LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF WARD COUNCILLORS IN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES: A CASE STUDY OF BUFFALO CITY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor Philosophiae (Public Administration) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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 DECLARATION

I, Primrose Nompendulo Mfene & student number 200316087, hereby declare that the thesis for DPhil. (Public Administration) to be awarded is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to critically examine the leadership and accountability of ward councillors in South African municipalities: A case of Buffalo City Municipality. The theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas was used to interpret the manner in which ward councillors are expected to interact with the members of the community when performing their leadership and accountability roles.

The study adopted a case study design that assisted in establishing what is required from ward councillors with regard to their leadership and accountability roles in local governance. Qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were used to collect data. The focus group interviews with ward committee members (n=100) from twenty-five (25) wards identified themes that relate to leadership and accountability constructs. The identified themes were verified in the quantitative phase in which questionnaires were administered to fifty (50) ward councillors. The qualitative data was analysed thematically using NVivo and quantitative data was analysed using MS Excel.

Generally, the views of the ward councillors regarding their leadership and accountability were positive. However, their leadership and accountability were largely dependent on their individualised communication skills and emotional intelligence. Hence the study established that unless ward councillors are equipped with skills and knowledge in communication and emotional intelligence respectively, their leadership and accountability roles will not be able to contribute effectively to local governance. Subsequently, the study made a set of recommendations in this regard.

KEY WORDS: Accountability, leadership, emotional intelligence, communication, communicative action, and local governance.
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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Municipalities are expected to operate in a democratic, accountable and participatory manner, and to complement their formal structures of representative government with a system of ‘participatory governance’ involving all residents (Piper & Deacon 2009:417). This would require that municipalities should provide leadership and continual education to enhance local democracy, to build awareness of environmental issues, to invest in youth development’, to empower the most marginalised groups in society, and to empower ward councillors to achieve these objectives (Pycroft 2000:151).

There is greater emphasis on community leadership by the current government, but the community leadership role of councillors in theory and practice remains unclear (Snape & Dobbs 2003:52). However, in terms of section 1.4 of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, local government has a key role to play in building political leadership that is able to bring together networks of local interests that cooperate to realise a shared vision and empowering ward councillors who should play a pivotal role in building a shared vision and mobilising community resources for development.

In South Africa, the leadership role, duties and responsibilities of councillors towards their communities is legislated and specified by, inter alia, the municipal Code of Conduct for Councillors. This includes serving and representing community members in the constituency regardless of their political affiliation, and avoiding any circumstances where there could be a conflict of interest (Joseph 2002:17). Ward councillors as elected representatives are expected to provide leadership and to be accountable to their respective constituencies.
Improving local government accountability improves service delivery, particularly for the poor. Conversely, increasing the resources allocated for public services without fixing the accountability incentive structure will most likely not translate into greater development benefits for the poor (Yilmaz, Beris & Serrano-Berthet 2008:1). One of the seven primary characteristics identified in the second King Report (2002) includes accountability, where communities’ rights to receive information relating to the stewardship of the organisation’s assets and performance are addressed (Fourie 2009:1116). It is important that municipal inhabitants should receive information about the services that a municipality renders so that they are in a better position to demand accountability from their councillors when certain services are not rendered. Therefore, ward councillors should be encouraged to provide leadership to their constituencies and be accountable for their actions.

This study intends to address the gap in the literature that appears to exist regarding the leadership and accountability of ward councillors in terms of their electorate. A critical analysis of the leadership role and accountability of ward councillors will provide valuable information for local governance.

1.2 RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The local government sphere is faced with ever-increasing service delivery protest action across the country. Additionally, service delivery protests have been covered in newspapers, radio stations and national television where communities are vocally expressing their dissatisfaction with the slow delivery of municipal goods and services. Between March and July 2012, broadcasts relating to the above were relayed on television in various areas including Sharpville, Ratanda (outside Heidelberg), Grabouw and KwaLanga in the Western Cape. The Daily Dispatch (23 March 2013, 30 April 2013 and 09 May 2013) and IOL News (16 January 2007 and 31 July 2007) published service delivery protests in various areas of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality which included Mzamomhle and Duncan Village.
The high rate of service delivery protests conveys the fact that communities are dissatisfied with the performance of their ward councillors and the slow provision of services by municipalities. In this regard, Naidoo in the Sowetan (07 July 2011) noted that communities become angry when their situation does not improve and they see certain politicians living the high life. Notably, municipal service delivery statistics since 1994 show an increase. This is complemented by various policies in favour of the poor, such policies as free basic water, free basic electricity and the provision of sanitation. Despite this, the leadership and accountability in municipalities have undermined the improvement of local governance.

Frequently, the complaint is heard that an organisation ‘lacks leadership’ (Nigro 1965:252). The leadership role of local councillors does not match the democratic challenges of a local ‘governance’ structure (Hansen 2001:117). However, one of the primary tasks of councillors is to ensure that the municipality as a whole is accountable to the people it serves. As public representatives elected by the people, councillors spend much of their working day monitoring accountability and reminding the administration that it is there to make a difference to the lives of the public (Joseph 2002:10). Accountability places an expectation on leaders to ensure that their service organisations meet externally imposed targets (Wallace & Tomlinson 2010:23). Citizens can hold political leaders accountable through legislation, empowering them to demand explanations and justifications from local government, specific bodies and processes for citizen oversight mechanisms (Yilmaz, Beris & Serrano-Berthet 2008:15). Therefore, at the local government sphere, ward councillors should always account for their actions and display leadership that would be a basis for their constituencies to have greater confidence in them.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Section 152(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, mandates local government to provide a democratic and an accountable government for local communities. In fulfilling this mandate, councillors
should, in terms of Schedule 5 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), be accountable to local communities and report back on council matters, including the performance of the municipality. Developmental local government is required to provide a vision and leadership to achieve local prosperity (The White Paper on Local Government, 1998:39). It appears that the South African local government is not upholding this constitutional mandate as it is shaken by various service delivery protests.

Gildenhuyys and Knipe (2000:113) maintain that the essential principle of representative democracy is the responsibility and accountability of elected politicians to the public, rather than direct participation of all citizens in the policy-making and decision-making processes. Failure related to leadership affects the likelihood of success of all other governance efforts (Archibald & Munn-Venn 2008:19).

Local government is an important sphere of government because it is close to communities. It is where most basic services such as water, electricity and housing are rendered directly to the community. Therefore, both elected politicians and appointed officials are constantly in contact with the community. It is for this reason that leadership and accountability should be enhanced to strengthen local democracy and to promote improved efficiency in local governance and service delivery initiatives.

The National Local Government Strategy (LGTAS) (2009:5) suggested that an ideal municipality should, among other things, provide democratic and accountable government for local communities as well as facilitate a culture of public service and accountability amongst its staff. LGTAS (2009:24) further recognised the need to do things differently in areas which include municipal accountability. In this study, an assumption is made that the absence of leadership and lack of accountability by ward councillors have a significant detrimental impact on service delivery at the local sphere of government.
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question is:
To what extent can a leadership and accountability framework for ward councillors improve local governance?

The following secondary research questions are proposed:
• To what extent does the lack of adequate monitoring of service delivery by ward councillors contribute to the problems faced by the municipality?
• What is the professional relationship between ward councillors and municipal officials as well as the community to promote service delivery in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality?
• How do ward councillors best interact with and convey information to their respective communities?
• How can the accountability of ward councillors be improved by local communities?
• Can transparency enhance the accountability of ward councillors in the context of service delivery in South Africa?
• Can ward councillors in underdeveloped communities learn any lessons from those councillors who represent more affluent communities?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Aims

The study aimed to examine how the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in South African local governance with reference to the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality influence local governance. To achieve this aim, the elements of the communicative action and emotional intelligence of ward councillors were examined.
1.5.2 The objectives

To examine the relationship between leadership, accountability and local governance, the objectives followed were:

- to provide a broad overview of governance at the local sphere of government in South African with the emphasis on issues of leadership and accountability by ward councillors;
- to establish the leadership role and accountability of councillors applying the Jürgen Habermas’s communicative action model;
- to examine the relationship between ward councillors and their ward committee members to find out whether ward councillors as leaders are accountable to their constituencies;
- to critically analyse the current state of local governance in South Africa focussing on the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality as a case study;
- to investigate how ward councillors in affluent and less affluent communities display their respective leadership roles;
- to investigate and review what accountability mechanisms are used for ward councillors; and
- to make recommendations for the improvement of leadership and accountability of ward councillors.

1.5.3 Hypothesis of the research

For purposes of this research the following hypothesis is proposed:
The violent service delivery protest action that is present in South Africa is primarily due to a lack of accountability and leadership on the part of ward councillors.
1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The provision of goods and services to communities is a complex activity for a municipality in South Africa. It is mostly influenced by the leadership and accountability of those in power. This study will be undertaken at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, investigating the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors. The study will not attempt to analyse the causes of non-delivery of services by the municipal administration. Secondly, the study will not determine party politics of ward councillors in the provision of goods and services to the community.

1.7 THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.7.1 Theoretical framework

The application of the theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas in this study is explained. Communication action refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations. The actor seeks to reach an understanding about the action situation ad their plans of action in order to coordinate their situation by way of agreement (Habermas 1984:86). Communicative action is an individual action designed to promote common understanding in a group and to promote cooperation, as opposed to ‘strategic action’ designed simply to achieve one’s personal goals (Bolton 2005:2). However, communicative action relies on a cooperative process of interpretation in which participants relate simultaneously to something in the objective, the social, and the subjective worlds, even when they thematically stress only one of the three components in their utterances (Habermas 1985:120). The elected representatives (ward councillors and proportional representative councillors) operating within the full council meeting or in standing committees are required in terms of a variety of legislative prescriptions to ensure that the municipal administration implements the decisions and policies of the municipal council to address the needs of communities. As elected representatives, the ward councillors must
take the needs and demands of the community to the municipal council or the relevant standing committees for discussion after which feedback to the community should ideally take place. It is when feedback is given that the community will have an opportunity to demand accountability from the ward councillors. In turn, ward councillors will account for their actions.

The feedback sessions by ward councillors can be analysed using Jürgen Habermas’s communicative rationality, which Niemi (2005:227) states “is the contention that all speech acts oriented to understanding raise three kinds of validity claims simultaneously: claims to truth, truthfulness and, normative rightness”. This is in keeping with the view held by Archibald and Munn-Venn (2008:19) that without clear communication from responders, leadership will be unable to respond successfully. In addition, Cheyne (2004:57) argues that leadership in local government requires that leaders should interact with other stakeholders to address matters of concern.

According to Hansen (2001:105), what seems to be needed is another new role that stresses that local councillors are co-governors and guardians of an inclusive and democratic form of local governance. Therefore, the communicative action theory will be helpful in formulating a model within which ward councillors should interact with their peers, administrators, the general public and, most importantly, with their constituencies to avoid conflict that would lead to a crisis situation.

The concept of ‘crisis’ is introduced by Habermas in his theory of communicative action who states that arises when modern society fails to meet individual needs and when institutions in society manipulate individuals. People interact to respond to a crisis and Habermas refers to this interaction as “communicative action” (Mabovula 2010:3). Crises must be handled and therefore leadership is required in times of upheaval and adversity (Ericksen 2001:23). The leadership skills of ward councillors will thus be essential in such situations. This is especially true against the background of the often violent service delivery protest action that is manifesting itself throughout South Africa.
Communicative action can be understood as a circular process in which the actor is two things in one: that is, first, the actor can be an initiator who masters situations through actions for which she or he is accountable. Second, an actor can be a product of the transitions surrounding her or him of groups whose cohesion is based on solidarity to which she or he belongs (Mabovula 2010:1). Accountability places an expectation on leaders to ensure their service organisations meet externally imposed targets (Wallace & Tomlinson 2010:23). Local decision-making structures have been criticised for lacking transparency and accountability, which is reflected, not least, in falling voter turnout during local government elections in South Africa (‘democratic deficit’). Secondly, the issue has been raised that, in its traditional institutional setting, local government appears to become less and less capable of coping with evermore complex social, economic and environmental issues and challenges (‘performance deficit’) (Wollmann 2008:283). This is in keeping with the view held by Archibald and Munn-Venn (2008:19) that without clear communication from responders, leadership will be unable to respond successfully.

1.7.2 Conceptual framework

In this study, leadership and accountability are the main concepts that will be studied with specific emphasis on local government councillors. These will be briefly defined and a brief description of each concept will be given. In the following paragraph an overview of governance is provided to contextualise the problem.

1.7.2.1 Governance

Governance refers to working with and listening to citizens in order to manage the public’s resources and respond to the needs and expectations of citizens as individuals, interest groups, and the society as a whole. Governance involves active cooperation and on-going engagement in the process of policy
formulation and implementation between politicians, senior management, front-line workers, and citizens (Fitzgerald et al. 1997:491). Governance, in contrast, refers to “the action, manner or system of governing in which the boundary between organisations and public and private sectors has become permeable. The essence of governance is the interactive relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces” (Rakodi 2003:524). The description of governance that is appropriate for this study is the one proposed by Du Toit et al. (2002:64) namely that governance implies the actions undertaken to improve the general welfare of a society by means of the services delivered.

1.7.2.2 Leadership

In the municipal context leadership is the influence a person exerts upon the voluntary behaviour of others to draw people together and to motivate cooperative efforts (Strodl 1993:2). Seemingly, leadership, according to Masciulli (2011:71), appears to be a universal requirement of all societies, “past, present, and future”. Matshabaphala (2008:4) adds that leadership is about creating an enabling environment for a multiplicity of constituencies through the way people behave.

Some theorists are of the opinion that leadership potential is determined by personality traits. Others believe that leadership depends on the position held by a person. Leadership may also involve carrying out specific clusters of functions aimed at inducing people to work to their ultimate mental and physical capabilities (Fox et al. 1991:91). Effective leadership enhances the community (be it a single organisation, a network of organisations, or local, regional, national and international collectivities) capacity to propose clever solutions to complex predicaments and adapt to changing circumstances.

Public leadership structures and processes should facilitate this key aim, which is to be achieved by maintaining and strengthening their learning capacity (’t Hart 2011:326). With personal leadership, the focus is on leadership at an individual level. Some individuals in the public sector are manifesting attributes of a corporate culture in their interaction with their
clients. Some, on the other hand, are contributing towards the social service culture about which communities are complaining (Matshabaphala 2008:9). Another set of definitions conceptualises leadership from a *personality perspective*, which suggests that leadership is a combination of special traits or characteristics that some individuals possess. These traits enable those individuals to induce others to accomplish specific tasks. Other approaches to leadership define it as an *act or behaviour*, that is, things leaders do to bring about change in a group (Northouse 2010:2). Northouse further provides additional definitions of leadership in terms of the *power relationship* that exists between leaders and followers as well as in terms of *skills* that leaders should possess.

In the following paragraphs the categories of leadership identified by Northouse (2010) are briefly reviewed:

**1.7.2.2.1 Leadership as a process**

Leadership as a process means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader, but rather a transactional event that occurs between the leader and the followers. Process implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers. When leadership is defined in this manner, it becomes available to everyone. It is not restricted to the formally designated leader in a group (Northouse 2010:3). Leadership has also been increasingly related to processes, and especially so in the context of partnership working. Processes can be ‘formal and informal instruments such as committees, workshops, seminars, and telephone, fax and email use, through which collaborative communication takes place’. In more general terms, leadership is about “a set of processes or dynamics occurring among and between individuals, groups and organisations “(Dudau 2009:402). Leadership is the process by which a person exerts influence over other people by inspiring them, motivating them and guiding their activities to help achieve the organisation’s goals (Ferreira *et al.* 2003:367).
1.7.2.2 Leadership as an influence

Leadership as an influence is concerned with how the leader affects the followers. Influence is the *sine qua non* of leadership (Northouse 2010:2). Leadership influence is measured by its contribution to the easing of tensions and the building of institutions that will reduce the likelihood of future crisis (Dimock & Dimock 1969:307).

1.7.2.3 Leadership occurs in a group

Groups are the context in which leadership takes place. Leadership involves influencing a group of individuals who have a common purpose. This can be a small task group, a community group, or a large group encompassing an entire organisation. Leadership is about one individual influencing a group of others to accomplish common goals. Others (a group) are required for leadership to occur. Leadership training programmes that empower people to lead themselves are not considered a part of leadership within the definition that is set forth in this discussion (Northouse 2010:3).

Leaders direct their energies toward individuals who are trying to achieve something together (Northouse 2010:3). Leadership has been viewed by some as an inherent attribute rather than a learning process. It has been a prevalent belief that all successful leaders had to be endowed with the necessary personal traits that come naturally. This may be true for political leaders, but it may not be so for chief executive officers (Gildenhuys 2004:223).

1.7.3 Accountability

The concept of accountability has numerous facets that are described by Tippet and Kluvers (2010:23) as an obligation to render an account for a responsibility that has been conferred; the process via which a person, or group can be held to account for their conduct; public accountability;
managerial as well as traditional accountability. Public accountability involves the public as principals and is concerned with issues of democracy and trust; managerial accountability is concerned with the day-to-day operations of the organisation; and traditional accountability is the rendering for account on actions and decisions. An explanation of accountability by Sarker and Hassan (2010:2) proposes that accountability is a social relationship in which an actor feels an obligation to explain and to justify her or his conduct to some significant other (a specific person, an agency or a virtual entity such as the general public). Accountability places an expectation on leaders to ensure their service organisations meet externally imposed targets (Wallace & Tomlinson 2010:23). Accountability as a cornerstone of democracy cannot be viewed in isolation from leadership which Ferreira, Erasmus and Groenewald (2003:367) propose is the process by which a person exerts influence over other people in order to achieve set goals. It can be safely said that since the local government sphere is regarded as the most democratic sphere of government, municipalities should ensure that accountability mechanisms are in place for both elected representatives and appointed municipal officials to account for their actions. This will in turn support the endeavours of a municipality to promote committed municipal officials and elected representatives.

One of the principal cornerstones of democracy is that each political representative and public official is subject to public accountability which demands transparency of government activities (Gildenhuys & Knipe 2000:129). This requirement is also prescribed in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Tippett and Klouvers (2010:23) argue that accountability in the public sector is complicated by the greater number of accountability relationships, such as those between elected representatives and managers, those between elected representatives and citizens, and those between citizens and managers.

Bovens (2005:187) identifies various types of accountability. These are organisational accountability which relates to public managers in organisations; political accountability which requires that elected
representatives and political parties account for their respective activities and
behaviour; legal accountability applied by courts when summoning public
managers to account for their acts or on behalf of their institutions;
administrative accountability which is applied through oversight and control
functions of the auditors, inspectors and controllers and professional
accountability which is accountability among professional peers. In addition,
Yilmaz et al. (2008:15) identify social accountability and downward
accountability. Social accountability encompasses mechanisms that can give
the poor and marginalised a more direct voice in the policies that local
governments formulate and implement to deepen democracy and to ensure
that citizens receive feedback and influence government action. Downward
accountability builds appropriate local governance structures that require
bridging the supply and demand side so that local governments can be
downwardly accountable to citizens. A precondition for downward
accountability is to simultaneously empower local government and citizens.
Salleh and Khalid (2011:1310) propose that local governments have multiple
stakeholders which means that they have multiple accountabilities. Downward
accountability is towards the beneficiaries, suppliers and communities. Since
corruption manifests itself in various facets of actions, the application of
various types of accountability could reduce the level of clandestine activities
that would culminate in corruption. Subsequently, elected representatives and
appointed officials will always do the right thing, fearing that the inhabitants
will demand accountability.

The traditional tenets of representative democracy presuppose a direct
relationship between individual voters and their elected political
representatives; a situation where the individual voter can demand
accountability directly from her or his political representative on a personal
basis (Gildenhuyss & Knipe 2003:149). Maile (2002:326) states that
accountability implies enforcement, monitoring and answerability as ways of
controlling the use of political power. Therefore, for the purposes of this study,
political accountability, as proposed by Blair (2000:27), is considered the most
appropriate in that in a democratic system of governance, public sector
employees must be accountable to the elected representatives and the representatives in turn must be accountable to the public.

Accountability encompasses various facets of local governance which include financial, legal, professional, economic and public accountability. However, for the purpose of this study three dimensions of accountability will be examined. These dimensions are: (i) accountable for what? (ii) accountable but how? and (iii) accountable to whom? (Haque 2007:435).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.8.1 Methodological rationale

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:38) distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methodologies by stating that quantitative research methodology relies upon measurement and uses various scales. On the other hand, qualitative methodology uses words and sentences to qualify and to record the information about the world.

Quantitative research is used to answer questions about relationships among measurable variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena. This approach is sometimes called the traditional, experimental, or positivist approach (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:101). In this study quantitative research was used to make predictions about the leadership role of ward councillors with the intention of developing a model of a good leader.

In addition, qualitative research was used in this study to understand the thoughts and opinions of ward committee members about the accountability role of ward councillors. Their contribution to the study will provide a basis for enhancing the accountability role of ward councillors. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:101) contend that qualitative research is used to answer questions
about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants’ point of view.

This study investigated the prevalence of leadership and accountability of ward councillors when interacting with members of the public and in carrying out their duties. Whilst quantitative research saves time and is cost-effective, qualitative research discovers how people perceive their surroundings. Hence a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed. This mixed methods approach is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation involves finding convergence among sources of information, different investigators or different methods of data collection. A researcher could establish an ‘audit trail’ of key decisions that have been made during the research process and validate the quality of those decisions (Fox & Bayat 2007:107).

It was important to choose appropriate paradigms and methods of enquiry which were likely to produce a reasonable quality of data obtained in the research. Therefore, a positivist, quantitative paradigm was necessary. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:16) contend that a positivist/post-positivist theoretical framework is used when a researcher uses “test” and “predict” in the purpose of the study. Henning et al. (2004:17) further state that “in a positivist view of the world, science is seen as the way to obtain the truth, to understand the world well enough so that it can be controlled by a process of prediction”. The positivist paradigm assumes that knowledge comes from experience and knowledge. The reason for the choice of this paradigm was that the data collected from ward councillors about their leadership and accountability roles assisted in predicting how the ward councillors should behave so as to be good leaders.

Interpretive research is a communal process, informed by participating practitioners and scrutinised or endorsed by others. Phenomena and events are understood through mental processes of interpretation which are influenced by an interaction with social contexts (Henning et al. Smit 2004:206). Interpretative researchers assemble a comprehensive collection of records related to people, actions, context and the perceptions of participants.
to service as a basis for the inductive production of explanatory theory (Fox & Bayat 2007:10).

One of the purposes of the qualitative approach is interpretation. The researcher was able to gain insights about the nature of a particular phenomenon, to develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon and to discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:148). Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm locates the participants in the study, as well as the constructs being investigated within the description of governance that facilitate the means of service delivery (Du Toit et al. 2002:64). The interpretive paradigm was employed in this study to investigate the accountability role of the ward councillors. Through focus group interviews and observations, a rich description of their leadership and accountability roles was generated.

1.8.2 Population and sampling

The study was conducted in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The sample of the study comprised a total of a hundred and fifty (150) participants consisting of fifty (50) ward councillors and a hundred (100) ward committee members from twenty-five (25) wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Eight (8) focus group interviews (n=6-12) were conducted. Fifty (50) questionnaires were administered to fifty (50) ward councillors. Purposive sampling was used for the purposes of the study. The purposive sampling of people or other units is chosen for a particular purpose (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:219). The problem with purposive sampling is that different researchers may proceed in different ways to obtain a sample. In sampling, it is possible to have a combined form of random (quantitative) and purposeful (qualitative) sampling (Fox & Bayat 2007:61). Therefore, in this study, purposive sampling was combined with target sampling. De Vos, et al. (2011:233) describe target sampling as a strategy for obtaining systematic information when random sampling is impossible and when accidental
sampling cannot be strictly implemented as a consequence of the hidden nature of the problem.

1.8.3 Data collection techniques

In a case study, data often includes observations, interviews, documents, audio tapes and visual materials. In many instances, the researcher spends extended periods of time on site and interacts regularly with the people who are being studied (Leedy & Ormord 2001:149). For purposes of this study, data collection tools that were used to obtain information from the ward councillors were self-administered questionnaires, observations and focus group interviews.

These techniques are explained in the following paragraphs:

1.8.3.1 Self-administered questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to collect data because Fox and Bayat (2007:88) propose that they are cost effective, less intrusive and reduce bias. Questionnaires were administered to the ward councillors to obtain their views pertaining to their leadership roles. Questionnaires were chosen because they cover a large sample within a short space of time. All ward councillors are literate and were able to complete the questionnaires. To save time, permission was sought from the Executive Mayor or the Speaker of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality to distribute these questionnaires during a council meeting.

Questionnaires were compiled using the four-point scale. Goddard and Melville (2001:48) state that a four-point scale forces a decision while a five-point scale provides the possibility of a neutral answer. For purposes of this study, ward councillors indicated how comfortable they are with their ability

- to give account to the members of the public,
- to monitoring implementation of municipal decisions and policies,
• to make information available and to give feedback to the members of the public, as well as
• to ensure proper application of municipal resources.
For example, the four-point scale encompassed ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’.

1.8.3.2 Observation

Observation techniques form part of both quantitative and qualitative research (Fox & Bayat 2007:84). The advantage of using the observation technique is to gain more insight into the manner in which feedback is given and how ward councillors give account for their actions in these meetings. Ward committee meetings and constituency meetings were observed by the researcher to obtain a greater understanding of the role of ward councillors, and the communication and relations between the ward councillors and members of ward committees. The researcher adopted a non-participatory stance during observations. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:103) argued that this data-collection technique is a simple observation and is the recoding of events as observed by an outsider. The aim of employing this data collection tool was to observe the interaction between ward councillors and ward committee members. The frequency of the ward committee meetings per ward were also recorded as these meetings are one of the mechanisms used by the municipality to promote accountability. Additionally, the manner in which ward councillors give report on various municipal council issues to the ward committees is very important.

1.8.3.3 Interviews

Arrangements were made to conduct interviews with the ward committee members. The aim was to examine the level of trust and confidence the members of the public have in the ward councillors and how ward councillors ensure public participation, transparency and feedback to decrease the level of service delivery protests in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. To
achieve this aim, focus group interviews were conducted with ward members. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:110), the advantage of using focus groups is that when the participants disagree on a particular issue, the whole group will explore the disagreement in detail. Thus, the researcher was able to gain a deeper insight on the topic.

Structured interviews were conducted. A list of issues to be investigated was drawn up prior to the interview. The advantage of structured interviews is that interviewers can ensure that all items on the interview schedule are considered (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:105).

1.8.4 Data analysis

The quantitative data collected through questionnaires was analysed with the assistance of the statistician using univariate analysis in MS Excel spreadsheet. Univariate analysis was chosen because of its simplicity and a summary of data collected were presented in tabular and graphic form for easy comprehension and utilisation (De Vos et al. 2011:254).

To analyse the qualitative data, a thematic analysis was used. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) assert that thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic. The analysis of data from the focus group interviews was undertaken with the assistance of the qualitative analysis software QSR NVivo10. This software was chosen because it is to manage large amounts of data.
1.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

1.9.1 Validity

Face validity of the research instruments were guaranteed. The interview schedule for ward committee members was designed and handed to the promoters. The questionnaire for ward councillors was adapted from Prof. V. Notshulwana. These were revised according to the promoters’ comments and suggestions. The comments of the Faculty of Arts Ethics Sub-Committee were also taken into consideration.

The mixed methods approach adopted in this study leads to triangulation. Triangulation is associated with construct validity. A variable is measured with a particular instrument (Fox & Bayat 2007:70). Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2009:34) add that triangulation ensures interpretive validity and establishes data trustworthiness. When multiple techniques are applied, the validity of the investigation is heightened (Van der Merwe in Garber 1996:261). The level of validity of this study was increased by the guidance and monitoring the researcher had from Professors V. Notshulwana and D. Taylor who are known for being resourceful researchers in the fields of leadership and ward committees respectively.

1.9.2 Reliability

When testing the reliability of data in this study, the researcher made use of Cronbach’s alpha. The internal reliability of variables was evaluated by utilising the Cronbach’s alpha which is roughly equivalent to the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficient for a scale (Hardy & Bryman 2004:23).

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will be useful to the municipal policy makers and implementers in fields such as communication and accountability. The study
will be stepping stone for the empowerment of ward councillors in leadership and emotional intelligence. This will be useful to municipal authorities whose responsibility is to ensure sustainability municipal systems and structure for service delivery. Proportional representative (PR) councillors and other leaders in the municipality may benefit from the study because the finding may guide them on how to monitoring municipal performance effectively and how to enhance communication in the municipality.

By focusing on the specific leadership and accountability factors which influence municipal performance, the study might motivate future researchers to identify other factors with a view to establishing the role each factor plays in local governance. For those responsible for capacity development programmes for ward councillors, this study would provide them with focus areas in this regard.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission to conduct research was sought from the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (see Annexure 1). The informed consent was obtained from all participants. Anonymity is of significant importance in studies where employees are to make statements about their employer. Since anonymity is regarded as essential by many respondents, they must be convinced that it will be respected. In studies where anonymity cannot be maintained, respondents must be assured of confidentiality (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:100). Any participation in a study should be voluntary (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:107).

Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that anonymity as well as privacy would be protected as far as possible. Permission to record the interviews was sought from the participants. Ethics clearance from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) committee was also obtained for this study.
1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a rationale and background to the issues of leadership and accountability in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The research problem, research questions, aims and objectives were highlighted. The chapter also provided a brief outline of the research methodology and design of the study which include the procedures involved in the data collection process. The validity and the reliability of research instruments, the significance of the study, and ethical considerations were also given.

1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 provided the rationale and background of the study, problem statement, aims and objectives, and also provided the research methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 2 will provide an overview of leadership and accountability in local governance of a developmental local government. It will also provide an overview of the requirements of a developmental local government mandate that has been assigned to municipalities as well as the Local Government Turnaround Strategy.

Chapter 3 will provide an exposition of the communicative action theory by Jürgen Habermas explaining the handling of crisis situations. The ward councillor/constituency interface through communication action will also be examined.

Chapter 4 will discuss the leadership theories and the nature of accountability. It will also examine the South African Local Government Turnaround Strategy in relation to leadership and accountability of ward councillors.

In Chapter 5, the research methodology and design will be discussed in detail.
In Chapter 6, the research findings and analysis will be presented.

Chapter 7 will provide a summary of findings and make recommendations based on the findings.
CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the debate on leadership and accountability continues to capture the attention of municipal stakeholders and academic discourse owing to the predicament of service delivery protests which are primarily attributed to a lack of leadership and accountability of ward councillors. In this regard Coetzee (2010:22) proposes that too often municipalities in South Africa are led and managed by inexperienced and incapable mayors, municipal managers or sector managers, or managers and leaders who are neither trained nor equipped to perform the developmental role that is required from them. Wallace and Tomlinson (2010:23) postulate the fact that accountability places an expectation on leaders to ensure their service organisations meet externally imposed targets. In this regard, it was necessary after the first democratic local government elections in 1995, to capacitate local government officials to provide leadership that would bring about social, economic and political stability. Also, this necessitated local government to put in place mechanisms for accountability to replace the undemocratic practices of the former apartheid regime.

In this chapter an overview on developmental local government and the requirements of the local government turnaround strategy is given. This will be followed by a brief conceptualisation of the terms “local government” and “local governance”. The leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in local governance in a developmental local government will also be discussed.
2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANDATE

Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, stipulates that municipalities are expected to give priority to the basic needs and to promote social and economic development of the community. Steyn-Kotze and Taylor (2010:199) define developmental local government in South Africa as “local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives”. According to Raga and Taylor (2005:139), developmental local government is at the core of local government transformation in South Africa and places implicit responsibilities on local authorities. From this point of view, developmental local government is a system to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities; to ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all (and specifically the poor and disadvantaged); to actively engage communities in the affairs of municipalities of which they are an integral part, and in particular planning, service delivery, performance management, resource utilisation and organisational change. To empower the poor by providing an efficient, effective and transparent system of local administration as well as a framework for delivery of services that takes the needs of the poor into account, in order to achieve the overall social and economic upliftment of communities in harmony with their local natural environment (Scott 2005:179).

Developmental local government whose mandate is to have a major impact on the daily lives of South Africans has four interrelated characteristics, namely:

- **Maximising social development and economic growth** to ensure that local government has a significant influence on the local economy. The overall economic and social conditions of the locality are conducive to the creation of employment opportunities and the promotion of social development (The White Paper on Local Government, 1998:38).
Questions that need to be asked by councillors in this regards are the following:

- Do the policies of municipalities for installing infrastructure prioritise the use of local labour?
- Do they prioritise the use of contractors that are owned by previously disadvantaged racial groups?
- Are the services provided in a way that ensures that the rights of the poor to a free allocation of water and electricity are safeguarded (SALGA 2006:43)?

- **Integrating and co-ordinating** to ensure that all efforts work together for common goals. This can be achieved by making use of integrated development planning which is a tool for municipalities to facilitate integrated and coordinated service delivery within their locality (The White Paper on Local Government, 1998:38).

Creating integrated living environments involves paying attention to all the different needs that a community must meet in order to sustain itself. It also means that resources will be concentrated so that past imbalances are adequately addressed (SALGA 2006:44).


In the context of the above characteristics, development local government requires strong and effective leadership of both the councillors and municipal officials. The leadership of ward councillors becomes crucial when a municipality strives to promote the general welfare of the community and citizens. Ward councillors are in a better position to create an enabling environment for developmental local government by influencing their constituencies and officials to work towards the developmental goals of their municipalities. It is for this reason that Raga and Taylor (2005:139) suggest
that municipal councillors require a particular level of expertise and knowledge to enable them to perform their functions in the best interests of the communities they were elected or appointed to serve. Councillors have a significant and broader role to perform in terms of the new developmental mandate assigned to municipalities in South Africa. An inhibiting factor to these ideals is put forward by Coetzee (2010:22), namely that too often municipalities in South Africa are led and managed by inexperienced and incapable mayors, municipal managers or sector managers, or managers and leaders who are neither trained nor equipped to perform the developmental role that is required from them. Therefore, if local government wants to become more developmental, it will have to (re)focus its leadership, not only at the top, but also within all levels and sectors of the organisation as well as in the community.

Initiatives such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) were introduced to give effect to the provisions of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998. Nkuna (2011:627) argues that developmental local government set out to mediate between the social goals of the RDP and the economic imperatives of GEAR. Explaining the RDP and the GEAR, Nkuna proposes that the RDP was a policy framework for integrated and coherent socio-economic progress and it sought to mobilise all the people of South Africa and the country's resources toward the final eradication of the results of apartheid. Its goal was to create a sustainable and environmentally friendly growth and development path. The GEAR was a strategy for rebuilding and restructuring the economy of South Africa in keeping with the goals set in the RDP. It was introduced in the context of the integrated economic strategy so that it could successfully confront the related challenges of meeting basic needs, developing human resources, increasing participation in the democratic institutions of civil society and implementing the RDP in all its facets.

For municipalities in South Africa to succeed in establishing themselves as developmental local government structures they need strategic,
organisational, and technical capacities. In the context of local government, strategic capacity refers to the ability of local government to provide leadership in defining the local development agenda, mobilising the community in implementing that agenda, and providing direction in the utilisation of the available resources towards the implementation of the programmes aimed at actualising a local development agenda (Maserumule 2008:441). The ward councillors must, therefore, provide leadership that will eradicate apathetic tendencies and encourage the positive involvement of citizens and community groups. This requires that ward councillors need to know and understand the social, economic and material needs of the community. Problems usually arise when there is disconnect between the ward councillors and the community, resulting in service delivery protests and a vote of no-confidence on the part of the councillors.

The local government turnaround strategy will now be briefly explored in the following section.

2.3 REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TURNAROUND STRATEGY

The post-apartheid reconstruction in South Africa was premised on a system of local government and developmental local government was an effort to break from the past. As such, it embraced values of social integration and sustainability on which developmental local government system should be built (Van Donk, Swilling, Pieterse and Parnell 2008:26). If one observes the challenges facing government and urban regions, the new developmental context as well as the developmental gaps in the current local government system, it is obvious that a major turnaround is needed – to ‘move on’ from a ‘dysfunctional developmental local government’ towards a ‘developmental local state.’ Such a turnaround will involve multiple approaches, the efforts of various government departments, as well as the active involvement of leaders, developmental role players, communities and business (Coetzee 2010:22).
In a community survey conducted in 2007, it was found that the provinces that struggle the most with reaching service delivery targets are the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, with Mpumalanga not far behind. The marked differences in poverty, wealth and institutional capacity in South Africa’s 283 municipalities have made it necessary to begin tailoring policies and approaches to suit their circumstances. A ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach does not work (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) 2009a:9). Subsequently, an assessment which was conducted between April and August 2009 was designed to ascertain the root causes of the state of distress in many of the county’s municipalities in order to inform a National Turn-Around Strategy for Local Government (State of Local Government in South Africa Overview Report and??? National State of Local Government Assessments Working Documents (COGTA) 2009b:3). This strategy aims to build clean, effective, efficient, responsive and accountable local government; improve performance and professionalism in municipalities; improve national and provincial policy, oversight and support; and strengthen partnerships between local government, communities and civil society. These goals set by COGTA must certainly be a step in the direction of improving the developmental performance of local government (Coetzee 2010:21).

Support programmes that were put in place after 2007 included Project Consolidate and the five (5) Year Strategic Agenda. Both these initiatives yielded progress, firstly in upping the levels of hands-on support provided to local government, and secondly in creating a systemic mechanism and framework (the five (5) Key Performance Areas) for local government to work within and report on. These interventions were not able to address deep rooted problems and capacity challenges sufficiently. Initiatives and programmes to advance service delivery and institutional support such as the former Planning and Implementation Management Support Centres, the Integrate Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP) and Urban Renewal Programme (URP) nodal programmes, the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) analysis and training weeks, the Bucket Eradication programme, Siyenza Manje, the Ilima project (Old Mutual), and the donor-supported Consolidated Municipal Transformation Programme were also
reviewed. In spite of these programmes and initiatives, service delivery and governance problems were identified in municipalities. The following priority areas remain government’s developmental challenge:

- Major service delivery and backlog challenges, for example, housing, water and sanitation;
- Poor communication and accountability relationships with communities;
- Problems with the political administrative interface;
- Corruption and fraud;
- Poor financial management, for example, negative audit opinions;
- Number of (violent) service delivery protests;
- Weak civil society formations;
- Intra- and inter-political party issues negatively affecting governance and delivery; and

The above state of local government in South Africa required COGTA to focus on implementation of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) and to strengthen the system of cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Annual Report 2010/11 2011:5). It should be noted for purposes of this study that the LGTAS was approved by the South African Cabinet in December 2009. One of the key milestones in ensuring that the LGTAS is implemented was to mainstream it within COGTA’s Programme of Action by ensuring that the Minister’s delivery agreement with the President is based on key objectives of the LGTAS, namely that of building a clean, efficient, responsive and accountable local government system. All seven outputs of the delivery agreement are aligned to the 2014 objectives of the LGTAS (Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs Annual Report 2010/11 2011:5).
Political parties must promote and enhance the institutional integrity of municipalities by ensuring that political management does not destabilise and place inappropriate pressure on councils and administrations; that political office bearers deployed in municipalities are well trained and have the integrity to provide leadership in the best interest of communities; that a performance management system for councillors is established and managed and that councillors are responsive and accountable to communities (COGTA 2009a:22). The Turnaround Strategy is an effort to stabilise local government and put municipalities on the path of responsive and accountable service delivery. It can be argued that for the Turnaround Strategy to be effective in stabilising the municipalities, it must address the root causes and not the symptoms of such conflicts (Mafunisa 2010:547).

Kroukamp (2011:37) states that the launch of the LGTAS resulted from two seemingly separate, yet related concerns. The first concern is the increasing community dissatisfaction about poor service delivery, resulting in protests, civil disobedience and millions of Rands worth of damages to state and private property. The second concern is the overwhelming number of municipalities (279 out of 283) receiving poor audit opinions, either disclaimers or qualified opinions, from the Auditor-General during the 2007/2008 audit cycle owing to a lack of controls, mismanagement and a lack of governance principles (Kroukamp 2011:37). However, the introduction of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) explicitly provided a strategy to restore the confidence in government at the local sphere and to rebuild and improve the basic requirements for a functional, responsive, accountable, effective and efficient developmental local government. A strategy alone will not be enough to ensure that municipalities will deliver effective services. The enforcement of statutory legislation and the appointment of competent and effective municipal leaders and staff who know how to deliver are needed (Edwards 2010:94). Leadership challenges must be resolved as the continuation of these will further compromise service delivery. In practical terms, part of the business re-engineering process must include role definition between the offices of the mayor, the speaker and the municipal manager. Tensions at this level are being attributed to the lack of a
clear definition of role and responsibilities (Mbele 2010:54). Each municipality is required to formulate its own Turnaround Strategy. It is equally important that ward councillors must be involved in the development and implementation of the LGTAS as they are in close proximity to the communities. They are the first to know and to be aware of the problems, needs and interests of the communities. Hence their leadership needs to be strengthened.

2.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The shift in emphasis from ‘government’ (the power to govern) to ‘governance’ (the act of governing) is linked to the global acknowledgement that organs of civil society need to be empowered to share the responsibility for governance. In essence, government institutions require a new citizen-oriented management approach. In this sense, relationships and partnerships have become much more important for local government than in the past (Ismail, Bayat and Meyer 19973).

2.3.1 Local government

Local government structures are ‘local democratic units within the democratic system which are subordinate members of the government vested with prescribed, controlled governmental powers and sources of income to render specific local services and to control and regulate the geographic, social and economic development of defined local areas’ (Venter, Van der Walt, Phutiagae, Khalo, Van Niekerk and Nealer 2007:3). Local government comprises of local community management and administration and encompasses the political and bureaucratic structures and processes that regulate and promote community activities (Cloete 1995:1). In terms of section 152(1)(a) to (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, local government should aim at providing democratic and accountable government to local communities to ensure sustainability, social and
economic development, a safe and healthy environment, and community involvement.

Local government consists of municipalities and is the sphere of government that is closest to the community and thus renders goods and services directly to the community. Venter et al (2007:5) contend that the term ‘municipality’ has the same meaning as ‘local’. Municipalities are organisational units of local government, and these can be regarded as decentralised agencies for the national sphere of government. The term ‘municipality’ can also be used to refer to local areas that fall within a municipal boundary. In terms of section 2 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, a municipality is an organ of state within the local sphere of government exercising legislative and executive authority within its area. It consists of political structures and the administration of the municipality as well as the community of the municipality.

Section 151 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, provides for the status of municipalities and states that local government consists of municipalities whose executive and legislative authority is vested in a council. Thus, a municipality has the right to govern the affairs of its community. Section 155(1) of the Constitution establishes categories A, B and C of municipalities. Category A is a municipality that has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its areas. Category B is a municipality that shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a category C municipality. Category C is a municipality that has municipal executive authority in an area that includes more than one municipality.

2.3.2 Local governance

Local governance is entrenched in section 152(1)(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which stipulates that local government should encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government. According to Rakodi (2003:524), governance
refers to “the action, manner or system of governing in which the boundary between organisations and public and private sectors has become permeable. The essence of governance is the interactive relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces”. Venter et al. (2007:159) view governance in the municipal context as how a city community organises itself, determines its priorities, allocates resources, and selects who has a voice and holds office bearers to account.

Governance is described as the exercise of control over society and the management of its resources for social and economic development. Demands for increased governmental responsiveness and accountability have played a significant role in this development (Devas 2001:394). Governance is the totality of how people manage the way they co-exist with one another in a mutually beneficial way. It is about institutionalising appropriate combinations of the culture, structures and modes of behaviour that society needs for effective co-existence. Governance means constitutional, legal and administrative arrangements by which local government exercises power, as well as the related mechanisms for public accountability, rule of law, transparency and citizen participation (Holtzhausen and Naidoo 2011:741).

Governance is used in various contexts in different approaches. The first is an institutional perspective which regards governance as fundamental rules which regulate the relationships between rulers and the ruled, the rules in use or constitutive choice rules, operating at deeper levels of analysis than collective and operational choice rules. Second is the policy network approach seeing governance as ‘directed influence of social processes’ through ‘self-organising, inter-organisational networks’. Lastly, it is the structuralist view in which governance denotes the structures of political and, crucially, economic relationships and rules by which the productive and distributive life of a society is governed (Tambulasi 2010:334).

Cheyne (2004:56) describes local governance as an ability of certain groups of stakeholders to influence decision-making. In this context, the institutional
barriers progressively fade out and the solutions to political problems are determined by the citizens. Starting from there, the leadership of local elected representatives is characterised by a stronger interdependence, reciprocity and co-responsibility. According to Devas (2001:394), local governance deals with power relationships among different stakeholders in cities because it involves individual citizens and households of all income groups. The poor may have some influence over what happens but they always strive for their survival and livelihood. In turn, the actions of the institutions of city governance can either make that process easier or more difficult for them.

Distinguishing between local government and local governance, Holtzhausen and Naidoo (2011:741) contend that effective local government focuses on effective leadership, openness and transparency, responsiveness, and accountability. The core characteristics for the implementation of effective local governance include both transparency and accountability. Effective local governance also typically includes leadership, transparency and accountability, public participation, impartiality in service delivery, efficient and effective use of state resources, sound human resource management, performance management and customer-oriented service delivery. Venter et al. (2007:7) see governance as a policy depth and sensitivity through engagement with government stakeholders and role players.

Cheyne (2004:57) states that leadership is the wide mobilisation of those who participate in the definition of public problems, of those who look for solutions and who move ahead in order to accomplish their objectives. This approach towards leadership in the framework of local governance is therefore profoundly different from the approach where leadership emanates from the exceptional personality of the leader.

The seven primary characteristics of good governance entail the following: discipline and commitment by senior management to promote sound ethical behaviour, transparency, avoidance of conflict of interest, accountability, responsibility, fairness, and social responsibility. These principles should be
promoted by functionaries in all spheres of government. (Edwards 2010:94; Tambulasi 2010:334)

When governance is discharged in the absence of these ideals, the resultant outcome is bad governance. Bad governance occurs when systems of governance are incapable and unaccountable to ordinary citizens and irresponsible to them and to their voice. It is largely about (but not limited) to corruption, inequality in provision, lack of participation, and an absence of transparency and accountability in resource use and decision making, resulting in undesirable political, economic and social outcomes (Tambulasi 2010:334).

It can be argued that leadership, especially political leaders such as councillors, should always be in close contact with the community so that they are abreast of the developments and the prevailing public problems. This will enable them to relay information from the council to the community and to communicate the needs and problems of the community to the council. In cases where the community is passive and always in agreement of the information brought to them, the councillor has the responsibility of encouraging them to participate in public meetings where they can voice their concerns.

The leadership role of ward councillors in the South African context is elaborated on in the following section.

2.4 LEADERSHIP ROLE OF WARD COUNCILLORS

A basic choice in systems for electing representatives is between ward-based elections and city-wide elections on the basis of proportional representation. Proportional representation is widely perceived as being fairer than the simple majoritarian ward-based system, producing a more balanced representation across the city. However, where the poor are relatively concentrated, the ward-based councillor system helps to ensure a direct link between voters in poor communities and their councillor, where the councillor has to depend on
the votes of his or her constituents (Devas 2001:395). By contrast, a party-list proportional representation system places power into the hands of political parties and weakens the link with poor communities. Compared with executive councils, the system of executive mayors tends to produce more decisive city government, with a clearer line of accountability. But this can marginalise the influence of ward-based councillors and, unless there are adequate checks and balances, may unduly concentrate power (Devas 2001:396).

‘Leadership is crucial to the functioning and success of local governance’ (Bochel & Bochel 2010:725). Hence a new role that stresses local councillors as co-governors and guardians of an inclusive and democratic form of local governance is needed (Hansen 2001:105). This is because governance demands leadership capable of working horizontally and that involves interactions with followers or other actors (Alonso 2009:7).

The performance of organisations is directly related to the quality of its leadership (Smit, De J Cronje, Brevis, & Vrba 2004:275). A municipal organisation differs from many other organisations in that it has a number of leaders: the councillors who give leadership in the sense of having to take policy decisions, the heads of departments, and the heads of the various sub-units within each department. Each official in charge of a unit is a leader, but at a different level, and consequently the responsibility and accountability of a leader tend to grow with the rank that person holds. The question is: What is leadership? Is it some quality that can be captured, distilled and administered to an official in increasing doses with each promotion? Is leadership an inherent personal trait? Or is it something that can be taught, something that those occupying positions of leadership need to study? (Craythorne1997:303). Leadership is concerned with personal qualities and attributes as well as acquired skills, and involves both the behaviour of the leader, and the situation, the latter being the organisation itself and the group or community it services. (Craythorne1997:305). “Leadership is the process of exerting influence on the behaviour of a group so that the predetermined policy goals and objectives can be realised…” (Gildenhuyse 2004:222). It can
be argued that the representative role of ward councillors requires that they perform their functions in such a way that would be satisfactory to their constituencies. The delivery of services in municipalities is dependent on the capabilities of municipal officials to be able to perform their functions. Under-performance of municipal officials has a negative effect on the performance of ward councillors. Thus, their endeavours to fulfil the needs of the community will fail, leading to a lack of trust in ward councillors which, in turn, will cause instability. It is in this situation where ward councillors should display real leadership.

Leadership then is concerned with personal qualities and attributes as well as acquired skills, and involves both the behaviour of the leader, and the situation, the latter being the organisation itself and the group or community it services (Craythorne 1997:305). In most municipalities and other spheres of government political and managerial leadership is perceived to be poor, resulting in a lack of vision, lack of integrity and indecisiveness on important service delivery issues (Edwards 2010:93). The effective functioning of a public institution begins with its leadership. It is clear that the need for effective leadership becomes an imperative in combating ineffectiveness, unethical conduct, poor service delivery and corruption in the public sector. Taking all the concerns into consideration, it seems that the challenge of leadership, good governance and effective service delivery are increasingly complex (Edwards 2010:94).

Leadership is the process of exerting influence on the behaviour of a group so that the predetermined policy goals and objectives can be realised (Gildenuys 2004:222). The methodology of leadership involves the creation of a positive environment. The methodology of leadership involves the following four primary aspects, which are:

**Creating a positive work climate.** The leader must seek to create a positive work environment that is conducive to self-imposed discipline, motivation and a sense of responsibility on the part of the management and the staff.
Harmonising goals and objectives. The leader also needs to harmonise the goals and objectives of the organisation with those of staff – especially their personal economic and social needs and their personal ambitions, such as self-realisation by promotion.

Representation and response interactions. The leader must adequately represent his or her staff to outside agencies and higher authorities in the whole government system and to take care of their legitimate claims and interests. The leader must also respond to and take care of the needs that can be met from within the limits of his or her authority.

Applying sanctions and rewards. It is also necessary for the leader to use rewards and sanctions to secure the compliance of staff. Those who work positively for the accomplishment of the organisation’s objectives need to be rewarded, and sanctions need to be applied against those who do not (Gildenhuys 2004:231).

Ward councillors need certain leadership qualities to be able to perform their leadership role. Isaac-Henry (2003:85) identified the following qualities of leadership:

- Sacrificing other aspects of life to political activities;
- Recognising that in a large urban authority, leadership of the authority is a full time job;
- Building and sustaining networks of relationships, whether with committees of the council, with officers or with the local party outside the council chamber;
- Recognising the importance of public relations and publicity both for himself, his local authority and his cause;
- Promoting relationship with the opposition and strategies to handle it; and
- Having debating skills and tactical acumen so as to be in control at council meetings.
Ward councillors are political leaders which Morrell and Hartley (2006:484) state are democratically elected representatives who are vulnerable to deselection, and operate within, as well as influence, a constitutional and legal framework. Their source of authority is a mandate (permission to govern according to declared policies, regarded as officially granted by an electorate upon the decisive outcome of an election). Membership of the electorate is set out in law, and broader than organisational or union forms of membership, since it extends to all citizens with voting rights in a defined constituency.

Since political leaders are elected rather than appointed, and act as representatives, they require consent from those whom they govern and serve. They have a duty to serve all their constituents and protect the interests of future generations, rather than simply those who supported them. This should include the elderly and disadvantaged groups, as well as those who do not have the power to vote, such as children. Political leaders operate under different structures of accountability and scrutiny. They have formal legal responsibility for a broad range of issues such as health, law enforcement, taxation, education, legislation, social welfare and the economic sphere (Morrell and Hartley 2006:485).

Local government faces many challenges, most of which are related to the general trends observed in public sector leadership, especially those that concern the introduction of business-like management practice. In a study on Portuguese Local Government, leadership was found to be the most critical factor, confirming its key role in the success of any institution. Hence, to achieve excellence, the role of leadership in the local government is to:

- Communicate the organisation’s values;
- Create a sense of urgency for changing the environment;
- Work across traditional boundaries and build networks;
- Develop an organisation-wide culture that solicits and values everyone’s opinions;
- Trust subordinates and empower the staff;
- Ensure that important information is available to the decision-makers;
• Act as leaders, motivating employees and getting things done;
• Show appreciation and recognition for employees’ achievements and contributions; and
• Be an agent for learning and develop a culture of continuous improvement (Kanji 2007:423).

In South Africa, each ward councillor is elected by a specific geographically-defined ward within the area of jurisdiction of the municipality. A ward committee is established in each ward to assist the ward councillor in understanding the needs and the views of the community. Ward councillors are expected to make sure that concerns related to their wards are represented in council. Ward councillors serve as chair of their ward committee and are expected to hold regular public meetings within their wards. They can interact directly with any interest group even if that group is not represented on the ward committee (SALGA 2006:53). For the ward councillors to interact successfully with the members of council and the members of the community, Kaplan and Norton in Maserumule (2008:442) argue that they need to have competency pillars for success that should supplement the above leadership qualities. These are knowledge, skills and values which are important in determining the strategic success of the organisations. Knowledge pertains to basic or general knowledge that a person needs to carry out the job. Skills are about the skills needed to supplement the knowledge base. Values are a set of characteristics and professional behavioural patterns that are required to guide human action for excellent performance of work.

It is important for ward councillors to possess the above competency pillars as they need to have knowledge of the services rendered by municipalities, the departments responsible for rendering these services and most importantly, the needs of the community. Ward councillors are public figures and as such they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will be acceptable to the community they lead. Skills that they need to possess are related to their ability to monitor implementation, to promote social relations, to make
information available and to ensure proper application of municipal resources. These roles will be reviewed in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1 Monitoring implementation

Councillors are the elected representatives of the communities who elected them and are mandated to make decisions on behalf of their constituencies. This idea is based on the principles of *representative democracy* which recognises the need for communities’ to have a voice in their government, but assigns that voice to selected persons chosen through the voting process (SALGA 2006:48). Councillors need to carry out their duties in a *transparent* and *accountable* way. This implies that councillors do not act as individuals and do as they wish. Their actions must be visible to the public so that the public (or party to which the councillor belongs) are able to object when they feel their interests are not being adequately represented (SALGA 2006:49).

The logic of democratic politics is that politicians know they will be judged not by what appears in a statement of strategy or policy, but by what happens on the ground. Operational matters and task accomplishment are therefore an entirely legitimate concern of elected leaders (Entwistle *et al.* 2005:543).

Councillors act as a key feedback mechanism for monitoring:

- Whether the municipality’s plans and programmes are achieving the intended effect;
- Whether services are being provided in a way that is efficient and fair; and
- Whether capital projects as committed to in the IDP are actually taking place according to plan within a reasonable timeframe.

As ward councillors in particular often receive complaints from the public on specific problems, they are in a good position to advise the public on how to resolve their issues. They can also assist their constituents in making formal complaints or petitions, as may be appropriate, for submission to the municipality, and can help follow up on the concerns brought to them. The councillors are also given reports on various service delivery issues and the
progress of capital projects, and should pass this information on to the community at every opportunity (SALGA 2006:52).

One of the primary tasks of councillors is to ensure that the municipality as a whole is accountable to the people it serves. As public representatives elected by the people, councillors spend much of their working day monitoring accountability and reminding the administration that it is there to make a difference to the lives of the public. Therefore, in order to ensure a high standard of public service, councillors must be vigilant and efficient (Joseph 2002:10). According to Salleh and Khalid (2011:1307), a lack of accountability relates to failure in the implementation and monitoring stage. It is during this stage that leadership is important. Fourie (2009:1118) argues that leadership should ensure the establishment and operation of checks and balances which effective governance requires in a transparent manner.

2.4.2 Promoting social relations

Leaders’ interactions may be influenced by the context but an important feature of political leadership is the diversity of people with whom they interact in a formal capacity, for example, members from the same party at various levels; other political leaders; representatives of unions, lobby groups and communities of interest; business leaders; and individual voters. In each case, interactions are part of a wider constellation of interrelationships, and recursively influence the context for other interactions. This is a more subtle rendering of interaction than economic approaches (for example, public goods theory and transaction cost economics) which are expressed in terms of relationships of exchange (Morrell and Hartley 2006:495). Leaders must go beyond “power over” relations with followers and engage in “power with” relations with them, striving to bring about not only what is good for one’s national or regional or local group but also what is good for global cosmopolitan humanity (Masciulli 2011:73).
Councillors are expected to be in close contact with their constituencies and to keep the council informed of the real experiences and views of the residents within the municipality. Local government legislation has in several places emphasised the importance of public participation as a means to influence council processes. This means that elements of participatory democracy are also in place in South Africa.

In participatory democracy citizens have the right not only to elect their representatives, but also to participate actively in government decision-making on a continuous basis between elections. Citizens do not have a vote on council, but are meant to influence their councillors to represent their views on any topic that affects them. Councillors have a duty to be accessible to the public to allow for that input (SALGA 2006:49).

Ward councillors are also the voice of the municipality in the wards. Community members will bring all kinds of problems and issues to their councillors and expect that they will be addressed immediately. Ward councillors should take this role seriously. Where possible, community members should be given advice and assistance to solve their problems. Some issues may have to be taken up with municipal officials. In many cases problems cannot be solved by the municipality and community members have to be referred to other public sector departments. To be effective, councillors must be familiar with the role of ward committees. It is not possible for one ward councillor to stay in touch with up to 20 000 community members, for example. Ward committees have been established to increase the participation of residents in the democratic decision-making processes (Joseph 2002:21). Ward councillors should make sure that the interests of community members in their wards are represented as properly as possible. They should stay in touch with the issues in their areas, understand the key problems, and monitor development and service delivery. In committees, caucus and council meetings, ward councillors should act as spokespersons for the people in their wards. Ward councillors function as direct links between the council and the voters. It is their responsibility to make sure that voters are consulted and kept informed about council decisions, development and
budget plans, and any council programmes that will affect them (Joseph 2002:20).

One characteristic of the challenges facing political leaders is that actions and decisions may require the mobilisation of different groups in order to build consent. In this sense, the issue for politicians is to gain some consensus across the entire domain of a problem (Morrell and Hartley 2006:485). Councillors may have the opportunity to participate on committees within council. Committees are made up of a group of councillors who are usually designated to review or develop new policies relating to a specific issue. Different parties may be represented on such committees, and these committees may also include relevant officials of the council that work with the committee on an advisory basis. The committees develop the proposals for council to consider, and therefore have considerable influence. The executive committee has the most influence as it ultimately decides which proposals to put before council. In order to be prepared to participate effectively on these committees, it is essential that councillors should be informed by the basic principles of delegation, which are described later in this chapter (SALGA 2006:50).

A further source of complexity is that political leaders are directly responsible for the provision of public services (for example, street lighting), and also have a regulatory and enforcement role (for example, in collecting taxes). The ubiquitous language of customer relations breaks down here since many ‘customers’ of regulatory services are unwilling ones. People’s expectations of what leaders can provide may differ widely from what is actually possible given legal, logistical and practical constraints. These different challenges show how the relationship between leaders, stakeholder groups and the electorate is complex and interdependent (Morrell and Hartley 2006:485).
2.4.3 Making information available

Every council will be involved in various planning and policy-making processes, and specific programmes or projects that are implemented. The council will also conduct information campaigns on issues affecting the community. Councillors need to communicate these activities to the public in the interests of increasing transparency and promoting public involvement in these activities (SALGA 2006:50). Transparency and access to information refer specifically to community involvement and consultation as to the manner in which the people will be governed. Transparency assumes the free flow of information (Holtzhausen and Naidoo 2011:743).

The council can use radio broadcasts or newspapers to disseminate information to members of the public. The most effective outreach is often done by the councillors, working through ward committees, organised community groups, local party branches, public meetings and road shows (SALGA 2006:50). It is important for a municipality to stick to the values of openness and transparency when dealing with members of the public. Hence SALGA (2006:50) emphasises that municipal work is essentially public activity and that when municipal work is confidential, it must be challenged at all times. Rather the approach should be how to manage the flow of information in the interest of the municipality. Communication should be based on an integrated communication strategy and programme, with core messages which guide all the actors. Councillors are advised to familiarise themselves with the communication strategy of their municipality. Salleh and Khalid (2011:1308) assert the belief that public sector leaders fail to give guidance and deliver the information since they are unclear of the vision and the missions of the changes. Also, the intense emphasis on standards, targets and procedures is the obstacle to imaginative and effective leadership. More importantly, leaders should enforce the culture of trust so that any change initiative or reforms can be easily embraced.
A sense of direction and clarity of communication are crucial qualities that a leader should have when communicating with the members of the public. The first quality is the leader’s sense of direction. A leader conveys information about the best courses of action for the followers. The value of that information reflects the quality of the leader’s judgement. Such a sense of direction might also reveal the action that is most compatible with the wider mass of political actors. A second relevant quality is a leader’s clarity of communication. Good judgement is wasted unless a leader can effectively communicate his or her message: increased clarity enhances the informativeness of this message. Leaders should also coordinate. When coordination is important, a follower not only wonders about the content of the message received from a leader, but also considers how others interpret it. A clear message is better able to act as a unifying focal point. Indeed, a speech that points everyone in the wrong direction, but is commonly interpreted, may sometimes be preferable to one that points in the right direction but lacks a common interpretation. When a leader speaks clearly, followers rally around a commonly understood so-called “party line,” even though it may differ from the ideal (Dewan & Myatt 2008:352).

Direct communication and a mutual exchange of views with the public is the most effective form of communication. Communication campaigns work best when they are carried out in partnership with others outside of the municipality. This would include other government spheres and NGOs, – all of which can, if mobilised and supportive, transmit similar messages sometimes with a greater measure of credibility and impact (SALGA 2006:50). Subsequently, leaders must get followers and fellow citizens, colleagues and constituents to accept their interpretations by the effective use of public communication and at the same time organise the mobilisation of followers to attain goals with appropriate means as an adaptive or innovative response to the challenges posed by global problems (Masciulli 2011:71).
2.4.4 Ensure proper application of municipal resources

Councillors have the responsibility to make important decisions through voting in council on issues such as resolutions of council, policy changes, the IDP and the annual budget (SALGA 2006:50). A councillor cannot directly instruct an official on how to do his or her job but does have the right to expect officials to meet accepted standards of service. Councillors can raise any serious concerns within council for attention by the relevant department or via the Municipal Manager (SALGA 2006:52). However, councillors need to ensure that these decisions are implemented efficiently and effectively by municipal officials. They should do this without interfering and being seen as policing the actions and behaviour of the municipal officials.

Transparent disclosure of public spending and service delivery outcomes is a powerful overall control mechanism in the new system of budgeting proposed by government, particularly in ensuring the transparency and accountability of the operational aspects of the budget at the sphere of local government. While reforms in the budget process in municipalities have resulted in a more transparent and “bottom-up” approach, opportunities for popular consultation and participation still remain quite limited (Holtzhausen & Naidoo 2011:743).

Leadership is perhaps difficult to perform in the public sector, although this is where it would perhaps make significant difference to people. Leadership can nevertheless be the secret ingredient that was until recently too unpopular to use by policy makers, but that can make a whole difference under the paradigm of joined-up service delivery. Leadership can be integrated in the accountability debate, in the form of ‘active accountability’ (Dudau 2009:412).

2.5 ACCOUNTABILITY ROLE OF WARD COUNCILLORS

Blind (2011:2) comments that accountability as a concept is dualistic in nature. On the one hand, accountability is abstract and value-ridden because it is associated with *inter alia*, the notions of responsibility, integrity, democracy, fairness and justice. On the other hand, accountability is highly
concrete and value-free because its origin lies in bookkeeping where accountholders must give justifications of their possessions to pre-determined bodies according to fixed procedures. The first approach to accountability is broad as in ‘state of being answerable’; the second is narrower as in ‘given obligations to evidence management or performance imposed by law, agreement or regulation’.

When the notion of accountability is espoused, three important questions arise: accountable to whom; for what; and how? These issues amplify three main dimensions: the agents of accountability (accountable to whom); the standards of accountability (accountability for what); and the means of accountability (how accountability is ensured). The agents of accountability from whom authorised relationships are derived include supervisors, elected chief executives and legislators, the courts, external auditing agencies, professional associations, co-workers, clients and the general public (Kakumba & Fourie 2007:653).

Considering the ‘accountable to whom’ in municipalities, Joseph (2002:8) agrees that as part of accountability municipalities are holding regular elections, but because of the time between elections additional mechanisms are required. Joseph (2002:10) further argues that councillors are elected to represent local communities on municipal councils, to ensure that municipalities have structured mechanisms of accountability to local communities, and to meet the priority needs of communities by providing services equitably, effectively and in a sustainable fashion within the means of the municipality. In fulfilling this role councillors must be accountable to local communities and report back at least quarterly to constituencies on council matters, including the performance of the municipality in terms of established indicators.

Accountability is the right to obtain justifications and explanations from public officials or private service providers responsible for the use of public resources. This places an obligation on officials to account for the use of public resources. Accountability is understood as the obligation to render an
account for a responsibility that has been conferred. Accountability means that those individuals and municipalities charged with the performance of particular actions or activities are held responsible (Holtzhausen and Naidoo 2011:741). It involves a rendering of an account and therefore the provision of accurate, relevant and timely information to the appropriate stakeholders. Underpinning the concept of accountability is the notion that one person is responsible to another, and is obliged to render an account of their decisions and actions to another party. Whilst information cannot be equated with accountability it is an essential ingredient of it, though public sector reforms have resulted in public sector organisations providing a wide range of information which has not lead to better accountability (Tippet and Kluvers 2010:22).

In municipalities, discontent has focused upon the lack of basic services, abuses of power and mismanagement. There is a need to ensure that accountability structures are created which are in line with legislative policy imperatives for local government. Improved accountability and financial controls would improve service delivery. At the political level, accountability requires making administrative leaders accountable to political leadership, typically through the contestability of political power. At a municipal level, accountability should take several forms. The traditional form is hierarchical, based on administrative leadership reporting to the political level (Holtzhausen and Naidoo 2011:742). Thus, ward councillors need to work together with the community to acquire a deeper understanding of service delivery protests. Municipal officials should be encouraged to answer communities’ question such as the following: Which services are not rendered yet promised by the ward councillors? Which services were delivered? Are they satisfied with these services? If not, why? These questions should be asked quarterly, not only when there are problems. This exercise would be a way of building trust between these two parties. Once trust exists between ward councillors and communities, there could be less service delivery protests.

It is in this context that Yilmaz, Beris and Serrano-Berthet (2008:1) postulate that improving government accountability improves service delivery,
particularly for the poor. Conversely, increasing the resources allocated for public services without fixing the accountability incentive structure will most likely not translate into greater development benefits for the poor. Cavill and Sohail (2005:157) assume that if the poor can participate in priority setting and planning for services, as well as in monitoring and disciplining providers, better services will result. Such an approach tends to be pragmatic. The involvement of service users in promoting accountability compensates for weak institutions and regulation; it places an emphasis on the results of service delivery over the ideology behind decisions, and focuses on people as consumers of services rather than as citizens. According to Joseph (2002:9), developmental local government requires a political leadership which creates opportunities to account to the community over and above regular elections. Councillors are elected to represent local communities on municipal councils, to ensure that municipalities have structured mechanisms of accountability to local communities, and to meet the priority needs of communities by providing services equitably, effectively and in a sustainable fashion within the means of the municipality. One of the primary tasks of councillors is to ensure that the municipality as a whole is accountable to the people it serves.

The Open Democracy Bill provides details on what transparency means in South Africa. Mechanisms to ensure government accountability and transparency include:

- Report-backs by members of Parliament or local councillors to their constituencies;
- Reports by parliamentary committees to parliament or by local standing committees to their council;
- Open meetings which members of the public can attend;
- Reports to the Auditor-General;
- Special commissions of enquiry;
- Access to parliamentary records, council records and minutes of meetings;
- Guaranteeing freedom of the media; and
Knowing their powers are limited, few councillors dare confront their constituency, especially when problems are rife. Few will admit that their powers are limited, as it would destroy their prestige. Rather than engaging with their potentially problematic constituency, councillors will use their only resources – information and networks – to build some influence locally. This leads inevitably to forms of clientism. Councillors’ accountability to their voters is further limited by two structural, interrelated elements: the South African electoral system, and South Africa’s current electoral practices (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008:16).

Bénit-Gbaffou (2008:16) contends that the accountability of ward councillors is limited by the current electoral system which emphasises the importance of the party in the choice of ward candidates. The ward system is supposed to be personality driven, thus enhancing accountability in opposition to the proportional representation system that relies on party lists and fosters party representativity. Bénit-Gbaffou (2008:18) further points out that ward councillors have little incentive to feel accountable to their local constituency because residents vote for a party more than for a candidate. Even ward committees have little ability to challenge their councillor, to make sure that he or she is liaising in an appropriate manner between the council and communities, or to access information on council policies or meetings. The ward committees’ mandate is officially limited, and if considered too obstructive, it can be easily sidelined by councillors (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008:18).

Cavill and Sohail (2005:162) suggest the following four factors that organisations can consider when promoting accountability for what urban services are doing:

- Directing attention towards improving the effectiveness of the service itself;
- Making accountability a function of good customer relations, and improving the individual service user’s capacity for action and initiative;
• Creating mechanisms to support a more collectivist approach through campaigning, lobbying and advocacy of services at both local and national levels; and
• Improving services through encouraging competing and alternative provision.

For ward councillors, the accountability challenge is three-fold. First, ward councillors must lead their constituencies to build trust, thereby increasing the level of confidence in each other. Second, ward councillors should ensure efficient and economic use of municipal resources to support the ‘value for money’ principle. This does not only mean that ward councillors should find the time and money for rendering goods and services to the community but also for influencing municipal officials to ‘put people first’ in everything they do. In this context the Batho Pele (People First) Principles are of particular importance. Third, ward councillors must provide leadership that supports service delivery in a positive way, yet protects the norms and values of the community. This implies that municipalities should embrace leadership which is accountable as in the absence of accountability municipal governance becomes ordinary administration which is separated from the stakeholders who constitute municipal governance.

2.5.1 Dimensions of accountability

The classical approach to accountability required that rules should be adhered to judiciously (Hanekom and Thornhill 1988:150). With the increase in public services, a new dimension has entered accountability – justification for government actions. Accountability is an aid in exercising control over executive actions and compels public official to act with caution and constraint (Fox, Schwella and Wissink 1991:124). Accountability includes external mechanisms, such as legislative instruments, political executive means, judicial or quasi judicial processes, as well as public hearings, interest groups, and media scrutiny; internal mechanisms, including official rules, codes of
conduct, official hierarchies, and performance reviews; and others like organisational culture and professional ethics (Haque 2000:606).

Accountability encompasses various facets of local governance which include financial, legal, professional, economic and public accountability. However, for the purpose of this study, three dimensions of accountability will be examined. These dimensions are: (i) accountable for what? (ii) accountable to whom? and (iii) accountable but how? (Haque 2000:600). These dimensions will be elaborated on in the following paragraphs:

2.5.1.1 The standards of accountability (accountability for what)

Grant and Keohane (2005:29) maintain that accountability suggests that the actors being held accountable have obligations to act in ways that are consistent with accepted standards of behaviour and that they will be sanctioned for failures to do so. Kosmicki (cited in Sindane 2009:498) suggests that accountability means standards. It is normal in institutions to work towards achieving targets. Thus standards are set to measure monthly, quarterly or even half-yearly performance and comparisons of actual against set standards are made. The setting of standards themselves – it is recommended – should be a collaborative effort. No agreement on standards between management and labour means no consensus on either targets or performance. A normally neglected aspect about performance against standards is remedial action. Performance measured against standards results in three occurrences, namely:

- Standards could be exceeded;
- Standards could be equalled; or
- Standards could not be reached.

It can be argued that ward councillors should provide leadership that supports and enable the attainment of standards. It would be a problem to realise this if they are not in agreement with the standards set for them. This would also create unnecessary tension between themselves, the community and the
municipal officials. However, it may not be possible for ward councillors to meet the standards if they do not know the expectations, needs and demands of the community. Hence, it is imperative that they should at all times be in contact with the community. Also, they do not only need time and money to reach the standards but they need to be involved in municipal decision making processes and the formulation of municipal policies.

2.5.1.2 The agents of accountability (accountable to whom)

The constituency-based local government election system introduced in South Africa introduces an element of direct accountability. The ward councillors are directly linked to a constituency, which means they have a direct line with the community they represent. Where applicable, they also sit as chairpersons of ward committees and as such see their function as intermediaries between the community and the municipality underlined (Community Law Centre 2008:11).

The advantage with local government is that there is a direct linkage between an elected representative and a definable constituency. A greater degree of accountability is possible because of this direct link. It is much easier to identify the public representative of a ward and therefore also easier to hold him or her accountable (Joseph 2002:10). The centrality of the councillors in the distributive networks allows for the exclusion of certain individuals and groups from decision-making processes and local government services in terms of their loyalty to incumbent politicians. Therefore amicable relations with, or at the very least dormancy towards, ward councillors are crucial for both individuals and organisations seeking to access local state resources and this limits the willingness of civil society to challenge local political figures, even when officially invited to do so (Staniland 2008:35).

It is important to take note that in South Africa ward councillors, as agents of accountability, should account individually to their constituencies, political party and to the Speaker of Council. They report as a collective to council.
This state of affairs makes their accountability biased towards their political parties' loyalty.

### 2.5.1.3 The means of accountability (accountable but how)

The mechanisms through which locally elected representatives can be accountable to the public include, among others, elections, public meetings and formal grievance procedures. It is submitted that the electoral system for local government itself may not in all respects establish direct accountability links as there are serious difficulties in defining community accountability for PR councillors. The constituency element in the electoral system, namely that of ward representation, appears not to have generated a strong enough direct link between communities and ward councillors. It is suggested that the failure to maximise on this institution of accountability has its roots in the quest of political parties to manage the fielding of candidates. The open meeting requirements in the Local Government: Systems Act 32 of 2000 seem to go far enough to ensure that municipal meetings do not take place away from public scrutiny, thereby facilitating the accountability of local representatives to the public. The Systems Act provides a clear obligation on the municipal manager to provide the public with a notice that sets out the date, time and venue of all meetings (Community Law Centre 2008:2). A performance management system has also been put in place to help councillors ensure accountability (Joseph 2002:10).

Cavill and Sohail (2005:165) suggest the following different mechanisms of accountability to citizens:

- Improving the responsiveness of service providers through better customer Services and formal grievance procedures;
- Increasing the influence of service users through opinion surveys, grassroots pressure groups and NGO provision;
- Improving best value in the design and delivery of services in low income areas;
- Increasing political participation in representative democracy; and
• Providing citizens new rights to services.

In general, accountability can be understood as the answerability for performance and the obligation that public functionaries (elected and appointed officials) have to give a satisfactory explanation to the public (taxpayers) over the exercise of power, authority and resources entrusted to them. The following elements capture the concept of accountability: undertaking official decisions or activities in a transparent way by capturing various stakeholders’ interests; using resources optimally - taking into consideration value for money and cost-benefit analysis, with no tolerance to waste and corruption; adhering to ethical and professional standards and regulations; responding to community needs as much as possible with prioritisation; establishing viable mechanisms of providing feedback and information to the public; endeavouring to foster awareness and civil society participation (Kakumba and Fourie 2007:652).

In order to enhance the interface between councillors and their constituencies, ward committees were created with the understanding that they would generate active interfaces between communities and municipal councillors. It appears that certain ward committee members find it challenging to maintain contact with their councillors owing to the aloofness of councillors and a lack of minimal resources to facilitate telephone and travel for ward committee members (Booysen 2007:24). Accountability is not just a matter of compliance but is based on relationships between the various stakeholders (Kluvers and Tippet 2010:50). It requires replacing personal defensiveness with professional inquisitiveness. It means openly sharing results in a professional atmosphere focused more on solving problems than on assigning blame. Most importantly, it means taking responsibility for making the changes needed to improve results (Guskey 2007:32).

It can be suggested that communication lines between councillors and ward councillors need to be enhanced so as to strengthen their professional relationships. Relations between ward councillors with ward committees will determine the manner in which councillors relay information from council and
committees of council to the ward committees and thus the members of the public.

2.7 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that post-apartheid South African local government has strived to entrench leadership and accountability in local governance. However, this is limited by various factors which are unique to the South African context, namely, an apparent inability of ward councillors to take up their leadership roles which include monitoring implementation, promoting social relations, making information available to the communities and ensuring proper application of municipal resources.

Mechanisms are put in place to enhance accountability. However, even though some mechanisms are utilised, accountability remains a challenge. Elements of loyalty and accountability to political parties are rooted in ward councillors generally. This state of affairs defeats accountability which is the cornerstone of democracy and implicates the leadership of ward councillors because the practice of accountability goes hand-in-hand with leadership. Communication is always present when a ward councillor as a leader gives account to her/his community, when they require accountability from municipal officials, when monitoring implementation, in constituency and ward committee meetings when providing feedback on council decisions, and in situations where there is a crisis such as service delivery protests.

In order to increase the validity and reliability of this research, these issues will be explored in Chapter 5. Chapter 3 will continue with the literature review to present a theoretical framework for leadership and accountability in local governance. This chapter will also explore the possible application of the communicative action theory by Jürgen Habermas when ward councillors perform their accounting and leadership roles.
CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATIVE ACTION THEORY BY JÜRGEN HABERMAS AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR WARD COUNCILLORS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 attention was drawn to the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in local governance of a developmental local government like South Africa in order to embrace the turnaround of local government system. The conclusion was that communication is key to both roles.

This chapter will discuss the theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas and how its constructs can be applied to enhance the leadership and accountability of ward councillors. This will be followed by a discussion on the handling of crisis situations by ward councillors. Attempts have been made by the South African government to intensify this area, especially at the local government sphere. In this regard, Snape and Dobbs (2003:52) highlight the fact that post-1997 there has been more overt governmental emphasis on community leadership, the community leadership role of councillors in theory and in practise remains unclear. An argument will be advanced on the link between communicative action theory and the emotional intelligence of ward councillors when interacting with the members of the community.

The first section of this chapter will discuss the theory of communicative action and the notion of crises by Jürgen Habermas. This will be followed by an overview of the antecedents of political behaviour as well as of the emotional intelligence of leadership. The last section of this chapter will examine the interface between ward councillors and their constituencies.

3.2 COMMUNICATIVE ACTION THEORY BY JÜRGEN HABERMAS

The goal of Habermas's theory of communicative action is that of “clarifying the presuppositions of the rationality of processes of reaching understanding, which may be presumed to be universal because they are unavoidable”
Habermas’s theory relies on a dichotomy of communicative versus strategic action to formulate it differently than that of action oriented toward reaching understanding versus action oriented toward success. This fundamental difference between actions that pursue strategic ends and actions oriented toward reaching understanding introduces a problem in Habermas’s theory at the very beginning of its formulation. Therefore whoever acts strategically wishes to have an impact on others and whoever acts communicatively seeks to achieve linguistic understanding (Plot 2009:831).

In an attempt to understand strategic action, Habermas talks about instrumental action as a non-social action oriented towards success or control. Instrumental action is presupposed by communicative action. Instrumental acts can only be implemented by means of a common understanding of language and language-based norms. The domination of instrumental action over communicative action is termed strategic action. In strategic action the values of success and control eclipse or dominate the values of understanding. Strategic actions can be regarded as substitutions for communicative actions (Kernstock & Brexendorf 2009:395). Strategic action is the special case when the actor tries to influence the decisions of a rational opponent (Bolton 2005:10).

Speech act theory distinguishes between three basic sorts of speech act, namely locational acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. Habermas concentrates on the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. They both presuppose and distort the inherent telos of communication, the search for understanding. Locutionary acts convey meaning (Johnson 1991:187). The locutionary aspect of utterances refers to something in the world or, more technically, expresses a state of affairs (Thomassen 2010:63). Illocutionary acts have force. In an illocutionary act something done in saying something. With utterance, someone is informed or warned. According to Habermas, participants in communicative action, those oriented toward reaching understanding exclusively engage in illocutionary acts. He claims that illocutionary force consists in the potential establishment of interpersonal
relations of a sort justifiable by reasons (Johnson 1991:187). The illocutionary aspect of utterances refers to what we do in saying something (Thomassen 2010:63).

As far as the illocutionary aspect goes, the speech act must be transparent, because it only works if the other understands the intentions of the other party. There must be mutual understanding; if there is not, then communication breaks down. Later Habermas links this aspect of language to communicative action, which is action oriented towards mutual understanding. For Habermas, the illocutionary aspect of language enjoys primacy (Thomassen 2010:64).

Perlocutionary acts generate consequences. In a perlocutionary act, something is done by saying something. For instance, we surprise, mislead, convince, or persuade another. Habermas posits an "internal relation" between perlocutionary acts and strategic action. Perlocutionary acts generate consequences in the world. As such they are a sort of linguistically mediated "teleological" action. In this regard perlocutionary acts presuppose the existence of illocutionary force. But they assimilate that force into settings of strategic interaction (Johnson 1991:187).

Finally, the perlocutionary aspect refers to what we do through, or by, saying something; for instance, I might achieve a certain effect by threatening you: ‘If you don’t come on time, I won’t wait for you’ (Thomassen 2010:63). In order to use language in the perlocutionary or purpose oriented, the language must be mastered in the illocutionary sense so as to communicate meaning. This is very important because Habermas wants to locate a normative force (reason and emancipation) in language and specifically in the illocutionary aspect of language use (Thomassen 2010:64).

It can be argued that even though illocutionary acts have force, they could be ideal to enhance the leadership of ward councillors. For instance, when they resolve conflicts in their constituencies, they need to apply force failing which, the conflict may not be resolved and the situation could worsen. The
Illocutionary act can also be used to conduct a meeting effectively and to have a fruitful discussion of the items on the agenda which on which, ultimately, concrete and informed resolutions would be taken. Before the illocutionary act, a locutionary act would be required to provide the status quo. Ward councillors should be cautious of perculatory acts. These acts should be avoided because, as representative leaders, ward councillors should be transparent all the time and try to maintain overt communication with the members of the community.

According to Fryer (2011:37), when creating unrestricted communication, people who wish to lead in a facilitative manner should use the influence at their disposal to promote situations in which:

- any party who is affected by a decision is able to participate in that decision;
- all are able to introduce any assertion whatsoever into organisational discourse;
- all parties, regardless of hierarchical status and expertise, are able to call into question the factual accuracy of assertions made by others, the authority of those others to make those assertions, and the speaker’s intent in making an assertion; and
- barriers that might distort communication by restricting participation, by precluding challenges to validity claims, or by otherwise inhibiting ideal speech are identified and dismantled.

It is important that ward councillors should not be seen as stifling communication with the members of the community. It can be perceived that communication is a vehicle through which public participation and public accountability can be achieved. Ward councillors should not lose sight of the fact that communication facilitates interaction and provides cordial relations. Subsequently, a conducive and liveable environment could be created.

In the theory of communicative action and elsewhere, Habermas suggests that the simultaneous thesis is true because all communicatively intended
speech acts can be rejected under three aspects namely, normative rightness, truthfulness and truth of the proposition (Niemi 2005:235). From a communications perspective, a central concern of Habermas is for the reconstruction of universal conditions of understanding within the human communication process. Habermas’s theory of communicative action understands communication as a multi-dimensional process in which each participant needs to accept particular premises in order to achieve mutual understanding with other subjects (Kernstock & Brexendorf 2009:392).

Habermas in Bolton distinguishes four forms of action which he says are models, namely, teleological action, normatively regulated action, dramaturgical action and communicative action (Bolton 2005:6-8). In the teleological action model the actor makes a decision among alternative courses of action, with a view to the realisation of an end, guided by maxims, and based on an interpretation of the situation (Bolton 2005:6-8). Teleological action is aimed at the objective world vis-à-vis which one relates either cognitively or volitionally, seeking either truth or effectiveness. Teleological action can be non-social, in which case it is guided by instrumental rationality, or social, in which case it is guided by strategic rationality (Thomassen 2010:68).

In the normatively regulated action model, actors in a social group pursue common values or norms of the group, "fulfilling a generalised expectation of behaviour". This model of action underlies role theory in sociology. Habermas suggests that often this action is performed almost automatically, in rote fashion, from second nature, out of deeply entrenched shared habits and regarded as unproblematic by the actors, rather than in a calculated instrumental way (Bolton 2005:6-8). Norm guided action is aimed at the social, intersubjective world, and here it is a matter of normative rightness or legitimacy; this type of action is assessed according to normative expectations (Thomassen 2010:68).

Sometimes in a dramaturgical action an actor is neither solitary nor a member of a social group, but is interacting with people who constitute a public for one
another, before whom they present themselves. The actor evokes in his public a certain image, an impression of himself. He has privileged access to his own intentions and desires, but can monitor or regulate public access to them. There is a "presentation of self", not spontaneously but stylised, with a view to the audience (Bolton 2005:6-8). Dramaturgical action is related to the subjective world, and is guided and assessed by the criteria of truthfulness (whether I am trying to deceive others) and authenticity (whether I suffer from self-deception) (Thomassen 2010:68).

In communicative action there are two or more actors establishing a relationship and seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement (Bolton 2005:6-8). In the communicative model of action, which is action oriented towards mutual understanding, agents are presumed to be able to relate to all three aspects of the world and to all three validity claims at the same time. Consequently, communicative action can be assessed according to all three criteria of truth, rightness and truthfulness/authenticity. It is important to highlight the essential difference between communicative and instrumental stratégic action. Where the latter are oriented towards success in the non-social and social worlds respectively, the former is oriented towards reaching understanding in the social world. This difference is central to much of Habermas’s theoretical framework, and this discussion will return to it later (Thomassen 2010:68).

The potential innovation of the theory of communicative action resides, in part, in the attempt to identify a mode of social interaction that draws its motivating force from neither strategic rationality nor social norms. Given this ambition, Habermas rightly observes that the "concept of communicative action stands or falls with the proof that a communicative agreement ... can fulfil functions of action coordination. As opposed to strategic action which coordinates interaction by force or influence, communicative action coordinates social interaction via consent (Johnson 1991:191).
Communicative action is individual action designed to promote common understanding in a group and to promote cooperation (Bolton 2005:2). Habermas in Johnson (1991:184) says communicative action involves participants in "the cooperative negotiation of common definitions of the situation" in which they are interacting. In everyday communicative practice, this process of mutual interpretation remains implicit. In more reflective forms of communicative action - what Habermas refers to as discourse or argument - it is made explicit. At both levels, participants in communicative action seek an agreement which can admit of consensus. In so doing, they advance and respond to validity claims, using the formal world-concepts as a commonly supposed system of coordinates.

Communicative action denotes interaction of social actors oriented to reaching understanding, in which they relate simultaneously to the objective, social and subjective worlds. They come to understanding with one another by negotiating definitions of a situation, argumentation and cooperative interpretation of events, goals, values and norms, and by sharing their subjective experiences, desires and feelings (Cecez-Kecmanovic & Janson Undated:4). Communicative action consists of attempts by actors to cooperatively define the context of their interaction in such a way as to enable them to pursue their individual plans (Johnson 1991:183). Communicative action requires that all actors abide by certain ground rules which allow the actors a chance to express their opinions, and honour only the force of the better and more rational arguments (Heng & De Moor 2003:335). The desirable features centre on the strength of good, well-grounded argument provided in an open forum, rather than authority, tradition, ideology, exclusion of participants, power, rules of experts, fear, insecurity, misunderstanding or prejudices. Abiding by certain ground rules implies that communicative freedom is not absolute. Communicative action involves obligation (Heng & De Moor 2003:335).

An important ingredient of Habermas’s presentation of communicative action is what he calls the ideal speech situation. In other words, he proposes a model of dialogical engagement that permits communicative action to realise
its ‘inherent telos’ of reaching understanding. Under such ideal speech conditions is the basis of truth. Truth thus lies not in correspondence to some absolute, reality; it lies in the achievement of shared lifeworld convictions amongst communicatively rational parties. Central to this notion of ideal speech is the raising and challenging of validity claims. What Habermas means by this is that, when a person speaks—in Habermas’s terms, when they perform a ‘speech act’—that person implicitly asks listeners to accept certain assumptions concerning firstly, the factual content of what they are saying; secondly, their authority to say what they are saying; and thirdly, what they hope to achieve by saying it. If the listener does not share these assumptions, then shared understanding has not been achieved through the performance of that speech act. Therefore, listeners must be at liberty to question those validity claims—those assumptions about factual content, authority, and intent—in order to verify their acceptance of them. Any disagreements that are thus identified can then be negotiated in order to bring about the harmony across each dimension upon which shared understanding depends (Fryer 2011:30).

Kernstock and Brexendorf refer to these three validity claims as truth, conduct or rightness and sincerity or authenticity. In addition, there is a background validity claim of comprehensibility, which is necessary before the three validity claims can be applied. The following questions should be answered to focus communication in a target-oriented approach:

- Is the speech act understandable? (comprehensibility)
- Is the content objective? (truth)
- Are the speakers’ intentions socially acceptable? (conduct or rightness) and
- Do speakers express what they truly believe? (sincerity or authenticity)

Each of the validity claims correspond to one of three knowledge interests or epistemological approaches. Furthermore, each validity claim is associated with a context or world in which communicative action occurs (Kernstock & Brexendorf 2009:396).
Habermas links speech act theory to an account of validity. Every speech act aimed at mutual understanding contains three validity claims, although often one of them will be dominant in any particular speech act. If the validity claims are contested, then the agents can shift to discourse (or what Habermas also calls argumentation), where they deliberate their disagreements and seek to arrive at a mutual agreement (Thomassen 2010:66). At the core of Habermas’s explication of both communicative action and communicative rationality is the contention that all speech acts oriented to understanding raise exactly three different kinds of validity claims. This contention is sometimes distinguished from a related claim, namely that all speech acts oriented to understanding raise exactly three kinds of validity claims simultaneously: claims to truth, truthfulness, and normative rightness (Niemi 2005:227). The three validity claims are claims to truth, normative rightness and truthfulness or authenticity. Each of these claims are linked to relations to different ‘worlds’: the external, objective world (truth), the intersubjective, social world (rightness) and the internal, subjective world (truthfulness) (Thomassen 2010:66).

Niemi provides the following example to explain the three kinds of validity claim.

If a professor asks a seminar participant for a glass of water (‘Please bring me a glass of water’) and the latter understands this as a genuine communicative act, then she can contest the request under what Habermas calls three validity aspects. First, she can challenge the normative rightness of the request (‘No. You cannot treat me like one of your employees’). This shows that the participant deems the request inappropriate in the context uttered. Second, she can reject the truthfulness of the utterance (‘No. You really only want to put me in a bad light in front of the other seminar participants’). To reject the request in this manner is to doubt the sincerity of the professor by suspecting that in spite of illocutionary appearances, he wants to achieve a perlocutionary effect. Third, one can deny the truth of the proposition or the necessarily assumed existential
Habermas also talks about three formal pragmatic functions of language: a cognitive, an interactive and an expressive function. These functions correspond to the three validity claims, namely to represent something in the world (truth), to establish legitimate intersubjective relations (rightness) and to express my intentions (truthfulness). In this way, Habermas connects validity claims, relations to different aspects of the world and functions of language. Often speech acts go unchallenged, and language and action take place against a shared and implicit background which Habermas calls the lifeworld (Thomassen 2010:66).

Communicative action is motivated by the wish to understand the other side in a communication. Interaction takes place on the basis of an already achieved common notion of the situation. It assumes a sort of background consensus consisting of four validity claims raised by the communication partners: that the speaker's utterances are comprehensible, that the contents of their proposition are true, and the claims that the speaker is truthful or sincere in uttering them, and that it is appropriate for him to be doing so (Heng De Moor 2003:335).

Validity is defined as consensus without force: a contested norm cannot meet with the consent of the participants in a practical discourse unless all affected can freely accept the consequences and the side effects that the general compliance of a controversial norm can be expected to have for the satisfaction of the interests of each individual. Argumentation insures that all concerned in principle take part, freely and equally, in a cooperative search for truth, where nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument. Validity and truth are ensured where the participants in a given discourse respect five key process of all requirements of discourse ethics: (1) no party affected by what is being discussed should be excluded from the discourse (the requirement of generality); (2) all participants should have
equal possibility to present and criticise validity claims in the process of
discourse (autonomy); (3) participants must be willing and able to empathise
with each other's validity claims (ideal role taking); (4) existing power
differences between participants must be neutralised such that these
differences have no effect on the creation of consensus (power neutrality);
and (5) participants must openly explain their goals and intentions and in this
connection desist from strategic action (transparency). Finally, given the
implications of the first five requirements, the sixth is unlimited time (Flyvbjerg

In the light of the above, it appears that communicative action would not have
meaning without validity claims. This implies that all parties partaking in a
discourse should do so with common understanding of the situation. They
should at the same time accept the consequences. The question arises about
whose responsibility it is to ensure that everyone partaking in a discourse
truthfully is telling the truth and what is said is right. Ward councillors should
be like glue which keeps the municipal governance intact. Importantly, it
would be desirable that they should be cautious of their utterances when
addressing the members of the public, especially when they are giving
account on contentious areas of service delivery where the members of the
public have expressed their dissatisfaction with service delivery or the
operation of the municipality.

3.2.1 Handling of crisis situations

Prior to its use in economics the concept of crisis was used in medicine. It
refers to that phase of a disease in which it is decided whether the self-
healing powers of the organism are sufficient for recovery. A crisis in a
medical situation of life or death is when a patient is trapped in the process
with all his subjectivity. A crisis cannot be separated from the victim's inner
view. He experiences his impotence toward the objectivity of his illness only
because he is a subject doomed to passivity and temporarily unable to be a
subject in full possession of his strength. Crisis suggests the notion of an
objective power depriving a subject of part of his normal sovereignty. When the crisis is resolved, the trapped subject is liberated (Habermas 1973:643). The word 'crisis' is used with less precision and greater frequency than most others in analyses of political change. Like the related concept of 'restructuring', it is sometimes seen as having been stretched to cover so many different kinds of changes that it has ceased to convey useful meaning about any particular change (Goodwin & Painter 1996:635).

All groups, whether they are large or small, powerful or weak, have the possibility of experiencing a crisis, an urgent situation in which all group members face a common threat. A common crisis experienced by family groups is the reduction or loss of income through unemployment, sickness, or death. Religious groups may face crises of persecution. Political parties usually experience a crisis in every election or, if there is lack of electoral machinery, in every revolution. Nations face a crisis in every sudden economic depression or inflation and in every attack by another nation. A crisis is a generic social experience (Hamblin 1958:322). Notions of 'permanent crisis' are particularly unhelpful since they lose the sense of crisis as a moment of intense disruption. In the context of our reworking of regulation theory, therefore, the key aspects of the concept of crisis are as follows:

- A crisis is a rupture in the reproduction of a social system. Crises may be of two sorts: a crisis in the system which is a rupture in the reproduction of some part of the system, or a crisis of the system in which the system as a whole is under threat.
- All complex social systems exhibit crisis tendencies. The tendency to crisis, however, may be mitigated by regulation.
- Crisis tendencies may lead to an actual crisis which, if resolved, produces a qualitative change in the character of the system. In the absence of a resolution, it makes little sense to talk of a 'perpetual' crisis. A crisis may lead either to a resolution or a failure, while a resolution may involve either change in the system or a replacement of the system (Goodwin & Painter 1996:635).
Habermas thinks that, in the conditions of free communication, problems of conflicts, crises and legitimacy can be solved in modern (capitalist and socialist) society which, among other things, also suffers from the "legitimacy crisis", meaning that it is faced with the crisis of its own identity, in addition to being overwhelmed with doubts into a variety of ideologies, worldviews, strategies and ways of governing (Mitrović 1999:221). A crisis facilitates charismatic leadership but is not a necessary antecedent condition. In the absence of a real crisis, the leader may be able to interpret events in a way that exaggerates environmental threats, or the leader may covertly precipitate incidents that make a crisis seem more imminent. Another alternative is the possibility that a leader can identify opportunities for significant innovations that will greatly benefit followers (Yukl 1999:297).

In the development of leadership responsiveness to members’ interests, the substantive and ultimate demands of the membership play a decisive role. Autonomous rank-and-file protest can be disruptive, but in itself it is not sufficient to give the organised membership control over their leaders’ decisions. For it is well known that leaders adopt members’ claims as their own and continue to dominate precisely because they retain control over the execution of policy (Wolfe 1985:381). The growing interdependence and the increasing mobility and communication make each society and each policy domain more vulnerable to crisis agents. Future crises do not limit themselves to international controversies between states, riots in the streets, and natural disasters. They also target science and technology, agriculture, information and communication technologies and seemingly remote fields such as educational and religious institutions and the arts (Rosenthal 2003:135).

However, in addition to the complex of personal and contextual circumstances such as personality, political experience, institutional factors and the local structures of opportunity, leadership also depends on the capacity to take risks (Alonso 2009:7). Rightly so, even in cases where ward councillors are not confident that they will be able to resolve the crisis, they need to have courage to take risks, to the extent of facing the angry protesters. This
situation calls for a person who will be heard by the protesters. It can therefore be safely said that communicative action is prevalent in participatory and representative democracies even though Eriksen (2001:29) postulates that communication is not a panacea for all leadership problems, as some obstacles require the use of power or even force. However, it is not the case that all forms of power imbalance, ‘irrationality’ or disturbance must be eliminated for communicative leadership to work. It is important that ward councillors should be trained to have a specialised way of communication.

Open communication is a cornerstone of the democratic ideal. Two assumptions are often made. The first holds that, if a variety of ideas are given equal opportunity to compete continuously and publicly, the ideas best suited for society will win out in the long run. This presupposes that dependable and relevant information will be inexpensively made available to all those interested. The second assumption is that a successful outcome of the debate requires that a majority of the general public be reasonably public spirited and patient, and not unduly confused and alienated by an excess of information and communication (Heng & De Moor 2003:334).

To each degree of the social development, according to Habermas, there is a corresponding degree of understanding social facts (knowledge), moral justification (legitimacy) and legal norms (regulation). If the development of these dimensions is not mutually coordinated, the society is subjected to conflicts, crises and changes (Mitrović 1999:220). A leader is expected to have an understanding of these dimensions. Hence, Eriksen (2001:23) highlights the fact that leadership is indicative of important social developments. It is linked to a demand for change. Leadership is not merely a construct symbolising ability to act and control. There are good reasons for its emergence such as someone has to take charge, provide the motivation for collective action and lead social processes in a favourable direction. Crises must be handled and leadership is required in times of upheaval and adversity.
To achieve success in democratic political action, it is fundamental to reach an understanding with the many. On the other hand, Habermas’s notion of a nonteleological action, with the exclusive goal of reaching understanding, does not account for political action either, because for the latter, the goal of reaching understanding with the many is fundamental because achieving success is in the telos of the action at stake (Plot 2009:832). Democratic political action is precisely the type of action in which the measure of its success is related to the grasping of political power through the reaching of understanding with a majority of those involved in the political process. The problem of Habermas’s organising dichotomy springs from his not seeing that the communicative dimension of political action is oriented toward both reaching understanding and toward staging conflict, its opposite (Plot 2009:834).

Government has a duty to make information available to communities; similarly, communities have a duty to obtain that information (Joseph 2002:9). Leaders have to communicate their vision, strategies, and expectations to followers (Smit, Cronjé, Brevis & Vrba 2007:270). When leadership takes place through direct and explicit communication of a message, it is possible for that leader to address fellow members of the domain in a sophisticated way. A physicist talking to physicists can assume that his audience members understand the principles of gravity, acceleration, and relativity; a diplomat or social analyst speaking to peers in her or his craft can assume that her or his audience members can transcend stereotypes associated with different national or cultural groups (Gardner & Laskin 1995:28). Communication is the basis of all relationships (Ferreira et al. 2003:93). According to section 20(3)(a) of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) authorises the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for local government in a province to increase the number of councillors in cases where extreme distances and a lack of effective communication in the municipality render it necessary.

Within the context of this study, the aim of leadership is to communicate the needs of the people to the municipality and to communicate council decisions
and the plans of the municipality on services to be rendered. In the process, accountability takes place. Leadership is a multidimensional influence relationship between the members of the community, who are the recipients of municipal services. During the process of leadership action, a leader should communicate with the followers in an understandable and unambiguous language so that she or he shares the same understanding of issues with the followers. A leader is therefore someone who can communicate in such a manner that her/his followers can trust and subsequently accept her or his ideas.

3.3 THE RELEVANCE OF COMMUNICATIVE THEORY IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Political leadership refers to control over public policy decisions. Political leaders derive their authority from the fact that they occupy a high office in a legally sanctioned government which, by virtue of its legitimacy, has the power and authority to choose between alternative goals and courses of action. In other words, the political of political leadership establishes the general organisational context. Explicitly or implicitly, political is taken to refer to the state and the governmental processes (Kellerman 1998:71). Political leaders are democratically elected, representatives who are vulnerable to deselection, and operate within, as well as influence a constitutional and legal framework. Their source of authority is a mandate, that is, permission to govern according to declared policies, regarded as officially granted by an electorate upon the decisive outcome of an election (Morrell & Hartley 2006:484).

Political leadership is not good in itself, but can be judged in relation to the functions it serves within a political order. What good leadership is cannot be defined independently from a particular initiative it helps to realise or a general set of institutions it helps to sustain. Nevertheless, what can be specified is the requirement of leadership in solving the dilemmas within many processes of collective action and thus in producing results and social order which can then be evaluated. Political leaders may help to solve these dilemmas by (1)
influencing the incentive structure; (2) interpreting social norms; and (3) focusing awareness on particular goals (Haus & Sweeting 2006:270). Managerial autonomy combined with reforms to strengthen the political leadership is seen as an optimal package to make the political leadership more effective (Reitan, Gustafsson & Blekesaune 2012:9).

Acting as a representative (a function of all political leaders) requires empathy, a willingness and ability to listen, and a service ethic. Acknowledging the difference between these two roles could engender a more refined account of what ‘transformational’ behaviour could mean, for example, since similar behaviours across these roles would not necessarily be equally effective (Morrell & Hartley 2006:498). In democracies, political leaders’ authority is constantly under scrutiny and they are accountable to different constituencies. Political leaders have to build groups and coalitions to address complex problems. Also, their authority is dependent on consent, and open to challenge from many quarters (Morrell & Hartley 2006:496). Political leadership in democratic and pluralistic systems is therefore interactive in nature, and entails political-administrative leadership (mobilising the administration for political objectives and values), opinion leadership (mobilising the public for a political vision) and institutional design/network leadership (establishing reliable modes of interaction and common understandings) (Haus & Sweeting 2006:270).

The concept of political leadership is difficult to define essentially, because it is dependent on institutional, cultural and historical contexts and situations – both particular and general (Masciulli, Molchanov & Knight 2009:4). However, Habermas and the Frankfurt School have proposed three conceptions of political activity in the context of the relationship of theory to practice and leaders to followers: the interpretive conception (the explication of meanings since humans are intentional and meaningful in their actions); the technical conception (using knowledge as a tool to change the social and natural worlds through our understanding of causal nexuses and other regularities); and the educative conception (enlightening people about which means are effective for the ends that they desire to pursue, as well as clarifying alternative ends
available for adoption) (Masciulli et al. 2009:4). It is for this reason that the antecedents of political behaviour are explained in the following paragraphs.

### 3.3.1 Antecedents of political behaviour

In order to succeed, leaders must be able to relate to the social and political climate, norms, established values, and realms of understanding within an organisation. The issue of leadership immediately raises questions involving practical competence, knowledge of relationships, understanding of institutionalised practices, and interpretative frameworks (Eriksen 2001:31). The majority depend on and even worship their leaders; their gratitude is expressed by loyal subservience. The leaders’ wealth, status, and limited numbers encourage and facilitate participation in collective action to advance their own material and social privilege (Wolfe 1985:373). Prophetic leaders are those who put forward new ideas, and continuing leaders are those who exercise real power. The latter type of leaders accepts some of the ideas of the prophetic leaders and applies them. The leaders use these ideas to articulate the strategic vision, they legitimised it, and they got others to pay attention to it (Joyce 2004:236). Leaders cannot manipulate the formation and execution of policy in their own interests (Wolfe 1985:382).

#### 3.3.1.1 Incorporating time into a framework of leader political influence

An episode of leader political influence occurs when the leader directs political behaviour towards a target audience, the target responds, and assorted outcomes—including performance—accrue. As episodes of political behaviour by the leader unfold over time and with assorted targets, the leader develops a reputation (either favourable or unfavourable) with respect to such critical elements of leadership as competence, decisiveness, trustworthiness, or effectiveness, or both. This reputation, in turn, serves as a contextual input for the next episode of leader influence (Ammeter et al. 2002:756). Therefore, the
leadership’s results and impact might not be seen immediately and sufficient time will be required to allow this to happen. Political leaders should apply the strategic action of Habermas’s communicative action theory which suggests that those who act strategically wish to have an impact. Thus, whether or not leadership has an impact on their followers would be witnessed after some time. Hence ward councillors should always avoid acting hastily to have quick solutions to problems especially those which would have adverse consequences in the long run.

3.3.1.2 Contextual influences on political processes

The context represents the interrelated conditions within which something exists or occurs. In the realm of political leadership, organisational context reveals the issues that are integral to the creation of the political environment. Power is context-specific and organisations are political settings that facilitate the exchange of power. The importance of context is that it shapes performance standards and determines the process by which leaders acquire their roles and authority. The underlying logic here is that context is vital to any discussion of political activity within organisations, and, therefore, is included in the model of political leadership (Ammeter et al. 2002:756).

Leadership cannot be dissociated from the temporal and situational context. In the presence of an incompatible organisational system or culture, a leader may remain powerless to achieve what is expected of her or him. Likewise, failure to consider the broader social context of leadership is to miss the significant role played by other factors such as beliefs about legitimate authority, organisational systems, nature of the work and cultural environment in the leadership process (Bolden & Gosling 2006:151).

3.3.1.2.1 Organisational structure

Structure provides the context that mediates the relationship between behaviour and power, and power is the essence of leader behaviour. From this perspective, the connection between organisation structure and
leadership is quite clear. Whereas leaders exercise free will in making behavioural choices, structural norms determine the appropriateness of their selection. For example, looking at just one method of describing structure, established the “mechanistic” and “organic” categories for organisation structures, with each representing opposite positions on the issues of formalisation and hierarchy of authority. The importance of this distinction is that each form contributes to a unique political arena that requires a different set of leader political behaviours (Ammeter et al. 2002:755).

3.3.1.2.2 Organisational culture

An organisation’s culture is the behaviour in and of an organisation, which consists of the values, beliefs, and behavioural norms that are shared by its members, drive actions and relationships, and create a broad set of organisational cues that form the bases for rules, procedures, and communications that constrain leadership. Through its existence and influence on behaviour, organisation culture frames and shapes the use of leader behaviours (Ammeter et al. 2002:757).

3.3.1.2.3 Accountability

Accountability is the need to justify decisions to some audience, and it is considered the glue that binds social systems together. Accountability affects leader behaviour. In the context of political leadership, accountability mechanisms motivate leaders with the threat of being required to explain their actions to others within the organisation. As a consequence of being held accountable, individuals are more thoughtful in their decision-making activities, which may lead to better decisions (Ammeter et al. 2002:757).

3.3.1.2.4 History of prior leadership episodes
As previously described, the proposed model reflects a temporally based, episodic framework for examining the political processes whereby leaders exert influence. The premise here is that both the leader and the target members enter each situation with knowledge of prior leadership episodes. The construct of leader reputation represents the cumulative product of the leader’s actions and subsequent results within the organisation. The leader’s reputation serves as a key input into the context and the starting point for the next episode of leader political influence (Ammeter et al. 2002:758).

In the light of the contextual influences on political processes, it appears that traits and behaviour of leaders are influenced by the context within which they operate. The context is a given situation which leaders cannot change themselves. This state of affairs would require that they adopt a leadership approach that would be suitable for the context.

3.3.1.3 Leader attributes

3.3.1.3.1 General mental ability

The general mental ability (GMA) is intelligence, cognitive ability. It tends to be the single most valid predictor of future job performance and learning. Because skilled political behaviour depends so heavily on interpreting social situations and then enacting proper responses, it is likely that GMA will interact heavily with personality and social skill to produce individuals with more or less capability to engage successfully in political behaviours (Ammeter et al. 2002:759).

3.3.1.3.2 Personality measures

An examination of personality attributes that are most directly organisationally relevant indicates that certain personality characteristics can be linked to political behaviours. These attributes include self-esteem, self-verification, Machiavellianism, need for power, and locus of control. Individuals are more
likely to engage in political behaviour to the extent that they are higher in self-esteem. It is not clear if simply desiring to become a successful or worthy individual will trigger political behaviour to achieve this end. Some individuals strive for self-verification rather than enhanced self-liking or self-competence and would rather engage in interactions with others whose outcomes tend to support their preconceived views of themselves. In such instances, it would be expected that individuals high in the need for self-verification would engage in political behaviour only if doing so was consistent with their self-view (Ammeter et al. 2002:759).

3.3.1.4 Political will

To be effective in organisations, political leaders needed to possess both the desire and interest in engaging in politics (i.e. political will), and the intuitive savvy necessary to be good at it (i.e. political skill). Effective leadership requires a disposition to be influential. This disposition may result in universal influence-oriented behaviours (Ammeter et al. 2002:760). It is followers who grant authority and legitimacy, the *sine qua non* of those who can evoke, not simply coerce, desired behaviours. Some leaders tightly delimit the behaviour of followers; others expect compliance with a very limited set of dictates. But in all instances, leadership implies the existence of an organisation in which a population responds to the leader’s guidance (Ahlquist & Levi 2011:3).

3.3.1.5 Leader cognitions: information processing by the leader

Leader information processing constitutes the following three basic forms of knowledge structures: leader identity, power mental models (PMM), and political scripts.

3.3.1.5.1 Leader identity
Identity involves a theory of an individual that describes, interrelates, and explains her or his relevant features, characteristics, and experiences. This theory of self includes images that specify pertinent self-constructs (e.g. leader, executive branch manager) and establish one’s standing on particular dimensions for example, creative and powerful. The self-concept is an identity, which is invoked when one attempts to answer a personal question about the self-posed by oneself. Self-identification involves fixing and expressing one’s own identity, privately through reflection about oneself and publicly through self-disclosures, self-presentations, and other activities that serve to project one’s identity to audiences. As individuals interact with other persons in particular situations, selected components of their self-schemata are instantiated to construct their situated identity (Ammeter et al. 2002:761).

3.3.1.6 Leader social capital

Social capital includes the resources available to an individual through that person’s social or interpersonal ties, where these resources can be used to one’s benefit in an organisational setting. Individuals with good social and political skills build up extensive stores of social capital through their adeptness at developing and using diverse networks of people. Politically skilled individuals enjoy a favourable social identity and reputation among those in their network, resulting in significant and tangible benefits, such as gaining favourable reactions to one’s ideas, enhanced access to important information, and increased cooperation and trust. They know when to call on others for favours, and are perceived as willing to reciprocate in kind. In addition, they inspire commitment and personal obligation from those around them, which can be leveraged as a source of additional influence and power, and becomes a resource that maintains and even increases in value. (Ammeter et al. 2002:763).

3.3.1.7 Leader interpersonal style
Leader style has been discussed as a potentially important factor in leader effectiveness. It is regarded as the manner in which leaders express particular behaviours, which likely contributes to the target's interpretation of and subsequent effectiveness of such behaviours (Ammeter et al. 2002:763).

3.3.1.7.1 Social effectiveness

The ability to effectively read, understand, and control social interactions has been of interest to behavioural scientists for quite some time. Social skill is reflected in the effective exercise of persuasion, explanation, and other influence mechanisms that reveal the ability to control others. Social skill reflects the capacity and knowledge of both what to do and when to display different behaviours, as well as control and flexibility in exhibiting such behaviours (Ammeter et al. 2002:764). The capacity to direct the actions of others defines and is a necessary condition of leadership, but it is only one of several characteristics leaders may possess and even require. Leaders have power over others as a consequence of office, personal influence, persuasive capacity, charisma, or coercion, but all exercise power in interaction with followers. Without followers who act on leadership directives, the title of leader is hollow (Ahlquist & Levi 2011:3).

3.3.1.8 Target attributes

Attributes of the target audience play a key role in shaping the political behaviour of the leader, as well as the target's reactions. Essentially, the attributes of the target, leader, and context serve to define the situation and provide a backdrop within which the political behaviour of the leader and the target's response take place. Key target attributes discussed here are status or power and personality attributes (Ammeter et al. 2002:765).

3.3.1.8.1 Target status/power
The relative power and status of the audience are major determinants of the types of tactics the actor chooses to direct toward the target. The assumption underlying this model is that agents will favour tactics that are socially acceptable, are at a minimum feasible given the power of the agent relative to the target, are not overly costly in terms of resources (e.g. time, effort, opportunity costs, and lost resources) required for their execution, and expected to be effective in securing the interaction objective given the level of expected target resistance (Ammeter et al. 2002:765).

3.3.1.8.2 Personality

Target personality characteristics would also be expected to influence a leader's propensity to engage in certain types of political behaviour and the success of this political behaviour. The target and the leader might be able to engage in friendly interactions with fewer political overtones than a dyad where the target does not have any need for friendly interactions (Ammeter et al. 2002:766).

3.3.1.9 Reactive leader political behaviours

In contrast to the proactive tactics described above which are employed to assertively pursue desired outcomes, reactive tactics are used to protect the actor’s interests. These tactics encompass a wide array of defensive impression management tactics including accounts, disclaimers, self-handicapping, restitution, pro-social behaviours, excuses, and apologies. They can only be used to protect their established identity by warding off or discounting unfavourable images (Ammeter et al. 2002:778).

It can be concluded that political leadership is influence-based because whatever they do aims at influencing the followers. Also, their behaviour is influenced by the context within which they operate, their attributes, political will and interpersonal styles. Consequently, some of the antecedents of political leadership could have both positive and negative effects on the styles
and behaviours of leaders. Positive effects could be that their styles and behaviours could be unleashed and the negative effect could be that antecedents such as contextual influences can stifle their leadership potentials. For example, legislated procedures and bureaucratic requirements that they need to observe when performing their activities especially in cases where they need to address the problems arising from the community.

3.3.2 Emotional intelligence of leaders

The manner in which ward councillors communicate is more often than not dependant on the mood and the circumstances of the context. Communication can be influenced by one’s emotions. For instance, communication during times of anguish is different from that during times of happiness. Therefore, the truthfulness, comprehensibility and sincerity of their speech acts require that they should at all times be emotionally stable. This places emotional intelligence at the heart of communication. According to Kramer (2008:208), emotions are opposed to reason, are irrational, unproductive, subjective and not intelligent. The question arises: How can ward councillors deal with their emotions so that these do not affect their leadership and accountability roles?

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to process emotional information accurately and efficiently, including that information relevant to the recognition, construction, and regulation of emotion in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey1995:197). Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought in order to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (George 2000:1033).

Zhou and George (2003:553) identified the four primary dimensions of emotional intelligence. The first dimension encompasses the ability to accurately assess and express one’s own emotions, be aware of, appraise, and express the emotion of others, and be empathic. The second dimension
encompasses individual differences in the ability to use emotion to facilitate cognitive processes. The third dimension of emotional intelligence relates to individual differences in understanding and reasoning about emotions. The fourth dimension of emotional intelligence is related to the fact that people not only experience emotions and empathise with the emotion of others, but also try to manage or control these emotions.

The five underlying factors of emotional intelligence include

- empathetic response, that is, the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people;
- mood regulation, which is the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods;
- interpersonal skill, which includes proficiency in managing relationships and building networks;
- internal motivation, a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money and status that involves the ability to delay gratification in pursuit of a goal; and
- self-awareness, the person’s ability to recognise and understand his or her own moods, emotions, and drives and their effects on others (Barbuto & Burbach 2006:53). Emotional intelligence include internal, private feelings that influence functioning which may not necessarily be linked to social skills and also focuses exclusively on emotional skills rather than confounding them with social or political knowledge (George 2000:1033).

Ward councillors are political leaders who should be involved in local governance (which is service delivery in the context of this study). Therefore, they should lead their constituencies without losing sight of the fact that they have to ensure that services are delivered. During this process, they should not interfere with the operation of the municipal administrators. They should also be careful not to be influenced by their party political beliefs and values because they have been elected as ward councillors to represent the interests of everybody residing in that ward. It
is for this reason that they should possess emotional intelligence skills. This would not be feasible without communicative action that would act as a vehicle through which rational decisions would be taken and cooperation would be achieved. The following section will examine the manner in which ward councillors should interact with their constituencies through communicative action.

3.4 WARD COUNCILLOR/CONSTITUENCY INTERFACE THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

In South African, it has been an observable trend that communities express displeasure with service delivery by protesting. In some instances, ward councillors would be accused of not delivering promised service to the extent of being accused of ‘doing nothing’ for the community. This is an indication that the members of the community do not know or they ignore mechanisms that are in place to force ward councillor to account for ‘non-service delivery’. If they do not know about these mechanisms, then their protests can in a sense be justifiable. But if they know about these mechanisms, ward councillors need to check their means of accountability. It could be that they are not explicit when they account or the members of the community do not trust what they say. When this occurs, ward councillors need to devise new ways of accounting because during this process trust on the part of both parties should prevail. To improve trust and relations between ward councillors and their constituencies a unique way of communication is necessary, especially during the accountability process.

The notion of accountability in a democratic political system involves on-going communication between the rulers and the ruled, followed by periodic elections (Napier 2007:379). The key accountability relationship is between citizens and the holders of public office, and between elected politicians and bureaucrats (Mattei 2007:369). Habermas proposes that, just as people are ineluctably social, they are also fundamentally reliant on communication. This is because, bereft of communication, people will not be able to establish the bases of shared understanding and cooperation upon which social relations
depend. Therefore, not only is sociality a key characteristic of humanity; so is communication. Given the fundamental importance of communication to the human condition, Habermas proposes that any conception of normative ordering of that human condition must look to communication for its basis (Fryer 2011:29). The relationship between communication and trust as interactive in that effective communication is a necessary antecedent to trust which in turn reinforces positive communication (Zeffane, Tipu & Ryan 2011:78).

Communicative action requires that all actors abide by certain ground rules which allow the actors a chance to express their opinions, and honour only the force of the better and more rational arguments (Heng & De Moor 2003:335). The point of departure is that leadership is a matter of cooperation, and that the success of leaders depends on the quality of the cooperation they are able to establish between themselves and their subordinates. Leadership is interpersonal influence, exerted in a situation, directed (through a process of communication) towards the achievement of one or more specified goals (Eriksen 2001:22). Communicative action is successful to the degree that agreement is cooperatively achieved and that individual plans of action are coordinated. Communicative action exemplifies the concept of communicative rationality inherent in human speech, which denotes a communicative practice characterised by actors’ obligation to give reasons for or against validity claims raised, to challenge, accept or reject claims of others on the bases of the better arguments (Cecez-Kecmanovic & Jansen Undated:4).

Communicative action is motivated by the wish to understand the other side in a communication. Interaction takes place on the basis of an already achieved common notion of the situation. It assumes a sort of background consensus consisting of four validity claims raised by the communication partners: that the speaker’s utterances are comprehensible, that the contents of their proposition are true, and the claims that the speaker is truthful or sincere in uttering them, and that it is appropriate for her or him to be doing so (Heng & De Moor 2003:335). It goes without saying that when a
speaker (who is a ward councillor in this study) wants to achieve these validity claims, she or he should have the following leadership qualities and skills as postulated by Isaac-Henry (2003:85):

- A deep and lasting commitment to her or his principles and to politics which resulted in almost all other aspects of her or his being life sacrificed to her or his political activities;
- The recognition that in a large urban authority, leadership of the authority is a full time job;
- The ability to build and sustain networks of relationships whether with committees of the council, with officers and with the local party outside the council chamber;
- The recognition of the importance of public relations and publicity both for herself/himself, her/his local authority and her/his cause. In this she or he will able to build a rapport with the press and the media, recognising at this early stage, the importance of public relations;
- Her or his relationship with the opposition and strategies to handle it; and
- Her or his debating skills and tactical acumen which allowed her or him to be in control at council meetings and to dominate the opposition.

Openness and trust build good relationships and contribute to effective communication. There must be mutual trust between parties before one party will open up (Ferreira et al. 2003:107). Ward councillors have the obligation of ensuring that there is trust between them and their constituencies. It should not be ignored that the relationship between ward councillors and their constituencies should be based on trust. The whole exercise of accountability would be meaningless when there is lack of trust. Ferreira et al. (2003:222) state that a lack of trust between parties often results in rumours and distorted information and may become an effective obstacle to change. According to Northouse (2004:181), trust has to do with being predictable or reliable, even in situations that are uncertain.
The lexicon meanings of trust include confidence in the reliance on good qualities especially truth, honour or ability (and taking something or somebody on trust means) to accept … as true and honest, without checking this is the case (Sing 2012:23). If politicians wonder why trust in politicians has declined when the trustworthiness of politicians (let us concede) has not, they need look no further for an explanation. The system of accountability on which politicians themselves have come to insist as part and parcel of “New Public Management” is an ideology of total suspicion (or, to put the same idea in other words, total mistrust). It should come as no surprise that the more this system comes to be taken for granted as the way to run the country (and indeed the way to run everything else), the more suspicious everyone is on those whose upstandingness the system is meant to secure (Dowdle 2006:241). Trust is essential to ensure effective leadership. The reliance, faith and confidence that exist relate to the intention and actions of a leader to be ethical, fair and non-threatening concerning the rights and interests of others (colleagues and members of the public) in (leadership) relationships (Sing 2012:23). Much of the success of leader political behaviour (or almost any leader behaviours for that matter) hinges on targets' trust that the leader is acting in good faith (Ammeter et al. 2002:766).

Trust, therefore, concerns the belief and faith in integrity, consistency, reliability, dependability and interdependence of actions of individuals working towards organisational goals. Coupled with these characteristics are the ability, capacity, loyalty, commitment and willingness to change and be influenced in order to ensure overall leadership effectiveness in realising organisational goals. Trust affects and in turn is affected by other group processes (Sing 2012:23).

Basic to Habermas’s theory of communicative action is the three-world concept which is essential for understanding his typology of social actions. These worlds include the social world consisting of a normative context that lays down which interactions belong to legitimate interpersonal relations; internal or subjective world, which is the totality of subjective experiences to which the actor has privileged access. In this
world, it assumed that by uttering experiential sentences, desires and feelings, an actor makes his subjective world known to the listeners who may trust or distrust the actor’s sincerity and truthfulness and; the objective world the totality of what is the case about which true propositions are possible. A social actor may entertain perceptions and beliefs about entities and states of affairs which agree or disagree with what is the case in the world. Thus, the actor’s perceptions and beliefs may be true or false. An actor may attempt to change an existing state of affairs and can succeed or fail in doing so. These two rational relations between actor and world are judged according to truth and efficacy criteria (Cecez-Kecmanovic & Jansen Undated:2).

Concerning the three worlds the actor raises three validity claims: 1) a statement is true, that is, if it expresses what is the case in the world, and a directive is successful in bringing about a desired state of affairs; 2) a statement is right with respect to existing norms and the existing norms are legitimate with respect to values; and 3) subjected experiences, desires, and feelings are truthfully expressed (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al. Undated:3).

3.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter discussed the relevance of communicative action in political leadership. The antecedents of political behaviour and emotional intelligence of leadership were also examined. This chapter concluded that the interface between ward councillors and their constituencies can be made possible by applying communication action theory. In the discussion, it is emphasised that increased trust and harmonious relations between ward councillors and their constituencies could be enhanced by a unique way of communication during accountability. In an attempt to have a profound understanding of the expected leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in a turned
around local government, Chapter 4 will give an overview of theories on leadership and accountability.
CHAPTER 4

AN OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND THE NATURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss concepts of leadership and accountability with reference to the need of a theory reflecting the interactions between the ward councillors and the members of the community. The primary aim of this exercise is to search for what makes effective leadership and what strengthens the accountability of political leaders, namely, ward councillors in the context of this study. The assumption underpinning this study is that lessons can be learnt from leadership and accountability approaches.

The first sections of this chapter will discuss an overview of leadership theories and an exposition of accountability approaches. The integrative approach to leadership is also discussed. The turnaround of local government in South Africa is discussed with the intention of understanding the context within which ward councillors operate.

4.2 AN OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES

The scientific study of leadership can be roughly divided into three periods: the trait period, from around 1910 to World War II; the behaviour period, from the onset of World War II to the late 1960s; and the contingency period, from the late 1960s to the present (Kellerman 1984:93). Some theorists are of the opinion that leadership potential is determined by personality traits. Others believe that leadership depends on the position held by a person, while yet others are of the opinion that a specific situation (contingency) will determine which individual will act as a leader (Fox et al. 1991:91). Northouse (2001:3) perceives leadership as a process which includes a transactional event
between the leaders and the followers, involving influence, occurring in groups, including directing a group to goals.

Various authors and experts in leadership have given their own interpretation of leadership. Some authors believe that particular behaviours determine who is suitable to be the leader. They also believe leaders can be seen by the style of leadership they display. Theories on leadership are discussed to identify a good and an effective leader. The trait theories, behavioural theory, as well as the situational theory are the most commonly referred to. In this study these are the theories that will be explored.

4.2.1 Trait theory

The personality era included the formal leadership theories. This era is directed to the great man period and the trait period. Researchers focused on great men (and some women) in the history of the world, and suggested that a person who copied their personalities and behaviours would become a strong leader. Leadership was equated with personality. Yet it became apparent that many effective leaders had differing personalities. Furthermore, personalities are extremely difficult to imitate. Some theorists attempted to explain leadership based on inheritance. Leadership theory was advanced in the trait period (Van Seters & Field 1990:30).

Trait theories of leadership attempt to isolate characteristics that differentiate leaders from non-leaders (Smit et al. 2007:279). These theories focus on the identification and analysis of the superior qualities of leaders. Frequently identified traits include intelligence, dominance and self-confidence (Richmon & Allison 2003:48). The trait approach began with an emphasis on identifying the qualities of great persons; next, it shifted to include the impact of situations on leadership; and most currently, it has shifted back to re-emphasise the critical role of traits in effective leaders (Northouse 2004:16). A trait is a relatively enduring characteristic, something that someone is born with or that has been developed in someone over enough time so that the
behaviour becomes characteristic. Traits include factors such as height, gender, intelligence, and introversion or extroversion (Burtis & Turman 2010:75).

The early research on leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness proceeded from the premise that those who became leaders were different from those who remained followers. The objective of the research was to identify what unique features of the individual were associated with leadership. In 1948, Ralph Stodgill reviewed all trait studies in an attempt to discern a reliable and coherent pattern. His conclusion was that no such pattern existed. The mass of inconsistent and contradictory results of the trait studies led Stogdill to conclude that traits alone do not identify leadership. He predicted that leadership theorising would be inadequate until personal and situational characteristics were integrated (Kellerman 1984:94). Great man leadership theories were highly popular. These theories asserted that leadership qualities were inherited, especially by people from the upper class. Great men were, born, not made. These theories evolved into trait theories. Trait theories did not make assumptions about whether leadership traits were inherited or acquired. They simply asserted that leaders' characteristics are different from non-leaders. Traits such as height, weight, and physique are heavily dependent on heredity, whereas others, such as knowledge of the industry, are dependent on experience and learning (Kirkpatrick & Locke 1991:48). Even though the trait approach has given some benchmarks for what to look for in leaders, it failed to delimit a definitive list of leadership traits. It also failed to take situations into account and it has resulted in highly subjective determinations of the most important leadership traits (Northouse 2004:23).

Leadership depends on traits. If the trait view of leadership is correct, then it may be said that the leader - unlike the rest of us – acts as she or he does because she or he is special. Trait view is correct in its claims that these differences are relevant to moral evaluations (Price 2008:8). Traits alone, however, are not sufficient for successful leadership - they are only a precondition. Leaders who possess the requisite traits must take certain
actions to be successful. Possessing the appropriate traits only makes it more likely that such actions will be taken and be successful (Kirkpatrick & Locke 1991:48).

Kirkpatrick and Locke noted that six traits on which leaders differ from non-leaders include drive, the desire to lead, honesty or integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business. These traits are explained as follows:

- **Drive**
  Drive should not to be confused with physical need deprivation. The term is used to refer to a constellation of traits and motives reflecting a high effort level. Five aspects of drive include achievement motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative.

- **Honesty and Integrity**
  Honesty and integrity are virtues in all individuals, but have special significance for leaders. Without these qualities, leadership is undermined. Integrity is the correspondence between word and deed and honesty refers to being truthful or non-deceitful. The two form the foundation of a trusting relationship between leader and followers (Kirkpatrick & Locke 1991:53).

- **Self-Confidence**
  A person riddled with self-doubt would never be able to take the necessary actions nor command the respect of others. Self-confidence plays an important role in decision-making and in gaining others' trust. Obviously, if the leader is not sure of what decision to make, or expresses a high degree of doubt, then the followers are less likely to trust the leader and be committed to the vision (Kirkpatrick & Locke 1991:54).
• **Cognitive Ability**
  Leaders must gather, integrate, and interpret enormous amounts of information. Leaders need to be intelligent enough to formulate suitable strategies, solve problems, and make correct decisions. Leadership effectiveness requires above average intelligence, rather than genius. Also, intelligence may be a trait that followers look for in a leader. If someone is going to lead, followers want that person to be more capable in some respects than they are.

• **Knowledge of the Business**
  Effective leaders have a high degree of knowledge about the company, industry, and technical matters (Kirkpatrick & Locke1991:55). Direction-giving effectiveness stems from the traits of the individual giving the direction. Their personal characteristics determine their effectiveness (Burtis & Turman 2010:74).

The trait approach contributed considerably in leadership as a practice and as a subject matter. The trait approach can be applied by appointed officials as well as elected representatives in public institutions. It can be safely said that the effectiveness of this approach is dependent on the personal features of an individual leader in different positions. For example, in the case of local government, traits of an administrative leader such as a municipal manager should be different from those of a political leader such as a mayor or councillors.

4.2.2 **Behaviour approaches**

Traits alone do not sufficiently explain leadership. But the inability to explain leadership from this perspective led researchers to look at the behaviour of leaders for an answer. Researchers hoped to identify something unique in the behaviour of leaders, for example that democratic leaders are more successful than autocratic ones (Smit *et al.* 2007:279). The behaviour era emphasised what leaders do, as opposed to their traits or source of power.
Leadership was defined as a subset of human behaviour. The early behaviour period was an extension of the trait period but the emphasis was on developing behaviour traits. The late behaviour period advanced the early behavioural period by adapting managerial application (Van Seters & Field 1990:33). The emphasis was to move away from the focus on the values or personalities as well as preconceived styles of leaders (Kellerman 1984:95). These theories examine a range of behavioural variables in leaders in attempts to determine followers’ perceptions of acceptable ways to influence their actions (Richmon & Allison 2003:44).

The influence era improved on the personality era by recognising that leadership is a relationship between individuals and not a characteristic of the solitary leaders. It addressed aspects of power and influence. The influence era comprises the power relations period and the persuasion period. Leaders were explained in terms of the source and amount of power they commanded and how it was used (Van Seters & Field 1990:32). Leadership behaviour means the particular acts in which a leader engages in the course of directing and coordinating the work of her or his group members. This involves such acts as structuring the work relations, praising or criticising group members, and showing consideration for their welfare and feelings. Similarly, inquiry into leadership behaviours examines specific behaviours of leaders and their relationship to a variety of other variables such as success, motivation and satisfaction (Richmon & Allison 2003:40).

Defenders of leaders’ behaviour say that leadership must be responsible to necessity. Advancing group goals in the face of necessity sometimes requires a leader to do what the rest cannot do (Price 2008:9).

### 4.2.3 Situational approaches

The situation era acknowledged the importance of factors beyond the leaders and the subordinate. The situational aspects determine the kinds of leader traits, skills, influence and behaviours that are likely to cause effective
leadership (Van Seters & Field 1990:34). In reaction to the failure of the traits perspective, much of what matters in effective direction-giving is determined by dynamics that are outside the control of the individual (situational perspective) (Burtis & Turman 2010:80). Situational leadership research involves understandings of leadership in which the potential for leadership resides in the situation rather than in the individual (Richmon & Allison 2003:40). Situational leadership focuses on leadership in situations (Northouse 2004:89). The situational characteristics which are considered most important in this model are 1) the expected support, acceptance, and commitment to the decision by subordinates and 2) the amount of structured, clear, decision-relevant information available to the leader (Kellerman 1984:99).

Situational approaches, like contingency approaches, acknowledge the importance of context and thus offer advantages over trait accounts. However, they overlook the ways in which leader and context may be interdependent. This is a limitation because political leaders are concerned with developing far-reaching policies that govern the authorising environment within which organisations and institutions operate. This makes it harder to treat the context for political leaders as a given (Morrell & Hartley 2006:493).

There were three periods which constituted the situational era. These periods are the environmental, social status and socio-technical periods. The environmental period focused on the task, while the social status period stressed the social aspect in a particular situation. The socio-technical period combined the environmental and social parameters. The social status and socio-technical periods were considered advancements over the environmental period because they began to recognise group influences (Van Seters & Field 1990:32).

In the environmental period leaders were thought to arise only by being in the right place at the right time in the right circumstances; their actions were inconsequential. The particular person in the leadership position was irrelevant, because if she or he was to leave, someone else would take her or
his place (Van Seters & Field 1990:34). Environmental theories view the emergence of leadership as dependent on the problems that the group must solve. Leadership is essentially a function of the occasion. Unlike trait theories of leadership, environmental theories contend that leadership does not reside in a person, but is a function of the occasion. These theories see the emergence of leadership as dependent on the particular problems that the group must solve. While great man and environmental theories of leadership focus on only single elements of the leadership phenomenon - either the leader or the situation - personal-situational theories look at the interaction between the two. In these theories, both the individual and the problems that she or he must solve are considered. This broad understanding of leadership produced a widely varied body of research that concentrated on examining the interaction between various measures of the characteristics of the leader with measures of aspects of the situational demands on the leader (Richmon & Allison 2003:37). It is the nature of the situation that determines a direction-giver’s success (Burtis & Turman 2010:74).

The situational approach focused on tasks, social aspects and the advancement of the environment. It can be ideal for leaders at the local government sphere to apply the information provided by the situational approach in their leadership. For instance, ward councillors are expected, among other things, to monitor the implementation of policies and decisions. They are also required to ensure that the members of the community have access to basic municipal services such as water, electricity, sewerage and solid waste removals. For each of these tasks and responsibilities, ward councillors could apply this approach. This implies that their leadership would be driven and influenced by the situation in which they need to give direction.

4.2.4 The contingency approaches to leadership

In reaction to the failure of the traits perspective, it is a combination of how a direction-giver treats others given particular situational and group dynamics that really determines group effectiveness (contingency perspectives) (Burtis
& Turman 2010:80). Various models were developed based on the situational approach to leaders. The most prominent of these are Fiedler’s contingency models, Hersey and Blanchard’s leadership cycle model, and the Vroom-Yetton-Jago model (Smit et al. 2007:282).

It was recognised during the contingency period that leadership was not found in any of the pure, uni-dimensional forms but rather contained elements of them all. Effective leadership was contingent or depended on one or more of the factors of behaviour, personality, influence and situation. The path-goal theory, normative theory and contingency theories were noteworthy during this era. The path-goal theory focused less on the situation or leader behaviour and more on providing enabling conditions for subordinate success. The normative model advised the leader which decision-making behaviour would be most appropriate, depending on the situation and the need for decision acceptance or quality or both (Van Seters & Field 1990:35).

Whilst behavioural theories may help leaders develop particular leadership behaviours, they give little guidance as to what constitutes effective leadership in different situations. Indeed, most researchers today conclude that no one leadership style is right for leaders under all circumstances. Instead, contingency-situational theories were developed to indicate that the style to be used is contingent upon such factors as the situation, the people, the task, the organisation, and other environmental variables. The major theories contributing towards this school of thought are described below (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison 2003:8). Contingency theory assesses situations according to leader-member relations, task structure, and position power and leader styles according to task or relational and motivational orientations (Van Slyke & Alexander 2006:363). The nucleus of this idea is that practitioners can then match the situation with the preferred leadership style to determine whether a particular leader is likely to be effective in that situation. The weakness of the contingency theory is the lack of empirical predictability and explanatory power in showing why certain leadership styles are more effective in some situations than in others. A
common characteristic of many leadership theories is the emphasis on leadership from a leader, follower, or context perspective (Van Slyke & Alexander 2006:364).

To complement the trait and behaviour approaches to leaders, and to tie in with Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s multidimensional view – which gave rise to the contingency or situational approach – research started identifying factors in each situation that influence the effectiveness of leadership. The reason for this approach and the shift in the emphasis was that the trait and behaviour approaches indicated that no single trait or style is equally effective in all situations, and that good leadership is the result of additional variables (Smit et al. 2007:282).

The most influential contingency model is by Fiedler (1967), which emphasises leadership style in combination with the relevant features of a given situation. This suggests that performance is a function of leaders’ style and some key features of the context (leader–follower relations, task structure, and position power). Other contingency approaches consider top management teams (upper echelons theory), or shared leadership, where the characteristics of an elite group are viewed as appropriate to a particular context (Morrell et al. 2006:492). Contingent leadership eschews any ‘one best way’ to lead, arguing that the leadership approach should vary with organisational circumstances and problems faced by the leader. Leaders need to master a large repertoire of skills and utilise those that make most sense in responding to challenges (Kellerman 1984:99).

Contingency approaches have an advantage over trait accounts in that they acknowledge the role of context. However, they also imply a mechanistic relationship between style and context. This is an instance of a dualist framing of leadership, between the individual and the system. The difficulty of applying this to politicians is that the context is constantly changing and can be different depending on the nature of particular challenges, or the different actors with whom they interact. Political leaders’ networks are not static, as is implied by the idea of a prevailing mode of working: instead they are highly...
fluid. Changes in these, or the wider context, influence the contingencies of leadership (Morrell *et al.* 2006:492).

4.2.5 From transactional to transformational leadership

Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas, and Halpin (2006:291) cited that transactional and transformational leadership behaviours are subsumed under task-focused and person-focused leadership respectively. In this section transactional and transformational leadership will be looked at. This will include the leadership eras that evolved between the transactional and transformation eras, namely the anti-leadership era and the culture era.

4.2.5.1 The transactional era

During the transactional era, the influence era was revisited. This era was divided into the exchange period and the role development period. The exchange period included the vertical dyad linkage theory, the reciprocal influence approach, and the leader member exchange theory. In these theories leadership involves a transaction between the leader and the subordinates that affects their relationship. The role development period refers to the relative roles of the leader and subordinate. Theories illustrative of that period are the social exchange theory and the role-making model (Van Seters *et al.* 1990:36). Van Seter and Field further note that the exchange periods and role development period were elevated to acknowledge the reciprocal influence of the subordinate and the leader, and the development of their relative roles of time. Theories that emerged during the exchange period include the vertical dyad linkage theory, and the leader member exchange theory. In the role development period, the elements of the exchange existed but this period refers to the relative roles of the leader and the subordinate. Theories illustrative of this period were the social exchange theory and the role-making model.
4.2.5.2 The anti-leadership era

The anti-leadership era is the period in which numerous empirical studies were conducted to test various theories but unfortunately the results were less than conclusive, and a sentiment arose that perhaps there was no articulable concept called leadership. The anti-leadership arose. In the ambiguity period, it was argued that leadership is actually an encompassing term to describe organisational changes that are not understandable. The substitute period was a more constructive developmental phase which evolved directly out of the situational era, and attempted to identify substitutes for leadership (Van Seters & Field 1990:36).

4.2.5.3 The culture era

In the culture era, it was proposed that leadership is not a phenomenon of the individual, the dyad, or even the small group, but rather is omnipotent in the culture of the entire organisation. The leadership focus changed from one of increasing the quantity of work accomplished (productivity, efficiency) to one of increasing quality (through expectations, values). This era suggested that if a leader can create a strong culture in an organisation, employees will lead themselves. Once the culture is established, it creates the next generation of leaders (Van Seters & Field 1990:37).

With the cultural turn in management theory of the early 1980s and the development of the organisational culture there was an aphorism, ‘In Culture there is Strength’. The focus was on what has been termed ‘culture management’. Culture management is also, like transformational leadership, inherently dynamic. The aim is to win the “hearts and minds” of employees: to define their purposes by managing what they think and feel, and not just how they behave. Thus culture management implies planned, one-way cultural change incorporating all organisational members as they come collectively to embrace the desired beliefs, norms, values and codes of behaviour of the (unchanging) managerial culture (Wallace, O’Reilly, Morris & Deem 2011:69).
4.2.5.4 The transformational era

The improvement over previous eras lies in the fact that it is based on intrinsic, as opposed to extrinsic, motivation. In comparison with the transactional era, leaders must be proactive rather than reactive in their thinking; radical rather than conservative; more innovative and creative; and more open to new ideas. Leadership exercises influence to produce enthusiastic commitment by subordinates, as opposed to reluctant obedience or indifferent compliance. Transformational leadership is essential during organisation transition by creating visions of potential opportunities and instilling employee commitment to change (Van Seters & Field 1990:38).

Van Seter and Field (1990) further mention that the charisma period and the self-fulfilling prophecy period were also during this era. The charisma period entailed that leadership must be visionary; it must transform those who see the vision, and give them a new and stronger sense of purpose and meaning. The charisma period includes the charisma leadership theory which is a theory in which leader traits, behaviours, influence and situational factors combine to increase the subordinate receptivity to ideological appeals. The self-fulfilling prophecy period is based on theorising by Field on the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon. This research dealt with the transformation of individual self-concepts, and improves on previous theories by considering the transformation as occurring from the leader to the subordinate, just as much as from the subordinate to the leader.

Transformational leadership focuses on the commitments and capacities of organisational members (Richmon et al. 2003:42). The transforming leader recognises and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual understanding that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents (Kellerman 1984:79). Transformational leadership traits have been linked with knowledge creation, organisational performance, follower self-concordance, work alienation, creativity, and higher order motives (Morrell & Hartley 2006:491). Leaders who have adopted a transformational style of leadership
emphasise higher motive development and arouse followers’ motivation and positive emotions by means of creating and representing an inspiring vision of the future. Inspiring visions often include (a) highly desirable goals such as performing on a world-class level and (b) values such as fairness or motives such as self-actualisation, or both (Rowold & Rohmann 2009:273).

Transformational theory emphasises two distinct types of exchange leadership: transformational and transactional. Transactional leadership involves rewards as a way of inducing compliance, while transformational leadership involves heightening the consciousness of followers through appeals to higher order values and morals (Richmon & Allison 2003:49). It can be assumed that leaders use appropriate expression of emotions to inspire and motivate their followers. Also, with regard to the present study, transformational leadership can be related to emotional reactions in the lead. For example, a transformational leader, acting with enthusiasm and articulating his or her vision, may stimulate positive emotions in the follower. Charismatic leaders emphasise interpersonal relationships at work by arousing followers’ enthusiasm, excitement, emotional involvement and commitment to the group objective (Rowold & Rohmann 2009:273).

Transformational leadership has its roots more in the human relations approach to leader-follower interaction, with the key assumption being that leaders can motivate followers by using non-pecuniary incentives, such as appeals to morality and ethics, persuasion and inspiration, and by using organisational culture to align the interests and preferences of subordinates with the vision and goals of leaders (Van Slyke & Alexander 2006:365). A commonly accepted definition of the transformational leader is that he or she raises the aspirations of his or her followers so that the leader’s and the followers’ goals are fused, in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose. Transformational leadership is made up of four components: charisma, inspiration, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation. The leaders develop a vision and in doing so, engender pride, respect and trust. They then motivate staff by creating high expectations, modelling appropriate behaviour, using symbols to focus efforts and providing personal
attention to followers by giving respect and responsibility. Finally, the leaders maintain a continuous challenge to followers by espousing new ideas and approaches (Currie & Lockett 2007:343).

Leaders should encourage those they lead to transcend their immediate self-interests through developing a shared vision for radical improvement, and then foster synergistic endeavours to achieve it driven by a collective moral purpose. Translated as ‘transformational’ leadership, this normative conception was also used in public services research policy and service organisations (Wallace et al. 2011:68).

The theory of transformational and transactional leadership was expanded. In its current form, the full range of leadership theory represents nine factors, comprising five transformational leadership factors (i.e. inspirational motivation, idealised influence [attributed and behaviour], intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration), three transactional leadership factors (i.e. contingent reward, management-by-exception active and passive), and laissez-faire (or non-) leadership. (Rowold & Rohmann 2009:275).

The transactional versus transformational rubric resonated somewhat with the leadership typology developed by Ralph Stogdill and with earlier work on charisma. Bass and Avolio worked out a more operational version of Burns’s approach and applied it to organisational leadership. They identified four aspects of transformational leadership (idealised influence, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation), two aspects of transactional leadership (management by exception and contingent reward) and something they called laissez-faire leadership (Crosby & Kiedrowski 2008:4). Rowold and Rohmann categorised the transformational approaches to leadership as follows:

- The core transformational leadership includes items that refer to the intellectual stimulation and the ethical aspects of leadership. The sample items consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.
The maintenance of a positive attitude emphasises the energetic or charismatic aspects of leader’s behaviour. The sample item talks optimistically about the future.

The inspiration is a process important for motivating followers. The sample item specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose. It relies on an effective communication about higher motives (like that of music).

The individualised consideration is a component of transformational leadership. The sample item spends time teaching and coaching. Central to this leadership factor are two aspects: first, the individual relationship between leader and led and, second, acting on individual needs (Rowold & Rohmann 2009:276).

The difference between transactional and transformational leadership is that the former uses contingent rewards, punishments, and corrective actions as a result of deviations from acceptable standards. The latter provides inspirational motivation and individualised consideration, engaging followers in recognising and confronting challenges, considering new perspectives for addressing opportunities and threats, and arousing followers through emotional attachment and identification with the leader (Van Slyke & Alexander 2006:365).

4.3. **Integrative leadership**

Despite the growing consensus that the fast pace of change and increasing complexity of the modern world requires new approaches to leadership, little progress has been made toward defining, teaching, or studying integrative leadership. Yet integrative leadership is the behaviour most likely to lead organisations, communities, and society forward in times of increased interconnection and rapid change (Crosby & Kiedrowski 2008:2).

The integrative approach to leadership offers another perspective on this thorny question, one that does not focus directly on individual characteristics
or political interactions with the environment, important factors as these may be. The integrative approach is concerned with how public officials use management systems to improve performance, arguing that effective leadership is exhibited through actions that build and improve organisational abilities and management systems. The integrative perspective recognises the environment of the public sector by describing public leaders as operating in an organisational context over which they have limited control, as they try to improve performance through building and enabling critical organisational capacities (Moynihan & Ingraham 2004:428).

An integral approach accommodates equally the internal and external as well as individual and collective dimensions of leadership and followership. Effective and sustainable leadership and followership (and their inter-relationships) need to attend to all these various dimensions and inter-relationships for ensuring consistency, compatibility, and creativity of organisational activities. Building on an integral framework, an integral understanding of leadership and followership (as actual occasions) focuses on the specific interconnected processes of intentional, behavioural, sociocultural and systemic domains. With these domains, the inner spheres of a leader and follower and their respective external, behavioural aspects as well the collective embedment of leadership and followership can be assessed equally (Küpers 2007:198).

4.4 Leadership styles – patterns of leadership

The history of leadership shows that the failure of the trait approach and the growing emphasis on behaviourism in psychology moved leadership researchers in the direction of the study of leadership styles that was conducted by Kurt Lewin and his associates (Kellerman 1984:94). Leadership styles research, rather than focusing on particular behaviours, focuses on patterns or sets of behaviours that constitute action dispositions that can be measured and compared. Such leadership styles include democratic or autocratic, permissive or restrictive, and participative or non-participative
Leadership style refers to the behaviour pattern of an individual who attempts to influence others (Northouse 2004:89). Leadership style is the underlying need-structure of the individual which motivates his or her behaviour in various leadership situations. Leadership style thus refers to the consistency of goals or needs over different situations. Such styles are democratic or autocratic, permissive or restrictive, and participative or non-participative (Kellerman 1984:94). In reaction to the failure of the traits perspective, in determining group effectiveness it matters less who the person is (the argument made in the traits perspective) and more how she or he treats others while they are grouping (style perspective) (Burtis & Turman 2010:80).

4.4.1 Autocratic style

The autocratic style is characterised by the tight control of group activities and decisions made by the leaders (Kellerman 1984:94). The autocratic style means that the leader makes all decisions for the staff to follow simply without questioning. The leader is presumed to have all the authority and required attributes that place far above his or her subordinates in being able to judge that is best for realising the organisation’s objectives. This is a typical communist style of leadership and, in democracies, may only apply to the defence force in combat. Under normal circumstances, it can create dissatisfaction and lethargy among the staff. (Gildenhuys 2004:232).

But if the consensual credentials of leader-follower relations deliver only qualified vindication of leadership’s authoritarian overtones, a second possible source of reassurance can be found in the democratic tone of many instrumental leadership prescriptions. For a long time, commentators have proposed that a top-down, autocratic approach will not suffice to drive organisational achievement; in order to succeed, leaders must give their people a chance to participate in decision-making. In that case, impositional leadership it is probably not likely to last for long. Leaders with a predilection
for imposition will not achieve the results needed to get to the top and stay there (Fryer 2011:28).

4.4.2 Democratic style

The democratic style emphasised group participation and majority rule, while the *laissez-faire* leadership pattern involved very low levels of any kind of activity by the leader (Kellerman 1984:94). The democratic style of leadership implies that the whole staff, or at least the whole management team, is a group and decides by casting their votes for or against a proposal (Gildenhuys 2004:232). Democratic leaders encourage participation and tend to reduce hostility amongst followers and to foster higher levels of performance (Fryer 2011:28). The problem with this style is that the chief executive office may in the end lose complete control of his or her management task and may come to be regarded a weakling who can be manipulated by subordinates. Also this style opens the way for over-ambitious subordinates to undermine the leader’s authority. Faction forming may result, with negative effects on the hostility and this may undermine the group’s feeling of coherence (Gildenhuys 2004:232).

4.4.3 Rational style

The rational style is halfway between the autocratic and democratic styles. In this case the leader solicits the cooperation of her or his team and staff members for decision-making. The leader draws the ideas and suggestions from the group by discussion, consultation and negotiation. This style relies heavily on the leader’s ability to listen carefully to everyone and her or his ability to persuade and steer the team in such a way that in the end the team accepts the outcome as their collective decision (Gildenhuys 2004:232). Leaders may involve other group members when working through problems and when making decisions (Burtis & Turman 2010:74).
In summary, during both the trait and behaviour eras, researchers were seeking to identify the best style of leadership. They had not recognised that no single style of leadership is universally best across all situations and environments (Kellerman 1984:95). It is therefore proposed that the approaches and styles of leadership that should be suitable for leadership in the South African municipalities, especially the positions of ward councillors, should comprise aspects of theory of communicative action, namely communicative action and strategic action. Communicative action embraces the validity claims comprising truth, truthfulness and rightness. Also, communicative action enhances democracy because it creates a platform for participation and deliberation by all stakeholders. Applying the strategic action, leaders would ensure that a collective decision is taken.

4.5 THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

4.5.1 The nature of accountability

Accountability is an inherently participatory concept. It is not the same as obedience. To give account is to communicate, not to surrender control. Accountability is therefore a discursive condition, something that sets up a dialogue between the public, and the public servants (Dowdle 2006:12). Goetz and Jenkins made the following distinctions relating to accountability:

- The first distinction is between the two aspects of accountability:
  - having to provide information about one’s actions, and justifications for their correctness; and
  - having to suffer penalties from those dissatisfied either with the actions themselves or with the rationale invoked to justify them. These aspects of accountability are sometimes called answerability and enforcement.

- The second distinction is between the two key actors in the accountability drama: between the target of accountability, the one obliged to account for her or his actions and to face sanction, and the seeker of accountability, the one entitled to insist on explanations or to
impose punishments (Goetz & Jenkins 2005:12). An accountability system can be between vertical forms of accountability in which citizens and their associations play direct roles in holding the powerful to account, and horizontal forms of accountability, in which the holding to account is indirect, delegated to other powerful actors. Elections are the classic form of vertical accountability. It is the state being held to account by non-state agents. Informal mechanisms of vertical accountability include public pressure, negative or positive press releases, media coverage, public displays of support or protest movements, interface meetings between citizens and public officials and petitions (Blind 2011:12). This accountability is based on the nature of the obligation (Bovens 2007:459)

- Horizontal accountability consists of formal relationships within the state itself. It exists when one state actor has the formal authority to demand explanations or impose penalties on another (Goetz & Jenkins 2005:9). Horizontal accountability refers to within-state or internal accountability whereby public servants are held accountable to their peers, and public administrators, altogether are held accountable to the relevant ministers. Horizontal accountability is thus linked with both political and institutional accountability (Blind 2011:12). This accountability is also based on the nature of obligation (Bovens 2007:559). Formal means occur when citizens appeal to the institutions of horizontal accountability as in presenting evidence to a corruption control agency, appealing to a public ombudsman or filing a claim through the court system (Blind 2011:12).

- The third distinction is the difference between *ex post* and *ex ante* accountability.
  - *Ex post* accountability is in a strict definitional sense the only true form accountability. Holders of power are expected to take actions, the impacts of which can be assessed only after the fact by accountability seekers, who may choose to impose sanctions
if explanations for the decision, or its outcome, are deemed insufficient (Goetz & Jenkins 2005:12). On the other hand, ex post accountability refers to holding elected officials to account through law or other monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms, and ultimately through elections. While the sustainability of ex post accountability depends on the availability of information and the credibility of (formal or informal) sanctions as well as the fairness of elections, the viability of these traditional vertical accountability mechanism has been questioned, particularly as elected officials who are charged with, or convicted of, criminal wrongdoing are typically re-elected rather than repudiated by the electorate, both at national and local levels of government (Blind 2011:14).

- But ex ante accountability does exist – for instance, when the decision-making process is subjected to questioning before a proposed action is finally approved, as when government spending plans must be defended under cross-examination by government legislators, in which case the exercise of sanction can take the form of parliamentary rejection or substantial amendment (Goetz & Jenkins 2005:12). Ex ante accountability can also be linked to representative democracy as in the elected officials being liable for their actions based on their pre-election knowledge of the needs and wants of the constituents. Consultation and the use of feedback mechanisms help ex ante accountability by making citizen interests known, and thereof reflected ex ante in policy making (Blind 2011:14).

With regard to external accountability, sub-councils and ward committees may be established in terms of the Structures Act. Sub-councils may be established comprising only councillors and may have duties and powers allocated to them and may make recommendations to the metropolitan council on any matter affecting their areas of jurisdiction. Here is a further link
between the rulers and the ruled where accountability comes into play (Napier 2007:385).

There are two aspects of accountability: public accountability that involves the public as principals and is concerned with issues of democracy and trust; and managerial accountability that is concerned with day-to-day operations of the organisation. Managerial accountability, the provision of detailed information is not directed to being more accountable to the public but rather is an attempt by the principals (elected representatives) to control the agents (managers) and legitimise past decisions and actions (Tippett & Kluvers 2010:23). Being aware of the broad and complex nature of accountability, the next section will discuss the scope of accountability.

4.5.2 The scope of accountability

For purposes of this study, Table 1 is useful because the accountability dimensions (transparency, liability, controllability, responsibility and responsiveness) should always be present when accountability takes place.

Table 1: Dimensions of accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conception of accountability</th>
<th>Key determinants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Did the organisation reveal the facts of its performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liability</td>
<td>Did the organisation face consequences for its performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controllability</td>
<td>Did the organisation do what the principal desired?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Did the organisation follow the rules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>Did the organisation fulfil the substantive expectation (demand/need)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Koppell 2005:96)
Koppell (2005:96-97) provides an explanation of these conceptions that transparency is a critical tool for assessing organisational performance. Liability attaches culpability to transparency. In this view, individuals and organisations should be held liable for their actions, punished for malfeasance, and rewarded for success. The liability dimension of accountability is quite familiar with respect to elected officials. Elected representatives are said to be accountable because voters can punish them by removing them from office. The dominant conception of accountability revolves around control. However, responsibility can also take the form of formal and informal professional standards or behavioural norms. Such standards may encourage better behaviour and set expectations against which bureaucrats can be evaluated. Responsiveness is more consistent with responsibility than with control.

Public institutions are accountable to a plethora of different forums, all of which apply a different set of criteria (Bovens 2007:455). It will thus be useful to explain the types of accountability which answer the question asked by Bovens (2007:454) as to whom account is to be rendered. This will yield a classification based on the type or forum to which the actor is required to render account. Types of accountability that will be discussed in the following sections are legal accountability, administrative accountability, political accountability, public accountability and social accountability.

4.5.2.1 Legal accountability

Legal accountability is a conventional type where accountability relationships involve a great deal of external oversight (by legislative and constitutional structures or agencies) such as parliamentary committees, the Ombudsman, the Auditor-General and the Public Service Commission to ensure that individual or group performance complies with established standards and performance mandates. It utilises externally derived expectations, where external agencies normally review and verify the quality of public
management through processes like financial or programme audits (Kakumba & Fourie 2007:654).

Legal accountability is assured by the judiciary, which checks whether politicians and officials act within the confines of their prescribed jurisdictions. As such, it has more to do with the rule of law and preventing the abuse of public service. Legal accountability must be based on proof that in the case of a perceived breach of established rules and regulations, the agent is put on notice, through the enactment of prior law or standards. In this respect, legal accountability is based on reason (Blind 2011:8). Legal accountability will usually be based on specific responsibilities, formally or legally conferred upon authorities. Therefore, legal accountability is the most unambiguous type of accountability, as the legal scrutiny will be based on detailed legal standards, prescribed by civil, penal or administrative statutes, or precedent (Bovens 2007:456).

In a legal public accountability regime, public officials are responsible to individuals and firms about their respect of lack of respect for legal requirements or legal rights through processes of administrative and judicial review, judged in accordance with law, resulting in either validation or nullification of official acts (and sometimes compensation for private parties affected by official illegality) (Mashaw 2006:120).

Legal accountability minimises discretion and appears to simplify the accountability process by prescribing standards. However, focussing on securing compliance with input control and process can be a great deterrent to procuring accountability, especially in terms of output and outcomes. Moreover, emphasis on the process and legalities offer a viable excuse to public servants who may simply be reluctant to respond to critical citizen needs, only to claim that they are following rules and laid-down procedures; and so the rules can provide some kind of security for incompetence (Peters 1995:292). This legal regime is structured by a host of doctrines, rules, and norms that define who has ‘standing’ to complain (to whom), who is a public authority subject to public law norms (who), what sorts of claims qualify as
“legal” claims and are thus “justiciable” (about what), through what procedures administrative or judicial consideration can be obtained (what process), and the limits (on the reviewing body’s competence). These competence rules include limits on remedies that define the effects or possible effects of being held legally accountable (Mashaw 2006:120).

4.5.2.2 Administrative accountability

In a public administrative regime lower-ranking officials are responsible to superiors for their compliance with official instructions. Once again, there are a host of rules and doctrines that structure these public accountability relationships and provide the standards against which performance is measured (Mashaw 2006:120). But the administrative regime is dramatically different from the legal regime. It is hierarchical rather than coordinate – officials (to whom) call other officials (who) to account within the same organisation. The operation (process) of accountability is managerial rather than legal, continuous rather than episodic. And superiors have the power not merely to sanction wayward actions, but to remake them, remove errant officials, and redesign decision structures (effects) (Mashaw 2006:121; Bovens 2007:456).

The hierarchical or bureaucratic accountability forms part of the classical type, operating in the conventional public administration schema, where accountability relationships follow a rather strict superior-subordinate hierarchy, and where the public servant is technically accountable through the leadership of the department or unit up to the top. The accountability relationship is based on the internal controls through supervision of individuals with reliance on seniority of position arrangement. Some of the usual manifestations of hierarchical accountability include immediate supervisors and periodic performance reviews, where individual evaluation is based on obedience and adherence to organisational directives, and other mechanisms that reduce employee discretion (Romzek 2000: 24).
4.5.2.3 Political accountability

Accountability can apply to individuals or representatives in democratic governments who need to answer to their electorate for performances or non-performances concerning their respective structures of government of which they are members. This dimension one can refer to as the external political dimension where public representatives – those elected to positions of public office like members of parliament, provincial councillors and city councillors - account to the population for their decisions and actions (Napier 2007:379). Political accountability can be defined as the elected officials’ obligation to answer to the public, and of public servants to the elected officials. It is generally ensured through elections and the legislative system, and is supported by well-functioning political party systems and a healthy executive-legislature division of labour (Blind 2011:7; Bovens 2007:455). Political accountability forms the cornerstone of democratic practice where the mandates of elected office bearers and public administrators must reflect on the agenda and expectations of the public (Kakumba & Kuye, 2006: 813). Political accountability applies also to the internal structures of government including elected public representatives who assume decision-making functions or executive functions. Political accountability also refers to non-elected public officials who have roles and responsibilities as far as management and administration are concerned, including the initiation of submissions for executives and councils to decide upon (Napier 2007:380).

Political accountability regimes are of two general types. The most visible form of political accountability is the election. In electoral regimes, elected officials are responsible to the electorate for their choices of public policies. That responsibility is effectuated by voting combined with other political and party processes of candidate selection that lead to either re-election or dismissal of elected officials. Political accountability includes standard electoral processes and a host of other political processes in which elected officials hold their fellows, or non-elected officials, accountable for their actions based on essentially political criteria (Mashaw 2006:121). Leaders assume office through revolutionary force or are elected by voters through a
democratic electoral system. Those who assume office through revolutionary force are unlikely to want to account to constituents in general and are more likely to account to those who placed them in office, whereas those who are elected democratically are more likely to want to do so to ensure their popularity amongst an electorate (Napier 2007:379).

Whereas political responsibility entails in many cases no more than giving an account to a public forum of one’s actions, political accountability entails suffering the consequences and it is an amendatory concept (Mattei 2007:368). Political accountability emphasises the government’s responsiveness to its constituents; professional accountability relies exclusively on integrity and trustworthiness of experts who have the skills to get the job done (Siddiquee 2006:44). The twin problematic of political accountability consists of (i) the need for additional accountability measures for periods in-between elections and the indirectness of public servants’ accountability to citizens; and (ii) the increasing power of the executive vis-à-vis the legislative branch, also referred to as "decretism" (Blind 2011:7).

However, for the purposes of this study, political accountability, as proposed by Blair (2000:27), is considered the most appropriate in that in a democratic system of governance public sector employees must be accountable to the elected representatives and the representatives must be accountable to the public.

4.5.2.4 Public accountability

The idea of public accountability seems to express a belief that persons with public responsibilities should be answerable to the people for the performance of their duties (Dowdle 2006:3). From public law, it borrows the notion that accountability is a product of a particular relationship existing between two individuals, the principal and her or his agent, in which the agent is required to demonstrate that her or his actions conform to the demands, intentions, and interest of the principal. It then borrows from political theory the idea that the
public itself can be analogised to an individual (Dowdle 2006:3). Public accountability is associated with western democracies. It demands that facts concerning government activities be published so that public debate can be conducted on them. This in turn is based on the fact that citizens (taxpayers) do not only have tax obligations, but also defined rights within a democratic state. Public accountability is also based on the principle of the sovereignty of citizens over the financing of government activities (Tippett & Kluvers 2010:23). As members of the public, we actuate public accountability by participating in this dialogue, for example by thinking for ourselves whether the accounts offered by public officials are proper and in our interest (Dowdle 2006:12).

Thus elected political office-bearers and appointed public officials are obliged to conduct a public dialogue with members of the public (public participation) on government activities, thereby ensuring transparency. In this way, transparency in both collective accountability (external) and administrative accountability (internal), can be ensured. The underlying principle in public accountability is that human beings are fallible and therefore the activities of those entrusted with public office must be kept under close scrutiny by the citizens (Tippett & Kluvers 2010:23).

4.5.2.5 Social accountability

Social accountability was born in the mid-1990s as result of disenchantment with the new public management’s market-inspired forces, such as privatisation, contracting out, joint programme management, and later on the public-private-people partnerships (PPPPs), which social accountability has embraced, developed and expanded with time. It has also largely been associated with the drive to ensure effective, sustainable, and more importantly, pro-poor development (Blind 2011:9).

Social accountability was subdivided into two sub-components: the voice-led social accountability defined by citizen participation in policy-making,
advocacy and deliberation processes, and the control-oriented social accountability defined by citizens’ watchdog role, often in cooperation with other societal actors, such as the media and professional associations (Blind 2011:9; Bovens 2007:457). Citizens have expanded powers to hold political leaders accountable through generic legislation empowering citizens to demand explanations and justifications from local governments, specific bodies and processes for citizen oversight, and formal bodies or processes for citizen oversight mechanisms (Yilmaz, Beris & Serrano-Berthet 2008:15).

Social accountability mechanisms can give poor and marginalised people a more direct voice in the policies that local governments formulate and implement. Such mechanisms are often part of broader efforts to deepen democracy and ensure a robust public sphere for citizens to give feedback and control government action. The practical form of the participatory practices and arrangements include public meetings, citizen juries, forums for various social groups, such as the young or the elderly, neighbourhood assemblies, multi-choice referendums accompanied by active public debate and discussions, and activism by nongovernmental organisations and other community groups (Yilmaz et al. 2008:15).

Given the involvement of the state, one wonders whether some institutionalisation of social accountability practices might not have taken place in some sectors and contexts. In this respect, three possible paths for the institutionalisation of social accountability are proposed. These are: (i) blending participatory mechanisms into the strategic plans of government agencies and the rules and regulations of front-end bureaucrats; (ii) creating specific government agencies with the explicit objective of ensuring societal participation; and (iii) legal participatory mechanisms by requiring agreed agencies or the government as a whole to engage society in different segments and phases of the public policy processes (design, planning, implementation and evaluation) (Blind 2011:9).

This section discussed the nature and scope of accountability. It is evident that the concept of accountability is broad and complex. The view which was
used in an attempt to understand the scope is that accountability is based on the nature of obligation. The following section will discuss leadership and accountability.

4.6 THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT TURNAROUND STRATEGY: AN APPEAL FOR LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Leadership and accountability in local governance in South African municipalities should be in keeping with the requirements for that of a development local government and the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS). COGTA (2009a:25) notes that the main aim of the Turnaround Strategy is to renew the vision of developmental local government. To do this the LGTAS seeks to improve the organisational and political performance of municipalities and, in turn, the improved delivery of services. The goal is to improve the lives of citizens, and progressively meet their social, economic and material needs, thereby restoring community confidence and trust in government. According to Powell (2012:21), three key priorities for the Turnaround Strategy were improving access to basic services, deepening participatory democracy, and improving financial management and administrative capacity.

The following strategic objectives that guide the LGTAS were identified by the Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). These are aimed at restoring the confidence of the majority of the members of the community in municipalities, as the primary expression of the developmental state at a local level:

- Ensure that municipalities meet the basic service needs of communities;
- Build clean, effective, efficient, responsive and accountable local governments;
- Improve performance and professionalism in municipalities;
- Improve national and provincial policy, oversight and support; and
• Strengthen partnerships between local government, communities and civil society (COGTA 2009a:19).

In 2009, the Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) assigned all nine provinces to assess the state of local government in their jurisdictions. They were expected to make recommendations on what must be done to restore the confidence of the community in municipalities by 2011. Subsequently, a summary of provincial assessments exposed the following causal reasons for distress in municipal governance:

- Tensions between the political and administrative interface;
- Poor ability of many councillors to deal with the demands of local government;
- Insufficient separation of powers between political parties and municipal councils;
- Lack of clear separation between the legislative and executive;
- Inadequate accountability measures and support systems and resources for local democracy; and
- Poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities (COGTA 2009b:10).

Indicators of this distress included huge service delivery backlogs, a breakdown in council communication with and accountability to citizens, political interference in administration, corruption, fraud, bad management, increasing violent service delivery protests, factionalism in parties, and depleted municipal capacity. In some cases accountable government and the rule of law had collapsed or were collapsing owing to corruption, profiteering, and mismanagement (Powell 2012:21).

Local government is in distress, and this has become deeply-rooted within the system of governance (COGTA 2009b:4). This prompted the government to introduce the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) to tackle the problems that each municipality faces (Taylor 2011:3). The notion of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy is that the objectives would allow the
various municipalities to become developmental and help to maximise the use of scarce resources (Taylor 2011:4). The strategy is underpinned by objectives that include meeting basic needs of communities; improving municipal performance through professionalisation; enhancing national and provincial policy, oversight and support; and finally strengthening partnerships between local government, communities and civil society. Furthermore, one of the outputs embedded within these objectives is to deepen people-centred government through a refined Ward Committee Model. This includes a review of the legislative framework for ward committees to promote broader participation of various sectors and propose new responsibilities and institutional arrangements for ward committees (Ramjee & Van Donk 2011:12).

The LGTAS is a strategy aimed at addressing the most crucial impediments to local government fulfilling its developmental role. The LGTAS includes mechanisms for strengthening partnerships between local government, communities and civil society. Furthermore, municipalities are required to reflect in their own strategies how they will improve public participation and communication, including effective complaints management and feedback systems, as a means to enhance local government performance and service delivery (Qwabe & Mdaka 2011:67).

“... the state is cognisant of some of the inhibitors to effective and efficient service delivery in South Africa and that proactive measure are being taken to address some of these problem areas is the introduction of the Municipal Systems Amendment Bill. While community protests have brought wide-spread attention to the acute gaps in delivery on basic services, the protests have also highlighted other critical weaknesses in local government, including weak leadership, lack of accountability and transparency, poorly capacitated administrative systems and a blurring of boundaries between political and administrative structures. This Bill is an attempt to deal with issues internal to the municipal administration that at the end of the day impede
service delivery and raise frustrations among communities. Notwithstanding some of the limitations in the Bill which particularly relate to the extent to which legislative provisions can address matters related to political culture, the fundamental shift towards the greater professionalisation of municipalities is necessary” (Ramjee & Van Donk 2011:14).

However, Taylor (2011:3) is of the opinion that each municipality faces different social and economic conditions and has different performance levels and support needs. Therefore, a more differentiated approach was required to address the various challenges of municipalities. Ramjee and Van Donk (2011:13) argue that the LGTAS lacked a monitoring framework, one that would assist municipalities in assessing progress made towards their municipal turnaround strategies. Also, municipalities were expected to develop their turnaround strategies in a very short space of time, leaving little opportunity for meaningful reflection and broad-based engagement on the key levers that would be instrumental in the required ‘turnaround’.

Van Niekerk (2012:62) identifies the following aspects which might have implications for the successful implementation of the LGTAS if they are not adequately addressed:

- Institutional capacity. The high vacancy rate and inadequate on-the-job training of local-sphere employees is a concern.

- Political interference. Although the Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Bill (RSA 2010) prohibits party-political office-bearers from becoming municipal officials or councillors, continued political interference will further compromise administration and service delivery. The opinion is that the role definition between the mayor’s office, the speaker’s office and the municipal manager’s office should be clarified, since conflict at this level contributes to a lack of vision and role clarification.
Leadership challenge. The State of Local Government in South Africa report (CoGTA, 2009) in Van Niekerk (2012) noted that councillors in many municipalities are unable to provide effective leadership and effective oversight in the affairs of their respective municipalities. Although the Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Bill (RSA 2010) makes provision for the requirements relating to the skills and expertise of municipal managers, the lack of both vision and adequate capacity to plan strategically, to translate strategic plans into budgets, and to manage the implementation of strategic plans in the majority of municipalities is hampering service delivery.

Effective communication. The majority of municipalities in the country do not have a coherent communication strategy, such as a helpdesk through which community members can channel their grievances. In addition, the majority of the municipalities have no system in place to capture and report on municipal activities, with the result that communities feel marginalised (Van Niekerk 2012:62).

Kopacz, Imber and Jadro (Undated:10) state, “Successful turnarounds occur only when there is strong leadership that possesses a few definitive characteristics: courage, unwavering commitment to achieve the most good for the most constituencies, decisiveness, credibility, tolerance and the ability to persuade. These characteristics are those ideally found in leaders we elect to public office.”

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter covered various aspects of leadership and accountability in local governance. Regarding the leadership theories, the discussion focused on various influences of leadership. The evolution of the theory of leadership starting from the personality era to integrative leadership was also considered. An attempt was made to link leadership with the theory of communicative action. Special attention was paid to the notion of crisis situations.
Leadership plays a significant role in local governance. It is the glue which keeps the systems of local government together. Failure in leadership would have a detrimental effect on the entire system. To strengthen local democracy, leadership should account to the members of the community. This chapter also explained mechanisms for accountability. These mechanisms are perceived as assisting in curbing corruption at the local government sphere.

In conclusion, turning around municipalities is dependent on various processes and those involved in local governance. Therefore, it can be safely said that an ideal municipality envisaged by the South African government can only be achieved when the needs and interests of the recipients of municipal goods and services are satisfied. When this occurs, levels of service delivery protests and unnecessary conflicts will decrease.
CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research design and methodology of the study will be presented. The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality was selected to expedite discussion that was vital for the investigation into the leadership and accountability of ward councillors in South African municipalities. The research design of this study includes the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigm informing the research, the context within which the research took place and the data collection techniques of the study. This is followed by the research methodology employed in the study which includes population and sampling, data analysis, reliability and validity. Ethical considerations and the limitations of the study will also be provided.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan or strategy aimed at enabling answers to be obtained to research questions (Burns 2000:145; Terre Blance et al. 2004:161). The research design is the blueprint that enables the investigator to come up with solutions to problems and guides her or him in the various stages of the research (Frankkfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1997:99). In simple terms, Yin (2003:21) defines research design as a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations. Terre Blanche et al. (2004:37) suggest that a researcher makes a series of decisions along four dimensions: (i) the purpose of the research, (ii) the theoretical paradigm informing research, (iii) the context or situation within which the research is carried out and (iv) the research techniques employed to collect data. All these dimensions are applied in this study.

It can be concluded that the research design is a sequence that guides the researcher in the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation.
Therefore, the researcher adopted a case study design for this study. According to Henning et al. (2004:41), a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning of the participants involved. However, Fox and Bayat (2007:69) suggest that the following three aspects should be borne in mind when conducting case study research:

- The case should be defined or demarcated;
- The concern is to search in an inductive way for consistent regularities and recurring patterns; and
- Triangulation which is associated with validity is used.

A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. A case study inquiry

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variable of interest than data points, and as one result
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin 2003:13).

A major strength of case study data collection is, according to Yin (2003:13), the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality has been chosen to be a case study to examine the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in the South African local government.

5.3.1 Interpretivist paradigm

It is important to choose appropriate paradigms and methods of enquiry which are likely to produce a reasonable quality of data obtained in the research. Therefore, an interpretivist paradigm was necessary. According to Jackson
(1995:7), qualitative methods are generally supported by the interpretivist paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing. Because the positivist and interpretivist paradigms rest on different assumptions about the nature of the world, they require different instruments and procedures to find the type of data desired. This does not mean that the positivist never uses interviews or that the interpretivist never uses a survey.

Jackson (1995:9) further argues that instead of confining itself to behaviour alone, the interpretive approach examines how people make sense of their lives, how they then define their situation, and how their sense of self develops in interaction with others. Mertens (1997:161) suggests that qualitative methods are preferred methods for researchers working in the interpretive/constructivist paradigm; however, they also recognise the fact that quantitative methods can be used within this paradigm when it is appropriate to do so.

Terre Blanche et al. differentiate between the ontology and methodology by stating that:

Interpretive paradigm involves taking people’s subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them (ontology), making sense of people’s experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us (epistemology), and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse information (methodology). The interpretive approach does not focus on isolating and controlling variables, but on harnessing and extending the power of ordinary language and expression to help us understand the social world (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:274).

Therefore, focus group interviews and observations were conducted. The focus groups with ward committee members were conducted to make sense of their experiences regarding the leadership and accountability of ward
councillors. Ward committee meetings were observed to examine the interaction between ward councillors and their ward committee members. Ward committee members were chosen to partake in this study because of their direct interaction with ward councillors. They are placed in a perfect position to know whether ward councillors are providing leadership to their wards and whether they give account of their actions and service delivery in their respective wards.

Given the interpretive stance adopted in this study and the nature of the research question of understanding how ward councillors in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality lead and account, it is believed that a case study design is appropriate. The same question could have been approached using surveys designed for the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in all South African local and metropolitan municipalities. However, this might not reveal in detail the unique and rich information obtained from focus group interviews with ward committee members and observations of ward committee meetings.

5.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two approaches which are commonly used in social sciences. These are qualitative and quantitative approaches. Debates about quantitative and qualitative methodologies tend to be cast as a context between innovative, socially responsible methods versus obstinately conservative and narrow-minded methods (an opinion of advocates of qualitative approaches) or precise, sophisticated techniques versus mere common sense (an opinion of supporters of quantitative approaches (Thomas 2003:6). Quantitative study usually ends with confirmation of the hypotheses that were tested (Leedy & Ormord 2001:101). Quantitative researchers collect data in the form of numbers and use statistical types of data analysis. Qualitative researchers collect data by identifying and categorising themes (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:47). These approaches are explored further in the following paragraphs.
Qualitative approaches are those approaches in which the procedures are not as strictly formalised, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted (Mouton & Marais 1988:155). Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative research studies issues in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the study’s use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, live story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives (Mertens 1997:160). Qualitative research emphasises verbal descriptions and explanations of human behaviour. It concerns itself with representative samples, and emphasises careful and detailed descriptions of social practices in an attempt to understand how the participants experience and explain their own world (Jackson 1995:7). The key words associated with qualitative methods include complexity, contextual, exploration, discovery, and inductive logic. By using an inductive approach, the researcher can attempt to make sense of a situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomena under study. Thus, the researcher begins with specific observations and allows the categories of analysis to emerge from the data as the study progresses (Mertens 1997:160). The inductive approach begins with empirical observations and then results in the development of theoretical propositions (Struwig & Stead 2004:15). Qualitative methods allow the researchers to study selected issues in depth, openness, and detail as they identify and attempt to understand the categories of information that emerge from the data (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:47).

Qualitative research was employed in this study to understand the thoughts and opinions of ward committee members about the accountability role of ward councillors. Their contribution to the study assisted in answering questions about how ward councillors account to the members of the community and what they do to provide leadership in their respective wards.
Leedy and Ormrod (2001:101) contend that qualitative research is used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants’ point of view.

Quantitative research seeks to quantify or reflect with numbers, observations about human behaviour. It attempts to describe relationships among variables mathematically, and to apply some form of numerical analysis to the social relations being examined. It is characteristic of the positivist approach (Jackson 1995:13). Quantitative research is used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena. This approach is sometimes called the traditional, experimental, or positivist approach (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:101).

The quantitative approach may be described in general terms as the approach to research in the social sciences that is more highly formalised as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined, and which, in terms of the methods used, is relatively close to the physical sciences (Mouton & Marais 1988:155). In this study, quantitative research will be used to make predictions about the leadership role of ward councillors with the intention of developing a model of a good leader.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:38) distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methodologies by stating that the quantitative research methodology relies upon measurement and uses various scales. The qualitative methodology uses words and sentences to qualify and to record the information about the world.

Although the initial research design in this study was predominantly from the qualitative approach, the quantitative mechanism was used to promote triangulation. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods to study a single problem, looking for convergent evidence from different sources, such as interviewing, participant observation, surveying,
and a review of documentary resources (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:380). Triangulation involves the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in order to compare and contrast the different findings to see the extent to which they do or do not agree with each other (De Vos et al. 2011:).

This study investigates the prevalence of leadership and accountability of ward councillors when interacting with members of the public and in carrying out their duties. Whilst quantitative research saves time and is cost effective, qualitative research discovers how people perceive their surroundings. Hence a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed. This mixed-methods approach which is referred to as triangulation was used. Triangulation involves finding convergence among sources of information, different investigators or different methods of data collection. A researcher could establish an 'audit trail' of key decisions that have been made during the research process and validate the quality of those decisions (Fox & Bayat 2007:107).

The exploratory nature of this study influenced the researcher to conduct focus group interviews with ward committee members to investigate the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors with the aim of examining the level of trust and confidence the members of the public have in the ward councillors and how ward councillors ensure public participation, transparency and feedback to decrease the level of service delivery protests in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The members of the ward committees were carefully selected to represent the public as they are links between the ward councillor and the members of the public. They are the only structure in a municipality which know the problems, needs, desires and demands of the community because they work directly with the members of the public.
5.4.1 Target population and sampling of the study

The target population of the study comprises ward committee members and ward councillors in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. A sample of participants from the target population was chosen for the study. Purposeful sampling was used to select ward councillors and ward committee members from one hundred and fifty (150) participants. This sampling technique was used because it is the easiest sampling methods for choosing appropriate participants from a target population.

Researchers working within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm typically select their samples with the goal of identifying information-rich cases that will allow them to study a case in-depth. Although the goal is not generalisation from a sample to the population, it is important that the research makes the sampling strategy and its associated logic clear to the reader (Mertens 1997:261).

The pre-specified sample of this study comprised one hundred and thirty-four (134) participants, consisting of fifty (50) ward councillors and eighty-four (84) ward members from fourteen (14) wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The sample of fifty (50) ward councillors was chosen for the purpose of investigating whether they understand what their leadership roles are. The sample of eighty-four (84) ward committee members was selected to examine how the ward councillors account to their constituencies.

The sample of ward councillors comprised all fifty (50) ward councillors in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. In this municipality there are wards which are underdeveloped and troubled by service delivery protests and there are those which are in affluent communities. Ward councillors of affluent communities are targeted to identify the leadership and accountability mechanism they use to ensure fewer, if not none, of the service delivery protests. This was done with the intention of developing a leadership and accountability framework within which ward councillors from underdeveloped communities can operate.
The sample of ward committee members comprises eighty-four (84) members from seven (7) wards in the underdeveloped communities and seven (7) wards from affluent communities. The ward committee members were targeted to verify the level of trust and confidence the members of the public have in the ward councillors and how ward councillors ensure public participation, transparency and feedback to decrease the level of service delivery protests in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

On the commencement of the fieldwork, the sample of the study comprised a total of one hundred and fifty (150) participants consisting of fifty (50) ward councillors and one hundred (100) ward committee members from twenty-five (25) wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Eight (8) focus group interviews \((n=6-12)\) were conducted. Fifty (50) questionnaires were administered to fifty (50) ward councillors. Thirty (30) ward councillors completed and returned the questionnaires whilst twenty (20) were not returned. Data was collected over a period of three months.

5.4.2 Profile of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality

This study was conducted in a metropolitan municipality in the Province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. A metropolitan municipality is rated in terms of section 155(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 as a category A municipality that has exclusive executive and legislative authority in its area. Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality is one of the two metropolitan municipalities in the Province of the Eastern Cape. It consists of a corridor of urban areas, stretching from the port city of East London to the east, through to Mdantsane and reaching Dimbaza in the west. East London is the primary node, whilst the King William’s Town (KWT) area is the secondary node. It also contains a wide band of rural areas on either side of the urban corridor. The Community Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa estimates the total population of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.
to be 755 196 (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2011-2016:19).

Map 1 –Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality spatial map

Map 1 here above indicates that the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality consists of rural and urban areas marked in green and red respectively. The geographical demarcation of wards in this municipality is such that some wards consist of rural and urban areas, some are predominantly rural and some are predominantly urban.

There is a great deal of movement in and out of Buffalo City. Significant movement also occurs within Buffalo City, between urban and rural settlements, as people search for opportunities. This is most evident in places such as Duncan Village where a high demand exists for informal residential accommodation, due to its proximity to places of employment in the city centre and West Bank. This has resulted in dense shack settlements developing in the area and a high density of dwellings within certain parts of Duncan Village (IDP 2011-2016:45). Care was taken to ensure that rural and urban areas were represented in the study.

5.4.3 Data collection techniques

Data collection tools used to obtain information from the ward councillors and ward committee members were self-administered questionnaires, observations and focus group interviews. Struwig and Stead (2004:19) posit that the triangulation of method could include various methods such as interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. The designs and approach adopted in the application of these techniques are explained in the following paragraphs:

5.4.3.1 Questionnaire design

Structured self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from 50 ward councillors. This data collection technique was chosen because it is cost effective, speedy, less intrusive, it reduces bias, lacks interviewer bias, and offers the possibility of anonymity and privacy to encourage more candid
responses on sensitive issues (Fox & Bayat 2007:88); (Somekh & Lewin 2007:221); (Babbie 1995:277).

The questionnaire was compiled using the four-point scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ (See Annexure A). A four-point scale was preferred over a five-point scale because Goddard and Melville (2001:48) state that a four-point scale forces a decision while a five-point scale provides the possibility of a neutral answer. The questionnaire was designed to cover the following constructs:

- Accountability
- Communication
- Emotional intelligence
- Enhancement of municipal performance and
- Leadership.

5.4.3.2 Observation

Observation is another data collection method that was used to support the information collected through focus group interviews and questionnaires. Observation techniques form part of both quantitative and qualitative research (Fox & Bayat 2007:84). The researcher carried out the observation during ward committee meetings. She adopted a non-participatory stance during observations. As the researcher attended the meetings, she took note of the warm reception she got from both the ward councillor and the ward committee members. The researcher observed the procedure of the meetings, whether wards councillors report on decisions and planned programmes of the municipal council, whether ward committees report and table problems of their communities for discussion and how these matters are dealt with.

The main advantage of observation is its directness: it enables researchers to study behaviour as it occurs. The researcher does not have to ask people about their own behaviour and the actions of others; he or she can simple watch as individuals act and speak. Moreover, data collected by observation
describes the observed phenomena as they occur in their natural settings (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1997:206).

5.4.3.3 Focus group interviews

Focus groups are group interviews that rely, not on a question-and-answer format of interview but on the interaction within the group. This reliance on interaction between participants is designed to elicit more of the participants’ points of view (than would be evidenced in more researcher-dominated interviewing). Using focus groups as a research strategy would be appropriate when the researcher is interested in how individuals form a schema or perspective of a problem. The focus group interaction allows the exhibition of a struggle for understanding of how others interpret key terms and their agreement or disagreements with the issues raised. They can provide evidence of how differences are resolved and consensus is built (Mertens 1997:174).

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:110), the advantage of using focus groups is that when the participants disagree on a particular issue, the whole group will explore the disagreement in detail. Thus, the researcher will gain a deeper insight on the topic. The advantage of structured interviews is that interviewers can ensure that all items on the interview schedule are considered (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:105). The advantages of focus groups are that:

- a secure setting can be provided for a discussion without fear of criticism;
- an in-depth discussion of a topic can be obtained; and
- such discussions can be very useful in constructing questionnaires. (Struwig & Stead 2004:100).

The structured interviews were conducted with focus group of ward committee members ($n=6-12$) from 25 wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The main items addressed in the interview schedule were accountability,
communication, transparency, promoting participation, enhancing municipal performance and leadership to examine the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in local governance.

The presentation, interpretation and discussion of data collected will be done in Chapter 6.

5.4.3.4 Reliability and validity of focus group interviews and observations

Qualitative data was collected in the form of focus group interviews which were tape recorded. This ensured the accuracy and reliability of data. The observations and thoughts of the researcher during the course of the study were recorded in a journal. Before commencement with the interviews, the researcher read the preamble which had been prepared prior to the interviews to the focus group Bashir et al. (2008:43) note that reliability and validity are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm. That can be achieved by eliminating bias and increasing researchers’ truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon using triangulations. Shenton (2004:64) identified the following criteria that may be employed by the positivist researchers:

- Credibility (in preference to internal validity);
- Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability);
- Dependability (in preference to reliability); and
- Confirmability (in preference to objectivity).

These are the components that the researcher employed to verify and to increase the reliability of the focus groups and observations of ward committee meetings. Also, to enhance reliability and validity of the study, the researcher as a data collection instrument herself, laid aside all prejudices and biases. The participants were allowed to participate in the language in which they were comfortable, that is, isiXhosa. Some mixed isiXhosa with English. This in itself allayed power relations issues that might have existed in
the groups seeing that the researcher is a lecturer at the University. In addition, the researcher mentioned that she is a ‘MaMvulane (clan name) born in Buffalo City’ in her introductory remarks. This also increased credibility and conformability of the interviews and observations.

Given the small size of the sample used in the study, transferability of the findings and conclusions of this study cannot be applied to a wider population. Findings and conclusion are applicable to the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Should other municipalities make use of these findings and conclusions, they would need to make changes in certain areas to suit their circumstances. Hence the profile of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality is given in section 4.4.2 here above. However, dependability is addressed in this study: for example, should this research be repeated using the same context, as Shenton (2004:71) points out, similar results would be obtained.

5.4.2 Data analysis

The quantitative data collected will be analysed using univariate analysis. Univariate analysis is the examination of the distribution of cases on only one variable at a time (Babbie 1995:376). This is chosen because of its simplicity and a summary of data collected will be presented in tabular and graphic forms for easy comprehension and utilisation (De Vos et al. 2011:254). In this study, appropriate descriptive statistical techniques were applied. Descriptive statistics refer to statistical techniques and methods designed to reduce sets of data and make interpretation easier. Descriptive statistics may therefore be defined as the collection, organising, presentation and analysis of data (Fox & Bayat 2007:111). Descriptive statistics enable the researcher to summarise and organise data in an effective and meaningful way. They provide tools for describing collections of statistical observations and reducing information to an understandable form (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1997:355).

Simple descriptive analysis, frequency distributions and interpretation (done in percentages) are used in this study. Some of these interpretations are
displayed using bar and pie charts. The questionnaires were coded statistically. The coded data from the questionnaire was captured in the computer. The statistician made use of the computer program MS Excel spread sheet to process the collected quantitative data and to generate statistical results. The result of this analysis is provided in the next chapter where each variable is treated separately.

To analyse the qualitative data, a thematic analysis was used. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) assert that thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic. Hardy and Bryman (2004:550) hold that thematic analysis is an approach of the content analysis where the coding scheme is based on categories designed to capture the dominant themes. Braun and Clarke (2006:82) state that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. The following steps suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2001:15) will be followed when carrying out the thematic analysis:

- Organisation of details about the case;
- Categorisation of single instance;
- Identification of patterns; and
- Synthesis and generalisation.

In this study, the analysis of data from the focus group interviews was undertaken with the assistance of the qualitative analysis software QSR NVivo10. This software was chosen because it is to manage large amounts of data. It also allows ideas and issues to emerge more freely without compulsion to force data into already established categories (Jones 2007:74). In this study, data was transcribed into NVivo and was later coded. The codes were refined and in the process some codes were dropped because their
density was low. Ultimately, themes which will be discussed in Chapter 6 were developed during the analysis.

5.4.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability refers to the stability or consistency of measurements; that is whether the same results would be achieved if the test or measure was applied repeatedly. Validity refers to whether the measurement collects the data required to answer the research question (Somekh & Lewin 2007:221).

This study has adopted a mixed-methods approach to enhance its validity. The mixed-methods approach leads to triangulation. Triangulation is associated with construct validity. A variable is measured with a particular instrument (Fox & Bayat 2007:70). Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2009:34) add that triangulation ensures interpretive validity and establishes data trustworthiness. When multiple techniques are applied, the validity of the investigation is heightened (Van der Merwe in Garber (1996:261).

5.4.3.1 Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

When testing the reliability of data in this study, the researcher made use of Cronbach’s alpha. The internal reliability of variables was evaluated by utilising the Cronbach’s alpha which is roughly equivalent to the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficient for a scale (Hardy & Bryman 2004:23).

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients greater than 0.70, the recommended minimum value for reliability (Nunally 1978:85-94), were observed for approximately half of the summated scores, whilst the values for the other scores were all in the 0.50 to 0.69 range, which, according to Nunally (1978), is sufficient evidence of adequate reliability when conducting exploratory research. Based on the results, it can thus be concluded that the reliability of the summated scores is at an adequate level.
Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.70 and above are typically employed as a rule of thumb to denote a good level of internal reliability; values between 0.50 and 0.69 denote an acceptable level of reliability; while values below 0.50 denote poor and unacceptable levels of reliability (Nunally, 1978; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The questionnaire which was used to collect data from ward councillors was adapted from Prof. Notshulwana’s instrument of leadership. The accountability, communication and municipal performance items were included in this instrument to address the aims of the study.

5.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to the ethical considerations held in social science research concerning ethics when carrying out research with humans. Consequently, a letter requesting permission to conduct research at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality was written to acquire information from the ward councillors and ward committees. The municipality subsequently gave their permission to the request (see Annexure 1). The researcher made use of the consent form to acquire the informed consent of all the participants. The researcher also agreed with the participants that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time and to participate or not to participate. In the consent forms as well as in the introductory remarks the focus group interviews and observations, the research indicated that participants would remain anonymous and the information obtained from them would be confidential. Subsequently, pseudonyms were used in respect of the wards that participated in the focus group interviews and those which were observed. During the data collection and analysis period, tape recordings and data collected were stored in the researcher’s laptop which has a password. Hard copies of the questionnaires were stored under lock and key in the researcher’s office. Ethics clearance from the Nelson Metropolitan University’s Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) committee was sought for this study.
5.6 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

5.6.1 Limitations of the study

Although it would have been useful to observe meetings of the ward committee meetings and public or constituency general meetings of all wards at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality to attain a broader understanding of whether ward councillors communicate council decisions to the members of the community and whether the members of the public do have trust and confidence in their ward councillors, in this study it was not possible owing to inadequate resources and the remoteness of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Despite the fact that the contact numbers of all ward councillors were made available by the Public Participation Unit, observations of ward committee meetings proved to be a challenging exercise as arrangements were made by the researcher without any assistance from the Unit.

Observations were carried out in some wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. A setback in this strategy was that some ward committee meetings were postponed to later dates because of other municipal commitments and meetings. This was a problem for the researcher who is based in Port Elizabeth which is 350 km away from Buffalo City.

It was decided beforehand that ward committee members from the disadvantaged and affluent communities would be interviewed. Disadvantaged communities were targeted to understand the challenges in these communities. Affluent communities were targeted to discover leadership indicators of ward councillors in these areas. Because of the recent demarcation of wards in this municipality, some wards cover rural and urban areas, some are predominantly urban and some predominantly rural. This demarcation militates against the preconceived idea that disadvantaged communities will learn lessons from affluent and disadvantaged communities.
A further limitation was the scarcity of local literature relating to the leadership and accountability of ward councillors in the South African context. Most of the literature reviewed was from international countries and this was not always relevant to the South African context.

5.6.2 Delimitations of the study

The study was delimited to the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality which is a category A municipality. The target population for the study comprised only ward councillors and ward committee members. Other stakeholders such as municipal officials in the Public Participation Unit, political representative (PR) councillors, the speaker or deputy speaker and community development workers (CDWs) would have been involved if the focus of the study had not only been on ward councillors.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the research design and methodology followed in the study. Thus, data collection methods and instruments, the population sample, data analysis of data collected were discussed. The researcher found the participants in the study very cooperative. The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality’s Public Participation Units assisted a great deal in facilitating focus group interviews and distributing and collecting questionnaires from the ward councillors. Subsequently, the researcher was able to acquire more information than was expected. Observing ward committee meetings proved to be a very useful exercise as the researcher was able to see and witness the conditions under which ward councillors operate.

Chapter 6 will focus on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results.
CHAPTER 6

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS, PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the local government context, leadership has been defined as ‘the ability to overcome resistance to particular courses of action, notably to cause others to agree to something they were not necessarily initially predisposed to’. It entails blending and using available resources to effect change or to prevent a certain course of events (Sullivan, Downe, Entwistle & Sweeting 2006:492). Ward councillors are directly elected to represent and serve the people in specific wards. There are usually between 3 000 and 20 000 voters in a ward. The job of ward councillors is not simple, and effectively representing the interests of voters in one ward can sometimes cause conflict in the council. Most ward councillors are also members of political parties and have a dual accountability to both their party and the voters. The party has a responsibility to look after the whole area and to consider all residents. This means that ward councillors from a party cannot put the interests of people in the ward above the party’s policies for the municipality as a whole. Ward councillors should make sure that the interests of the people in their wards are represented as properly as possible (Joseph 2002:20). Therefore, ward councillors should prioritise their accountability role to those who elected them.

The previous chapter sketched the research design and methodology for this study. Presented in this chapter are the results and discussion of the data analysis conducted to address the research questions of the study. The following research question was posed: To what extent can a leadership and accountability framework for ward councillors improve local governance? This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section the sample characteristics are identified. In the second the data is presented, analysed
and discussed and in the third section a summary of main findings and conclusion are discussed.

6.2 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

This study was carried out in two phases. The first phase was the qualitative phase and the second phase was the quantitative phase. The identification of samples for each phase was different from the other. Such differences are elaborated on in the following sections.

6.2.1 Qualitative phase

Focus groups interviews with ward committee members from twenty-five (25) wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality were undertaken with the purpose of soliciting their views on the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors. Ward committees were chosen on the basis of their close interaction with the ward councillors and the members of the community. They know the problems and the needs of the community and they also know whether their respective councillors are undertaking their responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. The research was limited to ward committee members who were prepared to participate in the focus group interviews. It was determined at the proposal phase of this study that the ward councillors constituting the sample of this study should be in a Category A municipality. This criterion was important because a Category A municipality is a municipality which has its own legislative and executive authority. An interview with Maclean who was an executive mayor before this municipality was granted a status of having an executive mayoral system, revealed that this municipality met the requirements of a metropolitan municipality. He listed these requirements as the following:

- Large population;
- Two university (University of Fort Hare and the Walter Sisulu University);
- Large industries; and
- Large budget which was more than one billion Rand.

The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality is demarcated into 50 wards according to geographical areas, regardless of whether a ward area covers rural or urban areas. Therefore, ward committee members who participated in this study were from both rural and urban areas as well as from affluent and disadvantaged communities. This is important because their experiences, knowledge and understanding of how ward councillors should lead differ. Some wards are densely populated and some are sparsely populated. The densely and sparsely populated wards are in the urban and rural areas respectively. Therefore, their needs for services are not the same. For example, potable water, electricity and hygienic sanitation are mostly needed in sparsely populated rural areas. As much as these services are also needed in informal settlements in densely populated urban areas, housing is their priority. The geographic demarcation of wards in this municipality is indicated in map 2.
To complete this research, observations were carried out in ward committee meetings where the ward councillor is the chairperson. These were undertaken to gain a profound insight into the manner in which various
aspects of leadership and accountability take place in various wards. For the purposes of this study, the aspects of leadership and accountability include communication, enhancing municipal performance and emotional intelligence.

6.2.1.1 Focus group interviews

The ward committee members who participated in the focus group interviews were from twenty-five (25) wards in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Arrangements to conduct focus group interviews with the ward committee members were made possible by the Public Participation Unit of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. These focus groups were conducted in King William’s Town, Mdantsane and East London over a period of eight weeks. Even though the items of the interview schedule were written in English and were understood by participants, some participants requested to respond in a language that they are comfortable with, that is isiXhosa. This was not a problem because the researcher also speaks isiXhosa and in some instances the researcher translated questions from English to isiXhosa.

6.2.1.2 Observations

Arrangements with ward councillors were made to do observations in their ward committee meetings. Observations were done in both the wards which are predominantly rural as well as in those which are predominantly urban.

6.2.2 Quantitative phase

Ward councillors of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality were the sample for the quantitative phase of this study. Questionnaires were administered to the ward councillors to obtain their views pertaining to their leadership and accountability roles. Questionnaires were chosen because they cover a large sample within a short space of time. All ward councillors are literate and able to complete the questionnaires. To save time and costs, the questionnaires
were distributed to ward councillors and collected by the Department of Public Participation of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The Head of this Department was specifically requested because she has direct contact with all the councillors in the municipality.

A challenge faced in this phase of the study was that this municipality has been used to conduct many surveys and the ward councillors are extremely busy.

6.3 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA:

Results of the research are discussed in the following areas:

6.3.1 Qualitative Phase

The researcher has identified five themes and each of these formed major findings from the qualitative data. These five themes are the leadership roles of ward councillors, the relationship between ward councillors and the community, enhancing municipal performance through effective communication, promoting accountability through transparency and public participation, and the emotional intelligence of ward councillors. Each of these themes relates to the leadership and accountability constructs discussed in section 6.3.2. These themes were derived from qualitative analysis using NVivo coding nodes described in chapter 5.

6.3.1.1 Ward committees’ focus group discussions

This section presents results and an analysis of discussions with ward committees. The aim is to reveal the perception of ward committees regarding the leadership and accountability of ward councillors, and their relationships and communication with the ward committees as well as with the communities.
If ward councillors do not convene regular meetings, it paralyses the functioning of the ward committee. Consequently, this affects community development which is the ultimate objective of the ward committee structure (Qwabe & Mdaka 2011:68). As it is important for any leader to convene meetings to discuss issues, to take decisions, to give feedback and to communicate information, the first question that was posed to the focus groups was based on the number of times their respective ward councillors convene ward committee meetings and constituency meetings. Depending on the relationship that exists between the ward councillor, the ward committees and the constituency, the ward councillor is expected to convene meetings with ward committees to discuss the problems and needs of the ward, give feedback on council decisions that affect the ward and receive reports from ward committee members on their activities. The empirical investigation found that out of twenty-five (25) wards which participated in the focus group interview, only eight (8) wards convene ward committee meetings and constituency meetings. Interestingly, the trend is that ward councillors who do not have good relations with their ward committees do not convene meetings as is expected of them.

6.3.1.1.1 Leadership of ward councillors

Leadership involves interpersonal relationships engaged in finding solutions to collective problems relative to objective, but also normative, parameters. In order to succeed, leaders must be able to relate to the social and political climate, norms, established values, and realms of understanding within an organisation (Eriksen 2001:23). The interview responses to the question: “What is your general view of the leadership role of your ward councillor?” indicated that ward councillors are leaders in their respective wards, but not all provided effective leadership. Indeed, it is true that most ward councillors were members of the community before they were elected ward councillors. They have not been formally trained for the leadership roles that they must perform. Some, if not all of them, were political activists before and were elected because of their active political role in their communities.
They are unfamiliar with what it is expected of them, and what local governance is about. They assumed their leadership duties without knowing the values that they should have. It is likely that this could be one of the reasons why ward councillors do not perform as they are expected to by the members of the community and the municipal authorities.

In the focus group discussion, one of ward committee members had this to say:

For ward councillors to lead effectively, they should be impartial when dealing with matters brought to them by ward committee members. They should understand that they are elected to ensure that their constituencies receive services rendered by the municipality and should not promote the agenda of their political parties. Thus, they should be impartial and tend to perpetuate conflict within the community. For example, the ward councillors are supposed to be organisers and should work hand-in-hand with ward committee members. This does not happen, instead they tend to do everything in the ward together with the work which could be done by ward committees.

A majority of ward committee members regarded some of their ward councillors as being authoritative. One member of the ward committee said:

I want to be specific; my councillor does not display any leadership in my ward because he or she has favourites. If there is disagreement on any issue he or she would say ‘Nizakuva ngam nthanda ningathandi’ (meaning ‘You will hear what I say whether you like it or not’).
On a positive note, other ward committees indicated that their ward councillors perform their duties responsibly and with compassion. An example was given by a member of the ward committee of a ward which is far removed from the city centre. Their ward councillor decided to rent an office in town so as to be accessible to the members of the community who would need proof of residence and any official authorisation required by institutions such as banks and insurance policy institutions. This ward councillor pays the rent for this office and claims from the municipal treasury later. This is a classic example of how leaders should display their leadership through their emotional intelligence.

Ward committees were also asked how ward councillors should respond to the needs of the community with the view to obtaining more information about their leadership role. Various responses were given as follows:

- Ward councillors should ensure that they fulfil their promises. Failure to do this will lead to protests.
- They should address all the needs of the community and not only those of their fellow members of their political parties.
- They should be given more powers by the municipal authorities because some community needs are not addressed since they have to seek approval from the municipality on certain issues.
- Municipal policies limit the actions of ward councillors.
- They should make use of the services of and work closely with the ward committees because they cannot know everything.

Since ward councillors are political leaders, they are elected rather than appointed, and act as representatives: they require consent from those whom they govern and serve. They have a duty to serve all their constituents and protect the interests of future generations, rather than simply those who supported them (Morrell & Hartley 2006:485). Ward councillors who do not to respond to the needs of the community are therefore not doing what they are elected for. The members of the community conclude that “ward councillors are just enriching themselves” as one of the participants indicated.
6.3.1.2 Relationship between ward councillors and the community

Communicative action, carried out in an endeavour to achieve shared understanding, is the primary role of communication (Fryer 2011:30). One cannot ignore the fact that shared understanding will be achieved when there are cordial relations between the ward councillors and the community as well as the ward committees.

The focus groups were asked a question on how ward councillors report back on council matters and how they declare their interests. The majority of ward committee members responded that the relations between them and their ward councillors are tense in that they do not receive reports and the ward councillors have not declared their interests. This instigated a discussion on the relations that ward councillors have with their ward committees. Some ward committee members indicated that the relationship between themselves and the ward councillors is not good and this has a negative effect, especially when the community asks questions about service delivery. Subsequently, there was consensus that the municipality should organise workshops for both ward councillors and ward committees to strengthen relations. In an attempt to address strained relations between the ward councillor and the members of the ward committee, one participant responded said:

I personally went to the councillor with the aim of promoting unity between the councillor and ward committee members. The ward councillor said in isiXhosa, ‘sozeleya i-ward committee ndiyazi njenge ward committee yam’ (meaning I will never recognise that ward committee). That was true because this ward councillor has never convened ward committee and constituency meetings.

The kind of relations that need to exist between these two is that they should share the same values and should have a common understanding of
community interests. This commonality would eliminate any areas of conflict that may otherwise surface. The issue was raised that certain ward councillors do not reside in their wards but still their relations with the ward committee as well as with the community is good.

It cannot be ruled out that there should be cordial and healthy relationships between ward councillors and the members of the ward committee. Any misunderstanding between these two parties may have a detrimental effect on the service delivery as well as the relations between the ward councillor and the members of the community. Qwabe and Mdaka (2011:70) postulate that a weak relationship between ward councillors and ward committees as well as a lack of appreciation for the potential role that the different stakeholders represented on the ward committee can affect the development of the municipality, hamper good cooperation and slow down the development process. In this regard, two members of the focus group discussion mentioned their experiences in their ward: because of the strained relations between them and the ward councillor, the ward councillor does not communicate important issues decided upon at council meetings that would benefit the community such as poverty alleviation activities which include the provision of food parcels to the needy.

It was apparent that wards where relations between the ward councillor and the ward committees are strained do not perform well. The message which was clearly articulated by participants is that this state of affairs also affects the municipal administration in that ward committees do not submit reports on their activities as required by the Public Participation Unit. A clear picture of this was given by one participant who said:

We as ward committee members of my ward, we have complained to the municipality about poor relations in the ward but we were told that as long as we receive our stipend, we should know that we are still ward committees. What is worrying is the way the councillor communicates with them. For
example, if we are giving any advice the councillor would say: ‘Ndím u-councillor, ndimopheteyo apha’ meaning: I am the only one who is the councillor and who is in power here

Ward councillors should create favourable conditions for ward committees to be fully and actively involved in the affairs of the local municipality (Councillor Induction Programme, Handbook for Municipal Councillors 2006:121). They should also be conscious of the language they use when relating to the members of the community as well as the members of the ward councillors. Using the Habermas theory of communicative action, Bolton (2005:11) refers to language as a medium of communication, but communication is a broader concept, and "communicative action designates a type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts and does not coincide with them".

An analysis of the views of ward committee members reveals that the relationship between ward councillors and the members of the ward committee and the community are not always healthy. There are ward councillors who do their best to maintain these well. Unhealthy relations between ward committees and ward councillors are likely to have detrimental effects on the delivery of services, as well as on the trust in and respect for the ward councillor that the members of the ward committee and the community should have. Some utterances by ward councillors are divisive and do not promote good relations. Fryer (2011:29) points out that Habermas proposed that social beings are reliant on communication. Without communication, the bases of shared understanding and cooperation upon which social relations depend will not be established. Therefore, not only is sociality a key characteristic of humanity; so is communication as well.


6.3.1.1.3 Enhancing municipal performance through effective communication

Councillors need to communicate council activities such as council decisions, projects, planning and policy-making processes to the public in the interests of increasing transparency and promoting public involvement in these activities (Councillor Induction Programme, Handbook for Municipal Councillors 2006:49). It should be noted that the manner in which this information is communicated is very important because whatever the ward councillor says may be misinterpreted and misconstrued by various people depending on their linguistic understanding, cultural background, mood and the context in which the information was communicated.

To investigate whether the members of the public have access to information, the focus groups were asked a question: “Do the members of the public have access to the Councillor’s Handbook, information on the induction of councillors, council records and minutes of meetings?” It was revealed that some ward councillors do share information with ward committee members as well as with the members of the public. Some indicated that the information is shared with the ward councillors’ favourites. Some would share information when they want the support of the ward committee on a particular issue. Some ward committees get information from the ward councillors of neighbouring wards or from PR councillors in their wards. Some do share the information with ward committees but this is sometimes not directed at the relevant people. One participant gave an example of their ward councillor relaying information to a ward committee member who occupies a different portfolio. Subsequently, the relevant occupant of that portfolio would not do what is to be done. One participant said:

Our ward councillor does not share information with all members of the ward committee but with favourites. The favourites tend to keep the information to themselves. It will be just by sheer
luck that unfavourites get information. When I analyse this situation I find that there are councillors who feel threatened by some members of the ward committee and as such decides not to share the information because they will cause trouble and will be empowered and put them in a better position.

The convenors of portfolios are elected at the first ward committee meeting which is officiated by the municipal official (Maclean 2013: Discussion). Hence it is obvious that the ward councillors facilitate the election of the portfolio coordinators and therefore cannot alienate some and work closely with others. Thus they should all work as a team and as colleagues.

The fact cannot be disregarded that ward councillor who share the council information with the ward committee members are not likely to have service delivery protests and demonstrations in their wards. So, the members of the public will have information about what is being done about their requests and demands from the municipality. The ward councillors who do not share the information with the ward committee members are in fact missing the point that they are the agents of communication between the members of the community and the municipal council.

Relating specifically to the issue on how ward councillors communicate with the members of the public and whether they allow freedom of expression in meetings, one participant related to one incident that occurred in their ward, saying that:

*When the community was protesting, the ward councillor in the presence of the mayor said to the protesters that ‘Do whatever you want to do – I have my own people and this is not my money, it is money from your parents’ taxes’. Subsequently, the hall was burnt down. Whilst*
the hall was in flames the community decided to burn down spaza shops belonging to the foreigners. In that manner the municipality, that is, the mayor and the chief whip will listen to their demands.

Ward councillors should be mindful of the fact that their speech is always subject to being interpreted differently by different people. Niemi (2005:231) suggests that in communicative action a speaker selects a comprehensible linguistic expression only in order to come to an understanding with a hearer about something and thereby to make herself or himself understandable. It belongs to the communicative intent of the speaker:

- that he perform a speech act that is right in respect to the given normative context, so that between him and the hearer an intersubjective relation will come about which is recognised as legitimate;
- that he make a true statement (or correct existential presuppositions), so that the hearer will accept and share the knowledge of the speaker; and
- that he express truthfully his beliefs, intentions, feelings, desires, and the like, so that the hearer will give credence to what is said.

Effective communication helps build public trust, confidence and integrity among all the stakeholders. (Councillor Induction Programme, Handbook for Municipal Councillors 2006:140). Some participants said that their ward councillors do not communicate information that would assist ward committee members to perform effectively. This information includes legislation passed by the council and the information they receive from their breakaway sessions and workshops. This is in contradiction to what is in the Handbook for Municipal Councillors, namely that the primary function of a ward committee is to be a formal communication channel between the community and the municipal council. Ward committees are advisory committees which can make
recommendations on any matter affecting the ward (Councillor Induction Programme, Handbook for Municipal Councillors 2006:118). Ward committee are in fact an extension of municipal council. During an interview, Maclean (2013) indicated that decisions taken at the ward committee meetings should be forwarded to the municipal council by the ward councillor. It is therefore not surprising that the ward committee members do not have direct influence with council which, in the researcher’s view, it would be beneficial to the improvement of municipal performance and enhanced dissemination of municipal information to the members of the public.

6.3.1.1.5 Promoting accountability through transparency and public participation

Accountability is the need to justify decisions to some audience, and it is considered the glue that binds social systems together. In contrast to responsibility, which strictly reflects an internal feeling, accountability takes on different forms and affects leader behaviour (Ammeter et al. 2002:757).

In order to establish whether ward councillors account for their actions and the mechanisms that employed to enhance accountability, two different responses were drawn from the focus group discussions. Some pointed out that ward councillors are accountable and some said they are not. To uphold the anonymity of ward committees, they will be referred to as Case A and Case B respectively.

In Case B councillors are not accountable. It goes without saying that, in cases where the ward councillor does not hold meeting with the ward committee and with the members of the community, such a councillor does not give account. This has implications for transparency. One of the participants said:

I want to give you a clear picture of what is going on in my ward. No ward committee meeting ever sat. The
councillor being the chairperson of this meeting there is no way that we as ward committees could meet. When the councillor wants to make her or his report s/he calls extended ward committee which is consists of SANCO and party political members. Political party camps are infiltrating the ward which makes it very difficult for us to work. What we have discovered is that our councillor expelled some ward committee members and replaced them with non-elected members.

Another participant said:

There is no transparency in our ward, 'Sibona izinto ziqhubeka' meaning: 'We see things happen', the councillor does not have any communication with us.

In Case A, ward committee members expressed their satisfaction with the manner in which their ward councillors display a sense of responsibility which in turn translates into accountability. Ward committee meetings and public meeting do take place in these wards. In ward committee meetings, the councillor updates the ward committees on council decisions and new developments in the municipality so that these can be relayed to the members of the community. Ward committee members report on their activities in different wards and in different portfolios. Problems arising from these reports are discussed. In cases where the meeting is unable to reach a solution, the ward councillor communicates these to the relevant departments in the municipality.

In analysing the divergent occurrences in Cases A and B wards, Case A wards are a classic example of how all ward councillors should lead and be accountable. Ward councillors coordinate the performance of ward committee members. Lessons from these can be used as lessons for Case B wards.
To find out about the accountability and the measures that are in place to ensure that ward councillors account to their constituencies, it was revealed that some ward councillor convene meetings and some do not. Participants in one ward exposed the fact that their ward councillor does not have time to attend to community issues and does not even call constituency meetings because s/he has another job. Some indicated that they do not have ward committee meetings whilst some said they do. In wards where there are many villages, the ward councillors rely on the information brought by the ward committees who in turn get that information from the chairpersons of these villages. In these areas the ward councillor arranges ward committee meetings and area meetings. Problems of the community are discussed in these area meetings. This is where the councillor gives account to the community and communicates information from the municipality.

The overarching goal of accountability mechanisms is to control action and to improve individual and organisational performance. In the context of political leadership and thus ward councillors in this research, accountability mechanisms motivate leaders with the threat of being required to explain their actions to others within the organisation (Ammeter et al. 2002:757).

Transparency is specifically crucial when ward councillors account to their constituencies. To the question whether ward councillors should be encouraged to be more transparent about their interests and their activities in and outside the council, the participants provided different responses. Some indicated that they are not transparent whilst some said they were transparent. It was observed that those who said their ward councillors were not transparent are the ones who indicated that the municipal information is not communicated to them. Also, the secretaries of ward committees are unable to compile their monthly report required by the Public Participation Unit to monitor their performance.

In response to the question: “What do you think should be done to encourage improved public participation?” Participants suggested that the
ward councillors should avoid conflict situations and should always create a positive atmosphere for participation. They should display trust in the members of the ward committees because these members provide ward councillors with information from the public. Also, the term of office for ward councillors should be the same as those of ward committee members to ensure continuity and to strengthen collegiality.

An analysis of the ward committees’ responses on transparency and public participation revealed that during the process of being transparent, where the ward councillor is declaring what she or he has and has not done, accountability takes place. Also, the members of the public are encouraged to participate when they see that the ward councillor is honest and does not have any clandestine motives. This is in agreement with Blind’s (2012:2) conclusions that accountability is value-ridden because it is associated with the notions of responsibility, integrity, democracy, fairness and justice.

6.3.1.1.6 Emotional intelligence of ward councillors

A well performing municipality has always been associated with upright and accountable leadership. Honest leadership and the accountability of ward councillors play an important role in the improvement of the delivery of services in a municipality. Hence, for purposes of this study the intention of the researcher was to find out from the focus group participants about preventing the abuse of power and corruption of elected representative. One of the participants revealed the following:

My ward councillor wants to be a ward committee. She or he does all the work that belongs to us as ward committee. When ward committees do their work which the ward councillor wants to do, the ward councillor thinks that the ward committees are against them and want to take their positions.
Another participant contradicted this and said:

*My ward councillor only goes to the community when there is a problem.*

When asked to explain what they expect from the ward councillors, one participant said:

*The ward councillor should apologise when she or he has done anything that offends the community. The councillor should be neutral in politics and she or he must not be divisive by sharing the information with some ward committees whilst neglecting the rest of ward committees.*

In support of this view, another participant said:

*Also, the councillor should handle what is brought forward by ward committee in the right way. It is demoralising for a councillor not to attend to the issues brought to her or him by ward committees because even the community will see that ward committees members are committed to their work when their needs are met.*

More or less the same views were expressed by another participant who said that:

*When there is conflict among ward committee members whether the councillor is involved, present or not involve, the ward councillor should be able to solve such conflict because I perceive the ward councillor as a “mother” to the ward committees.*
Leadership, especially from the ward councillors, is acknowledged as crucial to the functioning and success of local governance (Bochel & Bochel 2010:725). Therefore, the researcher’s intention was to establish the capacity of ward councillors when dealing with and addressing the needs of the members of the community. One participant exposed the following fact:

_The councillor does not allow ward committees to attend community meetings such as SANCO meetings where problems of the community are discussed. Should ward committee members attend, the councillor would perceive that ward committees as her or his enemies._

During the discussion, the question that the researcher had was how the ward councillor and the ward committees will know the demands and interests of the community if ward committee members do not attend these meetings because they are part of the community.

So, according to the participants in this case, the ward councillor lacks emotional intelligence which Barbuto and Burbach (2006:53) conceptualise as an aptitude. To support this argument, one participant said:

_Ukhansila wethu akasimameli xa simxelela ngeengxaki zabahlali (Our ward councillor does not listen when reporting the problems of the community)._  

The participants further commented that in some instances, the councillor and the ward committee members would agree on a matter and later the councillor would deny that decision.

The themes used in the qualitative phase are also used to determine the themes in the quantitative phase which each constitute various variables which are mentioned in section 6.3.2.
6.3.2 Quantitative Phase

The results of the quantitative data are discussed in the following sections. The presentations and the discussion of findings are dealt within two sections. Section A presents the demographic information of ward councillors and Section B presents the interpretation and discussion of a public sector leader. The presentation and discussion of findings are offered under the headings of accountability, communication, emotional intelligence, enhancement of municipal performance and leadership as indicated in table 6.1.

6.3.2.1 Section A: Demographic information

Gender

The majority of respondents are females (53 per cent) and males comprise 47 per cent. This indicates that local government has progressed with gender equality campaign for 50/50 women representation in government.

Figure 6.1: Frequency distribution: Gender (n = 30)
The opinions of both female and male ward councillors are equally important in this study. Ward councillors are political leaders who hold formal political authority, are: i) democratically elected ii) representatives who iii) are vulnerable to deselection, and iv) operate within, as well as influence a constitutional and legal framework. Their source of authority is v) a mandate: permission to govern according to declared policies, regarded as officially granted by an electorate upon the decisive outcome of an election (Morrell & Hartley 2006:484). Regardless of their gender, ward councillors need to be of service to their constituencies. In addition, their roles and functions are not differentiated according to gender.

Age

The age of ward councillor respondents was analysed. The findings reveal that 23 per cent of ward councillors who participated in the study were between the ages of 30 and 39, followed by 23 per cent between the ages of 40 to 49, followed by the majority of 33 per cent aged between 50 and 59 years, and a small percentage (20 per cent) were above 60 years of age. The summary of this analysis is indicated in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Frequency distribution: Age (n = 30)
The total number of ward councillors who returned the filled in questionnaire out of 50 ward councillors the sampled is 30. The majority (53 per cent) of respondents are above the age of 50. Therefore, opinions on public sector leadership emerged from ward councillors who are above 50 years of age.

**Marital status**

A relatively large percentage of respondents (53 per cent) are married whilst 23 per cent are unmarried. Only 7 per cent of the respondents are in a committed relationship. Another 7 per cent of the respondents are divorced and 10 per cent are widowed. The marital status of a political leader can have an influence on her or his political life.

**Figure 6.3: Frequency distribution: Marital Status (n = 30)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a committed relationship</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a committed relationship</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (53 per cent) of respondents are married. Therefore, opinions on public sector leadership emerged from ward councillors who are married.
Academic qualifications

A small percentage (27 per cent) of the respondents have studied up to Grade 10. The levels of education of the majority of respondents are relatively high. 17 per cent of the respondents have attained Grade 12; 23 per cent obtained diplomas; 17 per cent possess bachelors' degrees and 10 per cent have honours degrees.

Figure 6.4: Frequency distribution: Highest Qualification (n = 30)

The high levels of education of the respondents indicate that they have the potential of reading and understanding municipal official documents such as the IDP, policies, rules and regulations. Most importantly, as representatives of the public, they are able to read and understand the minutes and the items on the agenda of council meetings and the committees of council they serve. They need to read reports from the provincial and national government institutions on services which include housing, water, education and energy in which municipalities have competency. The respondents may not need assistance in understanding the Handbook for Councillors as well as code of conduct for councillors provided for in Schedule 5 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998).
6.3.2.2 Section B: Public sector leadership

6.3.2.2.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 6.1 indicates the descriptive statistics for each variable that was measured on a four-point Likert scale. Respondents who agreed with the statements on the dimensions indicated their choice by selecting ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ and those who disagreed indicated their choice by selecting ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.

The general goal of descriptive statistics is to summarise and describe a set of data. The mean and the standard deviation are the most commonly used descriptive statistics (Gravetter & Wallnau 1999:100). The mean is the arithmetic average of all the values in the data set. It is calculated by summing all the values in the data and dividing this by the number of values (Terre Blanche et al. 2004:197). Simply put, a population mean is the average (Goddard & Melville 2001:52).

Table 6.1: Descriptive statistics for each variable: D-Accountability to D-Overall (n=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Strongly agree [1.0 – 1.5]</th>
<th>Agree [1.5 – 2.5]</th>
<th>Disagree [2.5 – 3.5]</th>
<th>Strongly disagree [3.5 – 4.0]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D-Accountability</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>26 87%</td>
<td>3 10%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Communication</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>23 77%</td>
<td>6 20%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Emot/Intell.</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>11 37%</td>
<td>19 63%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Mun.Performance</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>17 57%</td>
<td>12 40%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Leadership</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>8  27%</td>
<td>20 67%</td>
<td>2 7%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Overall</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>18 60%</td>
<td>11 37%</td>
<td>1 3%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.1 indicates that respondents account for their actions, and they disclose their business and professional interests to their constituencies. These results are also illustrated in Figure 6.1 for ease of reference. They also give feedback to the members of the community in a transparent manner (mean score = 1.38). Respondents reveal that communication is an important tool they use when discussing service delivery issues with their constituencies and disseminating council information to their constituencies, and the needs and problems of their constituencies to the municipal council and administration (mean score = 1.36).

Table 6.1 also reveals that the emotional intelligence of ward councillors is in relation to their ability to manage their emotions, to display empathy and to value the ideas and opinions of other people, including their constituencies and fellow councillors (mean score = 1.66). Their emotional intelligence is prevalent when monitoring the implementation of council decisions and policies. This does not only require that they acquaint themselves with municipal policies but also allows them orientation towards the achievement of set standards (mean score = 1.55). This table further reveals that the respondents do not always provide the expected leadership in that they are
not always open to criticisms or have a broad approach to problem solving (mean score 1.79). The overall mean score for all the variables is 1.54.

The results in Table 6.2 indicate Cronbach alpha values between 0.5 and 0.8. In this study, the variables which have values of 0.86 and above are accountability, communication, and municipal performance. Emotional intelligence and leadership have values of 0.65 and 0.56 respectively. The overall value of all instruments is 0.89.

**Table 6.2: Cronbach's alpha statistics for public sector leadership dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D-Accountability</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Communication</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Municipal Performance</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Leadership</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Overall</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients greater than 0.70, the recommended minimum value for reliability (Nunally 1978: 85-94), were observed for most indices, with the exception of ‘emotional intelligence’ and ‘leadership’ with values in the range 0.52 to 0.69. Nunally argues that in the early stages of basic research, coefficients between .50 and .69 are sufficient evidence of adequate reliability. The observed Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all in this interval or better, thus confirming the reliability of the reward categories’ summated scores.

In the following section, the presentation of findings and the discussion of results of the variables as indicated in Table 6.4 are provided.
Table 6.4: Description of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D-Accountability</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Communication</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Emotional/Intell.</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Overall</td>
<td>Average of above five dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.2.2.2 Accountability

Statements 6, 10, 15 and 23 relate to accountability (see annexure A). The objectives of these questions are to discover the perceptions of respondents relating to issues of accountability such as feedback, transparency, disclosure and accepting responsibility. These variables are coded as B06, B10, B15 and B23 on the horizontal axis and the results are presented in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5: Frequency Distributions: Accountability (n = 30)
**B06: Building commitment by giving regular, open and truthful feedback to the constituency.**

The majority of the respondents (70 per cent) strongly agree and 27 per cent agree with the statement. None disagree whilst only 3 per cent strongly disagree.

**B10: Building trust through integrity, accountability and transparency.**

The results of this statement as illustrated in Figure 6.5 reveal that the overwhelming number of the respondents, namely 87 per cent, strongly agrees, with 10 per cent agreeing and only 3 per cent disagree.

**B15: Disclosing your business, professional and social interests to the constituency**

The results reveal that 57 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, 33 per cent agree, 7 per cent disagree and 3% per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

**B23: Accepting responsibility for your actions and decisions**

The majority of respondents, namely70 per cent, strongly agree and 27 per cent agree with the statement. Only 3 per cent of the respondents strongly disagree and none disagree.

Figure 6.5 graphically depicts the views of ward councillors as public sector leaders on accountability. It is clear from this figure that a total of 97 per cent of the respondents place a higher degree of importance on building trust (87 per cent strongly agree and 10 per cent disagree), transparency and accepting responsibility (70 per cent strongly agree and 27 per cent agree). A total of 90 per cent of the respondents (57 per cent strongly agree and 33 per cent agree) also place a higher degree of importance on disclosing interests.
In summary, these results are not surprising given the fact that the issues of accountability, transparency and trustworthiness of councillors are overemphasised in the local government documents such as the Councillor Induction Programme: Handbook for Municipal Councillors (SALGA), 2006, Schedule 5 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and the Local Government Turnaround Strategy, 2009.

In a democracy, the principle of accountability is closely linked to that of transparency. Transparency is the creation of openness and access so people can see what is going on in the government and society. The government has a duty to make information available to communities; similarly, communities have a duty to obtain that information. The government cannot be accountable if communities have no way of finding out what the government is doing. (Joseph 2004:9). However, the municipality will only know the needs and problems of the community when the ward councillor collects this information from the community for the municipality. Hence it is important that:

Ward councillors should stay in touch with the issues in their areas, understand the key problems, and monitor development and service delivery. This will enable them to communicate the information to the municipality. In committees, caucus and council meetings, ward councillors should act as spokespersons for the people in their wards. Ward councillors function as direct links between the council and the voters. It is their responsibility to make sure that voters are consulted and kept informed about council decisions, development and budget plans, and any council programmes that will affect them (Joseph 2002:20).
The general assumption would have been that ward councillors lack accountability, implying that they do not give regular feedback to their constituencies, they do not build trust, they do not disclose their interests and they do not accept responsibility. Contrary to this hypothesis, given the response rate, it was found that the respondents are accountable.

### 6.3.2.2.3 Communication and information

Statements 3, 4 and 12 relate to communication (see annexure A). These questions endeavour to discover the perceptions of respondents on the role of ward committees on service delivery, the manner in which disseminating information occurs and how they maintain the flow of information between the municipality and their wards. These variables are B03, B4 and B13 on the horizontal axis in Figure 6.6.

**Figure 6.6: Frequency Distributions: Communication (n = 30)**

![Bar chart showing frequency distributions for communication statements B03, B04, B12]

**B3: Discussing service delivery issues with your constituency.**

The results to the statement as illustrated in Figure 6.6 reveal that the majority (90 per cent) of the respondents strongly agree and 7 per cent agree with the
statement. A small percentage (3 per cent) of the respondents strongly disagrees.

**B4: Making municipal information available to members of the community.**
The majority, namely 77 per cent, of the respondents strongly agree and 7 per cent agree with the statement. Only 3 per cent disagree and 3 per cent strongly disagree.

**B12: Clarifying what is expected and maintaining the flow of information.**
The results reveal that 50 per cent strongly agree, 47 per cent agree, and 3 per cent strongly disagree.

Figure 6.6 illustrates the views of ward councillors on communication. The response rate of respondents shows that the respondents consider communication as important in their leadership. A total of 97 per cent of the respondents (90 per cent strongly agree and 7 per cent agree) discuss service delivery issues with their constituencies. A total of 84 per cent of the respondents (77 per cent strongly agree and 7% per cent agree) disseminate information to relevant stakeholders. A total of 97 per cent of the respondents (50 per cent strongly agree and 47 per cent agree) maintain the flow of information.

It can be concluded that the respondents regard communication and information in a serious light. However, it should be noted that communication is not a panacea for all leadership problems, as some obstacles require the use of power or even force (Eriksen 2001:30). It can be argued that there cannot be communication without information. Communication is a vehicle through which information is relayed. Hence Hansen (2001:119) says Information and dialogue procedures are being elaborated and remedied in order to render the local councillors more visible and more aware of what is going on”.

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The majority of ward committee members who took part in the focus group discussion indicated that their councillors do not share information and thus there is no communication. Some do share information with their favourites but not with everybody. With this kind of response regarding communication, the municipality may consider conducting a survey with the ward committees who are working directly with the ward councillors. The municipality might even identify the deficiencies and gaps in the flow of information in order to improve its communication strategy.

6.3.2.2.4 Emotional intelligence

Statements 7, 8, 9, 19, 20 and 22 (see annexure A) relate to emotional intelligence. The objectives of these questions are to discover the perceptions of respondents relating to issues of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, motivation, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and empathy. These variables are B07, B08, B109, B19, B20 and B22 on the horizontal axis in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7: Frequency Distributions: Emotional Intelligence (n = 30)
B7: Acting in an extroverted, friendly and informal manner.
The results reveal that 27 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 30 per cent agree with the statement. Also, 37 per cent disagree and 7 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

B8: Operating with energy, intensity, and emotional expression.
The results reveal that 27 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 50 per cent agree with the statement. Only 20 per cent of the respondents disagree and 3 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

B9: Working to control emotions and maintain and understand personal demeanour.
All the respondents (50 per cent strongly agree and 50 per cent agree) agree with the statement.

B19: Accommodating the needs and interests of others.
The majority (60 per cent strongly agree and 33 per cent agree) of the respondents agree with the statement. Only an insignificant 7 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement.

B20: Valuing the ideas and opinions of others.
All the respondents (67 per cent strongly agree and 33 per cent agree) that the respondents value the ideas and opinions of others.

B22: Demonstrating an active concern for people and their needs.
The majority (67 per cent strongly agree and 30 per cent agree) of respondents agree with the statement and only 3 per cent of the respondents strongly disagree.

From the responses of the participants one can describe the ward councillors at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality as being emotionally intelligent. This is in agreement with Kramer’s (2007:212) conclusion that leaders lead by tapping their own emotional intelligence and blending it with the emotional intelligence of others. Indeed, ward councillors should possess emotional
intelligence to be successful. Their political acumen will only be prominent when they are emotionally intelligent. They will certainly be active in local politics and local governance. A good ward councillor in most cases is the one who is not only empathic but also able to control her or his emotions. However, it is important to observe that emotional intelligence remains important in leadership. It is worth mentioning that bad and unacceptable leadership will always be associated with a lack of emotional intelligence.

Mascuilli (2011:76) mentions that emotional intelligence requires that leaders learn how to bring about a reservoir of positivity rather than being a cause of a contagion of negative emotions that sap morale and feelings of solidarity. The ward councillors as leaders are therefore required to possess all the aspects of emotional intelligence suggested by Barbuto and Burbach, namely:

(a) empathetic response, the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people; (b) mood regulation, the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods; (c) interpersonal skill, proficiency in managing relationships and building networks; (d) internal motivation, a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money and status that involves the ability to delay gratification in pursuit of a goal; and (e) self-awareness, the person’s ability to recognise and understand his or her own moods, emotions, and drives and their effects on others (Barbuto & Burbach 2006:53).

Kramer (2007:211) adds:

*Emotions – especially hatred, greed, vengeance, and lust – can certainly be harmful to governance.*

During the qualitative stage some ward committee members said that their ward councillors ‘treat them like school children’ and some said that their ward councillors have favourites with whom ward councillors share information. The
analysis of such behaviour is that such ward councillors lack emotional intelligence. Also, ward councillor who are vulnerable to the emotions mentioned by Kramer (2007) create an unfavourable situation for both the municipal authorities and the members of the community.

The relationship between the ward councillors and the ward committee members is fundamental in determining whether ward councillors are performing their duties efficiently and effectively. If the ward councillor and the ward committee members do not get along with each other, the members of the community are likely not to have their concerns and demands communicated to the municipal council as well as to the municipal administration for consideration. It is for this reason that ward councillors should work on their emotional intelligence, failing which, the municipality should empower them in various aspects of emotional intelligence.

This study has established that emotional intelligence is a key determining factor in the leadership and accountability of ward councillors. For instance, a ward councillor who is not empathetic is likely not to be regarded as a good leader. If a ward councillor lacks interpersonal skills she or he will not be able to identify the problems in the community and will not be able to monitor the implementation of decisions and policies by the municipal administration. Similarly, good leaders should be aware of their own moods and emotions so that they work on these. If they cannot do this on their own, then, they can seek professional help.

When a ward councillor has established a good rapport with the members of the community as well as with the ward committee member, she or he may gain recognition and respect. Also, she or he will be trusted. As was discussed in Chapter 3, trust always prevails when ward councillors interact with ward committee members, members of the community and the municipal authorities. Trust is gained during interaction. Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson (Undated:4) highlight the fact that in communicative action the interaction of actors aim to reach understanding with one another by negotiating definitions of a situation, argumentation and cooperative interpretation of events, goals,
values and norms, and by sharing their subjective experiences, desires and feelings. Therefore, ward councillors earn trust from all those they interact with when they act in good faith.

### 6.3.2.2.5 Enhancement of municipal performance

Statements 1, 14, 17, 18 and 21 relate to the enhancement of municipal performance (see annexure A). The objectives of these questions are to discover the perceptions of respondents relating to issues of enhancement of municipal performance which include problem solving, monitoring implementation, demand feedback, achievement and setting standards and municipal resources. These variables are indicated as B01, B14, B17, B18 and B21 respectively on the horizontal axis in Figure 6.8.

**Figure 6.8: Frequency Distributions: Enhancement of Municipal Performance (n = 30)**

B1: Studying problems in the light of past practices.

The results reveal that 23 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 53 per cent agree with the statement. A total of 34 per cent of the respondents either disagree (17 per cent) or strongly disagree (7 per cent) with the statement.
B14: Monitoring the implementation of council decisions and policies by municipal officials.
The majority of the respondents agree with the statement (77 per cent strongly agree and 20 per cent agree). Only 3 per cent strongly disagree.

B17: Pushing vigorously to get answers and feedback from municipal officials on service delivery issues and complaints of the members of community.
The results reveal that 60 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 30 per cent agree whilst 7 per cent disagree and 3 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

B18: Adopting a strong orientation toward achievement and setting standards.
The results reveal that 57 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, 40 per cent agree and only 3 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

B21 – Ensuring proper application of municipal resources.
The results show that 77 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, 17 per cent agree, 3 per cent disagree and 3 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

In view of the responses, over 80 per cent of the respondents believe that they have the capacity to enhance municipal performance. A total of 76 per cent in B1 believe they have the capacity to solve problems, 97 per cent in B14 believe they do demand feedback from municipal officials, 97 per cent in B18 direct their efforts toward achieving and setting standards, and 94 per cent in B21 are able to ensure that municipal resources are used efficiently and effectively. This is interpreted as a positive response.

Regarding the enhancement of the performance of a municipality, it cannot be an exaggeration to say that the respondents have the capacity to ensure that
the Buffalo City Municipality performs well. They are certainly devoted to service to their constituencies. As such, Smit et al. (2004:275) emphasise:

The performance of organisations is directly related to the quality of its leadership.

SALGA (2006:52) states that the councillors should help monitor the performance of the municipality without interfering with the work of the municipal officials. They act as a key feedback mechanism for monitoring the following:

- Whether the municipality’s plans and programmes are achieving the intended effect;
- Whether services are being provided in a way that is efficient and fair; and
- Whether capital projects as committed to in the IDP are actually taking place according to plan within a reasonable timeframe.

What the ward councillors say and do when monitoring the performance of the municipality should be guided by the theory of communication action. Niemi (2005:231) contends that:

In communicative action a speaker selects a comprehensible linguistic expression only in order to come to an understanding with a hearer about something and thereby to make himself understandable.

The ward councillors should always be cautious of the fact that what they say may be objected to on different grounds that Niemi (2005:235) says may be inappropriate, out of place or embarrassing. Therefore, it is in the interest of a ward councillor to be mindful of the language she or he uses when enquiring about issues pertaining to service delivery from municipal officials. The same approach should also be used when they interact with their ward committee members and their constituencies. However, to ensure that the standards are
set in a manner that will be beneficial for monitoring, SALGA (2006:52) suggests the following:

While a councillor cannot directly instruct an official on how to do his or her job, councillors do have a right to expect officials to meet accepted standards of service and can raise any serious concerns within council for attention by the relevant department.

It can be argued that, within the context of this study, monitoring can only be performed in an effective manner when standards are set. From a completely different perspective Pickering (2012:32 argues that political competition at the municipal level provides accountability and should stimulate local elected officials to improve government performance in order to please their constituents and increase their likelihood of re-election.

The public has a right to know how municipalities apply the power and resources entrusted to them (Holtzhausen & Naidoo 2011:741). It is the responsibility of ward councillors to monitor how municipal resources are utilised so that in turn they can provide feedback to their constituencies. Most importantly, they should ensure that municipal resources are allocated to services most needed by the community. These services include houses, electricity, roads, clean water and sanitation.

6.3.2.2.6 Leadership abilities

Statements 2, 5, 11, 13, and 16 relate to accountability (see annexure A). The objectives of these questions are to discover the perceptions of respondents relating to issues of leadership such as risk taking, problems solving, practical strategies, and being open to criticisms and influence. These variables are B02, B05, B11, B13 and B16 on the horizontal axis in Figure 6.9.
Figure 6.9: Frequency Distributions: Leadership (n = 30)

B2: Being willing to take risks and to consider new and untested approaches.
Responses to this statement indicate that 47 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and the remaining 53 per cent agree with the statement.

B5: Taking a long-range, broad approach to problem solving.
The results reveal that 37 per cent of the respondents strongly disagree, 43 per cent agree, 13 per cent disagree, and 7 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

B11: Focusing on short-range, hands-on, practical strategies.
The majority of the respondents (37 per cent strongly agree and 60 per cent agree). Only 3 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

B13: Encouraging ward committees and the public to make constructive suggestions and criticisms for improving service delivery.
A total of 96 per cent of respondents (83 per cent strongly agree and 13 per cent agree) agree with the statement whilst only 3 per cent strongly disagree.
B16: Seeking to exert influence by being in positions of authority.
20 per cent strongly agree and 27 per cent agree with the statement while 30 per cent disagree and 23 per cent strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 6.9 indicates the views of ward councillor on their capacity to lead, implying that they have the capacity to take risks, solve problems, utilise practical strategies and are open to criticism. The results indicated in this Figure demonstrate that all the respondents (47 per cent strongly agree and 53 per cent agree) are capable of taking risks. A total of 80 per cent of the respondents (37 per cent strongly agree and 43 per cent agree) can solve problems. The responses of the respondents with regard to being able to apply practical strategies and being open to criticism registered a total of 97 per cent and 96 per cent respectively. The majority of the respondents disagree that they exert influence by being in a position of authority which is indeed the behaviour expected from political leaders. Ammeter et al. (2002:7556) point out the following:

*The political behaviour by the leaders unfolds over time and with assorted targets, the leader develops a reputation (either favourable or unfavourable) with respect to such critical elements of leadership as competence, decisiveness, trustworthiness, and/or effectiveness.*

Personal character traits are an important facet of the ability to exercise political leadership. The leadership qualities of decisiveness, strength, resolution, risk taking, vision and imagination are differentially distributed, irrespective of wider structural circumstances (John & Cole, 1999; Middlehurst, 1999; Paul & Andrew, 2003).

Communication action can be useful to enhance the leadership capabilities of ward councillors. Habermas (cited by Mabovula 2010:1) views communicative action as being one type of action that uses all the human ways of thinking and language. Indeed the fusion of these type of actions may encourage
leaders to take risks through their well thought-out moves; solve problems of their constituencies with their critical thinking way; and come up with strategies that can be used to make and to deal with difficult decisions. Leaders can earn respect through the manner in which they make use of language when deliberating on service delivery issues with their constituencies.

This view is in line with the provision of the Councillor Induction Programme: Handbook for Municipal Councillors (SALGA) (2006:124) that councillors are directly accountable to the communities they serve: their personal and leadership skills will affect their ability to lead effectively, professionally, fairly and honestly.

The assumption made in this study is that the absence of leadership and the lack of accountability by ward councillors has a significant detrimental impact on service delivery at the local sphere of government. This assumption led to the hypothesis that the violent service delivery protest action that is present in South Africa is primarily due to a lack of leadership and accountability on the part of ward councillors. From the study, it was discovered from the survey with ward councillors (as illustrated in sections 6.3.2.2.1 to 6.3.2.2.6) that they are accountable, they promote communication, they have emotional intelligence, they enhance municipal performance and they have the capacity to perform their leadership roles. Thus, considering their responses, service delivery protests in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality may not be linked to the leadership and accountability of ward councillors.

On the contrary, it was discovered from the focus group interviews that there are disparities in the leadership roles of ward councillors. From the interviews it emerged that some ward councillors do not quite understand what their leadership roles entail and some do, even though they still have some weak points. In some wards, the relations between the ward councillors and the ward committee members are strained and subsequently affect the communication in the ward. In these wards, ward councillors hardly ever
convene meetings. In some wards the relations are healthy, implying that there is communication.

While other variables and themes discussed in this study are very important, emotional intelligence is a major determinant for leadership and accountability. Invariably, communication is an effective tool that can be used to promote leadership and accountability. So, effective communication for leaders is anchored in ways of thinking and language which communicative action encompasses. As is indicated in the focus group discussions, utterances by leaders can be divisive and drive people to act in ways which they would have not under normal circumstances. Therefore, in this study emotional intelligence is found to be a recipe for an accountable leader. This finding is supported by Mascuilli (2011:6) who posits the following:

*Public leaders who lack a high degree of emotional intelligence (in this comprehensive sense) in their decisions and actions cannot compensate for their shortcomings by delegating and relying on their advisers’ emotional intelligence, though they can delegate a good deal of communication, strategising, and organisational skills. Rather, leaders must empathise and interact with advisers and other co-leaders and adversarial leaders, as well as followers/collaborators, so as to be continually aware of, and responding to, their emotional needs and moods.* (Mascuilli 2011:76).

From the foregoing argument the researcher would like to argue that in this study the lack of service delivery cannot be attributed to a lack of accountability, a lack of communication or a lack of emotional intelligence of the ward councillors. From the researcher’s observations carried out in the ward committee meetings, the ward councillors

- know the problems and needs of their constituencies;
• report council decisions and plans, especially those that will affect their wards;
• update ward committee members on new developments in the municipality;
• explain the processes and structures of the municipality;
• are transparent;
• are empathic to the ward committee members and the members of the public; and
• make decisions with the ward committee members.

The ward councillors of the wards which were observed are indeed in line with the aim of the LGTAS to rebuild and improve the basic requirements for a functional, accountable, responsive, effective and efficient developmental local government (Ramjee & Van Donk 2011:12).

Finally, the relationship between ward councillors and the ward committees is a key factor in determining the effectiveness of a ward. If the ward councillor and the ward committee members do not get along with each other, this will create divisions within the ward committee members which will later spill over to the community. This is exacerbated by the ward councillor having favourites among the ward committee members. In wards where the relations between the ward councillors and the members of the committee have completely broken down and there is no interaction whatsoever between the ward councillor, members of the ward committee and of the community, the ward committee members seek assistance either from the PR councillor in the area or from the ward councillor of the neighbouring ward. In these wards, ward committees interact directly with the municipal officials when solving the problems of the community.

6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it is established that the leadership and accountability of ward councillors is very important in local governance which is in the context of this
study is service delivery (refer to chapter 1). Taking into consideration the differing responses from the qualitative and quantitative phases, it was observed that there are problems with service delivery in the municipality. This might be attributed to insufficient financial and human resources in the municipality. Recommendations in this regard are provided in Chapter 7.

Service delivery protests erupt when the community is not satisfied with the provision of services. Therefore, it is incumbent on an individual ward councillor to influence municipal officials to speed up the delivery of services to her or his ward. Therefore, the quantified responses of ward councillors exhibit that the ward councillors have the capacity to influence and monitor the implementation of municipal resources.

Chapter 7 presents conclusions and recommendations on the challenges faced by ward councillors when performing their leadership and accountability roles.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The research analysed the following question: “To what extent can a leadership and accountability framework for ward councillors improve local governance?” The study examined the leadership and accountability of ward councillors in local governance by studying the ward councillors in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Local governance (which in the context of this research is service delivery) is influenced by various factors such as insufficient financial and human resources. However, this research established that service delivery may also be influenced by elements of emotional intelligence and the theory of communicative action.

This study established that the pillars on which local governance is anchored include the leadership and accountability of ward councillors. For example, if ward councillors are expected to have a significant effect on local governance, they must influence municipal stakeholders through communicative action. They must understand that they lead and are accountable to the community, the majority of whom are poor and dependent on state welfare and free housing. Once these are not delivered, service delivery protests erupt. This chapter therefore proposes to make recommendations on the basis of the research findings. The areas for further research as well as the limitation of the study are also presented.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 presents the rational and background of the study. The chapter outlines the research problem. This is followed by the purpose of the research which includes the aims, objectives, and the hypothesis of the study. The theory of communicative action and other theoretical concepts that frame the study are explained. The purpose of the research, the research problem, the
research questions, and the hypothesis of the research, the objectives, the definition of key concepts and the objectives of the study are also dealt with. Finally, the chapter outline is given.

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth conceptual framework for the study. Leadership in local governance and accountability are conceptualised. An overview of the requirements of a developmental local government mandate that have been assigned to municipalities as well as of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy is given. The leadership role of ward councillors which include monitoring, implementing and promoting social relations is critically analysed. This is followed by the conceptualisation of accountability in the context of political power addressing enforcement, monitoring and the answerability of councillors as a means of controlling the use of political power. The dimensions of accountability are outlined.

Chapter 3 provides an exposition of the communicative action theory by Jürgen Habermas, explaining the handling of crisis situations. The relevance of the communicative action theory on the leadership of ward councillors is examined. The emotional intelligence of leaders is also presented. The ward councillor/constituency interface through communication action is also examined.

Chapter 4 provides an in-depth theoretical framework to the study. Leadership theories and the nature and scope of accountability are discussed extensively. This chapter also examines the South African Local Government Turnaround Strategy in relation to the leadership and accountability of ward councillors.

Chapter 5 reviews the research methodology employed for purposes of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The triangulation approach was used to increase reliability. The research design is explained and the reasons for choosing a case study design and the interpretivist paradigm for the study are given. The sample for the study is indicated and the sampling methods (purposive and target sampling) are explained. The data collection tools used are explained in detail. The data
Chapter 6 provides the interpretation and analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data. This is divided into two sections. The first section presents the interpretation and the analysis of the qualitative data. The second section deals with the interpretation and analysis of the quantitative data. The triangulation research method was used to increase validity of data as it provided a valuable method of gathering information.

Chapter 7 summarises the findings and provides recommendations on the leadership roles and accountability of ward councillors in local governance. It focuses on different ways of refining the roles of ward councillors in improving service delivery in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

7.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In determining the appropriate strategies the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality should adopt in ensuring effective leadership and accountability of ward councillors, the following findings and shortcomings are identified:

- The induction of ward councillors does not prepare them adequately for leadership roles.
- Certain ward councillors appear to lack emotional intelligence.
- There are limited good relations between ward committee members and certain of the ward councillors. This could adversely affect the flow of service delivery information from the municipality to members of the community.
- Certain ward councillors do not convene ward committee and constituency meetings.
- Positive and strong leadership of ward councillors could reduce the prospects of service delivery protests.
- There is a strong relationship between communication and accountability.
• The transparency and integrity of ward councillors promote their accountability.
• The emotional intelligence of ward councillors has an influence on their leadership.
• Communication is an important tool that ward councillors use to provide accountability to their constituencies and to demand accountability from municipal officials.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is an awareness of the importance of reducing service delivery protests at the local government sphere in South Africa. Service delivery protests in municipalities may be attributed in part to a lack of accountability and leadership of ward councillors regarding basic municipal services such as houses, electricity, road infrastructure, water and sanitation. Ward councillors are assisted by ward committees in identifying and prioritising development projects and municipal services to be provided in their respective wards. However, service delivery is declining owing to a lack of municipal support. Hence, ward councillors need to revitalise their leadership and accountability roles to match the contemporary local governance dynamics. Furthermore, ward councillors have to display a high level of emotional intelligence and leadership.

The section that follows provides recommendations for ward councillors in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

Recommendation One: Improving communication

The municipality should ensure that the ward councillors are aware of its communication strategy. Certain ward councillors in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality lack communication skills. This is confirmed by the focus group interviews which revealed that some ward councillors do not communicate municipal decisions and information to the members of the
community and ward committee members. Ward councillors should display effective leadership at all times. This is more often than not demonstrated in communicative action. Bolton (2005:8) explains communicative action as a relationship established by two or more actors who seek to reach an understanding about the action situation. It is therefore recommended that ward councillors should always strive to win their followers’ trust. According to Eriksen (2001:22), the point of departure is that leadership is a matter of cooperation and interpersonal influence, exerted in a situation, directed (through a process of communication) towards the achievement of one or more specified numerical goals.

It is recommended that ward councillors can improve their communication by ensuring that they convene ward committee and constituency meetings as prescribed by municipal legislation. Communication facilitates interaction between the ward councillors and their constituencies. Information dissemination, the circulation of relevant information and conducting regular meetings are vital functions of a ward councillor (SALGA 2006:124). In terms of section 21(1) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, communication with a local community by a municipality must be done through the media.

Language is a medium of communication, but communication is a broader concept, and communicative action designates a type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts (Bolton 2005:11). It is necessary to abolish compulsion in communication. It is also necessary to develop universal communication ethics and establish adequate democratic procedures among people and social groups (Mitrović 1999:221). The challenge is that power is almost always an element of communication. It is therefore meaningless to operate with a concept of communication in which power is absent (Flyvbjerg 1998:216). However leaders, including ward councillors, should not use communication to exercise their power and to disparage the members of the community and ward committees. Hence it is important that ward councillors should select the language they use carefully when communicating as respect for others is displayed in communication and trust is built through communication. Instead, they should use communication as a mechanism to
influence their constituencies, to account for their actions and to give feedback on council decisions and plans of action.

**Recommendation Two: Improving the monitoring of implementation**

Whilst ward councillors are encouraged to display leadership and respect when relating with the municipal officials and members of the community, what has not been clearly articulated is the fact that communicative action, that is, the individual action of a ward councillor, is important to ensure common understanding and cooperation (Bolton 2005:2). Thus, ward councillors need to understand the policies of the municipality and the contract agreements between the municipality and the service providers. This would enable them to identify deviations and failures in service delivery. Also, a solid background would be laid for communicative action and for holding service providers as well as municipal officials accountable for their actions. Moreover, this would empower them to set and monitor service delivery standards.

**Recommendation Three: Promoting social relations**

In relation to the first recommendation above, communication is the anchor of solid social relations. Some members of the ward committees in the focus group discussions described relations with ward councillors as being strained. Ward councillors’ roles in the promotion of social relations might not only be affected by their lack of accessibility to the public but also by the quality of the cooperation they are able to establish between themselves and their constituencies (Eriksen 2001:22). In this respect ward councillors should maintain healthy relations. In this study it was found that social relations are reliant on the principles of communicative action. As such, ward councillors should seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement (Bolton 2005:8). They should be able to relate to the social and political climate, norms, established values and realms of understanding within a municipality. The issue of leadership immediately raises questions involving
practical competence, knowledge of relationships, understanding of institutionalised practices and interpretative frameworks. Leadership involves change and development of interpersonal relations and institutionalised patterns of interaction (Eriksen 2001:31).

However, this might not happen in reality. The ward councillors are often required to strengthen social relations. This might explain why certain members of ward committees complained during the focus group interviews that some ward councillors fail to interact with them as well as with the members of the community. Promoting social relations is complex as this should occur in diverse environments which include legal, political, financial, social, technological and religious environments. For example, ward councillors should be aware of the fact that their actions have legal, political and financial implications. What they say and what they do should be within the parameters of the local government legislative framework. They should understand the financial jargon that may be used by municipal officials so that they are able to participate meaningfully in municipal budgeting. They should also be sensitive to the diverse religious, political and cultural beliefs of the members of the community. They should not see these as a barrier to enhancing the delivery of services in their wards.

**Recommendation Four: Promoting emotional intelligence**

Emotional intelligence represents a set of attributes which include self-awareness, emotional management, self-motivation, empathy and relationship management for monitoring one’s own and others’ feelings, beliefs, and internal states in order to provide useful information to guide one’s own and others’ thinking and action (Sosik & Megerian 1999:367). Emotional intelligence includes the ability to understand and regulate emotions (Schutte et al. 2002:769). One might also expect that individuals higher in emotional intelligence would be better able to resist situational threats to a positive mood and self-esteem. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence better resist situational threats such as service delivery protests in their respective wards. For example, emotionally intelligent ward councillors might minimise how
much their moods and self-esteem are harmed by interpreting service delivery protests as a challenge and should strive come up with a sustainable solution to such problems (Schutte et al. 2002:771).

Ward councillors who possess aspects of emotional intelligence are likely to exhibit good leadership and effective accountability for several of the following reasons:

First, to the extent that a leader is self-aware, she or he may demonstrate determination, far-sightedness, and strong convictions in her or his beliefs. A leader who possesses the emotional management aspect considers the needs of others over her or his personal needs. Second, leader who possesses the emotional management aspect of emotional intelligence uses emotionally expressive language. Third, a good mood may facilitate a leader’s intellectually stimulating behaviours aimed at solving old problems in non-traditional ways. Fourth, empathy may be required for leaders who display individually considerate behaviours to foster individuation, mentoring and development of followers (Sosik & Megerian 1999:370).

Therefore, ward councillors need to be emotionally intelligent to comprehend what is communicated to them by different the municipal stakeholders as well as by the members of their community. Communicative action is an action that Habermas says uses all human ways of thinking as well as language (Mabovula 2010:3). Although recognising that leadership and accountability play a crucial role in local governance, communication should be entrenched. Ward councillors are expected to make a contribution to municipal governance in different ways: the manner in which they communicate should be entrenched, taking into cognisance aspects of emotional intelligence. Hence Habermas’s communicative action is directly linked to emotional intelligence.
intelligence. Thus the way ward councillors think and the language they use may be influenced by their level of emotional intelligence.

**Recommendation Five: Capacity-building programmes for ward councillors**

Leadership has been viewed by some as an inherent attribute rather than a learning process. It has been a prevalent belief that all successful leaders had to be endowed with the necessary personal traits that come naturally. This may be true for political leaders, but it may not be so for chief executive officers (Gildenhuys 2004:223). In addition to capacity building efforts by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Local Government SETA (LGSETA), the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality should consider organising self-management and time management training programmes. The self-management training programmes will enhance the confidence, self-esteem and emotional intelligence of ward councillors. The time-management training programme will help ward councillors to ensure that services are delivered timeously. Most importantly, these training programmes will provide ward councillors with tools such as evaluating the use of time, focusing on priorities, being prepared for meetings, monitoring project progress in their respective wards, planning for effective use of time and avoiding distractions (Du Toit *et al.* 2001:401).

**Recommendation Six: Improving accountability through trust and transparency**

According Cavil and Sohail (2004:156) improved accountability improves service delivery outcomes. In theory, there is a relationship between accountability and service outputs.

The study identified an interesting connection between trust, transparency and accountability. These three constructs are inseparable. Certainly, when the ward councillor gives account of her or his action, she or he has to do that in a transparent manner without withholding information. Thus, the speech
acts of the ward councillor become the basis for their truthfulness. Linked to their emotional intelligence, Habermas’s validity claims namely, truth, normative rightness and truthfulness or authenticity become critically important to ensure that ward councillors improve their accountability.

To strengthen transparency, ward councillors should apply the validity claims as suggested by Kernstock and Brexendorf (2009:396), namely, the truth, conduct or rightness and sincerity or authenticity. This implies that ward councillors should always focus their communication when giving account for their action to a target-oriented approach. Thus, they should answer the following questions:

- Is their speech act understandable? (comprehensibility);
- Is the content objective? (truth);
- Are their intentions socially acceptable? (conduct or rightness); and
- Do they express what they truly believe? (sincerity or authenticity).

This practice will instil the culture of transparency which is a prerequisite for improved accountability.

**Recommendation Seven: Enhancing leadership roles of ward councillors**

Many municipalities appear to be inefficient in providing services and unresponsive to the needs of citizens (Bochel & Bochel 2006:724). Arising from this study, the importance of leadership of ward councillors cannot be disputed. Leadership is vital to ensure that ward councillors are able to take risks, solve problems, open to criticism and are able to influence their constituencies. Therefore, there is a need that the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality should encourage ward councillors who are visible to their constituencies. Visible ward councillors would be able to identify and better solve the problems in their wards. Societal problems which are left unattended for extended periods have the potential for causing unrest in areas. On the other hand if the problem is identified early, it is unlikely to create a perception
in members of the community that the ward councillors together with the municipal authorities do not care about their problems.

In this regard, the municipality should inspire the ward councillors with the critical elements of leadership which according to Ammeter et al. (2002:756) are their competence, decisiveness, trustworthiness and effectiveness. It is worth mentioning that the visibility of ward councillors would be unproductive without these elements.

**Recommendation Eight: Leadership styles and performance of ward councillors**

It is essential for ward councillors to recognise and understand the diverse values, beliefs, interests, demands and problems of their communities. The way in which a ward councillor responds to these will depend on her or his leadership style. Responses from members of the ward committees indicate that the majority of ward councillors are autocratic. The issue of their styles of leadership is thus important. It should be noted that the style of leadership of a ward councillor will have a positive effect on critical aspects such as communicating council decisions, sharing information, accountability and providing feedback.

The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality should, therefore, identify the styles of leadership that would enhance and promote levels of service delivery. Ward councillors should be provided with information and training that would enable them to adopt and adapt to these leadership and accountability styles. To ensure that the identified and preferred styles are sustained and are institutionalised, they should be in line with the mission and vision of this municipality.

**Recommendation Nine: Education qualification of ward councillors**

Ward councillors are elected representatives of members of a community residing in a demarcated area (ward). She or he should work hand-in-hand
with her or his ward committee of which she or he is a chairperson. The majority of ward committee members have passed Grade 12 (Standard 10) and opted to become ward committee members because they have not, as yet, been able to secure employment. It was established from the focus group interviews with ward committees that some ward councillors possess lower education qualifications than members of the ward committees. Ward councillors usually assume office without any formal training on municipal governance and procedures and the municipality has a responsibility to empower them. They need to read volumes of municipal policies, council agendas, minutes and documents pertaining specifically to, *inter alia*, service delivery. They also need to report regularly to the council on the progress of projects in their respective wards. Also, their representative role would not be complete if they do not deliberate in council meetings. They should also serve in various council committees. Therefore, they should possess a level of education that enables them to make a more meaningful contribution to their communities and council as a whole.

It emerged from the focus group discussions with the members of the ward committees that the municipality is spending a substantial amount of money on empowering ward councillors. This has, however, had an adverse effect on the visibility of certain ward councillors as they are studying part-time at a university. This study therefore recommends that the duration of the empowerment programmes of ward councillors should not be more than a month. Also, Grade 10 (Standard 8) should be their minimum education qualification.

**Recommendation Ten: Application of the Batho Pele (People First) Principles**

Ward councillors play an important role in service delivery. In an attempt to improve service delivery, ward councillors need to strengthen forces with the municipal administration in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. It is strongly recommended that ward councillors need to adhere to the Batho Pele
Principles which Joseph (2002:10) proposes advocate a culture of good, effective public service including those working for municipalities.

Ward councillors should consult and inform members of the community residing in their wards regarding the level and quality of public services. The information provided should indicate the accurate level of service standards. They should ensure that services are equally accessed by everyone and that redress is rendered when services are not delivered (Joseph 2002:18). The application of these principles by ward councillors could lead to enhanced service delivery, which would in turn create an improved image of the ward councillors and the municipality. It emerged from the study that not all ward councillors are fully aware of the importance and legislative prescriptions pertaining to the Batho Pele Principles.

7.5 FURTHER RESEARCH ON THIS TOPIC

The leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors in the governance of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality suggest that there are areas of research that can be useful in strengthening local governance in South African municipalities. This study concentrated on the leadership and accountability roles of ward councillors. It would be necessary to focus a study on the interface between ward councillors and ward committees. This is because healthy relations that exist between ward councillors and ward committees can positively influence service delivery. This study could provide a model for this kind of interface.

Future studies could analyse the leadership styles of ward councillors so as to establish the relationship between the leadership styles of ward councillors with local governance. There is also a need to investigate how a municipality can promote the accountability of ward councillors despite a variety of existing legislative prescriptions pertaining to the role, functions, duties and accountability of councillors.
A further research area that needs to be explored is the role of ward councillors in monitoring and evaluating municipal performance. A monitoring and evaluation model for ward councillors could include application of municipal resources, achievement and setting standards, monitoring implementation, and demanding feedback.

A better understanding of the emotions concerned and how ward councillors should interact with municipal stakeholders and their constituencies is required. This could address the issue of the emotional intelligence of ward councillors.
LIST OF REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1: Permission from BCMM

12 Sudbury Courts
Zareba Street
Richmond Hill
PORT ELIZABETH
6001

05 June 2013

THE CITY MANAGER
BUFFALO CITY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY
PO BOX 134
EAST LONDON
5200

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY AT BCMM

I am a student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University completing Doctor of Philosophy. I am sure you are aware that any post graduate study involves completion of a Treatise or Dissertation or Thesis. It is for this reason that I request your personal and professional permission to partake in my research in directorates and departments within BCMM.

The title of my research Thesis is LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF WARD COUNCILLORS IN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES: A CASE STUDY OF NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY, and is being undertaken under the Supervision of Professors V Notshulwan (Promoter) and D Taylor (Co-Promoter).

The study has two central aims. The first aim, is to test the two elements of the communicative action circular process in which the actor is an initiator who masters situations through actions for which he/she is accountable and a product of the transitions surrounding him/her. The second aim, is to establish to what extent do ward councillors enhance the performance of the municipality, public involvement and communication? The research study shall make use of self-administered questionnaires which will be distributed to ward councillors, focus group interviews with ward committee members and, observations in the form of sitting-in in the ward committee and constituency meetings. The sample will comprise all fifty (50) ward councillors and eighty four (84) ward committee members from seven (7) wards in the underdeveloped communities and seven (7) wards from affluent communities. The potential
participants or respondents would thus include ward councillors and ward committee members. The study will be beneficial to BCMM in that a framework that would improve the leadership role and accountability mechanisms for ward councillors to increase the level of trust and confidence of the public in ward councillors will be recommended.

The ethical research principles will be strictly adhered to throughout the research process so as to maintain a high standard of work and a high quality of the research study. The information obtained will be used only for purposes of this study, and will ensure anonymity and confidentiality of potential research participants or respondents. A copy of the full research report, once approved by the University will be handed to BCMM.

I thus request granting of permission to collect the necessary data/information from ward councillors and ward committee members at BCMM for the purposes of completion of my Thesis.

Your kind assistance in granting me permission will be highly appreciated and thank you for taking the time in allowing your staff to be part of this research study as I am sure it will not only be of benefit to me but to them as well.

Yours faithfully,

P. Nompendulo Mfene
E-mail address: pnmfene@nmmu.ac.za
Cellphone: 082 202 2312
Telephone (W): 041 504 2240

CITY MANAGER

Approved | Not Approved
APPENDIX 2: Interview schedule for ward committees

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

READ TO FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

“Thank you for agreeing to join us today. Before we begin, I would like to confirm that you have given your voluntary consent to participate. Do you agree freely?”

“Okay, then I would like to start with the instructions."

1. I will be the facilitator of this focus group discussion and my role will be to ask questions. I therefore encourage everyone to participate in the discussion. As the facilitator, I will just ask questions and I will not talk much but I may from time to time ask for more explanation or to give an example. I will also see that everyone has a chance to speak. Since we will have until (here I will state the time when the discussion will end), we will not have enough time to hear every little detail from everyone. Therefore, sometimes I may seem to cut you off, please do not take this personally as I would not mean to be rude but to ensure that we have time to hear from others.

2. I urge everyone to agree that anything especially sensitive issues that may be discussed here will not be told to anybody and they will not be repeated outside this room.

3. Everyone’s opinions and experiences are valid and will not be undermined. Please voice your agreement or disagreement on any issue that will be discussed.
4. A tape recorder will be used to record our discussions. The tape recorder is used because I want to get all the information.

5. I humbly request everyone in this room to introduce themselves to the group. Please indicate your name and your ward when introducing yourself.
Focus group questions for members of ward committees:

1. What is your general view of the leadership role of your ward councillor?
2. How many times per quarter does the ward councillor convene a meeting with:
   a. Ward committee members
   b. His/her constituency
3. How does the ward councillor report back on council matters to the community?
4. Do you think the municipality and the ward councillors encourage freedom of the media?
5. Do ward councillors declare their interest in community matters that are discussed at the meeting?
6. Do the members of the public have access to the Councillor’s Handbook, information on the induction of councillors, council records and minutes of meetings?
7. What do you think can be done to encourage ward councillors to be more transparent about their interests and their activities in and outside council?
8. How do ward councillors respond to the needs of the community?
9. What can members of the public do to prevent abuse of power and corruption by elected representatives?
10. What measures are in place to ensure that ward councillors account to their constituencies?
11. Is there any effort being made by ward councillors to ensure that members of the public participate in the affairs of the municipality?
12. What do you think should be done to encourage public participation?

Thank you again for being here today and for sharing your ideas with me!
APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire for ward councillors

Dear Madam/Sir

This research is being undertaken as a doctoral study conducted by Primrose Nompendulo Mfene on “Leadership and accountability of ward councillors in South African municipalities: a case study of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality”.

Participation in this is voluntary and anonymous. Responses to all questions will be kept confidential and will be used for this research only. Your participation is appreciated.

Completing this questionnaire will not take more than fifteen (15) minutes of your time.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at:

**Cell phone number**: 082 202 2312

**Office number** : 041 504 2240

**Email address**: pnmfene@nmmu.ac.za

Yours sincerely

Ms P N Mfene
Questionnaire

Participant: Please check, circle or write your response for each of the following questions. Please indicate a response for each question, skipping none. Thank you for your time.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Sex:
   _____1. Male
   _____2. Female

2. Age _____

3. Current relationship status:
   _____1. Never married
   _____2. In a committed relationship
   _____3. Living with someone in a committed relationship
   _____4. Married
   _____5. Separated
   _____6. Divorced
   _____7. Widowed
   _____8. Other (please describe)

4. Educational qualification:
   _____1. Certificate -
      _____1.1 Grade 12 (Standard 10)
      _____1.2 Grade 10 (Standard 8)
   _____2. Diploma
   _____3. Undergraduate degree/professional qualification
   _____4. Postgraduate degree –
      _____4.1 Honours
      _____4.2 Masters
   _____5. Other: Specify:

........................................................................................................................................
Below are some statements about different issues that involve you as a public sector leader. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with your ability to do these things. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Studying problems in the light of past practices.

2. Being willing to take risks and to consider new and untested approaches.

3. Discussing service delivery issues with your constituency.

4. Making municipal information available to members of the community.

5. Taking a long-range, broad approach to problem solving.

6. Building commitment by giving regular, open and truthful feedback to the constituency.

7. Acting in an extroverted, friendly and informal manner.

8. Operating with energy, intensity, and emotional expression.

9. Working to control emotions and maintain and understand personal demeanour.

10. Building trust through integrity, accountability and transparency.

11. Focusing on short-range, hands-on, practical strategies.

12. Clarifying what is expected and maintaining the flow of information.

13. Encouraging ward committees and the public to make constructive suggestions and criticisms for improving service delivery.

14. Monitoring the implementation of council decisions and policies by municipal officials.
15. Disclosing your business, professional and social interests to the constituency

16. Seeking to exert influence by being in positions of authority.

17. Pushing vigorously to get answers and feedback from municipal officials on service delivery issues and complaints of the members of community.

18. Adopting a strong orientation toward achievement and setting standards.

19. Accommodating the needs and interests of others.

20. Valuing the ideas and opinions of others.

21. Ensuring proper application of municipal resources.

22. Demonstrating an active concern for people and their needs.

23. Accepting responsibility for your actions and decisions.

Thank you for assistance in completing this survey!
APPENDIX 4: Language quality assurance

Editing and Translation Services
Renée van der Merwe
B A Hons (Applied Linguistics)
SATI Accredited

Mobile: 083 415 4570 E-mail: renee.vandermerwe@gmail.com

This serves as confirmation that the treatise, Leadership and accountability of ward councillors in South African Municipalities: A case of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, by PN Mtene has been submitted to me for proofreading and language editing.

R van der Merwe
16 January 2014