Citizen Participation, Decentralization and Inclusive Development

A Survey on Citizen Participation and Decentralization in South Africa
with specific reference to the Eastern Cape c. 2005

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Declaration

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Studies) in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. I declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the research conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged. I also declare that this thesis has not previously been submitted, as it is or under any other format, to another University.

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Date: 09 January 2009
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Abstract

Contemporary debates about development confer a prominent role to citizen participation and decentralization. Growing scepticism about the efficacy of narrowly conceived measures add pressure to reform development both theoretically and in practical terms. There is a greater understanding that ‘traditional’ development approaches and policies need to be reformulated and decentralization and citizen participation have been proposed as remedies to previous development failures.

It is frequently argued that citizen participation will improve the efficiency and efficacy of public services. Citizen participation is meant to render local government more accountable and to contribute to deepening democracy, by reinforcing representative democratic institutions with participatory forms. At the same time, decentralization reforms have been proposed as a response to the failures of highly centralized states. From a political perspective, it is argued, decentralization reforms can help the central state gain legitimacy and have been seen as a strategy for maintaining political stability. It has been repeatedly suggested that physical proximity makes it easier for citizens to hold local officials accountable for their performance. From an economic perspective, decentralization can improve the match between the mix of services provided by the public sector and the preferences of the local population. It has also been noted that people are more willing to pay for services that respond to their priorities and that increased competition between local governments generates spaces for more creative responses adapted to local needs.

But then, can decentralization and citizen participation live up to the faith and expectations that they have inspired? I argue that the literature commonly over-emphasises the role of citizen participation and decentralization in development and what these processes and reforms can achieve. Much of the evidence is anecdotal in nature and tends to neglect the specific contexts in which these processes take place. Also largely ignored are political economy considerations and a critical exploration of the relationship between these two key words. At best, when their interrelationships are addressed decentralization and citizen participation are conceived as based on a symbiotic relationship. I suggest, however, that the relationship between these two processes is not as straightforward as most of the literature assumes. The meanings of
these two key words in current development lexicon are explored and critically assessed. I argue that whether or not the rising prominence of these two words actually means the emergence of a new development agenda is a moot point. It critically depends on the understandings of these ambiguous terms. The thesis adopts a political economy approach. Combined with this is an awareness of the broader historical and socio-economic context in which citizen participation and decentralization take place.

The thesis applies these ideas triangulating diverse research methods and data sources. It combines a literature review and documentary analysis, a survey conducted with municipal authorities and civil society organizations in the Eastern Cape as well as structured interviews with Ward councillors and with key informants.

From a theoretical perspective, the study lays a foundation for understanding the relationship between development policies outcomes and the nature of citizen participation and decentralization in developing countries. This, in turn, provides a basis from which citizen participation and decentralization in South Africa can be assessed and understood. The thesis presents evidence from a case study of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. By revealing how different dimensions of decentralization and citizen participation operate and intersect, the findings demonstrate, that contrary to common knowledge, citizen participation and decentralization are frequently at odds. Moreover, contrary to frequent statements, the research also shows that opening new spaces for participation in decentralized local governance can result in fewer changes and disappointing results at best, undermining the transformative potential of the concepts of participation and decentralization.
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Relevant legislation, acts and policy documents

Five Year Local Government Strategic Agenda (2006 - 2011)
Integrated Development Plans Guideline Packs (2001)
Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (2005)
Local Government Transition Act (1993)
Municipal Demarcation Act (1998)
Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Act (2007)
Municipal Structures Act (1998)
Non Profit Organizations Act (1997)
White paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994)
White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1997)
List of abbreviations

ANC African National Congress
CBO Community Based Organizations
CDE Centre for Development Enterprise
CDF Comprehensive Development Framework
CSO Civil Society Organizations
CIDA Canadian International Development Agency
DFID Department for International Development
DPLG Department of Provincial and Local Government
ECLA Economic Commission for Latin America
ECSECC Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council
FBO Faith Based Organization
FIFA Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GAD Gender And Development
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GEAR Growth, Employment And Redistribution
HSRC Human Sciences Research Council
ICA Interim Constitution Act
IDASA Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDP Integrated Development Planning
IDRC International Development Research Centre
IFI International Financial Institutions
IIDIS Initiatives In Development Support
ILO International Labor Organisation
IMF International Monetary Fund
ISI Import Substitution Industrialization
ISNIE International Society for New Institutional Economics
LED Local Economic Development
LGNF Local Government Negotiating Forum
LGTA Local Government Transition Act
MDG Millennium Development Goals
MEC Member of the Executive Council
MIG Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MSA Municipal Systems Act
NCOP National Council Of Provinces
NEG New Economic Geography
NEPAD New Partnership for African Development
NGO Non-Governmental Organizations
NIC Non-Inner City
NMB Nelson Mandela Bay
NPO Non Profit Organizations
NPM New Public Management
ODA Official Development Assistance
OECD Organisstion for Economic Co-operation and Development
PC Project Consolidate
PD Paris Declaration
PMS Performance Management System
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSC Regional Service Council
RSA Republic of South Africa
SALGA South African Local Government Association
SAP Structural Adjustment Programmes
SLA Service Level Agreement
UN United Nations
UNCED United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-SA United Nations Development Programme – South Africa
UNHCHR United Nations High Commissioner on Human Right
WAD Women And Development
WB World Bank
WDR World Development Report
WID Women In Development
WPLG White Paper on Local Government
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Currently, a renewed emphasis on the need to undertake decentralization reforms and to enhance participation in development seems to have achieved a degree of consensus in the most influential development institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, developed and developing countries governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and research institutions. Decentralization and participation are words that form part of today’s mainstream development thinking. This has been paralleled by three related processes. Firstly, there is an increasingly global agenda on the part of aid donors to promote ‘good governance’ (democratization, rule of law, human rights protection, transparency, participation and accountability). Secondly, many developing countries are following democratization trends. Thirdly, there is recognition in academic circles that past development models were over-centralized and thereby inefficient and ineffective, as were those attempts that sought to implement a crude withdrawal of the state.

The overlapping of the diverse interpretations in the widespread rhetoric of decentralization and participation could be interpreted as the symptom of an urgent need for change. Donors are seeking higher ‘social returns’ for their aid flows; governments being under pressure to (more effectively) deliver on their promises; and citizens are disenchanted with democratic promises to transform their preferences into government programmes thus bringing the legitimacy of the whole democratic project into question. The reactions from donors, governments and citizens have resulted in the emergence of more ‘localized’ models of development. In the development jargon that has accompanied these trends: ‘development from below’, ‘territorial development’, ‘bottom up approaches’ and ‘endogenous development’ are proposed as concepts and approaches aimed at remedying previous development failures.

However, the degree of consensus in terms of implementation of this ‘new’ agenda is a moot point and could be interpreted as a consequence of the conceptual ambiguity underpinning these divergent approaches. It should not be surprising that politicians, businessmen, government officials, scholars, trade unions and NGOs are all talking
about the need to increase participation in development and promote decentralization initiatives; however, their diverse ideologies, goals and agendas make it difficult to reach a consensus on the practical level.

The definitions of decentralization and participation are a contested field and important debates have been held among development practitioners and scholars on these topics. Participation may be a technique, a methodology, a process and even a value and a desirable outcome. Participation has been described as a means and an end: as a means to increase policies’ or projects’ effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. More substantively, it has been approached as a key ingredient for local democracy.

The arguments that call for increasing citizen participation related to local governance are threefold. Firstly, it is argued that it will improve the efficiency and efficacy of public services. Secondly, it is meant to render local government more accountable. Finally, it should deepen democracy as it will reinforce representative democratic institutions with participatory forms (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). The concept of citizen participation has been part and parcel of the debate of the representative democracy ‘crisis’. It is seen as the remedy for this crisis: models of representative democracy need to be complemented with more participatory forms of democracy.

At the same time, decentralization reforms have been proposed as a response to the failures of highly centralized states. From a political perspective, it is frequently argued that decentralization allows greater political representation for diverse political, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in decision-making, and can provide better opportunities for local residents to participate in decision-making. Decentralization reforms can thus help the central state gain legitimacy and have been seen as a strategy for maintaining political stability. They provide an institutional mechanism to bring opposition groups into a formal bargaining process (Burki, et al, 1999) and therefore act as a key strategy for peaceful conflict resolution. From an economic viewpoint, the arguments in favour of decentralization are mainly centred on issues of allocative efficiency. Decentralization can improve the match the mix of services produced by the public sector to the preferences of the local population. It has frequently been argued that physical proximity makes it easier for citizens to hold local officials accountable for their performance. Additional economic arguments in favour of decentralization
reforms note that people are more willing to pay for services that respond to their priorities and that increased competition between local governments (if the population is mobile) can improve the delivery of basic services and generates spaces for more creative responses adapted to local needs (Bahl, 1999).

It is thus argued that, under decentralization reforms, the political objectives of increased political responsiveness and participation at the local level can coincide with the economic objectives of better decisions about the use of public resources. Both strands should therefore contribute towards the legitimization of the democratization project.

However, current decentralization programmes and calls for more participatory forms of governance often fall short of the great expectations that precede them and fail to ‘deepen’ democracy.

Frequently, decentralization reforms have implied more responsibilities for local government, but have not increased resources and power. Additionally, many local governments not only lack resources but work under organizational, institutional and political contexts that are not conducive to the introduction of participatory practices. Most local governments are unlikely to have the capacity to change their development approach with the same speed that policy makers can draft legislation, reformulate programmes and reconsider approaches (Plummer, 1999).

Additionally, more sceptical views on the relation between decentralization and peaceful conflict resolution note that by accentuating ethnic, political, and geographic divisions in often highly fragmented societies with weak state structures, decentralization could raise the risk of civil and ethnic conflict. Furthermore, decentralization is not necessarily related to democratic local governance. In many cases decentralization reforms have taken place but these processes have been not been

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1 Inequality concerns and fiscal decentralization are especially relevant for those countries where some jurisdictions are better endowed with resources than others and historical circumstances may have created local disparities. Tax bases vary substantially from region to region and from locality to locality. Martinez-Vázquez and Boex (2001) argue that significant regional variations in fiscal resources often lead to regional tensions and can lead to open conflict or demands for secession. The case of Bolivia comes to mind, where these horizontal imbalances are matched by ethnic cleavages.
participatory, democratic, or inclusive. Moreover, certain relevant emerging literature has pointed out that citizen participation in local governance does not necessarily lead to more democratic and inclusive political practices, either through the reinforcement of political clientelism or elite capture (Blackburn, 2000; Johnson and Wilson, 2000 and Schönwälder, 1997).

The relation between citizen participation and more inclusive models of development is also uncertain. Roodt (2001) is concerned with the way in which certain groups and individuals monopolize power and development resources at the local level, excluding other groups and individuals from participating. This preoccupation is also highlighted, i.a., in Fox and Aranda (1996), Leach et al (1999), McEwan (2005), Molyneux (2002), Pozzoni and Kumar (2005) and Schönwälder (1997).

Therefore, the relations between decentralization, citizen participation and more democratic and inclusive models of local governance are not straightforward. For some scholars decentralization is regarded as a condition (necessary but not sufficient) for the promotion of local democracy through increased participation. For others, some degree of citizen participation is a precondition for effective decentralization. I argue that it critically depends on how decentralization is conceived. But I will also note that it is important to understand the factors affecting the environment and the macro context where decentralization and citizen participation is intended to occur. Decentralization and participation cannot be unlinked from the broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of decentralized, participatory development to be transformative. For decentralization and citizen participation to transform formal democratic institutions, institutionalizing a more inclusive model of development, it must be stressed that such political agency and processes are contingent on conjunctural conditions that must be investigated (Mohan and Stokke, 2005; Phillips and Edwards, 2000 and Schönwälder, 1997).

The depth of the consensus established around these terms is thus complex and by no means uncontested. It is clear that for change to materialize, development theory and practice must go well beyond the prevalence of this new terminology. An effort should be made to clarify what it is meant and expected by these catchwords in development studies. When exploring this rhetoric, one finds that ‘good governance’, ‘participation’,
‘decentralization’, ‘local development’—now incorporated into mainstream development lexicon—have very diverse meanings associated with different visions of development and the processes and policies required to achieve these.

This thesis recognises that an unprecedented window of opportunity appears to have been opened since, more than ever, there seems to be a greater understanding that ‘traditional’ development approaches and policies need to be reformulated. Growing scepticism about the efficacy of narrowly conceived measures add more pressure to reform development both theoretically and in practical terms. If decentralization and citizen participation hold so many promises, why does there seem to be a wide gap between the promised land of participatory and decentralized development and everyday realities?

As Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) note that, on one hand, there is a clear need to deepen our understanding of the conceptualization, formulation and implementation of development policy regarding participatory development approaches in decentralized governance. On the other, the multiplicity of approaches and the diversity of interpretations of decentralization and citizen participation in development policies and projects, as well as the diverse theoretical conceptualizations and methodologies make it difficult to evaluate such practices. The evident gap between the promise of enhanced participation through democratic decentralization on one side, and the everyday realities of participatory politics on the other, suggests the need to more fully understand ‘the barriers and dynamics of decentralization and participation in local governance, as well as the enabling factors and methods that can be used to overcome them’ (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999, p. 6).

This thesis seeks to provide an overview of the concepts of participation and decentralization by reviewing their definitions, stated advantages and objectives, and critically assessing both their conceptual coherence and their utility as operational and policy tools. It seeks to operationalize both concepts in order to be able to assess the extent to which such practices are being implemented; what are the problems and challenges faced during their implementation and what is required to fulfil the promises associated to these key words in the contemporary development lexicon. This will improve our understanding about how, and under what conditions, citizen participation
and decentralized governance can contribute to more inclusive social change. In particular, this conceptualization will assist in the evaluation and understanding of the patterns of decentralization and citizen participation in local governance in South Africa.

After discussing these issues from a theoretical perspective, this research examines the complex relationship between development, decentralization and citizen participation in democratic local governance with specific reference to the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The objective of the case study is to understand how decentralization and citizen participation are being implemented in South Africa, both concepts being referred to as key components of a ‘developmental local government’ strategy (South African Government, 1998a).

The study seeks to understand some of the key features of the intergovernmental fiscal relations system and the decentralization process in South Africa and explores their relation to the process of citizen participation. It assesses the extent to which citizen participation is being undertaken by local government as articulated in South Africa’s legal framework and explores the extent to which municipalities’ developmental role is being conceived through the incorporation of participatory practices. Additionally, it provides an assessment of the ‘intensity level’ of citizen participation as understood by local government authorities, while comparing these answers with the perceptions of Civil Society Organizations (CSO). The assessment is extended to include accountability, monitoring and evaluation practices as key elements in facilitating effective citizen participation in local governance. It intends to identify and analyze the key challenges and constraints restricting the incorporation of participatory development approaches in local governance. Finally, it seeks to distinguish and discuss possible strategies to overcome the identified problems and limitations.

1.2 Justification of the Research

The rationale for undertaking this study is informed by numerous considerations. Firstly, the disenchantment with and failure of various development theories, as well as meagre results in terms of policy design and implementation, has made the search for alternative development strategies a priority. In describing and assessing the causes for
the rise to prominence of decentralization and citizen participation, this dissertation will look at the broader theoretical context and concepts relevant to the subject-matter. This includes looking at changes in development theories to provide a framework for discussion of the rationale for decentralization and citizen participation in development. Relevant theoretical paradigms and changes in development theory are outlined. Additionally, it critically discusses conventional arguments for decentralization and citizen participation, explicitly considering the challenging context of a developing country. From a theoretical perspective, the study lays a foundation for understanding the relationship between development policies’ outcomes and the nature of citizen participation and decentralization in developing countries. This, in turn, provides a basis from which citizen participation and decentralization in South Africa can be assessed and understood. At a broader level these findings contribute to an understanding of the role and place for decentralization and citizen participation in democratic local governance in the context of the developing world.

Secondly, the increasing global attention paid to participation and decentralization, as reflected in a growing body of literature\(^2\), statements in international summits and declarations, government policy documents and discourses, and especially, in South African legal and policy documents, suggest that these approaches may have considerable potential. Many municipalities face increasing pressure to promote these kinds of reforms, particularly through the decentralization process, as enabling legal frameworks and institutional channels for local level citizen participation have been developed and opened up in many developing countries. South Africa’s development agenda has been incorporating these key words since the democratic dispensation, when an era characterized by much more local autonomy --in which local authorities and communities have, in principle, gained access to new spaces to take greater control over their future development-- was inaugurated.

The demise Apartheid and the first democratic elections saw critical redefinitions of the content, roles and aims of local governments. In fact, one of the main themes of the transformation project in post-Apartheid South Africa is the creation and expansion of local democracy and institutions that encourage citizen participation, especially in local

\(^2\) This literature is reviewed in chapters two and three.
governance. The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) (South African Government, 1998a) notes that the Apartheid planning legacy left racially divided business and residential areas, as well as wealthy areas that have access to all basic services coexisting alongside poor areas which lack access to basic services. While important differences in the level of services between rich and poor urban areas exist, rural areas have remained underdeveloped and largely without services. Under such a challenging scenario, the new approach to local government (which the country has committed itself to since the Constitutional reform), aims to overcome the impoverished and unequal development perspectives of the past.

In the new system of local governance, local government is identified as a development agent with an aim to redressing inequality and poverty, supporting the extension of local democracy and ensuring the delivery of basic services, as put forth by the Constitution, legislative acts and policy documents. Section 152 of the Constitution recognises the following objectives for local government: ‘to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy environment; and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government’ (South African Government, 1996a, vii).

A developmental role for local government has been understood as the central responsibility of municipalities. Municipalities are now mandated to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. Key policy documents such as the WPLG (South African Government, 1998a) and other relevant legislation such as Municipal Structures Act (South African Government, 1998b) and Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (South African Government, 2000), place participation at the core of the local government system. Municipalities are called upon to support social and economic development in their communities and they are mandated to consult and involve the communities in these matters, since the communities are expected to ‘own the development processes’ (South African Government, 2000). The legal framework and policy documents place the onus for development on local authorities and communities and call for the establishment of partnerships for local governments to work with the private and community sectors.
The transformation project in South Africa is thus based on the development of local democracy and participatory institutions for local government to be responsive to local needs. In light of this, and given the reality of decades of inequality, it was deemed appropriate to investigate whether decentralization and participatory development can, and are actually helping to, address this legacy and if they can offer a development ‘alternative’. This is, in itself, a motivation to examine whether decentralization and citizen participation can live up to the faith and expectations that they have inspired.

Thirdly, despite the fact that local government in South Africa has improved its service delivery substantively over the past ten years, according to available scholarly literature and statistics in South Africa (Afrobarometer, 2006) there seems to be no sign that the massive reorganization that culminated in the 2000 local government elections has had any positive impact in terms of greater public esteem towards local government (Mattes et al, 2003). Various studies seem to confirm that public dissatisfaction with local government has not subsided, and a very recent report by Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) notes that South African citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of services provided by local government (IDASA, 2008). A survey conducted by Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to assess the impact of Batho Pele principles\(^3\) in municipal household services indicates that people see a difference in practice between the various principles at the municipal level. The greatest disagreement with the Batho Pele statement relates to Consultation, which indicates that this is the main gap in implementation. When consultation is considered together with Openness and Transparency and Providing Information, there appears little agreement that all these aspects are in place. There is also disagreement that municipal responsiveness is in evidence. The report highlights that the respondents believe that government is not managing to communicate and respond to people's priorities (HSRC, 2007).

Moreover, in South Africa, local government has been the target of considerable protests over service delivery. But if the reform of the system of local governance implied the creation of formal structures for people to channel their views and concerns

\(^3\) These are detailed in chapter five.
and to work in partnership with the governments to tackle development and governance challenges, why did massive protests take place during 2005 and 2006? Why does it seem that the new spaces created are not working (or at least are not used) as a way of voicing citizen needs and concerns regarding local government performance?

The recent IDASA study asserts that citizens in South Africa generally feel further removed from local government and from ‘development’, and demand more and better services on the one hand, while being less willing to contribute to local development through their own actions and initiatives on the other hand (IDASA, 2008). This thesis seeks to shed light on some of the possible causes of this phenomenon. Research results should inform a revision of the approach to citizen participation in light of the decentralization process in order to contribute to the improvement and consolidation of participatory approaches.

Moreover, while it is important to recognise the potential of decentralization and citizen participation in democratic models of local governance, the gap that exists between the legal and policy frameworks for decentralization to promote participation, and what in fact really occurs, needs to be better understood. This gap shows the need to understand the nature, dynamics, methods and relations of decentralization and participation in this new context. The dialectic between theory and practice in decentralized and participatory development is thus discussed in this thesis through an empirical study carried out in the Province of the Eastern Cape, Republic of South Africa.

Fourthly, this research thesis is also very timely given the review process of the WPLG initiated in 2007 by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG). This provides a relevant window of opportunity for research results to feed into this policy dialogue. Results emerging from this study are relevant for higher levels of government to recognize and understand municipalities’ constraints and problems if they want to make the discursive consensus of encouraging citizen participation and installing more decentralized models of governance meaningful. However, it is also relevant for the municipalities themselves to know what constraints they face if they want to implement participatory approaches to fulfil their developmental goals. Furthermore, research results will also be central to any further research into the nature and functioning of local government in South Africa.
Fifthly, in terms of evidence that it is already available, while there has been some encouraging work on decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa (especially in the last five years), the bulk of these studies are more specific in nature, with relatively little explicit engagement with emerging debates regarding the relationships between decentralization, citizen participation and democratic development.

Hugo Noble’s work is explicitly concerned with municipal managers’ perceptions and understandings of the development process as the broad approach to their everyday actions (Noble, 2004). Noble’s analysis of the ideological outlook of South African municipal managers of metropoles and larger urban centres is useful since it provides an important contribution to understanding the broader development approach adopted by these local government administrative authorities. However, while it gives some useful insight and helps to contextualise this study by providing empirical evidence to understand the approaches of local government administrative authorities, it leaves critical issues related to the process of implementing the agenda of citizen participation in decentralized local governance unanswered. At the same time, it is exclusively focussed on the views of municipal managers. An analysis of their political counterparts as well as of CSO perceptions and understandings in terms of citizen participation in local governance is also needed.

Although dated, the critical assesement of citizen participation in South Africa by Hildyard et al (1998) still offers contextualizing material. Other contributions can be found in United Nations Development Programme – South Africa (UNDP-SA, 2002) – focussed on the sustainability assessment of Integrated Development Planning (IDPs); some research work produced by HRSC on women’s political participation in local government (HRSC, 2004) and public participation in decision-making in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature (HRSC, 2005); the Centre for Public Participation (especially through its quarterly journal on public participation –Critical Dialogue: Public Participation in Review), Kroukamp (2002), Pieterse (2002) and IDASA (2004 and 2005). While none of them have explicitly concentrated on contrasting the municipal and local communities perspective of citizen participation processes, they provide useful background and complementing information. Monty Roodt has examined and reviewed the concept of participation in development and poses relevant questions to assess the
extent to which participatory initiatives can succeed in South Africa (Roodt, 2001). Very recently IDASA launched a report developing a ‘Local Governance Barometer’ (IDASA, 2008) which, although it does not focus on citizen participation, touches upon relevant related themes and dedicates a chapter to this issue.

Various papers have also been concerned with the assessment of specific citizen participation tools (see i.a. Hemson, 2007; Nyalunga, 2006; Piper and Deacon, 2008; Putu, 2006; Sithole et al, 2006 and Smith, 2004) or the assessment of participatory processes in specific communities4. Additionally, some research work carried out by IDASA (through its Budget Information Service, Palmer Development Group, 2004) on the decentralization process also helped contextualize my study. Some aspects of the fiscal decentralization process have been discussed in Ambert and Feldman (2002), Atkinson et al (2004), Davids (2003), Derichs and Einfeldt (2006), Momoniat (2003), Reddy (2003); Whelan (2004) and Yemek (2005).

The contributions that come from these studies are further discussed in chapters four and five. However, very few of these studies explicitly explore the linkages between decentralization and citizen participation and much of the literature concentrates on detailed case studies about the implementation of a specific participatory mechanism. The literature on citizen participation rarely relates the case study with the macro context. In particular, the case studies are not examined along with the process of fiscal decentralization, and the lessons gained from these sorts of study, although contributing to building a body of evidence, still remain fragmented and partial. While these writings detail and assess key features of the specific tools and spaces of citizen participation, the lack of more general empirical evidence regarding the success or failure of citizen participation makes it almost impossible to draw unqualified conclusions with regard to the effectiveness of citizen participation and decentralization for democratic local governance. This thesis, therefore, systematizes the body of unconnected and case specific literature in the country.

4 See i.a., for Ballard et al (2008) and Durban, Maharaj and Low (2008); for Cape Town, Benit-Gbaffiou (2008) and Moodley (2007). For the Eastern Cape, in discussing the application of rural restitution to Betterment Cases, Minkley and Westaway (2005) argue that the resolution of the Cata claim involved a strong emphasis on community empowerment and integrated planning and implementation. For an analysis of traditional authorities and local democracy see Xaba (2008).
Finally, at a broader level, relating the South African experience to that of other countries and to theoretical considerations in general provides the means to compare and contrast the local reality with the more general context of the theory and practice of decentralization and citizen participation. Not only is it a timely study, but it is also an appropriate research framework for assessing and understanding the dynamics of decentralization and citizen participation, which is a necessity still unmet. This researcher believes that more effort should be concentrated on the area of study regarding the relationships between democratic governance, citizen participation and decentralization: What is the relationship between decentralization reforms and citizen participation? What are the effects in terms of democratized local governance and what are the challenges and problems that need to be overcome with regards to this form of governance? It is also critical to discuss, in operational terms, how decentralization reforms and formal spaces for citizen participation are being introduced and sustained in municipal policies and local development strategies.

One of the major contributions of the study has been the development --and field testing-- of a research framework designed to assess citizen participation practices in decentralized governance. The criterion developed was applied in a case study for the Eastern Cape. This research should contribute to opening up a new line of studies on the links between decentralization and citizen participation. This in turn will refine the research framework, which can then hopefully be applied elsewhere, both in South Africa and abroad.

This study examines the complex relationship between decentralization and the role of citizen participation in democratic local governance. It develops a general framework that allows local governments’ perspectives, problems, views and opportunities connected to participatory approaches in local governance to be evaluated and understood while recognising the broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of participatory development to be transformative. I argue that if these issues are not properly dealt with, the efforts to promote citizen participation will result in fewer changes and disappointing results at best, undermining the transformative potential of the concepts of participation and decentralization.
1.3 Research Objectives and Guiding Research Questions

This research thesis seeks to identify key features of current development theory and policy specifically related to the emergence of decentralization and citizen participation discourses, to design and test –through a case study in South Africa- an assessment framework for decentralization and participatory spaces in local governance and to make a contribution to both theoretical interpretations and applied policy.

Firstly, it intends to discuss the concepts of participation and decentralization, their various meanings, contradictions and intersections. It will provide an overview of these concepts by reviewing their definitions, stated advantages and objectives, and by critically assessing both their conceptual coherence and their utility as operational and policy tools. This study will provide an operationalization of both concepts in order to be able to assess the extent to which these practices are being implemented and which problems and challenges are being faced during their implementation. This will help to better understand how, and under what conditions, citizen participation and decentralized local governance can contribute to more inclusive and democratic social change.

This thesis aims to construct an analytical framework that will facilitate the assessment of the degree to which the decentralization and participatory discourse is translated into practice, and to explore the causes of the implementation gap or shortfalls. This conceptual framework for assessing citizen participation in decentralized governance will provide a model to define the issues that should be considered and prioritized in the formulation and evaluation of decentralization and participatory strategies for democratic local governance.

In particular, this conceptualization will assist in the evaluation and understanding of the patterns of decentralization and citizen participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The research seeks to assess the extent to which municipalities’ developmental role is being conceived through the incorporation of participatory practices. Additionally it will provide an evaluation of the ‘intensity levels’ of citizen participation as understood by local government authorities, while comparing these answers with the perceptions of CSOs. It intends to identify and
analyze the key challenges and constraints restricting the incorporation of participatory development approaches in local governance.

After establishing this diagnosis, the research will identify and discuss possible strategies to overcome the problems and limitations that explain the gap between theory, policy formulation and practice. This dissertation seeks to discuss the suitability and potential of decentralization and citizen participation in the province, and more generally in South Africa, and to suggest policy guidelines in the light of these findings.

The case study will provide a critical analysis of the debate about decentralization, participation and democratic local governance in the South African context. It will also, more broadly, situate the assessment in terms of the international academic debate. It intends to contribute to a body of developmental narratives that will provide empirical material for scholars and developmental practitioners. It also seeks to record and appreciate the varieties, dynamics and gaps between development discourses and practice that are relevant for the work of development practitioners and for the enrichment of the academic debate.

Finally, this research is expected to provoke more critical inquiry and debate about the potentialities of participation and decentralization as fundamental issues for development making changes in the everyday life of local communities. The outcomes of this research should help reformulate our approaches to development and bring about sustainable forms of citizen participation in local governance to increase people’s freedoms and opportunities as the aim of the development process.

The research seeks an answer to the following broad question: If decentralization and citizen participation hold so many promises, why does there appear to be a wide gap between the promised land of participatory and decentralized development and everyday realities? These questions will be answered through a theoretical discussion which will then be grounded on a case study conducted in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

In South Africa, the Constitution and legislative frameworks, and policy documents such as the WPLG, define the role of local government as developmental. Participation
is given high priority; but what does that mean for local government authorities? What are the problems faced in the implementation of participatory approaches in local governance? What are the implementation constraints that municipalities face? In particular, what is the relationship between fiscal decentralization and citizen participation? To what extent is citizen participation in local governance influenced by the share of government revenue raised locally or transferred from higher levels of government? What are the consequences of citizen participation in local governance in terms of changes in policy and improved governance? Is there any evidence of new systems of accountability and greater responsiveness of administration and political organs of government to local needs and thus increased efficiency? Has this diversified the types of voices heard and considered in political process? In a nutshell, what are the relationships between citizen participation, decentralization and inclusive and democratic development? Chapters two and three discuss these issues from a theoretical perspective while Chapters four and five discuss the dialectic between theory and practice and offer answers to these questions based on a case study developed in South Africa. Chapter 6 summarises key results from the empirical study and Chapter 7 concludes and explores possible avenues for future research.

1.4 Methodology

When undertaking research on the relationships between decentralization and citizen participation, a variety of research and assessment criteria need to be employed in order to ensure accuracy and objectivity. Based on a variety of data collection methods combining both primary and secondary data, this study combines and triangulates diverse methodological approaches.

This triangulation of the various sources of information is essential to do justice to the complexity of the subject under examination (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000; Davids et al, 2005; Mouton, 2001 and Wood, 2001b). But triangulation here is not only understood as a combination of various data sources. It also means the combination of different research methods. Both qualitative and quantitative research has been combined and triangulation in these cases did not merely aim to validate findings. It was also used to achieve innovation of conceptual frameworks (Flick, 2004). It is argued that this strategy often leads to multi-perspective
meta-interpretations (Olsen, 2004). Triangulation and pluralism both tend to support interdisciplinary research (Flick, 2002 and Olsen, 2004). The use of appropriate assessment criteria in research of this kind is fundamental to shedding light on a highly politicized and ideological debate. As Blaikie (1991) notes triangulation is not free from problems; its usage has been plagued by a lack of awareness of the different ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with various theories and methods. But beyond these problems, the combination of qual-quant research, particularly in evaluation research, has been increasingly advocated (Blaikie, 1991). This section details the research methods employed in this investigation and outlines the research tools applied.

The diverse intellectual strands that inform the concept of participation and decentralization were analysed through an extensive literature review. This literature review allowed the researcher to identify recent trends and approaches to decentralization and participatory development, as well as challenges, problems and current debates. As a result of this literature review, conceptual issues around participation and decentralization are discussed. At the same time, this informed the discussion and analysis of South Africa’s legal and policy frameworks in terms of local government reform and citizen participation processes. In this study, legislation, policy documents and detailed type investigations on decentralization and citizen participation initiatives in South Africa were examined, including both unpublished and published literature. Findings from previous empirical research were also discussed and integrated into the analysis.

An empirical assessment of the fiscal decentralization process, as per the theoretical framework designed, was undertaken using statistics provided by Treasury South Africa. Data from the latest National Census, the latest Human Development Report (UNDP, 2003), the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) (which offers access to databases on a wide range of socio-economic indicators by municipality with data updated to 2005), and data from the Afrobarometer Surveys

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conducted in South Africa in rounds 2.5 (2004) and 3 (2006) were also integrated into the study.

A core set of research questions constituted the major investigative focus of the field research. These were derived from the theoretical discussion and adapted to the South African policy and legal framework as the basis for the empirical study chapters. These questions were drawn up also based on discussions with key informants --professionals and practitioners-- involved in training and undertaking capacity building exercises on citizen participation with municipal officials in Local Government, as well as with academics working on related themes in the Eastern Cape Province. They also provided useful information on the substance of this research which was integrated into the analysis. Finally, the questions were piloted and (where applicable) reformulated and subjected to position-role specific adaptations (Municipal Mayors and Mangers, Ward Councillors and CSO representatives). This set of core questions was specifically designed to gather information from Municipal officials and politicians as well as from CSOs (registered in the Eastern Cape) in order to be able to contrast data being gathered from these two diverse universes. These questions were applied using self-administered questionnaires. A small sample of Ward Councillors was also interviewed\(^6\) and the questions in the above mentioned questionnaire were adapted to this specific analytical unit and research method.

These data were assessed, summarized and synthesized to produce the findings detailed in this thesis. A critical analysis of citizen participation and decentralization regulations, laws, policies and practices was undertaken by merging the information collected through these diverse tools and methods. The information gathered was also used to answer some fundamental questions which arose through the literature review and the legal and policy framework discussion. The study then focuses on the viability and policy coherence of the institutional arrangements of decentralization and citizen participation.

Filed research for the case study of the Eastern Cape, South Africa was undertaken in the 2004-2005 period and the relevant chapters only detail events which occurred up to

\(^6\) Structured interviews were used.
2005. Policy documents and legislation which were available at the time of conducting the empirical study in 2005 were considered in depth, while post 2005 texts and documents are used where appropriate to ground the discussion. Additionally, information on fiscal decentralization trends was updated to include figures from 2003-04 to 2008-09.

1.4.1 Literature review

The first part of the research is concerned with a critical reappraisal of recent perspectives on decentralization and citizen participation that informs the approach and the analysis made in the South Africa study case. The literature review identifies the latest developments on the topic and related areas and gives a holistic picture of the reality under research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The diverse intellectual strands that inform the concepts of participation, decentralization, good governance and local development are analysed through an extensive literature review of development theories and development practice. Due to the complexity and multidimensionality of problems related to the development process, an interdisciplinary approach is required. Therefore, this report includes an interdisciplinary range of references with the aim of overcoming the barriers between different traditions of knowledge and experience (Flick, 2002 and Olsen, 2004). The research provides an overview of these related concepts by reviewing their definitions and origins as well as their related policy applications, and by critically assessing both their conceptual coherence and their utility as alternative approaches to development.

The first part of the research consists of a review of international literature including books, reports and journal articles as well as selected internet web-pages. Local literature was also reviewed. The literature review also provides the basis for the construction of an analytical framework that informed the empirical research carried out in South Africa. In particular, the survey questions were formulated by analysing the evolution of development theories, policies and approaches while also being informed by the discussion on the diverse understandings of citizen participation and decentralization.
In South Africa, the accumulated knowledge about successful and unsuccessful participation remains fragmented. In parallel with the literature which exists about the theory and policy aspects of citizen participation and decentralization, case study material has also been published. An important effort is made in order to identify the dispersed local research on the subject and to summarize the existing work in the area.

1.4.2 Empirical Study: South Africa’s Local Government Legal and Policy Framework Review

Based on the theoretical framework developed in this thesis, the research includes a critical analysis of the legal framework and the relevant policy documents related to decentralization and citizen participation in local governance for the South African empirical study. The research briefly outlines and examines the South African legislation and policy documents on decentralization and citizen participation in local governance. This review allows the researcher, by the act of deconstruction and critique, to provide some guidelines on the kind of legal and policy framework obstacles that impede effective decentralization and citizen participation in local governance and how these obstacles could be overcome to facilitate the relationship between decentralized and more participatory forms of policy.

1.4.3 Empirical Study: Fiscal Decentralization in South Africa

An empirical assessment of the fiscal decentralization process and its relationship to citizen participation, as per the theoretical framework designed, was undertaken using statistics provided by South Africa Treasury. Originally, the researcher intended to undertake an analysis of the evolution of the fiscal decentralization process in the last 10 years. However, this proved difficult as data was not available on the entire period for many municipalities. Moreover, due to the many revisions of the fiscal decentralization process and subsequent changes in the legislation and the municipal demarcation process, it is difficult to get comparable, historical data. Therefore, the approach was changed to prioritize a shorter term but take a more in-depth look at the size, source of finance and expenditure patterns of South Africa—and in particular Eastern Cape—municipalities. To take into account the high degree of variation among municipalities, an analysis of the 2003-2004 to 2006-2007 period was developed.
This component of the research work is critical as it contextualizes the extent to which decentralization and citizen participation tools and mechanisms at the local level are actually able to meet their objectives of implementing locally generated solutions to local development priorities (Ambert and Feldman, 2002). This part of the analysis is not concerned with the assessment of a particular citizen participation tool, but rather it explores the fiscal context where these tools are to be implemented. If expenditure priorities or the use of resources cannot be decided locally, then the instruments generated by the legislation and policy framework for citizen participation in local governance will be reduced to a local conduit for the implementation of centrally defined programmes and strategies; an agenda which is quite far from the envisaged emergence of a localized platform for control and decision making of development resources. Moreover, recent studies are highlighting the ‘governance implications’ of heavily relying on non-tax sources of income (Brautigam et al, 2008) and argue that the dependence of governments on non-tax sources of funding is likely to have adverse effects on their accountability and responsiveness (Moore, 2007).

1.4.4 Empirical Study: A Survey on Citizen Participation in Local Governance in the Eastern Cape

This part of the empirical study was carried out in order to consider local government and local community understandings of participation, their ‘intensity’ levels and the challenges with respect to integrating participatory approaches in the local governance process. The perceptions of municipal decision makers and CSO representatives regarding the causes for success and failure of decentralization and citizen participation processes were key foci of the investigation. This part of the study was also developed to assess the extent to which different mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance are being used and what problems this practice presents. Primary data was thus gathered to understand the factors that affect citizen participation in local
governance, the obstacles that impede meaningful citizen participation in local governance and how they could be overcome.

Due to the size of the country and the number of municipalities, the research is focused on the Eastern Cape province. This province provides a good opportunity to test a field research tool since it includes the three types of municipalities. The province includes a Metropolitan Municipality (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality), district municipalities and larger urban category B municipalities (Buffalo City) but also very small rural municipalities established in what used to be the former ‘homelands’: the Transkei and Ciskei regions. These last two regions were parts of the system of ‘reserves’ and were key areas for migrant labour for industry and urban commerce in the South African national economy throughout the Apartheid system.

The Eastern Cape is a province with deep fragmentations and acute development problems including high poverty rates and inequality as well as a severe degree of backlog in service delivery to poor communities. Actually, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo are the two provinces which show, according to diverse indexes, the highest degrees of deprivation and poverty. As per the Human Development Index (see Table 9.2.2.2 in Annex 9.2.2), the Eastern Cape is not only below the national average but it shows the third worst record (after Limpopo and the North West provinces). Using income as a measure of poverty, the headcount ratio for the province shows one of the worst figures for the country. Comparing the latest Census figures with the data available from the previous one, it is quite worrisome that the growth in levels of absolute poverty between 1996 and 2001 has been more pronounced in the Eastern Cape than is the case nationally. The poverty rate in 2005 was estimated to be 67.4%, compared to 62.9% in 2000\(^7\) (Statistics South Africa, 1996 and 2001).

However, the province is also characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity. Experiences of poverty differ within the province and are significantly influenced by factors relating to gender, race and spatial location. Although high poverty levels are pervasive throughout the province, very large pockets of poverty are found in the OR

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\(^7\) see Annex 9.2.2 - Table 9.2.2.1, including data for Eastern Cape Municipalities (2000 – 2005).
Tambo, Alfred Nzo and Chris Hani District Municipalities, which include the bulk of the former Transkei (see Table 9.2.2.1 in Annex 9.2.2). As per 2001 census figures, the province also ranks very high in terms of the percentage of households deprived of basic services. In general, the western part of the Province has the highest levels of service coverage. Again, it is the densely-populated rural areas of the former homeland area of the Transkei which suffer most in terms of low levels of water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal services, a clear legacy of apartheid (Statistics South Africa, 2001). As a consequence of this, as Bank and Minkley point out, more people than ever before are leaving the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, migrating to towns and cities (Bank and Minkley, 2005). However, there are also pockets of vulnerability, extreme poverty and underdevelopment within the relatively ‘more privileged’ areas.

In terms of human capital, the 2001 Census figures also confirm low levels of education in the province. In 2001, only 6% of the population had a higher education qualification, 14% had a Senior Certificate, 30% had some secondary education, while half of the Eastern Cape population had primary school education or lower. Alarmingly, 23% of the population had no formal education at all (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The functional illiteracy rate for the province was estimated to be 34.2% in 2005 (see Table 9.2.2.3, Annex 9.2.2).

The economy of the Eastern Cape is characterized by extreme levels of uneven development. Prior to 1994, the Eastern Cape was even more fragmented than it is today. The southern and western parts of the province fell under the old Cape Province, which included the major cities of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality) and East London (now incorporated into the Buffalo City Municipality). A corridor running from East London to the small city of Kingwilliamstown, some 50 kilometres inland, constituted a kind of border enclave between the ‘white-controlled’ South Africa and the fragmented territory of the quasi-independent homeland of the Ciskei, with the Transkei homeland lying further north. Currently, the economic profile of the province is still characterized by a number of contradictions. Two urban industrial manufacturing centres coexist with the poverty stricken and underdeveloped rural hinterland, particularly in the former homeland areas of the Transkei and Ciskei (Haines, 2004). In addition, a developed commercial farming sector grows alongside a struggling subsistence agricultural sector. The province shows a complex mix of
commercialized freehold property, especially in the former ‘white’ areas of the territory, and predominantly communally-held land in the former Transkei and Ciskei. As Minkley and Westaway (2005) argue, the program of land restitution is perpetuating a dichotomist understandings of rural development dynamics in the province. Moreover, this has effectively perpetuated differing productive systems on rural land, and made formal economic integration within the province as a whole more problematic than in certain other provinces such as the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng (Haines, 2004). Finally, there are concentrations of fairly well developed and efficient social and economic infrastructure in the western parts of the province that are virtually absent in the east (Eastern Cape Provincial Government, 2003b).

The Eastern Cape shows severe and widespread poverty and inequality indicators and a crude panorama in terms of economic growth, human capital and infrastructure. Under the new system of intergovernmental relations, this implies serious challenges for local governments which are ultimately responsible for redressing inequality and poverty, supporting the extension of local democracy and ensuring the delivery of basic services. As I have noted earlier, however, the perceptions of local government performance in South Africa are very critical (IDASA, 2008; see results below from Afrobarometer, 2004 and 2006). Data obtained from the Afrobarometer survey for South Africa in 2006, show that less than half of the population surveyed stated that they trust (either a lot or somewhat) the Local Government council (see Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: Trust in Local Governments**

![Pie chart showing trust in local governments](image)

Not at all, 26.10%
Just a little, 28.60%
Somewhat, 30.60%
A lot, 14.70%

Source: own elaboration based on data from Afrobarometer round 3 (2006)
*(How much do you trust your elected local government council?)*
The same source of data alarmingly shows that only 6.7% of the respondents considered that local government officials are free from corruption, and half of the population surveyed considers that either most or all of them are involved in corruption (see Figure 1.2). This situation highlights a growing contradiction between the responsibilities of this key developmental actor and the trust and faith being deposited in it by the local population.

![Figure 1.2: Perceptions of Corruption -Local Government officials](image)

Source: own elaboration based on data from Afrobarometer round 3 (2006).

(How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: Local Government Officials?)

Related to this discussion, but from another perspective, several studies have shown how the density of ‘social capital’ is crucial to economic performance (i.e. Evans, 1996 and Putnam, 1993). Social capital is said to be composed of a number of aspects including a high level of civic engagement in public affairs, horizontal relations of reciprocity and cooperation, networks of solidarity, trust and tolerance and high levels of participation in various kinds of voluntary associations (Durston, 2001). Some studies conducted in South Africa on associational life and government responsiveness seem to suggest low levels of trust and lack of confidence in local governments’ ability to deliver (Harrison, 2002 and IDASA, 2008), confirming statistics emerging from the Afrobarometer survey.

Moreover, as we will discuss later, if a committed political agent is a necessary ingredient for administrative and fiscal decentralization, the democratic empowerment
of local government is critically dependent on the associational dynamics and capacities of local actors (Heller, 2001; Mafunisa, 2004 and Pozzoi and Kumar, 2005). Although there is a burgeoning academic debate on the difficulties of measuring (and actually defining) social capital (see, i.a., Fine, 1999 and 2002 and Harris and De Renzio, 1997), a very rough approximation can be elaborated through evaluating one of its more visible manifestations: the degree of associability.

At the social level, associational dynamics are a crucial element in the system of governance (UNDP, 2002). Since there have been no attempts to measure social capital in the province it is possible to define an ‘associativism index’ as the number of associations per capita\(^8\) as a proxy. The Department of Social Development maintains a database of Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) working in South Africa\(^9\). It is interesting to note that, in relative terms, and following this very rough indicator of

\(^8\) For a discussion see UNDP (2002).
\(^9\) As per the Non Profit Organizations Act (South African Government, 1997), a NPO is defined as a trust, company or other association of persons that is established for a public purpose, and that the income and property of which are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered. This includes: NGO, Community Based Organizations (CBO), Faith Based Organizations (FBO), Organizations that have registered as Section 21 Companies under the Company Act 61 of 1973, Trusts that have registered with Master of the Supreme Court under the Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988 and any other Voluntary Association that is not-for-profit. The Directorate can only register an organization that has a constitution or any other founding document. The database includes organizations that develop activities in the following sectors: Business, Professional Associations and Unions; Culture, Arts and Recreation; Development and Housing; Education and Research; Environment; Health; HIV/AIDS; International organizations; Law, Advocacy, and Politics; Philanthropic Intermediaries and Voluntarism Promotion; Religion; Social Services.
‘associativism’, the Eastern Cape shows the second lowest provincial ‘associative density’.

Given this reality it was deemed appropriate to investigate whether decentralization and participatory development can and, are actually helping, to address these issues and if they can offer a development alternative. The urgency of redressing the social and economic situation of the province and addressing the backlog in service delivery justifies a study that focuses on the possibilities, challenges and relationships between participation and decentralization for inclusive and democratic development in the province.

All 45 municipalities which form the Eastern Cape were contacted\(^{10}\) and major role players in the policy formulation and implementation process in each of these municipalities were requested to participate in this research study\(^{11}\). The research included those local authorities positioned in local government bureaucracies, municipal managers, and elected officials (mayors) to affect strategic direction, interpretation and implementation of mechanisms and structures in relation to citizen participation in local governance. Accordingly, the questionnaire was originally sent out to all municipal mayors and managers. However, frequently the mayors requested that a specific individual responsible for citizen participation in the municipality respond. Thus, this resulted in more than one respondent from a particular municipality.

One of the reasons for choosing the self-administrative questionnaire as part of the methodological approach was that it is less expensive and requires a smaller staff to carry out the research (Davids et al., 2005). This allowed a larger amount of respondents situated in distant geographical areas to be included in the research than would have been possible through personal interviews. In addition it also allowed for the inclusion of data on the views of municipal mayors and managers who were difficult to reach or

\(^{10}\) The researcher asked for the help of the DPLG to support the empirical part of the thesis work by requesting the participation of the municipalities in this research. However, the positive response arrived too late and the researcher had to conduct the fieldwork without this support. In the end however, whether this was a disadvantage is a moot point as previous research (Noble, 2004) has in fact found that within different municipalities, there were varied feelings of support, dismissal and mistrust for the DPLG. Noble argued that in many cases counting on the support of the DPLG proved to be more a barrier than an enabling factor for municipal officials to participate in the research process.

\(^{11}\) See Annex 9.2.2 for the list and contact details of all Eastern Cape Municipalities.
coordinate a meeting. However, the response rate on mailed questionnaires is often poor. Frequently, only between 20% and 40% of mailed questionnaires are sent back to the researcher (Davids et al., 2005). In addition, with the self-administrative questionnaire, experience shows that often not all of the questions are answered. The researcher finally chose to use the mailed questionnaire method to privilege the fact that this would allow for data to be obtained from a larger sample and especially from distant and often reticent participants.

The months in which the field research was conducted (from August to October 2005) were marked by electoral competition and it proved difficult to get the responses from all municipal managers and mayors, many of them being unwilling to participate in this research project. After an intensive process of reiterated contacts through various means (telephone calls, emails, mailed letters and faxes) the researcher managed to obtain a 42% response rate by gathering 23 completed questionnaires from 19 municipalities. Moreover, the final sample included a metropolitan municipality as well as both mainly urban and rural local municipalities, including those larger B municipalities and a good number of the smaller (mainly rural) local municipalities. All but two district municipalities participated. The decision-makers scope of decision making covers approximately 60% of the population of the Eastern Cape as per the latest census figures available (Statistics South Africa, 2001). I therefore believe that the sample of respondents from the municipalities is large enough for a valid and reliable assessment and inference to be made on the basis of the data obtained via the questionnaire survey. The information gathered was also confirmed by the secondary data obtained from the above-mentioned sources.

The study also included 16 structured interviews with ward councillors since according to the South African local government legal framework they are in a privileged position to interact with local communities. For the ward councillors, the structured interview was chosen among other possible research methods because the databases which were accessed by the researcher lacked accurate information on e-mail, fax or postal addresses. A telephone number was the information available in the best cases (after calling the municipality requesting the contact details of ward councillors). Moreover, research produced by the HSRC (2004) stated that the response rate to mailed questionnaires obtained from ward councillors was overwhelmingly low. Taking all
these factors into account the researcher chose the structured interview option. The findings emerging from these interviews shed light on some common features that can be established in terms of the process of citizen participation in local governance. It also provides further insight into the quotidian operations of these municipalities in relation to citizen participation.

Therefore, in the local government universe, the survey represented a mix of elected local government members as well as officials in leadership positions (mayors, ward councillors and managers) to give as wide a perspective as possible on the challenges faced by citizen participation in local governance as understood through the diverse hierarchies and institutional spaces inside the municipality. In all cases the research work should be understood as a pilot study that could be carried forward by South African Local Government Association (SALGA) or the DPLG.

At the same time, a random sample of 100 developmental NPOs working in the Eastern Cape (as per the Department of Social Development Directorate) was constructed using an auto-administered questionnaire (see annex 9.2.1. for the list of NPOs included in the sample). Although it is not possible to claim validity of their views\textsuperscript{12} and consider the sampled NPOs representative of all civil society, they provided useful insights into the process of decentralization and citizen participation in the Eastern Cape. In this case 41 completed questionnaires were received.

Furthermore, three strategic interviews were also developed to consult with experts on local government issues and citizen participation in local governance. These interviews targeted in particular those involved with municipal officials’ capacity building activities and academics working on related topics in the Eastern Cape. They provided valuable inputs on their perspectives regarding decentralization and citizen participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape and informed the reformulation of the survey tools\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{12} It is important here to acknowledge the limitations in the size of the sample. For a population of 4020 registered NPOs, the size of the sample used here is only relevant for a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of 9.5, which is too wide.

\textsuperscript{13} I am extremely grateful to Prof. Monty Roodt, Head of Department – Sociology, Rhodes University (Interview conducted on the 23\textsuperscript{rd} May 2005), Prof. Hennie Van As (Head -Institute for Sustainable Government and Development, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) and Dr. Mvuyo Tom - University of Fort Hare (Interview conducted on the 23rd May 2005). An interview with the Director of
A set of core questions was integrated into three questionnaires (see Annex 9.1). As mentioned above, two of them were defined as self-administered questionnaires, one for local government authorities and one for CSOs. A question survey for structured interviews with ward councillors was also defined, adapting some of the questions included in the mailed questionnaire for municipal government authorities.

Although there are differences between the various groups of respondents, as well as differences in the types of municipalities they represent, standardized questions were justified in order to permit comparisons and the integration of the results to get a panorama for the province. In the questionnaires there is a degree of overlap in some questions, and this was deliberately employed in order to permit triangulation to take place.

Reliability and validity are central problems in the construction of a new research tool (Kirk and Miller, 1986). The question of reliability is related to the measure of internal consistency and in the application of the research tools to the various respondents. The questionnaires, in English, were prepared by the researcher in consultation with Prof. Richard Haines and the questions included in the questionnaires were formulated on the basis of previous research (see specifically Participa, 2004) and according to the existing literature. The analytical framework described in Chapter 3 provides the general approach that informed the formulation of the questions included in the questionnaires. In addition, specific issues stated in the South African legal and policy framework are also reflected in some of the questions included. They were also informed by discussions with key specialists in the subject matter who are also knowledgeable in the area under study (see above). Finally, a pilot study was undertaken (June 2005) and the form and content of the questionnaires underwent major revisions. In terms of validity, the pilot study allowed the researcher to reformulate some of the questions to avoid ambiguity and improve clarity. Finally, the questionnaires were discussed with an academic14 whose first language is Xhosa, as many municipal officials, elected representatives and participants from smaller CBOs

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14 I am thankful to Mr. Dumile Damane for his contributions on clarifying the way some questions were structured.
come from contexts where English is not fluently spoken. In this way, the researcher wanted to avoid any interference in the research schedule that could be introduced due to language barriers. The fact that there was a clear thread in the responses to the questionnaires speaks of the validity and reliability of the research tools. I believe the research tools employed meet both of these requirements.

All of the participants were briefed on the research objectives and were given guidance on the interview and on the questionnaire, as appropriate. They also received assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. In the case of the mailed questionnaire, they were accompanied by an introductory letter from Prof. Richard Haines, where the relevance of the research endeavour and the reasons for the research project were stated. Credentials of the researcher were also included (see Annex 9.1).

1.5 Problems and limitations of the research

This section includes a brief outline of main issues, problems, drawbacks and limitations of this research thesis. The limitations of the research should also be understood as an indication of possible areas for further research, as will be discussed at the end of this section.

One of the key obstacles for this study was the low disposition of municipal decision makers to participate in this research. The researcher had to call many times after sending the introductory letter which included the rationale for the study. Municipal decision makers were suspicious of the research and frequently asked for further details on the credentials of the researcher, which were sent. Among the reasons mentioned for not participating, they stated that they were ‘not interested in the study’. This obstacle may have been further enhanced by the fact that local government elections were soon to be held, and politicians might have been reluctant to participate in this research as they feared that research results could undermine their electoral prospects. Conscious of this, the researcher constantly reassured confidentiality and anonymity for the data, though this did not prove effective in all cases.

A minor problem was the fact that, at the time that the field research was conducted, there was no up-to-date database including contact details of municipal decision
makers. The researcher sent all the information on this research to the e-mails provided in SALGA and in the DPLG municipal databases, but a very high percentage of the e-mails were bounced back. The researcher then had to call the municipality and ask for updated, direct contact details (emails and telephone numbers) of the municipal elected representatives and officials.

It is important to realize that this research, by definition, does not provide an exhaustive picture of the interactions between local government and citizens as the study is on local government authorities and a small sample of developmental NGOs and CBOs working in the Eastern Cape. Some additional inferences are obtained from the structured interviews with ward councillors and from previous research on CSOs in South Africa. Given the heterogeneity that is characteristic of what actually constitutes a ‘local community’ and ‘community organizations’, further research should be conducted to assess the problems and obstacles local communities face in effectively participating in local governance.

Moreover, accountability issues within civil society groups often constitute another problem. Where civil society organizations claim to represent the voice of the poor, attention must be paid to the actual process in which the poor engage in articulating, aggregating and representing their interests to these groups (ECA, 2004). Questions of internal democracy and organization, their grassroots structure and internal culture, as well as the nature of their leadership, are critical for establishing whose voice is really being promoted through NGOs and other civil society organizations (Lander, 1998). The roles played by intermediary organizations, such as NGOs vs. grassroots community organizations, require particular attention. The different capacities of various types of civil society organizations to marshal resources, formulate priorities and exercise influence is also a factor that merits more analysis.

While some insights are provided in terms of the level and extent of involvement in participatory spaces as a function of age and gender, these factors, along with others such as class and ethnicity, condition the forms of participation associated with different forms of policy engagement and influence the outcomes of participatory fiscal processes. This study can only be understood as scratching the surface regarding these
aspects. It would also be interesting to scale up the study on the EC to other provinces of the country. This could be carried forward by SALGA or the DPLG\textsuperscript{15}.

This research study only focuses on those participatory spaces opened up by government. It is concentrated on institutionalized spaces for participation or ‘invited participation’ (ECA, 2004). In other words, the focus is on spaces created from above through government intervention. Political spaces, however, are constantly being created and reshaped where different actors and interests interact. Other forms of participation constantly occur and their interaction with formal or institutionalized spaces needs to be better understood.

Finally, this research study has not focussed on the role of traditional authorities. However, this is a key area in order to fully understand the patterns of citizen participation in local governance in a province such as the EC. Traditional authorities remain a relevant source of local power and a relevant actor in the local governance system. Bank and Minkley (2005) have noted that the transition to democracy has not broken the power of chiefs and the tribal authority systems in the rural areas. They argue that while new democratic forms of local governance have been introduced in rural spaces, they continue to coexist with traditional authorities that have remained influential and politically organized locally, but also regionally and nationally.

From a broad political economy perspective, the analyses of chieftainship and poverty, the relationship between traditional and local government authorities and the rest of the community, as well as their interaction in a framework of democratic, decentralized governance, deserve attention.

1.6 Research Overview

The thesis is composed of two parts. Part I is based on an extensive literature review where the theoretical approaches to local development, decentralization and participation are examined. This part is concerned with the identification of the

\textsuperscript{15} The fact that the DPLG has opened up spaces for discussing the way forward for the system of intergovernmental relations and the framework for developmental local government highlights appetite for this kind of research effort and offers a rare opportunity for research to influence policy.
conceptual reorientations in development theory and policy based on an extensive literature analysis which is included in Chapters two and three, providing the conceptual framework for this dissertation. Part II builds on the conceptualization developed in Part I and develops an empirical study for the Eastern Cape to illustrate the relationships between citizen participation and decentralization in South Africa.

Following an introductory chapter, Chapter two focuses on the current trends which can be identified in development discourses, with emphasis on the turn to ‘localizing’ development. However, an historical understanding of the evolution of development theories and policies is needed to be able to comprehend the so-called shift in development approaches, or the dichotomist tension between ‘alternative’ and ‘traditional’ perspectives towards development. While the objective of this chapter is not to present a chronological overview of development discourses for its own sake, it focuses on a number of themes and implicit debates at macro and meso-levels in the development literature with contemporary policy relevance, in particular in relation to decentralization, participation and democratic local governance. Key features of contemporary development discourses are identified focusing on the ‘return to places’ and a new localism in economic action. ‘All sharpen the focus on decentralization, citizen participation and the distinctiveness of place’ (Nel, 1999, p. 18). This chapter details the importance of these and related concepts and in doing so, lays a basis for the chapters which follow. It argues that the recent wave of enthusiasm for decentralization, citizen participation, the localization agenda and community self-help as an ‘alternative’ strategy for development needs to be examined critically.

Chapter three goes on to discuss the diverse concepts of citizen participation and decentralization --and examines their interrelations-. It builds on a variety of intellectual sources and disciplines, in particular on the fiscal federalism literature as well as on political science, organizational and institutional perspectives. It reviews the different meanings given to these terms and addresses the justifications for embarking on these processes. The assumed advantages and disadvantages of decentralization and participation are reviewed in light of the developing countries perspective. The chapter proposes a possible operationalization of the concepts of participation and decentralization that is used in this research. Finally, an analytical framework which integrates the different understandings of the development process, the operational
definition of citizen participation and the various meanings and dimensions of decentralization is developed to unpack the rhetoric of citizen participation and decentralization in local governance. This chapter, therefore, also integrates the discussion developed in Chapter two and critically relates citizen participation and decentralization concepts to diverse development approaches.

The arguments developed in Chapters two and three will help provide a better understanding of how, and under what conditions, citizen participation and decentralization can contribute to democratic local governance. In particular, this conceptualization will assist in the evaluation and understanding of the patterns of decentralization and citizen participation in local governance in South Africa. Additionally, this conceptual framework will help to identify factors that can influence local government attempts to promote participation and their outcomes, and will allow for an evaluation of how much of the participatory discourse is translated into concrete experiences.

In Part II of this research, Chapters four and five review the legal and fiscal framework for decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa, as well as the diverse literature on these topics from this country. Under the conceptual framework described in Part I, Chapter four, discusses the ‘macrovariables’ affecting decentralization and the citizen participation process. It looks at the reform process and highlights its political drivers. It also examines the current structures of local government. It then explores three critical issues to explain the gap between the actual results and the faith being placed on decentralization and citizen participation. Firstly, it critically examines the diagnosis based on local government lack of capacity. It subsequently reviews the legal and fiscal framework for decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa. In particular, it looks at the composition, size, source and expenditure of municipal finances to contextualize the extent to which citizen participation tools are able to achieve their objectives as stated in the legal and policy frameworks. It digs deeper into the intricacies of the fiscal decentralization context for citizen participation. As such, it shifts the focus of the assessment away from citizen participation tools and mechanisms themselves to the macro level. It looks at the system of cooperative fiscal governance and the relationship with the potential of citizen participation instruments for defining and implementing locally defined agendas.
The context and challenges within which local government has to operate are further investigated in Chapter five. Local government views on the political, legislative and institutional constraints where local governments operate are reviewed, since this informs and contextualizes the possibilities of participatory approaches in local governance. The research goes further to investigate the theoretical basis and understanding of the notion of participation as assumed by local government authorities at the municipal level. The specific understanding of citizen participation as held by decision-makers at the local level defines procedures and objectives of the particular municipality with respect to promoting citizen participation in local governance. This is then contrasted against the perceptions of representatives of CSOs in the Eastern Cape. This chapter focuses on the spaces for citizen participation in local governance as introduced by the policy and legal framework in South Africa’s new system of local government. It is especially concerned with the analysis of Ward Committees and the IDP process as the key spaces defined in the legislation and relevant policy documents for citizen participation in local governance. The focus of the analysis shifts to the process of citizen participation in itself, providing an assessment of citizen participation tools and mechanisms.

The combination of the analyses made in Chapter four and five is thought to provide an holistic understanding of the citizen participation and decentralization processes in South Africa. This type of analysis is currently lacking and Chapters four and five seek to offer the basis for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between decentralization, citizen participation and the outcomes of development policies. These chapters will, as part of the investigation approach, review the available literature and research findings on citizen participation and decentralization in an effort to comprehend and relate the extant theoretical and empirical data to the manifestation of citizen participation in decentralized governance in particular.

Together, these chapters allow in-depth consideration to be given to the operation of citizen participation and decentralization in democratic local governance in South Africa. Chapter 6 draws these together, presenting implications and main findings of the study.
The final chapter includes the conclusions of this research thesis. It highlights the main contribution emanating from the study, both in terms of theory and policy implications for the design and implementation of more inclusive and democratic systems of local governance. While the chapter gives an overview of the research content and key findings, it also discusses main limitations and proposes possible areas for further research.

1.7 Conclusions

This first chapter of the research thesis argues that citizen participation and decentralization have been positioned at the heart of current development discourses, both internationally and in South Africa. However, it is pointed out that the degree of consensus in terms of implementation of this ‘new’ agenda is a moot point and could be interpreted as a consequence of the conceptual ambiguity underpinning these divergent approaches.

It is suggested that there is a clear need to complejize the frequently assumed straightforward relations between citizen participation, decentralization and more democratic and inclusive models of local governance. For some scholars, decentralization is regarded as a condition (necessary but not sufficient) for the promotion of local democracy through increased participation. For others, some degree of citizen participation is a precondition for effective decentralization. I will argue that the relation will depend on how decentralization is conceived, and I will also highlight the need to look at the factors affecting the environment and the macro-context where decentralization and citizen participation is intended to occur. Political economy considerations are explicitly introduced to understand decentralization and participation, as these suggest the broader issues that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of decentralized and participatory development to be transformative. I agree with the literature which suggests that for decentralization and citizen participation to transform formal democratic institutions, institutionalizing a more inclusive model of development, it must be stressed that such political agency and processes are contingent on conjunctural conditions that must be investigated (Mohan and Stokke, 2005; Phillips and Edwards, 2000 and Schönwälder, 1997).
The chapter highlights the need to further frame the rise to prominence of participation, decentralization and localization in development in terms of broader conceptions of development theories. It is also suggested that there is a pressing need to understand the meanings, and operationalize the content, of citizen participation and decentralization.

It was also explained that after discussing these issues from a theoretical perspective, this research would examine the complex relationship between development, decentralization and citizen participation in democratic local governance with specific reference to the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The objective of the case study is to understand how decentralization and citizen participation are being implemented in South Africa, both concepts being referred to as key components of a ‘developmental local government’ strategy (South African Government, 1998a).

Deep fragmentations are pervasive in the Eastern Cape. The province shows severe and widespread poverty and inequality indicators and a crude panorama in terms of economic growth, human capital and infrastructure, as well as a severe degree of backlog in service delivery to poor communities. Under the new system of intergovernmental relations, this implies serious challenges for local governments which are ultimately responsible for redressing inequality and poverty, supporting the extension of local democracy and granting the delivery of basic services.

Given this reality, it was deemed appropriate to investigate whether decentralization and participatory development can and are actually helping to address these issues and if they can offer a development alternative. The urgency of redressing the social and economic situation of the province and dealing with the backlog in service delivery justifies a study that focuses on the possibilities, challenges and relationships between participation and decentralization for inclusive and democratic development in the province. The chapter also suggested the following key motivations for conducting this research work:

i) The disenchantment with and failure of various development theories, as well as meagre results in terms of policy design and implementation, has made the search for alternative development strategies a priority. It was noted that in describing and assessing the causes for the rise to prominence of decentralization and citizen
participation, this thesis will look at the broader theoretical context and concepts relevant to the subject-matter. From a theoretical perspective, the study is meant to lay a foundation for understanding the relationship between development policies outcomes and the nature of citizen participation and decentralization in developing countries.

ii) The growing global attention paid to participation and decentralization, as reflected in a growing body of literature, statements in international summits and declarations, government policy documents and discourses, and especially, in South African legal and policy documents, suggests that there is a critical need to understand whether these approaches can live up to the great expectations being placed on them. In fact, one of the main themes of the transformation project in post-Apartheid South Africa is the creation and expansion of local democracy and institutions that encourage citizen participation, especially in local governance. A developmental role for local government has been understood as the central responsibility of municipalities. Municipalities are now mandated to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. Key policy documents and relevant legislation place participation at the core of the local government system. In light of this, and given the reality of decades of inequality, it was deemed appropriate to investigate whether decentralization and participatory development can, and are actually helping to, address the Apartheid legacy and if they can offer a development ‘alternative’.

iii) Despite the fact that local government in South Africa has improved its service delivery substantively over the past ten years, according to available scholarly literature and statistics in South Africa there seems to be no sign that the massive reorganization at the local government level has had any positive impact in terms of greater public esteem towards local government. If the reform of the system of local governance implied the creation of formal structures for people to channel their views and concerns and to work in partnership with the governments to tackle development and governance challenges, why does it seem that the new spaces created are not working (or at least are not used) as a way of voicing citizen needs and concerns regarding local government performance? Various studies seem to confirm that public dissatisfaction with local government has not improved. This thesis seeks to shed light on some of the possible causes of this phenomenon. It is argued that research results should inform a
revision of the approach to citizen participation in light of the decentralization process in order to contribute to the improvement and consolidation of participatory approaches. It was highlighted that the gap that exists between the legal and policy frameworks for decentralization to promote participation, and what in fact really occurs, needs to be better understood. This gap shows the need to understand the nature, dynamics, methods and relations of decentralization and participation in this new context.

iv) I argued that this research thesis is also very timely given the review process of the WPLG initiated in 2007 by the DPLG. This provides a relevant window of opportunity for research results to feed into this policy dialogue. Results emerging from this study are relevant for higher levels of government to recognize and understand municipalities’ constraints and problems if the discursive consensus of encouraging citizen participation and installing more decentralized models of governance is to be meaningful. However, it is also relevant for the municipalities themselves to know what constraints they face if they want to implement participatory approaches to fulfil their developmental goals. Furthermore, research results will also be central to any further research into the nature and functioning of local government in South Africa.

v) In terms of evidence that it is already available, while there has been some encouraging work on decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa (especially in the last five years), the bulk of these studies are more specific in nature, with relatively little explicit engagement with emerging debates regarding the relationships between decentralization, citizen participation and democratic development. It is argued that very few of these studies explicitly explore the linkages between decentralization and citizen participation, and much of the literature concentrates on detailed case studies about the implementation of a specific participatory mechanism. Moreover, the literature on citizen participation rarely relates the case study with the macro context. In particular, the case studies are not examined along with the process of fiscal decentralization, and the lessons gained from these sorts of studies, although contributing to building a body of evidence, still remain fragmented and partial. While these writings detail and assess key features of the specific tools and spaces of citizen participation, the lack of more general empirical evidence regarding the success or failure of citizen participation makes it almost impossible to draw unqualified
conclusions with regard to the effectiveness of citizen participation and decentralization for democratic local governance.

vi) It is noted that an appropriate research framework for understanding the dynamics of and assessing decentralization and citizen participation is a necessity still unmet. This researcher believes that more effort should be concentrated in the area of study regarding the relationships between democratic governance, citizen participation and decentralization: What is the relationship between decentralization reforms and citizen participation? What are the effects in terms of democratized local governance and what are the challenges and problems that need to be overcome with regards to this form of governance? It is also critical to discuss, in operational terms, how decentralization reforms and formal spaces for citizen participation are being introduced and sustained in municipal policies and local development strategies.

This study examines the complex relationship between decentralization and the role of citizen participation in democratic local governance. It develops a general framework that allows local governments’ perspectives, problems, views and opportunities attached to participatory approaches in local governance to be evaluated and understood while recognising the broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of participatory development to be transformative. I argue that if these issues are not properly dealt with, the efforts to promote citizen participation will result in fewer changes and disappointing results at best, undermining the transformative potential of the concepts of participation and decentralization.

This first introductory chapter goes on to discuss the main objectives and research guiding questions. The general objective of the thesis is to identify key features of current development theory and policy specifically related to the emergence of decentralization and citizen participation discourses, to design and test –through a case study in South Africa- an assessment framework for decentralization and participatory spaces in local governance and to make a contribution to both theoretical interpretations and applied policy. This thesis seeks to discuss the suitability and potential of decentralization and citizen participation in the province, and more generally in South Africa, to transform development approaches, and to suggest policy guidelines in the light of these findings.
In South Africa, the Constitution and legislative frameworks and policy documents, such as the WPLG, define the role of local government as developmental. Participation is given high priority, but what does that mean for local government authorities? What are the problems faced in the implementation of participatory approaches in local governance? What are the implementation constraints that municipalities face? In particular, what is the relationship between fiscal decentralization and citizen participation? To what extent is citizen participation in local governance influenced by the share of government revenue raised locally or transferred from higher levels of government? What are the consequences of citizen participation in local governance in terms of changes in policy and improved governance? Is there any evidence of new systems of accountability and greater responsiveness of administration and political organs of government to local needs and thus increased efficiency? Has this diversified the types of voices heard and considered in political processes?

In a nutshell: what are the relationships between citizen participation, decentralization and inclusive and democratic development? Chapters two and three discuss these issues from a theoretical perspective while Chapters four and five discuss the dialectic between theory and practice and offer answers to these questions based on a case study developed in South Africa. Chapter six summarises key results from the empirical study and Chapter seven concludes and explores possible avenues for future research.

This chapter detailed the research methods used which essentially consist of the triangulation of various methodologies as well as data sources. Both qualitative and quantitative research has been combined and triangulation in these cases did not merely aim to validate findings, but to achieve innovation of conceptual frameworks through combining an analysis of decentralization trends and citizen participation processes, their understandings by key stakeholders and salient challenges.

The diverse intellectual strands that inform the concept of participation and decentralization were analysed through an extensive literature review. At the same time, this informed the discussion and analysis of South Africa’s legal and policy frameworks in terms of local government reform and citizen participation processes. An
empirical assessment of the fiscal decentralization process, as per the theoretical framework designed, was undertaken.

A core set of research questions constituted the major investigative focus of the field research. These were derived from the theoretical discussion and adapted to the South African policy and legal framework as the basis for the empirical study chapters. These questions were drawn up also based on discussions with key informants. They also provided useful information on the substance of this research, which was integrated into the analysis. Finally, the questionnaires were piloted and (where applicable) reformulated and subjected to position-role specific adaptations (Municipal Mayors and Mangers, Ward Councillors and CSO representatives). This set of core questions was specifically designed to gather information from Municipal officials and politicians as well as from CSOs (registered in the Eastern Cape) in order to be able to contrast data being gathered from these two diverse universes. These questions were applied using self-administered questionnaires. A small sample of Ward Councillors was also interviewed and the questions in the above mentioned questionnaire were adapted to this specific analytical unit and research method.

These data were assessed, summarized and synthesized to produce the findings detailed in this thesis. A critical analysis of citizen participation and decentralization regulations, laws, policies and practices was undertaken by merging the information collected through these diverse tools and methods. The information gathered was also used to answer some fundamental questions which arose through the literature review and the legal and policy framework discussion. The study then focuses on the viability and policy coherence of the institutional arrangements of decentralization and citizen participation.

This chapter finally included a brief overview of the key problems the researcher faced when conducting the research work and the main limitations of the study were highlighted. The latter include:

i) The fact that the study does not provide an exhaustive picture of the interactions between local government and citizens as it is focused on local government authorities and a small sample of developmental NGOs and CBOs working in the Eastern Cape.
Some additional inferences are obtained from the structured interviews with ward councillors and from previous research on CSOs in South Africa. Given the heterogeneity that is characteristic of what actually constitutes a ‘local community’ and ‘community organizations’, further research should be conducted to assess the problems and obstacles local communities face in effectively participating in local governance. In particular, the different roles played by intermediary organizations, such as NGOs vs. grassroots community organizations, require particular attention. The different capacity of various types of civil society organizations to marshal resources, formulate priorities and exercise influence is also a factor that merits more analysis.

ii) While some insights are provided in terms of the level and extent of involvement in participatory spaces as a function of age and gender, these factors, along with others such as class and ethnicity, condition the forms of participation associated with different forms of policy engagement and influence the outcomes of participatory fiscal processes. This study can only be understood as scratching the surface regarding these aspects.

iii) This research study only focuses on those participatory spaces opened up by government. It is concentrated on institutionalized spaces for participation. It is recognized, however, that other forms of participation constantly occur and their interaction with formal or institutionalized spaces needs to be better understood.

iv) The study has not focussed on the role of traditional authorities. However, I understand that this is a key area in order to fully understand the patterns of citizen participation in local governance in a province such as the Eastern Cape. Traditional authorities remain a relevant source of local power and a relevant actor in the local governance system. I argue that from a broad political economy perspective; the analyses of traditional authorities and poverty, the relationship between traditional and local government authorities and the rest of the community, as well as their interaction in a framework of democratic, decentralized governance deserve much attention.
PART I – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK –
Development theory and policy in the new millennium: the time of hybridization

Chapter 2: Key words in contemporary development theory and policy debates: a paradigm shift?

The completeness of the Ricardian victory is something of a curiosity and a mystery. It must have been due to a complex of suitabilities in the doctrine to the environment into which it was projected (...) That its teaching, translated into practice, was austere and often unpalatable, lent it virtue. That it was adapted to carry a vast and consistent logical superstructure, gave it beauty. That it could explain much social injustice and apparent cruelty as an inevitable incident in the scheme of progress, and the attempt to change such things as likely on the whole to do more harm than good, commanded it to authority. That it afforded a measure of justification to the free activities of the individual capitalist, attracted to it the support of the dominant social force behind authority(...) It may well be that the classical theory represents the way in which we should like our Economy to behave. But to assume that it actually does so is to assume our difficulties away. The celebrated optimism of traditional economic theory, which has led to economists being looked upon as Candides, who, having left this world for the cultivation of their gardens, teach that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds provided we will let them alone.

J.M. Keynes (The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, Chapter III)

2.1 Introduction

Different development discourses have proliferated over the time since the term ‘development’ was first coined. Throughout the various periods some discourses had prevailed over others and became the ‘mainstream’ model of insight or, in Khun’s words, the prevalent development ‘paradigm’. Under such a paradigm, policy is conceived and designed, in the sense that the theoretical approach to development informs and reflects the objectives and design of development policies. However, there is a dialectic relation between theory and policy that is evident when the failures of development policies –conceived under a development paradigm- generate redefinitions, new approaches or even a shift in the development paradigm.

Since early 1990s one has witnessed a return to more intensive and widespread debates and discussions about development theory and practice. This is to be explained, in part, due to the negative evaluation of the social impact of development strategies and debt crisis-related policies implemented in the Third World. The demise of Soviet-style communism and the shift away from more extreme neoliberal ideologies and enthusiasm in exclusively market driven strategies has opened up a space for a more productive discussion. The current debate seems no longer to be centred on grand
theories of social transformation, but on the degree and more adequate forms of intervention (Allen and Thomas, 2000, p. 7). In other words, unfulfilled promises and the dissatisfaction with development theories and policies spurred a constructive debate that has enriched the development agenda (Booth, 1993). Development theorists and practitioners have engaged in discussions as to whether the free market system can remedy the problems associated with global capitalism and provide the proper degree and forms of interventions required (i.a., Birdsall and de la Torre, 2001; Collier and Dollar, 2002; Fine, 2006; Giddens, 1998 and 2000; Gore, 2000; Hildyard, 1998; Ocampo, 2004; Stiglitz, 1998 and 2002 and Wade, 1990). The 2008 financial crisis has served as catalyst for the resurgence of Keynesians approaches to economic policy-making and more radical variations and policy recommendations shifting away from the neoliberal prescription of liberalization and deregulation. But as Wade (2008) warns, ‘there is a recurrent cycle of debate in the wake of financial crises, as an initial outpouring of radical proposals gives way to incremental muddling through, followed by resumption of normal business’ (Wade, 2008, p. 3).

Debates within and about development theories have moved away from grand narratives towards more local, empirical and inductive approaches. This shift has in turn been accompanied by a parallel move in development practice towards participation, empowerment and decentralization. Areas such as institution building, organizational strengthening, the ‘ownership’ of development policies, participation, social capital, human development, people-centred development, sustainable development, good governance and democratization to mention a few, have been brought to the centre of the international policy debate. This is reflected in the (re)incorporation of concepts and categories into mainstream development, in a supposed recognition of the failures of the ‘exclusively’ market-led development strategies that gained force during the eighties. Although views have widely differed as to the nature of the concrete measures entailed, a growing consensus has emerged: On the one hand, it is (at least rethorically) recognized that long term development requires more comprehensive approaches and polices that go well beyond macro structural adjustment (e.g. Stiglitz, 1998 and 2002; World Bank, 1998), and, on the other hand, there is an acknowledgement of the importance of a (revised) role for the state and

16 Throughout this chapter, each of these terms will be examined and discussed.
other non governmental development actors (e.g. Bresser-Pereira and Cunill-Grau, 1998; Cunill-Grau, 1995; Edigheji, 1999 and 2003; Le Roux and Graff, 2001 and Martinussen, 1997).

In the 1990s participation, people-centred development, social capital, good governance, democratization, decentralization and local development emerged (or in many cases re-emerged) as related concepts, and as ‘key words’ for the ‘development industry’. These words are part of the lexicon of the conventional wisdom behind development discourses and are being adopted as the key issues of the --at least rhetorically-- revised development consensus. These trends have filtered into major development institutions and governments’ development policy documents and have led many authors to refer to a shift in the development paradigm. And while some argue that a ‘second generation’ of reforms should be implemented, for others, the fundamental problems associated with the ‘Washington Consensus’-inspired policies are not being solved by new generations of reforms, that leave unchanged the core fundamentals. Such problems ‘are its narrow view of macroeconomic stability; its disregard for the role that policy interventions in the productive sector can play in inducing investment and accelerating growth; its tendency to subordinate social policies to economic policies; and, finally, its tendency to forget that it is citizens who should choose what economic and social institutions they prefer’ (Ocampo, 2004, p. 3). If something is clear is that, still, there is no agreement on the practical meanings of this new ‘consensus’ (Fine, 2006 and Ocampo, 2004).

For some, this implied the recognition by major development agencies (particularly the World Bank) of past failures and was seen as a positive shift away from both market-led, and traditional top-down, and centralized approaches, and towards an ‘alternative’ or emergent approach. For others, however, this incorporation has implied the loss of the radical perspective particular to the so-called alternative approaches (Cammack, 2002; Gardner and Lewis, 2000 and Kothari and Minogue, 2002). As Ocampo asks, is this so-called new consensus an indication that the development agenda is in fact changing? (Ocampo, 2001).

17 Issues such as gender, the environment, participation in development projects, decentralization and local development can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s when these topics were already discussed and theoretical perspectives and practical approaches developed (for a brief discussion see later on this chapter and the references included thereof).
The issue of the depth of the new development consensus established around these terms is complex, and by no means uncontested. An effort should be made towards clarifying what is meant by these catchwords in development theory and policy and the expectations that they raise. When one carefully explores the rhetoric, one finds that these key words, which have become incorporated into mainstream development lexicon, have very diverse meanings associated with different perspectives on the objectives, the role of key actors and the design of development policies.

Assuming this perspective, the present chapter focuses on the current trends in development discourse that the researcher has been able to identify, with emphasis on the shift towards ‘localizing development’. However, an historical understanding of the evolution of development thought is needed in order to comprehend the so-called shift in the development conception, or the ‘alternative’ approaches, and what is meant by ‘mainstream’ development perspectives. These key words in contemporary development discourses and their significance are correlated to the objectives of development, which in turn are related to a particular way of understanding development and the role of different development agents, ascertaining the role of the state, the market, and civil society in the process of development. Therefore, while discussing development theories and models this chapter also intends to briefly analyze the state - civil society relationship as implied in the various development paradigms reviewed. The emergence, definition and evolution of dominant (mainstream) --as well as alternative-- development theories and the implementation of related policies are reviewed in this chapter, focusing on the approach to ‘local’ issues.

The objective of this chapter is not to present a chronological overview of development discourses for its own sake, but to highlight how and to what extent contemporary debates are conditioned by certain theoretical assumptions that have a long and uneven history, and which ‘need to be rendered transparent before they can be retrieved, amended or properly acted upon’ (Corbridge, 1995, p. 7). To understand the extent to which local, territorial and decentralized perspectives really ‘matter’ in development it is necessary to understand the underlying meanings and approaches that have been applied to development, and the ways in which these ideas have been taken up and operationalized. Therefore, this chapter is based on an extensive review of the literature.
pertaining to some selected key topics relevant to the decentralization and citizen participation debate from various disciplines. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive overview of development theories; rather it focuses on those themes and implicit debates at macro and meso levels in the development literature which have contemporary policy relevance for the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation in democratic local governance.

The first part of this chapter focuses on what are called the grand narratives of development. While reviewing the key features of modernization and structuralism, the section discusses their conceptualization of regional development and local issues. The critique of these grand narratives, and the subsequent emergence of alternative conceptions of development are examined. The third section discusses the emergence of neoliberalism as the prevailing orthodoxy, as well as the main lines of criticism of neoliberalism and other development grand narratives. The reasons for the migration of local development and participation towards the core of development discourses are discussed. The emerging development agenda, as reflected in key summits and international conferences, and the relation between the core concepts in development discourses in terms of sustainable development, human rights, good governance, the role of people’s agency, social capital and the territorial dimension of development are explored. The final section discusses whether the new orthodoxy constitutes an ‘alternative’ to previous development paradigms and whether it contributes towards an enhanced critical reflexivity regarding their key features. This chapter lays the foundation for the analysis of the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation in democratic local governance, as developed in chapter three.

2.2 Development paradigms: the grand narratives

Although there is no unanimous definition of development, in general, a common feature is the centrality of the idea of ‘progress’. As Cardoso (1981a) explained, the belief in progress was not weakened by the two World Wars. Particularly after World War II, development was mainly associated with the idea of economic progress and the latter was understood as a substantial increase in per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The influence of Keynesian economics, the idea of the welfare state and Europe’s reconstruction (supported by the Marshall Plan) generalized the notion that
development could also be achieved in the Third World through a substantial blend of technical and financial resources. This was accompanied by systematic national planning in concert with bilateral and international agencies. Bretton Woods institutions were intended to provide the institutional basis for a new world system based on large scale international income transfers for economic stability.

Modernization theory, the merging of evolutionary and functionalist theories, served as the basis for the prevailing macrodevelopmental discourse. Modernization is defined as a gradual progression from primitive, or traditional, to more advanced societies. The goal of this movement is the establishment of a ‘modern’, industrialized, urban-based society. This theory offered the newly independent nations of the third world the promise of a guided transition to the state of a developed industrial society (Haines, 2005). In Eisenstadt’s words ‘modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other European countries, and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian and African continents’ (Eisenstadt, 1966, pp. 5-6).

Rostow’s classic ‘The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto’ (1960) as well as the writings of Eisenstadt and Smelser, i.a, can be stated as paradigmatic examples in this current of thought. Smelser (1968) describes the transition from traditional to modern societies as a process characterized by structural differentiation and defines a model of economic takeoff. He identified four critical areas where changes are expected to occur in the move from traditional to modern societies: in the realm of technology, the change from simple and traditionalized techniques towards the application of scientific knowledge; in agriculture, the evolution form subsistence farming towards commercial production of agricultural goods; in industry, the transition from the use of human and animal power towards industrialization and the movement from farm and villages towards urban centres (Smelser, 1968). New social and political institutions have to be established to facilitate this process of change. Rostow, in turn, defined five stages of this evolutionary process to achieve modernity: traditional stage, precondition for takeoff, self-sustained economic growth (takeoff), drive to maturity and high mass-consumption society (Rostow, 1960).
Under this perspective backward or traditional societies remained as such because of the lack of adequate political institutions and the lack of capacities in developing countries to move towards a more advanced state of society. Pre-capitalist and pre-industrial institutional structures in developing countries worked against development needs and processes. In other words, this approach sees the dichotomy traditional/modern as being explained by the inability of third world governments to allow the evolutionary and functionalist forces to work properly. Thus, developing countries need to create institutions and the capacity to facilitate such a process of transformation (a recommendation which is not very different from what in contemporary development discourses is known as the ‘good governance’ agenda).

The theory of modernization was conditioned by the strategic concerns of the United States in the context of the Cold War. For developing countries to catch up with more advanced western countries, considerable injections of aid were required. Additionally, domestic savings needed to be increased and invested in non-agricultural activities. It was assumed that the wealthier classes had a higher propensity to save, and the investment of their capital in the productive system would be the key to advancing along the growth path that was followed by western countries. Therefore, under this macro-development conception, an unequal distribution of income is a necessity in the earlier phases of growth, after which the benefits of development will ‘trickle down’ to the whole society.\(^{18}\)

The post-war period also saw the emergence of a structuralist economics in Latin America. The analyses of the development experiences in the region, in trying to explain the failure of outward-oriented development strategies, provided a strong basis for the development of this stream of thought (Cardoso, 1981b). Profound criticisms of orthodox economic thinking were developed by Raul Prebisch and other economists and social scientists associated with the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA).\(^{19}\) Prebisch reacted against those theories that were based on

\(^{18}\) This idea was supported by the empirical inverse U-shaped relationship between inequality and development found by Kuznets and known as Kuznets curve.

\(^{19}\) During its early formulations (in the 1940s), development approaches in Latin America were fragmentary, so it is difficult to talk, at least in this first moment, of a ‘Latin American theory of development’. Raul Prebisch was one of the most relevant figures of the time and founded ECLA in
economic liberalism and the theory of comparative advantage, and which entailed a universal recommendation to be implemented by underdeveloped countries. The theory of comparative advantage considered international trade to be the engine of development, which would enable underdeveloped countries to advance towards the income levels of developed countries, hence reducing the gap between them\(^{20}\). In contrary to this, for ECLA and Prebisch the main concern was to explain the disparities between national economies of the ‘centre’ and of the ‘periphery’-- differences that were heightened through international trade.

A common feature, from which this school of thought gets its name, is the identification of Latin American structural obstacles to development. This structuralist approach to development argued that, in the international division of labour, Latin-American countries played a subordinated position, by specializing in the production and export of raw materials and food. The consequence was an economy characterized by a high degree of specialization together with structural heterogeneity (Prebisch, 1963). These characteristics stood in contrast to the diversified and homogeneous economic structure of central countries. For Prebisch, international trade would increase the income gap between industrial and agricultural countries\(^{21}\). This tendency was strengthened by declining terms of trade\(^ {22}\). In the end, this results in a vicious circle associated to the endogenous dynamics of peripheral capitalism, as opposed to the virtuous circle typical of the industrialized countries. In the latter case, higher productivity allows higher wages, thus a higher level of internal demand, which in turn induces constant incentives for innovation and industrial development. The reproduction of the vicious circle in

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1948. Later, Furtado, Sunkel, Paz, Pinto, made enormous contributions to consolidate an analytical paradigm. But originally, as Cardoso states, they gained a lot of attention because they identified important problems of Latin American reality and were opposed to the prevailing economic orthodoxy: the Comparative Advantage Theory (Cardoso 1981).

\(^{20}\) The classic theory of trade (Ricardo) and its later neoclassical reformulations (Heckscher-Ohlin) assume that technical progress would spread to agriculture-producer countries. Free and competitive trade will make factor prices converge along with traded goods prices. It was not relevant that, initially, technical progress concentrates in the industrial countries because market mechanisms would induce the lowering of industrial products’ prices in relation to agricultural products. As a consequence, countries producing agricultural products will indirectly benefit from the results of technical progress.

\(^{21}\) The reason for this was that, as oligopolies will defend their profit rate and unions will fight to protect their wage level, increases in industrial productivity will not impact on lowering the remuneration of productive factors and therefore industrial products’ prices will not decrease.

\(^{22}\) If the terms of trade is the relative price of a country’s exports to imports, declining terms of trade is the expression of the long term trend in the price relation between periphery’s export primary goods and centre’s export industrialized goods. By that time Singer had demonstrated that there was a tendency towards the deterioration in relative prices of primary products in relation to industrial products (see Singer, 1950).
developing countries at the same time would increase the technological gap between the centre and the periphery.

Development requires structural changes in diverse spheres: international integration, agrarian reform, education, fiscal reform and improved access to finance (Prebisch, 1986). These changes would lend dynamism to the national economy through the development of industrial activity, achieving external independence, price stability, the diversification and expansion of productive sectors and reduction of unemployment.

Industrialization was still accepted as a means of spurring development. Structuralism was not a rejection of the industrialization path to development, but of the unregulated interaction with the global capitalist economy as a way of achieving development. The ECLA proposal comprised a political programme which aimed, in turn, at making capitalism viable in the underdeveloped economies of Latin America (Bielschowsky, 1998). Briefly, development is understood as a long-term process of changing the productive structure, and for achieving that, the state had a central position. The obstacles to development identified under this approach would only be removed if the state decidedly intervened, particularly through the promotion of industrialization processes (Prebisch, 1963).

During the 1950s, Latin American governments began to implement the advice of the ECLA, though not usually in as comprehensive a manner as was recommended (Bulmer-Thomas, 1995). This was reflected in the adoption of the Import Substitution Industrialization model. The faith in industrialization as a means of remedying underdevelopment spread throughout Latin America and most of the Third World, paralleling a similar optimism in the modernization perspective (Haines, 2004).

Although there are significant differences between modernization and structural approaches to development, there was a convergence regarding the assumed centrality of industrialization. The process of economic growth was central to both strands and was conceived mainly as a top-down, centralized exercise to be undertaken primarily by the state. Large-scale industrial projects were seen as central components in the promotion of rapid economic growth. Development aid and technical assistance also had a relevant role to play under both approaches.
In terms of the ‘spatial’ dimension of development models, standard economic theory predicted that intra-national disparities would disappear in later phases of development. Based on Solow’s growth model (Solow, 1956), neoclassical economics stated that regional disparities tended to diminish with growth simply because of diminishing returns on capital. In a competitive environment, regional labour and capital mobility leads to factor price convergence and thus also the convergence of regions within a country. Drawing on Kuznet’s empirical hypothesis23, Williamson suggested that there was an inverse U-shaped relationship between regional disparities within a country and its development level. In the first phase of economic development disparities would increase, but they would later converge (Williamson, 1965).

In the Keynesian tradition, however, as Myrdal (1957) and other scholars claimed, growth needs to be conceived as a spatially cumulative process, which is likely to increase regional inequalities24. Policy recommendations emanating from a structural approach to development, and the conviction that the structural obstacles to development would be removed through state intervention, were also informed by the conviction that it was also possible to achieve intra-national parity through targeted support for marginal areas. ‘Growth’ or ‘development’ poles planning, and a support for and belief in the notion of the diffusion of growth came to characterize regional planning policies throughout the world.

Perroux’s conceptual framework of ‘development poles’ (Perroux, 1981) provided the intellectual basis for a common feature of regional development policies that identified development with industrialization, and that accordingly identified the regions where development was expected to occur. It translated into the generation of incentives for the attraction of capital and foreign enterprises to promote regional economic growth under what has been termed a ‘smoke-stack chasing’ approach (Vázquez-Barquero, 1998). The appeal of the regional application of growth poles was world-wide, and

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23 As mentioned earlier, the inverted U-shaped relationship between income inequalities among households and the development level of the country.

24 The concept was that of ‘cumulative causation’: the possibility that changes in a given variable in the social system will ‘not call forth countervailing changes but, instead, supporting changes, which move the system in the same direction as the first change but much further’ (Myrdal, 1957, p. 13).
research and advocacy of planned regional poles expanded from the 1960s through the mid-1970s.

Rostow’s stage models of economic development, national growth and development plans and a belief in the ability of growth centres to catalyse growth in a region, all enjoyed widespread popularity. In general terms, this type of state intervention and planning has been referred to as ‘top-down’ planning because of the degree of control exercised by the central state over the entire regional development and planning process. I will refer to this as the traditional approach to local development and planning. The emphasis on conventional bureaucratic service delivery, based on the conscientious application of rules and procedures, is also characteristic of this approach to local planning and development (FCR, 1999).

However, modernization theory came in for substantial criticism in the late 1960s, and after, particularly for its assumption that the development experience of Western industrialized societies could be relatively applied to the third world countries in a relatively unproblematic manner. On the other hand, Latin American structuralism and its main policy outcome --the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) strategy-- also received strong criticism from the proponents of the dependency theory25 -- a perspective which was explicitly and radically opposed to modernization theory. Dependency authors noted that structuralist-inspired policies failed to break the dependency link with the First World. Serious doubts as to whether the gap between developing countries and industrialized countries could ever be closed and a growing disillusionment over the results of development planning started to emerge.

25 It is difficult to talk about a dependency ‘theory’. An heterogeneous corpus of positions vary from its ‘strong’ to ‘weak’ formulations; ranging from S. Amin (Amir, 1997), P. Baran, (Baran, 1952; Baran and Sweezy, 1966), Theotonio dos Santos (Dos Santos, 1970), A. Gunder Frank (Frank, 1969), and Rui M. Marini (Marini, 1991), focusing on external determinism, to Cardoso and Faletto (1979) who introduced a different light in the external determinism arguing that to understand why a society assumes a dependant form of relationship, it is critical to explore the linkages between economy, society and politics. Power relations are central to their analysis (how social classes were related to the dominant elites in the dependent state, and how these elites are related to the central countries, making it possible for the reproduction of dependency conditions. They argued for concrete analyses of each dependent situation. Under their approach ‘dependency’ should not be used as a generalist perspective (or ‘theory’) to explain underdevelopment, but as a methodology for the analysis of concrete situations of underdevelopment. For a good, synthetic discussion on the different strands of work associated to the dependency ‘school’ see Palma (1978).
The 1970s saw a proliferation of criticisms of development that questioned the belief in modernization and the search for ‘progress’ that had underpinned so much of development theory and practice since the 1950s and numerous articles offering alternative visions and approaches were published. The efficacy of the policy application of development grand theory --such as modernization-- was beginning to be questioned. Development scholars and policy makers started to highlight the need to restructure and improve the nature of the development process. However, these diverse strands of work did not provide the basis for a new grand theory of development. There were somewhat unrelated contributions from various disciplines that nevertheless helped to enrich the development discussion (Haines, 2005).

By challenging ‘trickledown’ theories of development and arguing that modernization was impacting differently on men and women, the gender debate emerged as a development issue with the Women in Development (WID) approach. This approach was mainly concerned with women’s lack of access to resources as key to explaining their subordination (Serote et al, 2001).

Another critical line of inquiry started highlighting the neglect –both from modernization and structuralist ranks—of the environmental aspects of the development process. A landmark for the inception of what was going to be known as the ‘sustainable development’ paradigm was the publication of the ‘Limits to growth: A report to the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind’ (Meadows et al, 1972) as well as the UN Conference on Human Environment or Stockholm Conference (held in Stockholm 5-16 June, 1972). For the first time, environmental concerns were put in the centre of the international debate. In Stockholm’s final declaration our responsibility in terms of environmental conservation was highlighted. There was extensive criticism of the West’s resource-intensive lifestyle and consumption patterns. This contributed to spawning a fruitful debate in social sciences’ but had to wait a while to be absorbed by mainstream development theory.

26 Later, during the 1980s and 1990s, this perspective was to be criticized and amplified by the Women and Development (WAD) and the Gender and Development (GAD) approaches, making explicit the distinction between sex and gender to challenge the existing social norms and positioning of women and men. The contributions from feminist economics has been relevant to assessing, from a gender perspective, macroeconomic policies and their outcomes, also looking at the intra-household effect of these policies and challenging the division between the paid and unpaid economy.

27 See UN (1972).
The 1970s also saw a shift away from ‘growth as development’ towards an emphasis on employment and redistribution with growth. This in turn challenged the traditional line of development economics which emphasized rapid economic growth as the goal of developing economies and ‘trickle down’ development approaches. The simple formula that economic growth would lead to development began to be questioned, and some attention shifted to the poor and to the social content of development. In this context, a ‘basic needs’ perspective emerged in the later 1970s.

The Basic Needs approach’s departing point is the recognition that developing countries can not achieve development exclusively based on growth orientated development strategies, but that instead, specific, corrective measures are needed. Trickle down perspectives are questioned and, under this approach, poverty should be faced with specific policies. Poverty is defined as the structural inability to gain access to basic resources. A strategy for development thus requires capital and skills, resources that are scarce in developing countries. Therefore, this entailed a shift from grand theory to more ‘practical’ approaches aimed directly at the reduction of poverty through social services such as education, health and welfare programmes (Hoadley, 1981). The identification of the groups who fall into these categories would define the recipients of development programmes. Therefore, the focus of the Basic Needs strategy is to facilitate access to basic goods for these specific identified groups. The idea was taken up by international agencies – the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank - and by orthodox development circles, and in a reworked form entailed a more direct targeting on the poor, the setting of quantifiable indexes of poverty and poverty alleviation, and a promotion of grassroots development projects (Haines, 2005). Additionally, by the mid 1970s, the poor results of the national programmes of regional development become evident. Criticism of the model of polarized development emerged. In a context of centralized systems and undiversified regional economies, the strategy of development or growth poles led to the configuration of enclaves and exacerbated the process of reproduction of a centre-periphery structure at the national level (Barrios, 2002). Voices claiming to pay more attention to local particularities emerged. By the end of that decade, however, the outbreak of the world crisis changed
the focus of public attention to international and national issues, and the intra-national disparities problem lost its former relevance.

Although diverse strands of work and contributions from various perspectives and disciplines questioned development meta-theories, they were not articulated into the new, prevailing development paradigm. These currents of work provided the basis for what were called alternative visions of development. However, it was the complex network of events, both at the international and national level --such as the debt crisis, the global economic recession of the early 1980s and declining commodity prices-- what was particularly decisive in the reformulation of macro development approaches and in the design and implementation of development policies.

The end of the 1970s and early 1980s witnessed the declining influence of Keynesian economics and the welfare state, coupled with the resurgence of neo-classical economics. An emphasis on market-driven public policy in the North impacted on development theory and policy, and influenced the thinking and activities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Conservative-minded governments came to the fore in North America and Europe and the overall political spectrum shifted to the right. Criticism of ISI strategies was this time focused on seemingly excessive protectionist measures, regulation, and state intervention, which, in turn, were seen as the cause of the recessions and economic crises in many developing countries. The conventional wisdom in orthodox economics that freely functioning markets would lead to greater efficiency, economic growth and achievement of social goals, pervaded the economic prescriptions for development. The core of this orthodoxy focussed on advocating conservative, anti-inflationist macroeconomic policies, market liberalization, deregulation and privatization (see i.a. Balassa, 1981; Kuczynski and Williamson, 2003 and Williamson, 1989). This diagnosis was promoted by multilateral organizations, particularly International Financial Institutions (IFIs). To illustrate: The World Bank’s formal endorsement of structural adjustment embodies a monetarist perspective and a general recommendation of market liberalization, which was in turn predicated on the idea that cutting back the state and relying on the markets would help optimize economic development and growth.
The IFIs closely tied medium-term adjustment packages with a series of conditions stipulating policy and institutional changes by the recipient country. A set of economic policy prescriptions (fiscal discipline and redirection of public spending, tax reforms, liberalization of interest and exchange rates, trade liberalization, privatizations of public enterprises and deregulation) were at the core of a typical reform package to be implemented as a condition for receiving funds from the IFIs. This was to be known as the ‘Washington Consensus’\textsuperscript{28} (Williamson, 1989, p.3).

2.3 The Shift to Micro-theories and to ‘Localizing’ Development: the End of Meta-theories?

During the 1980s, the debt crisis affected most of the developing world and the decade was to be known as the ‘lost decade’. This was accompanied by an increasing trend in global poverty rates, inequality and marginalization. This period was also referred to as the ‘impasse in development’: development thinking had fallen into an impasse with no viable alternative to neoliberal policy. As Cardoso argued, before this impasse there was a relative agreement on the meaning of progress and it was supposed to be a desirable goal (Cardoso, 1995). Since the 1980s, the idea of progress itself has been in crisis. Or as Sunkel and Zulueta put it (reflecting on the evolution of the Latin American development experience), the result of the failures of ill-conceived theories and policies was not only a deep economic crisis, but also a crisis of ideas (Sunkel and Zulueta, 1990).

The end of the cold war and trends of ‘democratization’ led many authors to believe that the combination of liberal democracy and neoliberal capitalism provided the only viable basis for the organization of society. This vision was best represented by

\textsuperscript{28} These prescriptions were summarized in Williamson (1989) noting that, ‘no statement about how to deal with the debt crisis in Latin America would be complete without a call for the debtors to fulfill their part of the proposed bargain by ‘setting their houses in order,’ ‘undertaking policy reforms,’ or ‘submitting to strong conditionality.’ The question posed in this paper is what such phrases mean, and especially what they are generally interpreted as meaning in Washington (…) The paper identifies and discusses 10 policy instruments whose proper deployment Washington can muster a reasonable degree of consensus’ (Williamson, 1989, p. 3). The 10 policy instruments were: Fiscal policy discipline; redirection of public spending from subsidies; tax reform – broadening the tax base and adopting moderate marginal tax rates; interest rates that are market determined and positive (but moderate) in real terms; competitive exchange rates; trade liberalization; liberalization of inward foreign direct investment; privatization of state enterprises; deregulation and, legal security for property rights (Williamson, 1989).
Fukuyama (1992) in his essay ‘The End of History and the Last Man’. Other authors promptly signalled that the future of civilization was not to be marked by grand ideologies opposition and confrontation; but by cultural and ethnical conflicts: the ‘clash of civilizations’ (e.g. Huntington, 1996) 29.

In fact, the issue of identity and culture was used as the key component of new grand theories (e.g. Harrison and Huntington, 2000) which were intended to replace Cold War certainties. Some of these ideas were very influential in the way some development agencies and governments approached international relations and development aid. While trying to explain the rise of ‘social capital’ in discourses of international development, Harris (2002) argues that the combination of issues of culture and identity with the ideas of ‘social capital’ (as used by the World Bank) is an attempt to obscure class relations and power. In other words, the dominant discourse was intended to ‘depoliticize’ development and to imbue it with an apolitical and neutral character (Cleaver, 1999; Green 2002; Mosse, 1997; Phillips and Edwards, 2000; Shore and Wright, 1997 and Wright, 1996).

In terms of meta-narratives, a heterogeneous discourse called Postmodernism provided the intellectual background to accommodate various views and perspectives, with its presumption of the end of grand ideologies and the rejection of universal and normative judgments. This relevant stream of thought, mainly associated with the works of Lyotard and Baudrillard, argues that changes in society can no longer be explained by the modern project, and considers postmodernity as a historical condition that marks the reasons for the end of modernity. Postmodern theory sees the world as heterogeneous, composed of a vast plurality of interpretations. Key tenets of this idea argue that in current times, constant change has become the status quo, and the notion of progress, obsolete.

29 These superficial --and in fact ideological theories-- were subsequently criticized from diverse quarters stressing that there was no such thing as the end of ideologies and grand narratives. Critically assessing the visions noted above, various scholars highlighted that these were in fact new grand narratives signaling the way to development (Hinkelammert, 2001).
As a grand narrative, postmodernity frames the debate on development putting identity, culture and the local at the centre of the analysis. Postmodern ideas about development have emphasized diversity, the primacy of localized experience, identity, indigenous knowledge and participation. A key tenant of postmodern development practice is that the local people themselves should be the principal actors in defining development. A corollary, there are no generalized answers to development challenges. In the introduction to the ‘Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge’, Lyotard defined the postmodern condition as a state of incredulity toward meta-narratives. He argued that the various meta-narratives of progress, such as Marxism and structuralism, were defunct as a method of achieving progress (Lyotard, 1979).

Under this approach, identity is inherently decentred and constructed in ‘unstable relations of difference’ (Dunn, 1998, p. 175). Critics of this perspective highlight the inherent dangers associated to the insistence on the idea of ‘difference’ and ‘relativism’ that could be easily essentialized and lead to totalitarianism. Habermas contends that postmodernity represents a resurgence of long running counter-enlightenment ideas (Dunn, 1998) and one could argue that postmodernism as such constitutes in itself a grand narrative of development.

Another critical reaction to the combination of the lost decade and the disillusionment with meta-narratives (neither the state nor the market seemed to be the panacea) came to be known as ‘Post-development’. Those who ascribed to the notion of post-development critically reacted to modernization theories and their derivatives. But it also included adherents of radical democracy, post-Marxism, eco-feminism, and various other positions. The sceptical post-development discourse is based on an implied meta-theory which can be described as ‘postmodern’. The unwillingness to define development in a normative sense is typical of the postmodern rejection of the principle of representation, of ‘speaking for others’ (Ziai, 2003).

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30 It is not the goal of this thesis either to review this complex current of thought or to develop a critique of postmodernity/postmodernism. References to this stream of thought are included here, however, as this provided the relevant framework, a grand theory, under which ‘the local’ gained ground.

31 A relevant avenue of critique rejects postmodernism arguing that the present, though significantly affected by globalization and the emergence of new technologies, is still to be framed and explained under a revised but still modern project. Influential works under this perspective include the reference to ‘reflexive’ modernity by Giddens (1991) or the ‘network’ society by Castells (1996).
Escobar (1995), Rahnema (1997), Sachs (1992 and 1997), to mention a few, provided relevant stringent criticisms of the more conventional wisdom and actual processes of development. The criticisms range from a focus on the environmental and destructive effects of development, the growing marginalization and lack of consideration to gender issues, the neglect of indigenous knowledge and culture as well as lack of participation. These initiatives reincorporated previous concepts developed earlier by authors that ascribed to the notion of ecodevelopment. In particular Schumacher’s ‘Small is Beautiful’ first published in 1973 early stressed the need for decentralized, participatory and local level initiatives (Schumacher, 1993). Postdevelopment thinking has mainly focused on the politics imbued in the terms used in the development discourse. While differentiated across multiple axes, they are united by an antagonism to development as a normalizing, deeply destructive discursive formation emanating from ‘the West’; by firm rejection of any sort of reformist tendencies and by faith in new social movements (Haines, 2005).

In part as a reaction to post-development critiques, the emphasis on participation and gender issues starts to gain ground in mainstream development. At the same time, indigenous knowledge starts to be recognized as a relevant source of knowledge to inform development strategies. A shift to local-level centred development initiatives also accompanies these trends. Increasing agreement on the importance of looking beyond traditional economically-oriented indicators and definitions of development is also characteristic of this reaction.

The earlier 1990s saw a growing systematization of work on human-centred development, and this was taken up in part by several of the bilateral and international development agencies. Development has to be ‘people-centred’ as opposed to ‘growth-centred’ (Korten, 1991). This broad perspective represents both mainstream and formally ‘alternative’ perspectives. It stresses, i.a., the need to build human resources and capacity; the need for more decentralized and participatory forms of development policy; the need to more efficiently utilize the various institutions and organizations of civil society, and to explicitly consider local dynamics, reassessing the ‘scale’ of

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32 Critics to this perspective note, however, that it offers little guidance as to what should or could be done. A more constructive perspective would argue that, instead, these ‘anti-development’ discourses could be considered as radically critical positions about development and not arguments for abandoning the idea (Allen and Thomas, 2000).
development processes. It also accords the environment, gender and human rights a higher priority than before.

Human or people-centred development (Korten, 1991), ‘development from below’ (Stöhr and Taylor, 1981) ‘development from within’ (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1992), ‘endogenous development’ (Wilson, 1995) and ‘bottom up development’ are all denominations that synthesize a turn to singularities, ‘the local’, culture, identity discourses and micro perspectives of development processes. These approaches take up some of the themes of the basic needs approach and incorporate a range of material from ‘alternative’ development thinking (gender, eco-development, participation) and stress that growth without equity and some form of redistribution of wealth and resources, does not necessarily constitute development.

There is a crucial recognition that poverty is not only an issue of poor material living standards, but of lack of choice and capability. Actually, what could be understood as a new development paradigm in itself\(^{33}\), the capability approach, asserts that development occurs when people have greater freedoms (or capabilities), expanding people’s choices (see Sen, 1999). In ‘Development as Freedom’, Seen argues that development entails a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, 1999). The Capability Approach broadens the vision of development beyond increasing income per capita, to include other goals that people value – such as being healthy, educated, and able to work and to engage in cultural activities.

‘Capabilities’ refer to what people are actually able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 5). The Capability Approach to development takes into account, and promotes not only the traditional material goals of development, but also the non-material goals of individuals and communities, and emphasises the importance of people’s agency and participation in development. This approach advocates a policy focus on expanding the freedoms and opportunities that people choose and value.

\(^{33}\) As Sabina Alkire notes, ‘were the capability approach to be taken up in all of the places now inhabited by utilitarian welfare economics or development focused solely upon economic growth, its implications could be rather akin to a scientific revolution’ (Alkire, 2003, p. 9).
Sen's writings have articulated the importance of human agency, and this has led to increasing attention to agency aspects of development (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). Human agency represents people’s ability to act on behalf of goals that matter to them and this aspect of freedom is a crucial element of development. In particular, there is growing concern with people’s political empowerment as a key element of this development approach.

A related concept that has emerged is the idea of self-determination. One of the key proponents of assertive, empowering assistance for people to meet their needs through self-reliance is Manfred Max-Neef who calls on the state to open up opportunities for direct participation by different social actors, leading to a more complete and harmonious development of the system of fundamental human needs (Max-Neef, 1992 and Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn, 1991). This has led to a school known as ‘Human Scale Development’, defined as ‘focused and based on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance, and on the construction of organic articulations of people with nature and technology, of global processes with local activity, of the personal with the social, of planning with autonomy, and of civil society with the state’ (Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn, 1991, p. 12).

These advances in theory underpinning the connections between human rights and poverty are leading to experimental and applied analytical work using rights frameworks and principles to investigate different dimension of development practice. Interesting attempts to develop and test rights-based indicators for measuring development and governance outcomes are being developed under the aegis of scholars nucleated around the Human Development and Capabilities Association.

Combining concepts from the sustainable development paradigm with a more holistic approach to poverty and development, Chambers developed the idea of ‘Sustainable Livelihoods’, with an aim to enhancing the efficiency of development cooperation and to address the failure of previous development approaches. His concepts constitute the

34 The recognition that despite its great potential, the vision of the Capability Approach is not fully worked out as a practical proposition, nor is it well integrated into economic analyses underlies the work of the network which seeks to systematize the ways in which this approach can be concretized into actions, processes and policies.
basis for the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, as developed by Department For International Development (DFID). According to Chambers and Conway (1992) ‘a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base’ (Chambers and Conway, 1992, p. 9). The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is defined as an integrated development method that involves an assessment of community assets, adaptive strategies and technologies contributing to livelihood systems, and the analysis of cross-sectoral policies and investment requirements to enhance livelihoods to achieve sustainable development (IISD, 1999).

Also, as a derivative of the sustainable development paradigm but specifically applied to understanding new dynamics associated with rural development, the ‘New Rurality’ approach puts the concept of territorial development at the heart of rural development analysis. The backbone of the ‘new rurality’ is the territorial character of rural development, and it holds sustainable development as a basic policy goal. It recognizes that in current rural spaces diverse activities (agriculture, mining, handicrafts, commerce, services, etc) and diverse social actors (State, producer organizations, farmers, native population, rural and urban communities, NGOs, etc) are involved. The structural changes recognized in the ‘new rurality’ are indexed by the growth of non-farming activities as an important source of rural income. This approach proposes the territorial nature of rural development, in opposition to the sectoral (associated with farming activities) character sustained by the traditional approaches (see i.a. Teubal, 2003). New rurality types of studies and policy prescriptions include bottom-up approaches for rural development. These studies focus on the examination of current rural institutions, their evolution, the impact of market failures on the permanence of inefficient institutions, the process of adaptation to new and better institutions, the consequences of current forms of property rights and transaction costs in reinforcing contracts, as well as the analysis of local community arrangements that could ensure the sustainable use of natural resources.

35 New Rurality is a policy-oriented interpretation of transformations in rural societies in Latin America taking place over the last three decades. However, some literature refers to ‘Nueva Ruralidad’ without distinction between an expression for identifying the structural changes in the rural economy, and the name of one policy-oriented interpretation of such changes, bringing up a program for rural development.
All these development approaches give relevance to the issue of specificities, indigenous knowledge and diversity. If people and communities are empowered to take development into their own hands, then development processes will be affected by culture and local specificities, and the paths to be followed and outcomes will be significantly different. Different local cultural preferences will permeate this process and democratic decentralization initiatives will be best suited to articulate this diversity. Human rights, identity discourses in development process, the preoccupation over singularities, traditions, indigenous knowledge and culture found a favourable environment under the local development discourse.

Also common to these approaches is a corollary of the above: the rejection of ‘one size fits all’ types of development policies. Purely technocratic, centralized approaches to solving development problems would fail unless they are supported by a sound understanding of the specific institutional and local context.

### 2.3.1 Democratization and good governance

The concepts of singularities, culture and human agency, have been related to empowerment and participation and together with the idea of freedom of choice, were integrated into a greater emphasis on the ‘good governance’ agenda and processes of democratization at local and national levels. If empowerment means redistributing power and transforming institutions then democratic governance should allow for these manifestations. A related theme is the building of a more vigorous civil society- a step which is regarded as essential to the construction of more robust democratic political cultures.

The confluence of these conceptualizations has led to a revisiting of the relationship between democracy and development. This relationship has been the focus of extensive academic production\(^{36}\). During the 1990s there was a flurry of studies looking at the relation between political regimes and economic growth with no conclusive evidence.

\(^{36}\) Studies developed during the 1970s and 1980s tended to found a negative correlation between democracy and development in poor countries. Huntington and Nelson (1976) found that political participation should be sacrificed, temporarily, in order to promote economic development. The works of Prezeworski i.a contributed to discrediting this thesis.
As Prezworski and Ligmongi argued ‘political institutions do matter for growth, but thinking in terms of regimes does not seem to capture the relevant differences’ (Prezworski and Limogne in Allen and Thomas, 2000, p. 378). The debate then turned its focus on the role of good governance within democratization and its relation to development.

Good governance has emerged as a key focal area both in terms of development policy and theory. It has been, in its own right, the focus of much discussion, as well as being considered a means for development and poverty reduction. Transparency, accountability, human rights, the rule of law, participation and containment or elimination of corruption are notions that form part of the umbrella concept of ‘good governance’ (Aubut 2004; Grindle, 2004; Minogue, 2002; Potter, 2000; Rhodes, 1996; Weiss, 2000 and Wood, 1999).

For the World Bank, governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a county's economic and social resources for development. ‘Good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policymaking, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs. Poor governance (on the other hand) is characterized by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unenforced or unjust legal systems, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life, and widespread corruption’ (World Bank, 1994b, p. 7). Efficient and accountable management by the public sector and a predictable and transparent policy framework are critical to the efficiency of markets and governments, and hence to economic development. Thus, in World Bank’s words, ‘good governance is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development, and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies’ (World Bank, 1992a, p. 1). The World Bank’s work on governance can be therefore interpreted within a framework of efficiency, sound public management and ‘good government’ practices (see i.a. World Bank, 1992a; 1994b and 1998).

The definition of good governance as provided by the World Bank (1992a) can be equated to the principles promoted by the New Public Management philosophy (see
The underlying vision is that development requires sound development management, a well run market economy and an effective liberal democratic political regime. Reform agendas informed by the good governance and new public management approaches are regarded as mutually supportive, with greater political accountability contributing to more efficient government.

The model of New Public Management (see i.a. Barzelay, 1992; Crozier, 1992 and Mintzberg, 1996) emerged via the critique of a centralized, inefficient, unaccountable and overextended state and has remained as the paradigm guiding administrative public sector reforms as supported by multilateral donors and development institutions. The public sector should incorporate an entrepreneurial dynamic and managerial behaviour (Maddock, 2002). Under the context of a ‘second generation’ of reforms, the business paradigm is applied to public sector management under a general reformulation of the conception of state functions and roles as facilitator, catalyst and articulator (Haines and Robino, 2008). It means moving from a means-based to a results-based rationale. The notion of ‘client’ is extended to what used to be the ‘beneficiaries’ or users of public services.

The New Public Management (NPM) approach has been very influential in development planning. The Market-based approach, as the FCR (1999) argues, emphasizes involving private sector management techniques, e.g. performance management, expansion of line management autonomy, reducing administrative overheads, and outsourcing service delivery (e.g. public-private partnerships, competitive tendering) (FCR, 1999, p. 16). This approach regards residents as ‘customers’ of public services that can voice their preferences through market mechanisms (e.g. choosing which services they would like to pay for) (Schacter, 2000). Community participation in planning is largely redundant.

However, these categories are by no means uncontested in terms of validity and effectiveness. As Minogue (2002) argues, the extension of private logic to the public sector has damaged desirable public service values. Crude applications of NPM-inspired public sector reforms are often myopic, lacking an understanding of how behaviours and cultures within the public sector are shifted. Political and managerial emphases on performance management techniques is inadequate in moving public servants to act in developmental ways. Developmental behaviour requires an attitudinal awareness and reorientation which can be induced but it is difficult to enforce (Dexter, 1996 and Pieterse, 2002).
In this sense, good governance implies two interlinked conceptualizations. It means reordering state-society relations through emphasizing: (i) strengthening civil society (as less state) and (ii) a certain degree of participation and democratization (in its procedural approach) as embodied in free and fair elections\(^{38}\). But also it means administrative and institutional reform requiring a reduced state, comprising a technocratic vision, and an accountable bureaucracy that provides a friendly environment for private-sector led growth (Mohan and Stokke, 2000, p. 7). Following this line of reasoning, various authors argue that this approach to good governance actually opens the door for market-driven decision-making. In this narrow, more instrumentalist version, the approach consists of reforms to create a minimalist state and to maximize the space for markets to structure the provision of public services (Minogue 2002; Pieterse, 2002 and Potter, 2000).

By the end of the 1990s the idea of insisting on a single model of good governance within a liberal democratic state was being increasingly questioned (Potter, 2000) and other discourses on good governance from outside the World Bank became broader in scope and stressed that good governance could have different properties depending on the particular institutional context concerned\(^{39}\). Since the early 1990s UNDP has been shifting away from traditional public sector management (particularly civil service reform) and ‘deconcentration’ programmes to addressing sensitive governance areas such as human rights, legislative support, judicial reform and corruption (UNDP, 1995). This position has been coupled by many other donors and international NGOs and suggests that the discussion is moving towards a common opinion that good governance does not necessarily mean less but sometimes more appropriate government (Weiss, 2000). However, reworked versions of NPM, following the revaluation of roles of state and civil society, have been integrated with concepts related to multiple governance relations and empowered civil society. There is an emerging convergence of opinion that the task requires elements of both strands of development thinking (Atkinson, 2001; Bardhill, 200 and Pieterese, 2002).

\(^{38}\) see i.a. Robert Dahl’s concept of poliarchy (Dahl, 1971 and 1999)

\(^{39}\) For a thorough assessment of the various understandings and approaches to ‘governance’ see Weiss (2000).
Peter Evans argued that in terms of public institutions, the legitimacy of the state and local layers of government are fundamental in determining the success or failure of development efforts in general, and the organization of the economic sphere in particular (Evans, 1996a). More democratic participation requires what Peter Evans has labelled an ecology of actors—’an interdependent, interconnected set of complementary actors’ (Evans, 2002, p. 22). Democratization and good governance are growingly seen as the framework within which development efforts can be effective.\(^\text{40}\)

2.3.2 A revisited relation between development actors: institutions and social capital

At the same time, contributions coming from a neo-institutional perspective\(^\text{41}\) (North, 1990), stressed that the broader institutional setting is key to explaining the development pattern any society follows. Transaction costs refer to the cost of seeking information to complete a transaction, the cost of negotiating and the cost of protecting and enforcing contracts. Asymmetric and incomplete information and the economic agent’s subjective and interpretative models cause failures in the free market game. Institutions are the structure that humans impose on human interaction, and therefore define the incentives that (together with the other constraints -budget, technology, etc.) determine the choices that individuals make, shaping the performance of societies and economies over time (North, 1993a). Institutions (as game rules) define transaction costs and therefore have an important influence in development paths.

The World Bank’s work on aid effectiveness in the late 1990s was the vital intellectual link the Bank needed to bring its work on institutions centre stage (Allen and Thomas, 1995).

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\(^\text{40}\) See i.e., Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (1995).

\(^\text{41}\) As defined by International Society for New Institutional Economics (ISNIE), the goal of the New Institutional Economics is to explain what institutions are, how they arise, what purposes they serve, how they change and how they should be reformed. The perspective is essentially interdisciplinary, combining economics, law, organization theory, political science, sociology and anthropology to understand the institutions of social, political and economic life (ISNIE undated). North explains that ‘(i)t is precisely in this economic and social context that the modern problems of economic development must be considered. The fundamental issue can be stated succinctly. Successful development policy entails an understanding of the dynamics of economic change if the policies pursued are to have the desired consequences. And a dynamic model of economic change entails as an integral part of that model analysis of the polity since it is the polity that specifies and enforces the formal rules. We are still some distance from having such a model but the structure that is evolving in the new institutional economics, even though incomplete, suggests radically different development policies than those of either traditional development economists or orthodox neo-classical economists’ (North, 1993b, p. 5).
The World Bank argued that the development community’s failure to have a greater impact on tackling poverty and achieving higher growth was not only due to inappropriate policies but to weak institutions. The conclusion was that good policies are vital but unsustainable in a poor governance environment which limits accountability, sets perverse rules of the game, and is incapable of sustaining reform. Thus, poor governance and weak institutions have led to misguided resource allocation, excessive government intervention, arbitrariness and corruption, which have deterred private sector investment and slowed growth and poverty-reduction efforts. However, where ‘poor’ governance has a negative impact on the poor, ‘good’ governance can have a positive impact by improving delivery of services, making decision-making more transparent, and by increasing citizen participation. The transformation of weak public institutions and distorted governance mechanisms into effective and accountable public institutions and transparent government decision-making processes has come to be seen by many as being at the ‘heart’ of the economic development challenge.

The terms and concepts of ‘good governance’, the ubiquitous ‘sustainable development’, ‘adjustment with a human face’\(^{42}\), were at the core of the reformist tendencies that started emanating from the World Bank by the end of the 1990s.

A re-assessment of the role of the state in economic development in the mid and late-1990s, spurred in part by more sophisticated analyses of the East Asian experience, suggested that cutting back the state and relying exclusively on the market would not solve problems with state capacity. There was a greater appreciation of the potential role of the state in providing an enabling environment and intervening in coherent fashion to stimulate and guide economic development. Actually, the dismantling of the uncritical hegemony of neoliberalism came in two waves. As Hart (2004) notes, first, a battle over the interpretation of East Asian ‘miracles’ in the early 1990s, when various scholars noted that the development paths of many newly industrialized countries had systematically violated some of the most sacred tenets of neoliberal orthodoxy – see i.a. Evans (1995) and Wade (1990) —and asserted the powerful role of the state in East Asian accumulation. Second, the eruption of what came to be known as ‘the Asian crisis’ in the second half of 1997.

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\(^{42}\) This was originally the title of a 1987 UNICEF report detailing the negative impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on health and education. Given the widespread criticism of SAPs, they have been replaced by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process.
As Allen and Thomas (2000) suggest, as a result of these two waves, the Bank launched the ‘Comprehensive Development Framework’ (CDF) in 1999. The CDF was formally endorsed as the basis for all of the Bank's work, incorporating the following core principles to guide the Bank’s operations: long-term and holistic vision, country ownership, country-led partnership and results focus (Wolfensohn, 1999). It has been underpinning the Poverty Reduction Strategy processes which superseded the SAP. The new approach was also influenced by various bilateral organizations and development experts whose views converged during conferences at meetings in the second half of the 1990.

But good governance does not only refer to state actors and institutions. Peter Evans’ ‘ecology of actors’ captures the interdependence and interconnection between development actors (Evans, 2002). The relevance of the ability of actors to cooperate was popularized by the works of Coleman and Putnam on social capital. Putnam’s explanation of social capital is based on a causal relationship between associational life and government performance. In his well-known study ‘Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy’ (Putnam, 1993), a holistic relationship between the state and civil society is depicted (but no explanation as to how it all happens is included). The author found that sub-national governments in Italy performed best, ceteris paribus, where there were strong traditions of civic engagement.

Although criticized, the idea of social capital has contributed to our understanding of the ways in which the construction and maintenance of the economies in capitalist societies is closely bound up with the building of state and civil society (Coleman, 1998; Putnam, 1993 and Putnam, 2000).

Briefly, social capital can be defined as resources (trust, norms and networks of association) inherent in social relations that facilitate effective action. Social capital can also be thought of as a framework that supports the process of learning through interaction. More generally, social capital is said to be composed of a number of aspects, including a high level of civic engagement in public affairs, horizontal relations of reciprocity, and cooperation rather than vertical relations of authority and dependence; networks of solidarity; trust and tolerance; and high levels of participation in various kinds of voluntary associations (e.g. Harrison, 2002).
For the World Bank, social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable collective action. It encompasses institutions, relationships, and customs that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. The World Bank understands social capital not just as the sum of the institutions which underpin a society, but as the glue that holds them together. Social capital, when enhanced in a positive manner, can improve project effectiveness and sustainability by building the community’s capacity to work together to address their common needs, fostering greater inclusion and cohesion, and increasing transparency and accountability (World Bank, 2000).

The concept of social capital is related to the notions of democratization and good governance, and it has been incorporated into discourses of state reform (Evans, 1996b). Evans stressed the importance of embeddedness. He refines and develops Putnam’s argument by highlighting a possible link between associational life and government performance. The introduction of the public domain as a player in government performance makes the concept more relevant for development studies. For Evans, social capital can be developed and used as a development resource (Evans, 1996b).

Also, from the perspective of regulation theory (Boyer, 2002 and Lipietz, 1997), trust has a major part to play in forming effective partnerships and networks in the ‘post-fordist’ accumulation regime. Due to what theorists identify as the rise of the flexible or post-fordist accumulation regime and its associated mode of production, the local state is perceived as being an increasingly important actor in local modes of regulation.

From different perspectives there seems to be a sort of consensus about the need to create strategies of shared responsibilities between the state, the market and society. This trend is in line with World Bank’s 1997-8 World Development Report (WDR), in which that institution ushered in a change in conception of the role of the state in economic development, stressing the need for the state to act as a key agent for development. The report focuses on State Reform and establishes a two-sequence

strategy where firstly, state functions must be synchronized to its capabilities and then, increasing state capability. A shift from an exclusive focus on macro level reforms to second generation or micro level reforms is introduced. A revised conception of the state as catalyst and generator of synergies is promoted. The current vision argues that state reform should be integrated with market oriented strategies. In this context, partnerships between public-private sectors are to be encouraged, and alliances between governments and non-state actors, particularly the private sector, are regarded as crucial.

This convergence of positions, at least in development agencies’ discourse, recognises firstly that a responsible, values-driven private sector can be an important actor in development, and secondly, that new forms of cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and civil society offer important potential for achieving development goals.44

Since the end of the 1990s there has been something of a shift within the IFIs, multilateral and bilateral development agencies, from a strict neoclassical orthodoxy to an approach that pays more attention to the complementarity of state and market, as well as the phenomenon of ‘market failures’ in developing countries. There is a reasonable degree of consensus on the need to remodel the state, but there are still significant divisions on the nature and content of state reform. This process has opened spaces, at least rhetorically, for the acknowledgement of the need for a renewed state in development that must work cooperatively with civil society. Therefore, alliances between governments and non-state actors are regarded as crucial. The concept of ‘partnerships’ is added as yet another relevant word for development policies. There is now explicit acknowledgement that new forms of cooperation between the public sector, the private sector, and civil society offer important potential for achieving the development goals (Bresser-Pereira and Cunill-Grau, 1998).

In terms of local planning and development approaches, these changes can be synthesized in what I call the co-governance approach. It emphasizes accountability and

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44 At a more general level, discourses in search of an alternative approach to the dichotomy between the state and the market have been generalized. In this context Giddens (1998) proposal of an alternative ‘Third Way’ has been particularly influential.
rebuilding democracy through constructing inclusive decision-making mechanisms, creating new patterns of consultation with local stakeholders, and building the capacity of communities – especially the poor - to interact with them. Communities are expected to play an integral and ongoing part in the affairs of the local government, beyond the traditional boundaries of representative democracy.

2.3.3 Localization, Globalization and Territorial Development

The confluence of various events, the evolution of development theories and policy recommendations ended in a revitalized focus on ‘the local’, paradoxically in times of increasing globalization. During the crisis of the 1980s, a reformulation of regional planning in the North emerged. Top-down approaches were partially superseded by locally driven strategies that gave preference to the more traditional ‘smoke-stack chasing’ approach of seeking investment from large-scale external firms (see Bianchi, 1996). The swing in favour of bottom-up strategies, which emphasize local action as opposed to that of the central state, has clearly marked a significant shift in development thinking. At one level, bottom-up development was a localized response to crisis and the reduced role of the central state. At a broader level, it is a reflection of a revised approach to development (Nel, 1999).

During the 1980s, in part as a reaction to the vacuum left by the rolling back of the state, NGOs and the role of civil society in development was emphasised. The ‘anti-state’ discourse resulted in two opposed fronts: on the one side, in the neoliberal and neoconservative front; on the other, in the more ‘progressive’ fronts, such as the advocates for a ‘people-centred’ development and more radicalized positions nucleated around the postdevelopment current of thought.

Criticism associated with the results of the application of the so called Washington Consensus, with its extremely simplistic way of understanding structural adjustment, noted that reforms associated to the Washington Consensus were not enough to create the conditions to incorporate technological, managerial and socio-institutional innovations, and to attract investment to the different local productive systems of developing countries. Factors related neither to the appearance of diseconomies of metropolitan agglomeration nor to socioeconomic and territorial inequality were taken
into account (Abalos-Konig, 2000). The exclusive focus on the macroeconomic level has increased the recessive impacts and enlarged political and social instability and so, because of the neglect of the microeconomic and territorial dimension, macroeconomic stability has been questioned. The reaction: a renewed call for the attention to microeconomic and territorial levels of structural change policies. In this renewed approach the territory is characterized by its own dynamic that is reflected in the interactions between its different elements. This ‘move’ supposedly reflects an analytical synthesis of the gradual process of recognizing the territory in all its dimensions (Alburquerque, 2004).

The ‘territory’ and the relevance of local factors have only been recently incorporated into mainstream economics45, although the spatial component of economic theory has a long history46. The relevance of spatial factors was finally incorporated into mainstream economics through the New Economic Geography (NEG) (Krugman, 1998). It seeks to explain spatial agglomeration of economic activities with models characterized by increasing returns, factor mobility, and transportation costs. However, this approach has received strong criticism for de-emphasizing the social, institutional, cultural and political embeddedness of local and regional economies which have a key role in determining the possibilities for or constraints on development, and thus explaining why spatial agglomeration of economic activity occurs in particular places and not others47.

The interaction between enterprises is now considered a key factor going beyond the traditional sectoral analysis based on enterprise type. New attention is given to the constitution of business networks, the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture and the construction of local consensus between different actors with interests in the territory.

45 Of course the preoccupation with spatial dimension within economics is not new, but as Alburquerque (2004) argues, the explanation for the theoretical marginality of the territorial nature of development should be found in the oversimplification made by neoclassical analysis where territorial references are abandoned while taking the analytical unit as an abstract entity (the enterprise or a particular economic sector), not related to its territorial background.
46 As early as Marshall’s analysis (industrial districts), the importance of the territory as an analytical unit has been recognized although marginalized from mainstream economics. Marshall’s theory of industrial organization is opposed to the neoclassical explanation of industrial localization, substituting the enterprise’s centrality of the latter with the territorial background and cluster formations where the enterprise is situated.
47 Geographer Ron Martin (1999) provides interesting critiques to NEG. Subsequently, Krugman and colleagues have tried to respond to some of these critiques (see in particular Krugman and Fujita, 2004). In an intermediate position (or as the author call ‘a third way’) see Fingleton 2007.
As Alburquerque (2004) points out, external economies related to local interdependencies are beginning to be reconsidered as a relevant factor to explain industrial development and localization in a much more systemic approach.

This turn to ‘localizing development’ stems from the realization that attempting to model an area’s economic evolution according to a centrally determined concept of how the region should function seldom works. Deductive style approaches did not take into account local institutional, political and cultural conditions which often have a decisive influence on the development of an area.

In the 1990s, debates about development focused on the need to establish macroeconomic stability, strong institutions and governance systems to guarantee the enforcement of the rule of law, control corruption, and provide greater social justice. Civil society is seen as a source of vitality for both democracy and economic growth. Its institutions are considered to be a countervailing force that curbs authoritarian practices and corruption. This line of reasoning would argue that they also create or strengthen associational organizations that provide goods and services that can be provided more efficiently than the state. The space left by a retreating state can be filled by such initiatives, and the proliferation of associations that manage local resources or deliver basic services will in turn support the trend towards greater participation and democracy.

A specific policy derivative of these trends has been the promotion of the Local Economic Development (LED) experiences as one of the key expressions of bottom-up development. LED encompasses a wide variety of approaches and strategies ranging in scope from the development and promotion of world cities to community strategies (Nel, 2001).

However, critics argue that we have now become so accustomed to talking about LED, place marketing, facilitation, public-private partnerships, participatory initiatives and the like as the conventional wisdom that the broader scheme of globalization is often lost sight of (Simon, 2000). Instead, they argue, these spaces reflect and reproduce the logic of the system that is defined at a more aggregated level.
Another way of looking at the micro-macro relations is the complex interrelationship between localism and globalism (sometimes referred to as ‘glocalism’). Indeed, the issue of the role of the local state as an agent of development and change in an era of global transformation has merited considerable academic attention. From the more ‘optimistic’ visions to the more ‘pessimistic’ ones; globalization has important influences on the ‘local’.

The former position can be represented –i.a- by Ohmae (1990 and 1995). He considers that the regions are the central space for social and economic development in a global context. He starts from a diagnosis that establishes that centralization does not allow the regional economies to take off. Central states have a low representation and prioritization of localities needs. He argues that nation states are an unreal representation that can not account for the processes that occur at a global level. In a somewhat opposing position, Bauman (1999) has a pessimistic view about globalization impacts on localities and concludes that local spaces reflect and reproduce the logic of a system that is defined at a more aggregated level. Beck (1998 and 2002) from a somewhat intermediate position, criticizes the current approach towards globalization and its relationship with localism as a partial analysis. He argues that some scholars have been more concerned with its economic dimensions (what for the author should be called globalism instead of globalization); others with its political, environmental and ecological or cultural dimensions. But globalization essentially generates multiple responses that reflect the fallacies and paradoxes of globalization and should be approached in a more comprehensive and complex way.

These socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics echo Giddens’s (1999) analysis of globalization in which the forces pulling power and influence away from local communities and nations into the global arena simultaneously bring with them an opposite effect: pushing downwards, ‘creating new pressures for local autonomy’ (Giddens, 1999, p. 9). Local issues and development strategies must be framed in the wider political economy conditions that generate what Giddens termed the pressures and opportunities of ‘runaway globalization’ (Giddens, 1999).

In particular, globalization has important consequences for how economies are governed and the capacity and ‘policy space’ for states to shape their own destiny.
While the margin of action might be reduced, the extreme position that globalization rules out the possibilities of effective national economic policies has increasingly been discredited (e.g. Collier and Dollar, 2002 and Ocampo, 2004). Far from globalization leading to the end of the state, it has generated a range of revised but strategic political responses and, although in a different mood from that of the past, a more active state.48

At present, the confluence of different approaches, from various disciplines, is leading towards a more integral vision of development that incorporates the territorial approach as one of its key conceptual and theoretical bases. As Moncayo-Jimenez (2003) states, one of the most relevant contemporary features is the emergence of the spatial dimension as a key referent for politics and economics, with a local, national and an international scope.49

2.3.4 New aid paradigms: participation and ‘localizing’ development

Paralleling these trends in theory and practice, a series of international conferences during the 1990s also contributed to a greater urgency regarding the need to localize development and promote more participatory and decentralized transformation processes. Towards the end of the decade these debates also began to be framed under a human rights framework.

The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (UN, 1990) agrees on a strategy that should be incorporated in development policies

48 The 2008 financial crisis has propelled a convergence in discourses about the need for stronger and more effective state intervention and regulation. At the same time, at the supranational level, in terms of the architecture of international institutions, there have been increasing calls for a reform of IFIs and the UN system. Various reconfigurations of developing countries alliances have taken place, but many of these initiatives (G77, G24) have failed in part because of the inability to find a common platform of initiatives within the ‘South’, but also because of the G7’s, especially the US’s, preference for bilateral agreements and dialogues. However, there is growing awareness that the many effects of globalization have consequences for both the North and the South: from environmental effects, the expanding reach of global production networks, growing financial speculation, the growing concerns with ‘security’, money laundering, labour standards, migration, just to mention a few, are all growing ‘global’ concerns, which trespass the boundaries between ‘North and South’. This is not to ignore that countries from the North and South are differently positioned to cope with these issues, nor that there are obviously different degrees of vulnerability to diverse shocks at both ends. However, this reconfiguration in terms of North-South interrelations has begun to transform the politics of development. In particular, a group of countries that has gained lot of relevance both in academic and policy circles are the countries grouped under the term BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa–although the definitions vary).

49 Illustrative of this is the fact that the World Bank is launching the WDR 2009 on ‘Reshaping economic geography’. 
adopted by African governments with a view to promoting popular participation in development. It encourages people and their organizations to undertake self-reliant development initiatives, empowering them to determine the direction and content of development ‘that is both human centred and participatory in nature’ (United Nations, 1990, viii)

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) promotes the dimensions of good governance, including civil society empowerment and decentralization, as relevant strategies for development. The Democracy and Political Governance Initiative of NEPAD states that one of the fundamental requirements for good governance is that government must move closer to the people. Public accountability and participation in governance and development are considered to be core characteristics of good governance.

At a global level, ten years after the Stockholm Summit, the Rio Summit --or the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992)-- was a key event that positioned the ubiquitous concept of Sustainable development at the forefront of the discussion. Agenda 21, which conferred a crucial role in sustainable development to local actors, was one significant outcome of the summit. As so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities is considered a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. In particular, it states that each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises, and adopt ‘a local Agenda 21’. Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The underlying assumption is that if natural resources are managed at the local level by community or local governments, then they will be looked after better and more effectively.

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Istanbul in1996, led to the international and official recognition of the important role played by local authorities in implementing the Habitat Agenda. At the same time, the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 6-12 March 1995) highlighted the fact that the
empowerment of civil society is a sine qua non condition for sound social development policy.

While it has recently received growing attention, the link between human rights and development was explicitly recognized in 1986 in the Declaration on the Right to Development. Article 1 of the Declaration states that ‘the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized’ (UN, 1986, vi). The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, reaffirmed by consensus the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.

The rights-based definition of development in the Declaration on the Right to Development sees it as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process. A rights-based approach to development is thus a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed towards promoting and protecting human rights. Essentially, a rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development (ODI, 2005).

This approach sets the achievement of human rights as an objective of development. The norms and standards are those contained in the wealth of international treaties and declarations. The principles include equality and equity, accountability, empowerment and participation (UNHCHR, 2004).

A rights-based framework for development gives due attention to issues of accessibility, including access to development processes, institutions, information and redress or complaint mechanisms. The concept of equity is central to a rights-based approach to development, both in the distribution of development benefits and in the level of participation in the development process; it encompasses economic, social and cultural rights as well as civic and political rights. This also means situating development project mechanisms in proximity to partners and beneficiaries.
Such approaches necessarily put participation and empowerment at the centre of a human rights framework for development. Rights-based approaches require a high degree of participation, including communities, civil society, minorities, indigenous peoples, women and others. According to the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, such participation must be ‘active, free and meaningful’, mere formal contacts with beneficiaries are not sufficient. The goal is to give people the power, capacities, capabilities and access needed to change their own lives, improve their own communities and influence their own destinies.

The human rights framework has now pervaded the development discourse of many donor agencies that are stepping up work on human rights issues and integrating human rights policies and principles into their agendas (OECD, 2006). One of the key recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publication reviewing donors’ experiences and approaches – ‘Integrating Human Rights into Development’ – is that aid agencies, including donors, should promote the integration of human rights in thinking and practices regarding new aid effectiveness processes, with particular reference to the Paris Declaration.50

At the normative level, the Vienna Declaration (1993) marked a milestone by establishing the principles of universalism and the indivisibility of all rights, which were reinforced by the millennium declaration. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the end product of numerous UN development conferences from the 1990s. They reflect the emerging role of human rights in the international community, focusing on economic, social and cultural rights.51 The Summit’s Millennium Declaration outlined a consensus ‘road map’ for how to proceed, and various

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50 Critics, however, have noted that human rights have not been addressed explicitly in the Paris Declaration, and that there is little written at present on ownership, alignment, harmonization and other key principles of the Paris Declaration from a human rights perspective (Foresti, Booth and O’Neil, 2006). More broadly, concerns about the Paris Declaration itself and the consequences of its implementation are related to the fact that it is narrowly centered on aid delivery alone (not embedded under a human rights framework) and that it fails to address issues of conditionalities imposed by donors.

51 The relation between MDGs and Human Rights is a contentious one. MDGs have been regarded as oversimplified targets that do not confer enough relevance to political and civil rights, including an instrumental understanding of citizenship and participation. The narrow vision of poverty that underpins the MDGs does not seem to reflect the growing consensus of poverty as lack of capability. A broader view of poverty also includes concerns for inclusion and participation. Various scholars note that human rights are more comprehensive than the MDGs, and the fact that the MDGs are optional and rely on political leadership is considered a weakness as for the lack of embedded accountability and obligation (Maxwell, 2005)
documents and initiatives taken in light of the Millennium Declaration give prominence to good governance and to the participation and empowerment of civil society.

As a response to some critics, it has become clear that the MDGs at the national level cannot be achieved unless they are understood and translated into strategies for action at the local level, involving relevant stakeholders and, for this reason, greater attention is being given to ‘localizing the MDGs’ (UNDP, 2007). Again, the localization agenda is closely linked to questions of public administration reform, decentralization and reform of local governance. In particular, the Urban Millennium partnership on ‘localizing MDGs’ is prepared in the context of the operationalization of MDGs at the local level in urban settlements. It aims to address the common criticism of MDG as a ‘top-down’ process, which excludes local authorities’ and other stakeholders’ involvement. Moreover, as they are focussed on national level aggregates, the MDG are criticized as being disadvantageous because groups and regions might be worse off even if national averages improve. ‘There is, thus, an inherent danger that even if the targets are achieved, the inequalities within a nation across people and places would still persist’ (UNHabitat, n.d.).

In the search for increased social returns from Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, the subsequent UN Conference on Financing for Development (Monterey, 2003) underscored the importance of governance as a way of encouraging Foreign Direct Investment and ODA. The more recent Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness sees good governance as key for effective resource mobilisation and allocation, to prevent diverting resources away from activities that are vital for poverty reduction and sustainable economic development. Key to the issue of ownership, partner countries are committed to encouraging broad participation of a range of national actors in setting development priorities.

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52 UNDP defines ‘Localizing the MDGs’ as ‘the process of designing (or adjusting) and implementing local development strategies to achieve the MDGs (or more specifically, to achieve locally adapted MDG targets).’

53 This risk was actually acknowledged in the UNDP’s Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals, which conceded that women, rural inhabitants, ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups are progressing slower than national averages - or showing no progress - even where countries as a whole are moving towards the Goals (UNDP, 2003, p.3).
The series of international conferences held during the 1990s and the first years of the present decade synthesised a transformation in development theory that positions institutional and spatial considerations at the centre of the analysis. A human rights framework for development is now being adopted by development agencies and policy prescriptions for decentralization, participation and local level initiatives are some of their derivatives.

This new consensus, at least at the international development institutions, translated into a shift in development cooperation in the late 1990s that was finally formalized in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: a reduced reliance on projects as the sole vehicle for development cooperation, refocusing of aid programmes on poverty reduction goals, new emphasis in governance, human rights and partnerships, institutional and organizational strengthening and prominence of civil society participation.

Two lines of criticism against the previous aid modalities converged. Some have argued that the project based and SAP aid paradigms were inspired by simplistic ‘one size fits all’ types of measures, non participatory processes and disregard for local specificities. As a reaction, under the new approach ‘conditionality’ is changed to ‘partnership’ and ‘mutual responsibilities’. A more participatory approach is envisioned as a crucial ingredient of PRSP. This is associated with development NGOs being seen as key agents to help target the strategy on the poor, on whose behalf civil society actors are supposed to act. Others explain the failure of previous aid attempts through a more modernist perspective, focusing on the lack of commitment to pro-poor development polices by recipient governments. This approach assumes that donors’ good intentions crowd out recipient countries efforts. The reaction then is to recognize that aid is fungible, it requires to looking at the overall environment of public policies and thus, abandoning the project approach.

A new paradigm of aid has emerged, replacing the previous project modality paradigm (Renard, 2007) emphasising the need for harmonization, ownership and alignment which was quickly endorsed by major development actors (the donor community through the Paris Declaration, international NGOs, academics). However, as noted by Renard (2007), three major streams of concern are also growing. Some advocates of the
new approach question some of these operational aspects (i.e. the issue of reduction of transaction costs for recipients being a moot point). Over-simplistic assumptions about a non conflictive and apolitical civil society are pervasive to the new approach.

Other critics argue that the approach is adequate but it is, again, another wish list that will not be put into action. Beyond good intentions, there is a risk that the Paris Declaration could be considered little more than a new set of catchphrases, reflecting the latest fashions in donor thinking. There are significant doubts as to whether major players are really willing to subject themselves to a collective discipline of harmonization (Renard, 2007), and whether civil society will have a substantive degree of participation in the preparation and monitoring of PRSP. Specifically, on the relationship between human rights and aid effectiveness, there is the perception that it is little more than a rhetorical attempt to introduce fashionable buzzwords into already established ideas and practices (Foresti, Booth and O’Neil, 2006). Finally, from another perspective, some authors are referring to internal inconsistencies in the new aid paradigm; are PRSP and MDGs, two key components of the new aid approach, mutually reinforcing or inconsistent?

### 2.4 Conclusion: a paradigm shift in development?

Currently, issues like ecological sustainability, unequal social relations in the fields of gender, race, ethnicity; multiculturalism, participation and democracy, good governance and institutional development, social capital, empowerment, human or people-centred development, decentralization and local development, are part of the contemporary mainstream development discourse. While all these are laudable notions embodying value-sensitive goals, the issue about the depth of the consensus established around them is complex. At the moment, even if it seems that something like a ‘new’ consensus exists, it is not yet clear what the nature of these revisions is and if they do imply a paradigm shift in development theory and its policy applications. Many of these words appear today as ‘key words’ for the ‘development industry’, constituting the lexicon of mainstream development discourses. This has been interpreted by many authors and institutions as a paradigm shift in development theory and policy. For others, ‘new concepts and areas of emphasis are often mere ‘add-ons’ to what is, by and
large, the same policy agenda, with new generations of reforms simply being appended to what are regarded essentially as the correct foundations (Ocampo, 2001, p. 4).

We have seen that due to diverse factors participation and ‘the local’ has been positioned at the heart of development theory and policy. The confluence of disciplines, and trends within and without disciplines, including new transdisciplinary shifts such as organizational theories, institutionalism, economic sociology and some variants of the ‘new theory of growth’, of spatial economics together with the contributions from other social sciences, has served to revitalize the conceptions of development to consider the ‘territory’ in its multiple dimensions (Bossier 1997). Although there are profound differences in adopted ontological and epistemological perspectives, all these theoretical approaches contribute to a revaluation of the territory as a more integral concept, in which it is conceived as an explicative element, not a recipient, of growth and development processes.

The promotion of decentralization processes and discourses of local development can be attributed to the questioning of prevailing development models, which were highly centralized and urban biased in character, and to sharp criticism of the way in which the ‘local’ dimension was approached in such conceptualizations. Local self-management responses emerged, defining local society itself as the agent for resolving its own problems independently of the state apparatus.

In the 1990s, political and institutional aspects were brought to the centre of the discussion in order to fill a vacuum left by the dilution of a highly interventionist model that was hegemonic throughout a great part of the 20th century. This shift is understood in mainstream development discourses as signifying a government closer and more reactive to the needs and requirements of the people. Decentralization reforms are at the heart of the initiatives of ‘localizing development’. In addition, people’s political empowerment as a key element of the human rights framework for development and citizen participation in local governance has been promoted.

54 At the time of writing the World Bank was planning to launch the WDR 2009 to be dedicated to geography and territorial development.
A reformulation of mainstream development has permeated the discourses and theories as well as the approaches and strategies for local development, indicating a move away from ‘traditional’ principles and recommendations related to the conception and design of development policies. Broad guidelines for the design of development policies reflect the principles of horizontality, subsidiarity, associationism, participation, public-private partnerships and demand-side orientation, which inform development policies in a general framework of decentralization oriented by a revaluation of the territory as a relevant factor whose own dynamics are recognized in the paths towards development (Haines and Robino, 2008).

At the same time, while advocates of structural adjustment programming and the minimalist state have initiated processes of civil service reorganization, privatization of services, and decentralization of functional responsibility to lower tiers of government, the advocates of ‘re-invigorating’ and ‘re-thinking’ the state have called for programs of institutional reform aimed at improving state capacity to better serve its citizens, designed to ‘bring the state closer to the people’ and redress the ‘public-private divide.’ In other words, the emergence of the centrality of ‘the local’ in development discourses paradoxically demonstrates the convergence of the neoliberal ideal of a minimal state (thus, the call for civil society and decentralization policies) with post development critiques of an inefficient and highly centralized state (and thus, the call for civil society). This shift has translated into the fact that both discourses focus on decentring the state through decentralization reforms and local level participation, placing emphasis on the interests and agency of local ‘people’ and their participation in processes of development (Mohan and Stokke, 2005, p. 1).

These key words in development thinking are illustrative of how development critiques coming from opposite directions converged in the 1990s and how both sets of forces, regardless of orientation in the debate on the role of the state in development, have impacted on the system of local governance. The Traditional approach to development management and planning was somewhat superseded by the market-based approach with emphasis on the NPM approach, which involves private sector management techniques, privatization and outsourcing service delivery, but also some degree of citizen participation to increase the efficiency of projects and for cost-sharing.
The pendulum has now stopped at the middle position and hybridism seems to be the word that best characterizes current development discourses. A new development approach that is mid way between previous development paradigms is gaining ground. In other words, key variables that defined the previous development paradigms are being reassessed in the search for a middle path between prior approaches to development. The co-governance approach emphasizes accountability and rebuilding democracy through constructing inclusive decision-making mechanisms and building the capacity of communities – especially the poor and marginalized - to interact with them. Communities are expected to play an integral and ongoing part in the affairs of the local government, beyond the traditional boundaries of representative democracy.

Development theory and policy have evolved through different junctures since the word ‘development’ was popularized during the 1940s. Over the last 60 years, the development theory and policy pendulum has swung from one end to the other, between emphasizing market failures and market successes, governments as active interventionists or passive enablers. In the 1970s and 1980s there was probably more of a division between mainstream and ‘alternative’ forms of development. More recently, the boundaries have become blurred as mainstream development thinking has incorporated various aspects of alternative development, though these emphases have often been diluted in practice. Key issues in contemporary development agenda had their origins in alternative discourses, but at present, development practice is dominated by a set of ideas that can be described as constituting a prevailing orthodoxy which is a middle path between both sides. But, as Pieterse (2002) asks, what is gained and what is lost in this act of hybridization?

A review of development theories and policies shows that there is a growing convergence between scholars, policymakers and practitioners on the relevance of human rights to development and poverty reduction efforts as a central feature of a revised approach to development. It is now widely accepted that development is a much more complex and holistic concept that goes beyond economic growth. It entails increasing capabilities and people’s options, it should be a participatory process and should be informed by ecological, cultural and gender considerations. Many are arguing however, that these positions have become commonplace rather than ‘radical’, and that these issues have been integrated into development thinking and practices, indicating a
high degree of cooption of politicized objectives rather than their success in transforming the development agenda. In particular, critics also argue that citizen participation in local governance will only reflect the fragmentation of civil society and promote the individualistic, self-help mentality of the discursively discredited neoliberal approaches to development (Cleaver, 1999; Cooke and Kothari, 1999; McGee, 2002; Mosse, 1997).

However, I would argue that instead of dismissing these discourses on good governance, participation, decentralization and local development as ‘mere depoliticization’, it should be also recognized that, inter alia, they are actually opening up new spaces for direct citizen engagement and participation in local governance systems. Many of these concepts have been used to map new directions in social and economic policy, advance a kind of multidisciplinarity, and allow some new perspectives to be taken in research. There is a distinct widening of scholarly activity and international debate in the circles of development agencies. The attention now being given to the influence of social, cultural, geographical and political factors and institutions in economic change, and to the interdisciplinary approach that has accompanied it, should also be acknowledged and welcomed.

The idea that free markets left to their own devices do not bring universal benefits is gaining ground and while the economics of liberalization continue to be informed in great part by neoliberal ideas, matters of institutional capacity building, governance and civil society are being integrated into the development agenda. The role of civil society in development is increasingly recognised as significant. However, in contrast to post-development approaches, the reliance on resurgent social movements is being problematized. There is some debate around what precisely constitutes civil society, as well as around the respective roles of the state and civil society in the development process. Also, the claims of NGOs to representativeness, to operating democratically, to their comparative effectiveness and proximity to constituencies, are being challenged.

More recently, this debate has been exacerbated during the discussions on the Paris Declaration and preparations for the Accra Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF3). Some CSO have raised concerns about the participation of CSO in the whole HLF3 process arguing that there has been limited civil society participation in the decision-making process from implementation to monitoring and evaluation, and it has been limited to the ‘Advisory Group on CSO and aid effectiveness’ only including a few NGOs from the North and South.
If development scholars and practitioners want to avoid being looked upon as ‘Candides’, we must cultivate our garden: if we are to understand the conditions for reinventing social collective projects of transformation, we need to part company with both post-development and romanticist views that pin all their hopes on resurgent civil societies, and neoconservative deterministic models that leave little room for agency. As Bank and Minkley (2005) point out, these approaches which suggest that the poor ‘pick themselves up by the bootstraps, galvanise their natural entrepreneurial talents and resources, and reinvent themselves as enterprising small holders and commodity groups in a hostile global environment with minimal state support are increasingly under question from below’ (Bank and Minkley, 2005, p. 34).

Instead, as Heller notes, we need to develop models of analysis that ‘explicitly unpack the configurations and conditions under which social forces and political actors become agents of transformation’ (Heller, 2001, p. 156). Indeed, as Hart suggests, development that abstracts from broader questions of ‘political economy leads inexorably to a dead-end’ (Hart, 2002, p. 652). Any analysis of the relationship between decentralization, participation and democratic and inclusive development should be approached with this perspective.

As I argued in a previous research piece, the lessons of the past have underscored the limitations of both state and market, and the challenge remains that of refining workable forms of institutional mediation that reconcile competing interests in society, providing the basis for a more inclusive and democratic development (Haines and Robino, 2008). Will participatory development and decentralization contribute to greater inclusiveness and to improve the technical efficacy of policy interventions while contributing to the democratic transformation of the development agenda itself? The following chapter explores in depth the concepts of citizen participation and decentralization and discusses the relationship between these terms in search of possible answers to these issues.
Chapter 3: Decentralization, Citizen Participation and Democratic Local Governance: Key Elements of a Revised Development Approach?

‘When I use a word’, Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less’.

‘The question is’, said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things’.

‘The question is’, said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master - - that's all’.

Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) 1871
Chapter VI of Through the Looking-Glass

3.1. Introduction

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, in the context of increased democratization trends, the role of people in decision making has taken on greater relevance in development processes. This is reflected in the discourses that emphasize the need to make development participatory and that specifically confer a central role to participation in local governance. One of the central axes of these trends has been the promotion of decentralization processes and discourses of local development. The emphasis has fallen on strengthening local governments that have assumed new responsibilities, competences and resources in a context characterized by high degrees of centralism, vertical political culture and economic constraints. Additionally, particular emphasis is placed on the idea that, at the local level, governments are supposed to advocate and introduce more participatory practices in local governance.

As I have discussed in Chapter two, the emergence of ‘the local’ can be explained by the questioning of prevailing development models that were of a highly centralized and urban biased character, and by sharp criticism of the way in which the local dimension was approached in such conceptualizations. Currently, a renewed emphasis on the need to enhance participation in development seems to have achieved a degree of consensus among the most influential development institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, developed and developing countries’ governments, NGOs and academic institutions. Decentralization processes have also been promoted and the principle of subsidiarity highlighted. Decentralization and participation are thus two words that form part of today’s mainstream development. Nevertheless, the definition of these terms is a contested field and important debates have been generated on the issues by development practitioners and scholars.
The multiplicity of approaches and the diversity of interpretations of citizen participation in development policies and projects, as well as the diverse theoretical conceptualizations and methodologies, make it difficult to evaluate such practices. It should not be surprising that politicians, businesspeople, scholars, government officials, unions, international aid agencies and NGOs are all talking about the need to increase participation in development. However, their diverse ideologies, goals and agendas make it difficult to talk about a consensus at the practical level. Participation may be a value, a process, a technique or methodology, and even a desirable outcome. Participation has been described as both a means and an end: as a means to increase policy or project’s effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability; as an end, it has been considered as a fundamental issue for strengthening democratic models of (local) governance. Recent approaches also consider participation as a fundamental human right. Indeed, the human rights framework for development sees participation both as a human right in itself and as a principle central to a rights-based approach.

At the same time, the good governance concept has also been positioned at the centre of development discussions. As a repackaging of democratization and decentralization into a more comprehensive set of normative guidelines for how governance is meant to happen, the good governance agenda, according to its protagonists, traverses a gamut of objectives ranging from the promotion of a business friendly environment to democratic participation, citizen rights, open government, transparency, accountability, a strong civil society and efficient and responsive service delivery (Aubut 2004; Hyden, 2007; Grindle, 2004; Kinuthia-Njenga, 1999; Minogue, 2002; Potter, 2000; Rhodes, 1996; Weiss, 2000 and Wood, 1999). Under the umbrella concept of good governance, the adjectives ‘decentralized’ and ‘democratic local’ have received growing attention.

Local governance refers to a sphere of decision making that has been decentralized from the central state apparatus. In the tradition of procedural or liberal understandings of democracy, ‘democratic local governance’ implies that meaningful authority is

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56 In this research the concept of Citizen Participation will also be used to embrace the idea of Community Participation. I have chosen to use the former conceptualization, as I believe it reflects the trends that can be identified in the more recent participatory development discourses, where the ideas of good governance, human rights and democracy have gained in importance. This is discussed further in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this chapter.

57 See i.a. Robert Dhal’s definition of Poliarchy (Dahl, 1971 and 1990). A poliarchy is a system of government that has elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, rights to run for office,
devolved to local units of government that are accessible and accountable to the local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberty (Blair, 2000). Other scholars, following the tradition of direct democracy emphasise inclusive participation as the very foundation of democratic practice. Such approaches suggest a more active notion of citizenship which recognises the agency of citizens as ‘makers and shapers’ rather than as ‘users and choosers’ of interventions or services designed by others (Cronwall, 2000; Cronwall and Gaventa, 2000 and Narayan et al, 2000).

As we have discussed in chapter two, at the time of its emergence the concept of (good) ‘governance’ had its prime focus originally on government, but the concept was subsequently reformulated to reflect a broader scope. In this shift away from an exclusive focus on ‘government’, local governance took on the broader definition of formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. It encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations and neighbourhood associations in pursuing collective action. Understood in this way, local governance defines the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making and delivery of local public goods (Shah, 2006).

This approach, which I have referred to as the co-governance approach, therefore emphasizes accountability and rebuilding democracy through creating new patterns of consultation with local stakeholders. It also involves constructing inclusive decision-making mechanisms, and building the capacity of communities – especially the poor - to interact with them. Communities are expected to play an integral and ongoing part in the affairs of the local government, beyond the traditional boundaries of representative democracy.

A clear trend can be identified in developing countries where governments are adopting rhetorically, but also, though less substantively, at a material level as well, the concept of participation in their legislative and policy frameworks. This trend has been

freedom of expression, access to alternative sources of information, and associational autonomy, in particular, political parties and interest groups that attempt to influence the government by competing in elections and by other peaceful means.
accompanied by another identifiable trend: the introduction of decentralization reforms. As Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) have noted ‘nowhere is the intersection of concepts of community participation and citizenship seen more clearly than in the multitude of programmes for decentralized governance that are found in both southern and northern countries’ (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999, p. 3).

As has been argued in chapter two, a flurry of events concurred to position decentralized governance at the heart of the development agenda at the beginning of the new millennium. The sharp criticism of development discourses given the failures of past experiences, a need to increase the efficiency of development aid, and unfulfilled promises of democratization, to mention a few, are at the heart of this revision of old concepts and approaches that has defined a new development language.

In particular, the so-called ‘democratic crisis’ (UNDP, 2004) involves the crisis in the relationship between citizens and the state and the perceived lack of responsiveness of government to citizens needs and of real connections between them. Diverse forms of institutionalizing participation have been proposed for bridging this gap. In the debate on constructing new relationships between ordinary people and the institutions that most affect their lives –the state structures in particular-, the issue of decentralized participatory governance has been proposed as an answer (UNDP, 1993).

The crisis in the relationship between citizens and their state is central to this shift towards decentralized democratic governance. There are many arguments that call for these reforms, both from an economic and political rationale. This shift is understood in mainstream development discourses as entailing a government closer to the people and being more responsive to their needs and requirements. In addition, in this strategy, local government plays an indispensable role in promoting the general welfare of the population, as it is regarded as the part of the public sector that is closest to citizens. Decentralization legislation is understood as the institutional framework for devolving

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58 The empirical evidence of the crisis in the relationship between citizens and their state is not limited to the developing world. Putnam, to mention one of the most frequently quoted scholars, in his ‘Bowling alone’ (Putnam, 2000), presents data pointing to the growing distance between citizens and state institutions in the United States.
power and responsibility to lower levels of government, which would also allow for
diverse forms of citizen participation in matters of local governance.

Nevertheless, the consistency and depth of this new language has not been subject to
much scrutiny. I would argue that the coherence of these two processes should be a
matter of debate, and that we should be wary of uncritical assumptions of a direct
relationship between decentralization, citizen participation and inclusive and more
democratic models of local governance.

On one hand, the very essence of the association of increased participation with more
deconcentrated forms of power is being questioned. There are examples which show that
increased citizen participation can be associated to concentration of power instead of
decentralization of power (e.g. some new participatory spaces opened in Venezuela
seem to suggest that this process is possible\(^\text{59}\)). On the other hand, some authors have
noted that there are no a priori reasons why more localized forms of governance would
be more pro-poor, inclusive or democratic.

The relationship between citizen participation, decentralization and democratic local
governance is not clear-cut. For some, decentralization is regarded as a condition
(necessary but not enough) for the promotion of local democracy through increased
participation. For others, some degree of citizen participation is a precondition for
effective decentralization. Some would also argue that even if decentralization leads to
increased citizen participation, this does not necessarily make a governance system
more pro-poor, inclusive or democratic. I would argue that the nature of this
relationship will heavily depend on how decentralization is conceived and
implemented. I would also suggest that the wider political economy conditions where
decentralization and citizen participation are set to occur is a critical factor in
explaining this relationship.

Academic and policy circles have begun to recognize that decentralization programs
often fall short of the great expectations that precede them. Various authors have noted
that decentralization has in many cases not been an instrument of democratization and

\(^{59}\) See emerging research being conducted by Lopez-May.\)
has repeatedly failed to fulfil the promises of efficient and effective service delivery (Ahmad et al, 2005; Azfar et al, 2001; Oyugi, 2000,). As Heller notes, decentralization in the developing world has more often than not been associated with rolling back the state, the extension of bureaucratic control, and the marketization of social services (Heller, 2001).

Some authors have warned about the effects of decentralization reforms on inequality. Under the banner of decentralization (or what should be called centralization through decentralization) many countries have introduced policies that actually concentrate power and decision-making and weaken local arenas for political debate, as well as aggravate inter and intra-regional inequalities. Countries undergoing decentralization reforms face complicated challenges for designing intergovernmental systems that take into account interregional disparities while introducing appropriate incentives (e.g. Ezcurra et al, 2007 and Slinko, 2003). From an intra-regional perspective, new institutional arrangements associated to decentralization reforms can also affect the distribution of resources and power between different groups or sectors in a given region. The issue of the impact of decentralization reforms on the rights of women is a relevant example of this under-explored dimension. This dimension of inequality associated with decentralization reforms is an important issue to take into account when designing decentralization reforms, as emerging research is suggesting (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

Various authors have demonstrated that political decentralization often runs into bureaucratic obstacles and politically motivated resistance from local and other elites, and that locally based popular movements are often co-opted by other actors for their own ends (Blackburn 2000; Johnson and Wilson 2000; Roodt 2001 and Schönwälder 1997). It has been also documented that, contrary to the democratizing effect hoped for through the creation of participatory spaces in local governance, increased participation can further entrench existing patterns of political and social inequality rather than giving more power to the voice of the poor and marginalized in local decision-making processes (Fox and Aranda, 1996; Leach et al, 1999; McEwan, 2005; Molyneux, 2002 and Schönwälder, 1997).
This chapter reviews the diverse concepts of citizen participation and decentralization and their inter-relations. It builds on a literature review of a variety of intellectual sources and disciplines, in particular, on the fiscal federalism literature as well as on political science, organizational and institutional perspectives. It also considers the results of empirical studies for the purpose of shedding light on these debates. The chapter reviews different meanings given to these terms and addresses the justifications for embarking on such processes. The assumed advantages and disadvantages of decentralization and participation are reviewed in light of the developing countries perspective.

The chapter goes on to propose a possible operationalization of the concepts of participation and decentralization that will be used in the assessment of South Africa’s participatory spaces. An analytical framework which integrates the operational definition of citizen participation with the various understandings of decentralization is developed. This will help to better understand how, and under what conditions, citizen participation and decentralized local governance can contribute to more democratic and inclusive social change. As per the discussion held in chapter two, the diverse meanings of decentralization and citizen participation are related to different development theories and conceptions of what development means, the key actors and their roles in achieving the diverse development objectives. In particular, the interrelation of this double conceptualization has informed the empirical study conducted in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. It provides the theoretical framework that will assist in the evaluation and understanding of the patterns of decentralization and citizen participation in democratic local governance in South Africa, as developed in chapters four and five.

3.2 A floating signifier (1): Decentralization as devolution, deconcentration, delegation or privatization?

Definitions of decentralization abound. Currently, the popularity of decentralization in scholarly and policy circles has caused the term to become ‘slippery’, such that it can mean all things to all people (Katsiaouni, 2003; Oluwu, 2001). Borrowing from
semiotics, the use of the concept of a ‘floating signifier’ for such an overloaded term seems appropriate.

Broadly stated, decentralization is the ceding or transfer of power from central government to sub-national entities (e.g. regional and local authorities) which have some spatial or geographical jurisdiction.

There are various dimensions of power (political, administrative, fiscal) which in turn define dimensions of decentralization. Beyond market decentralization or privatization, there is a large measure of agreement that decentralization can take various forms whose typical attributes can be described as deconcentration, delegation and devolution. The patterns and direction of accountability also vary according to each of these forms. Rondinelli et al (1984) proposed four different levels or forms of decentralizing powers: (i) market decentralization, (ii) deconcentration, (iii) delegation and (iv) devolution, which are discussed, in turn, below.

(i) Market decentralization refers to the transference of power from government to the private sector. This implies transference of public functions from government to voluntary, private or non governmental institutions by means of (a) contracting out partial services provision or administrative functions, (b) deregulation or (c) full privatization. This form of decentralization has also been termed divestment (Bennett, 1990; De Mattos, 1985; Rondinelli et al, 1984). Some authors also refer to this as economic decentralization (Coraggio, 1997; Finot, 2002).

(ii) Devolution is the transference of power and authority to a subnational level of public authority that is autonomous and independent from the devolving authority. This is the strongest form of decentralization as it implies transfer of authority for decision-making, finance, and management responsibility (Robertson, 2002; Oluwu, 2001). Political decentralization implies the creation of autonomous governmental entities with sufficient decision-making powers, within specific geographical limits. Through political decentralization, citizens or their elected representatives have more power in local public decision-making. Local government is supposed to be accountable to its

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60 A floating signifier means different things to different people; they may stand for many signifieds as they may mean whatever their interpreters want them to mean.
local constituencies. Moreover, the definition of decentralization—in its more comprehensive sense, as devolution—calls for independent subnational governments. However, in practice it is difficult to find truly independent subnational governments that are under the control of locally elected councils. Resources for subnational governments are subject to national control and this puts in doubt the very essence of autonomy of decision-making on the provision of local public goods. Because of this, the notion of an independent subnational government is a relative concept. The actual situation falls somewhere within a spectrum (Proud’homme, 1995), with local government acting as agents of local constituencies and agents of the central government.

Administrative decentralization involves the transference of decision making authority, resources and responsibilities for the delivery of certain public services from the central government to lower levels of government, agencies, field offices of central government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations. There are two basic types or forms: Deconcentration and Delegation.

(iii) Deconcentration is the transfer of authority and responsibility among different levels of the central government. It is the most basic or ‘weakest’ form of decentralization, as it simply consists of a redistribution of routine administrative functions between offices dependent on the central government. The centre retains basic decision-making power in this limited horizontal distribution of functions. It merely shifts responsibilities from one central government official in the capital city to those working in regions, provinces or districts. It thus has a more spatial connotation in that it implies a shifting of functions and resources, including personnel, by central government from the metropolis to other locations, but ultimately authority is retained by the centre (Katsiaouni, 2003). The local unit is accountable to the central government ministry or agency that has been decentralized.

(iv) Delegation, on the other hand, is the redistribution of authority and responsibility to local units of government or agencies that are not always necessarily branches or local offices of the delegating authority, with the bulk of accountability still vertical and to the delegating central unit. It is a more extensive form of decentralization as it involves the transfer of responsibility for decision-making and administration of public functions.
from the central government to semi-autonomous organizations. Usually, these organizations have a considerable degree of discretion in decision-making although, again, ultimate authority is vested in the centre, and the direction of accountability is upward (Katsiaouni, 2003 and Robertson, 2002).

Other related concepts include ‘spatial’ decentralization as a ‘process of diffusing urban population and activities geographically away from large agglomerations’ (Minis and Rondinelli, 1989 in Proud’homme, 1995, p. 2). ‘Territorial’ and ‘functional’ decentralization have also been proposed (Rondinelli et al, 1989) to refer to a process where the transfer of powers involves agencies that have a territorial basis (thus, territorial decentralization) or with entities that have specific state functions (functional decentralization). In the first case, territorial decentralization, a specific territory is granted a greater level of responsibilities and control than it previously had, through the transfer of such power from a more central level of government. Functional decentralization refers to the transfer of functions from central agencies to other intermediate or basic levels in a specific sector of public administration (Dilla Alfonso, 1997).

Under fiscal decentralization, some level of resource reallocation and revenue collection capacity is transferred to lower levels of government to allow local government to finance new responsibilities in terms of expenditure, with arrangements for resource allocation usually negotiated between local and central authorities (Oluwu, 2001). If local governments are to carry out decentralized functions effectively, they must have adequate revenues—raised locally or transferred from the central government—as well as the authority to make expenditure decisions. Actually, the ability of subnational authorities to act independently of the central government depends crucially on whether they have access to independent tax bases, sources of credit and (unconditional) transfers.

The question of which tier of government controls which resources is one of the key issues of decentralization. As has frequently been the case in developing countries, expenditure responsibilities have been transferred to subnational levels of government, but this has not been matched by increased resources. Inspired by this fact, variants in the decentralization family have also been suggested: hybrid or partial
decentralization—whereby responsibilities and personnel are decentralized, but not financing (Coragio, 1997).

Actually, the ways in which central governments decentralize their powers have very different policy implications. Additionally, as we have discussed, the focus of accountability changes in each case. Decentralization establishes a complicated set of principal-agent relationships, in which subnational governments act both as agents of higher levels of government and as agents of their constituents in the delivery of local services (Burki *et al.*, 1999). Deconcentration and delegation increase the autonomy of staff in regional offices of the central government and semi-autonomous organizations such as public corporations respectively, but preserve the hierarchical relationship between these subnational spaces and the national government. Privatization, in turn, moves responsibility out of the public sector altogether.

Therefore, decentralization is a comprehensive term that includes the diverse forms identified above and is most frequently used interchangeably to refer to any of these. This has led to confusion. Some observers of the process seem to have abandoned the search for an all encompassing definition, or a uniform notion, of decentralization and have declared that decentralization is not just one thing; not even a series of degrees along a spectrum or scale (Katsiaouni, 2003 and Oluwu, 2001). This fact makes any assessment of decentralization processes complicated and calls for surpassing the centralization-decentralization dichotomy.

### 3.3 The economic rationale for decentralization: principles and practice

The academic disciplines of public finance, political science, public administration, new institutional economics and organization theories have all attempted to produce a set of guidelines for decentralization reforms. A set of ‘principles’ are currently part of the conventional wisdom on how decentralization processes should be designed. This has been characteristic of the fiscal federalism approach. A growing body of literature in public economics has examined the economic rationale for decentralization. The standard economic, ‘Musgravian’ dimensions for evaluating public policy are efficiency, equity and macroeconomic stability (Musgrave and Musgrave, 1959). Traditional arguments for and against decentralization of expenditure and of taxation
responsibilities are in turn considered in the following paragraphs by grouping them in terms of the three dimensions above-mentioned.

While reviewing those conventional arguments --especially those stressed in favour of or against fiscal decentralization as per fiscal federalism literature—in this chapter I also recognize that they tend to ignore many of the critical factors and challenges facing developing countries. Much of the literature draws on practices and circumstances in developed countries with a long tradition of decentralized practices. However, developing countries have traditionally been characterized by decision making processes that are much more centralized\(^{61}\) and many features of developing countries make some of the standard public finance assumptions less relevant.

\textbf{a. Efficiency:}

The economic arguments in favor of decentralization are mainly centered on issues of allocative efficiency. Oates’ classic argument in favor of decentralization is that it can increase the efficiency and responsiveness of government (Oates, 1972). The decentralization theorem stipulates that ‘public service is provided most efficiently by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographical area that would internalize benefits and costs of such provision’ (Oates, 1972, p. 55). According to this argument, devolving resource allocation decisions to locally elected leaders can improve the match between the mix of services produced by the public sector and the preferences of the local population.

The essence of this argument is that decentralization, in a context of factor mobility, helps to facilitate mechanisms for revealing preferences. The Tiebout model suggests a

\(^{61}\) The IMF Government Finance Statistics (IMF, 2007) includes data on the percentage of subnational expenditure and revenue raised by subnational governments. These figures are markedly different for developed and developing countries. In terms of autonomy, it is important to distinguish whether local governments determine the allocation of expenditures themselves, or whether the centre mandates expenditures and local levels simply execute those expenditures. Statistics on subnational finance (most notably those in the IMF’s Government Finance Statistics) usually aggregate these two types of expenditures and present them in one figure as the ‘percentage of subnational expenditures.’ The problem with this data, however, is that analysts often use the percentage of total public expenditures undertaken at the local level as an indicator of decentralization. In some countries, local governments decide on the allocation of these resources, but in others these expenditures are mandated at the central level and only implemented at the local level (conditional transfers). Autonomy will not be enhanced by fiscal decentralization if funds are tied by the centre. For now, however, this is often the best data available for cross-country comparisons.
mechanism for revealing demand preferences for local public goods that ensures efficient provision for public goods by local government. People reveal their demand preferences for local public goods by moving to the locality with tax and expenditure patterns that best satisfy better their needs. Local governments ‘have their revenue and expenditure patterns more or less set. Given these revenue and expenditure patterns, the consumer-voter moves to that community whose local government satisfies his set of preferences (…) There is no way in which the consumer can avoid revealing his preferences in a spatial economy. Spatial mobility provides the local goods counterpart to the private market’s shopping trip’ (Tiebout, 1956, pp. 568-573). In other words, households and firms ‘vote with their feet’ by moving to communities where provision of local public goods is consistent with their demands.

Population mobility in the form of citizens ‘voting with their feet’ can result in local governments competing with each other to satisfy people’s demands, thus contributing to efficient delivery of basic services at the local level. Under this way of reasoning, decentralization can lead to more creative, innovative, and responsive programs by allowing local experimentation.

Another channel for ‘voicing’ local residents’ preferences is voting. Present fiscal decentralization theory assumes that preferences are expressed in votes and that constituents choose candidates based on the policy choices they represent. Locally elected leaders know their constituents better than authorities at the national level and so should be better positioned to provide the public services local residents want and need. Also, because local officials are more accessible to their constituents, they have the means and the incentive to be responsive. According to this argument, decentralization may also improve the management of public services since physical proximity makes it easier for citizens to hold local officials accountable for their performance (ADB, 2000). Another potential benefit of decentralization is that people are more willing to pay for services that respond to their priorities, especially if they have been involved in the decision-making process for the delivery of these services.

The efficient provision of government services requires that the public sector satisfy the needs and preferences of taxpayers as well as possible. In terms of the discussion on expenditure assignment, this is best achieved through the principle of subsidiarity,
which means that functions must be assigned to the lowest level of authority at which they can be effectively carried out. A related idea on the design of jurisdictions indicates that the ‘benefit area’ must correspond with the level of government that will provide the service\(^\text{62}\).

There are, however, also disadvantages associated with decentralizing the various functions of government. Fiscal federalism analyses the consequences of the diverse degrees and forms of decentralization and suggests the ‘desirable’ extent – or principles – of decentralization. The key issue under this perspective revolves around an assignment problem: the assignment of taxation, expenditure, borrowing powers and regulatory responsibilities to various levels of government and the way the assignment function is resolved determines the sort of fiscal relations – the system of intergovernmental fiscal relations—that should exist between the diverse levels of government.

Decentralization of expenditure responsibilities may not always be efficient. Some services can be provided less expensively on a larger scale, or their benefits may spill over across local jurisdictions, and residents of one jurisdiction might benefit from services being provided in another jurisdiction (inter-jurisdictional spillovers). Differences in the provision of public services could affect migration among jurisdictions; for example, services offered to the poor may induce immigration of low income persons. This possibility could induce local jurisdictions to engage in a sort of wasteful expenditure competition whose aim is to attract richer residents and repel poorer ones, which could only be self-defeating in the aggregate (Boadway \textit{et al}, 1994; Rao and Singh, 1998).

Another way of reasoning is that there are efficiency advantages in centralization or requiring harmonization of public services delivered by local governments. Providing these services centrally takes advantage of economies of scale and internalizes

\(^{62}\) Leaving the supply of public services with wider benefit areas to smaller units of government is likely to result in the inefficient under-provision of services, as subnational governments will seek to have a ‘free lunch’, relying on the contributions or execution of the service provided by others. Olson (1965) noted that if a political jurisdiction and benefit area overlap, the free rider problem is overcome, ensuring an efficient provision of public services.
externalities, but at the cost of imposing a common policy on populations with varied preferences and priorities.

This trade-off, which is the basis of the fiscal federalist approach, guides some of the choices that must be made in allocating functions. In general, the services central governments provide should benefit the entire economy or exhibit substantial economies of scale—for example, national defence, external relations, monetary policy, stabilization policies or the preservation of a unified national market. Correspondingly, subnational units should provide subnational public goods. Such responsibility-sharing arrangements are complex however, and to function properly they must be very clear (Bahl, 1999). Each tier’s responsibilities must be well defined, and the regulatory framework must anticipate that local governments are sometimes agents of the central government, and sometimes principals acting on their own. And without clarity and an appropriate regulatory framework, there can be no accountability, (Burki et al, 1999), which is one of the supposed advantages decentralization.

If fiscal decentralization is to achieve the benefits of increased efficiency in the provision of public services, subnational governments must have some degree of control over their sources of revenue63. ‘Subnational governments that lack independent sources of revenue can never truly enjoy fiscal autonomy, they may be (and probably are) under the financial thumb of the central government’ (Martínez-Vázquez and Boex, 2001, p. 5). Beyond some degree of fiscal autonomy, decentralization of taxing powers is desired in order to induce political accountability to local residents in a decentralized system of governance.

However, decentralized tax systems can interfere with efficiency, as the uncoordinated setting of taxes is likely to lead to distortions in markets for resources that move across jurisdictions or provinces, especially capital and tradable goods. Local governments that recognize this mobility may shape their tax policies in order to attract resources to their own jurisdictions. If all jurisdictions engage in such socially wasteful ‘beggar-thy-

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63 As Martínez-Vázquez and Boex (2001) state, although subnational governments are often increasingly assigned ‘own sources of revenue’ to fund their budgets, the term is often improperly used to refer to any revenue sources that flow to subnational governments irrespective of whether subnational governments have any control over these revenue sources (e.g., in many cases the rate and base of ‘own source’ taxes are still determined by the central government).
neighbour’ policies, the outcome might be a single rate, but at inefficiently low level (or high subsidies) for each tax on mobile factors. Thus, efficiency in tax administration suggests that subnational governments should levy taxes on immobile factors (Rao and Singh, 1998). A fiscal need criteria suggests that they should also levy cost-recovery user charges for services provided at the local level (i.e. tolls on local roads, electricity). In sum, fiscal federalism prescribes a series of conditions that taxes must meet in order to be ‘good’ local taxes: easy to administer locally; imposed solely on local residents; do not heighten competition between subnational governments or between subnational and national governments.

The main problem with the tax assignment as per the principles stated above is that it generally does not provide sufficient revenues for lower-tier governments. Theoretically, major expenditure responsibilities can be transferred to subnational governments in an effort to improve service delivery, but there are few high-revenue taxes that can be assigned to subnational governments without creating national distortions, both in terms of equity and efficiency. The principles of assignment thus result in a ‘vertical fiscal imbalance’ (Bahl, 1999). While, in general, the central government has a distinct advantage in raising revenues, subnational governments are better placed to provide public services. Thus, in most multilevel governmental systems, revenue raising authorities are different from those incurring expenditures (Rao and Singh, 1998). Since decentralization of expenditure and tax functions can be decided independently, it frequently happens that the preferred tax mix will not generate the right amount of revenue to finance expenditure assignments, the resulting fiscal gap being covered by intergovernmental transfers.

64 Some authors note, however, that decentralization might contribute to better identifying tax payers at the local level, and that overall revenue mobilization can actually be improved because decentralizing can broaden the tax net. An important share of government income through taxation comes from VAT and income taxes. For administrative reasons there are very high thresholds associated with both of these taxes, with the result that a large portion of the economy is outside the tax net. Due to familiarity with the tax base, subnational governments can move to capture this base (Bahl, 1999). The residential/land property tax is perhaps the ideal local tax in many ways. It is a rough form of benefit charge since residence/land owners are primary beneficiaries of most local services. It is a tax best administered by local governments since it requires identification of each residence or parcel of land, identification of each new improvement, and identification of changes in ownership. In short, it requires a familiarity with the local area; the tracking of such changes is well beyond the reach of the central government (World Bank, 2001).
The term ‘transfers’ is frequently used to refer to different kinds of public financing instruments (grants, subsidies and even revenue-sharing between central and subnational governments --if the local government has no autonomy to decide on the rate or tax base). There are various classifications of intergovernmental transfers based on different characteristics of the transference. In particular, key categories include:

(i) The purpose of the grant; transfers can be used to achieve a variety of public policy objectives and the characteristics of the grant will vary with them;  
(ii) Whether the grant is unconditional or if it imposes specific conditions for its use (these are called conditional and unconditional grants –a particular type of unconditional grants being ‘equalization’ grants);  
(iii) How the total amount of the grant is determined (in advance by a fixed formula or on ad hoc basis as part of the national budget discussion, ex post) and,  
(iv) How the available resources are distributed among subnational units (formula based, for the reimbursement of costs of services provided, revenues from a tax distributed in proportion to where the tax is collected or on ad hoc basis or as a result of political negotiations).

As mentioned above, grants can be designed to cover a fiscal gap. As there are costs in terms of economic distortions or high administrative costs associated with the decentralization of taxation, transfers are frequently used based on this argument. The decentralization of tax administration can increase the cost of collection and compliance for both public and private sectors. There are fixed costs associated with collecting any tax that have to be borne for each type of tax used by subnational governments. Taxpayers also incur compliance costs for all taxes levied. For some types of taxes, particularly where the tax base is mobile or involves more than one jurisdiction, the possibilities for evasion and avoidance increase with decentralization.

It is beyond the purpose of this chapter to either include an in-depth discussion of the various taxonomies produced to classify inter-governmental transfers (see i.a. Bahl and Linn, 1992) or to discuss the debate over how the transfers system should be designed (see i.a. Martínez-Vázquez and Boex, 2001). However, as transfers are an important part of intergovernmental fiscal relations schemes and account for a large part of subnational finances everywhere, their design is crucial for the success of decentralization programmes. While transfers are introduced to avoid some of the ‘dangers’ of decentralization, they also have difficulties associated with their design. As an example, with equalization grants, as subnational governments may differ in their willingness to raise taxes, these grants create an incentive for subnational authorities to understate their tax bases or relative wealth in order to maximize transfers. Ad hoc or ex post grants give public officials an opportunity to ‘buy favours’ (Martínez-Vázquez and Boex, 2001). Other kinds of grants (conditional grants) might excessively restrict the discretion of local governments. We will discuss this last issue specifically for South Africa and the municipalities in the Eastern Cape in Chapter 4.
(Shah, 1999). Transfers have thus also been justified on the grounds that they reduce the economic distortions or high administrative costs that would arise if subnational governments relied only on their own tax bases as per the principles of decentralized taxation, because the characteristics that make a good local tax also make for high costs of administration\(^{66}\).

Beyond the fiscal gap, transfers can be used to improve allocative efficiency by inducing local governments to take externalities and interjurisdictional spillovers into account. Transfers are used to induce local expenditure in specific services that would be underprovided if decentralized. In this case governments can use transfers to influence the sectoral pattern of local expenditure by earmarking transfers (to ensure they are spent on the service in question) or disbursing them in the form of matching grants (conditional grants that require a specific contribution by the local government in a particular expenditure area). Targeted conditional grants can be used to stimulate spending on specific items that the central government considers relevant (or to reimburse local governments for certain approved costs, as when a central government relies on local governments to implement central government policies -cost reimbursement transfers). As discussed below, transfers are also used on the grounds of equity considerations.

**b. Equity:**

In terms of equity considerations, the degree of inequality aversion of a particular society is relevant not only for determining the extent of government intervention in the economy, but for the desired degree of decentralization as well. Concerns about equity—horizontal and vertical\(^{67}\)—have been central to the discussion of

\(^{66}\) To function as a local tax, the incidence of a tax must be borne locally, but to be cheaply administered a tax must be imposed on a large volume of taxable activity flowing through a small number of taxpayers. Few taxes can meet both criteria simultaneously. Taxes that meet the test of localized incidence (such as property or business taxes) tend to involve large numbers of small-scale taxpayers. Taxes that meet the ease of administration test (such as taxes on manufacturing and imports and origin-based value-added taxes) tend to involve large-scale interjurisdictional incidence shifting (Burki et al., 1999).

\(^{67}\) The principle of horizontal equity states that those who are in ‘all relevant senses’ identical should be treated identically, while the principle of vertical equity deals with the treatment of unequals. In terms of taxation, taxpayers with similar characteristics (i.e. income) should be treated in the same way, while taxpayers with different resources should be treated differently (i.e. as per the ability to pay principle). For a discussion on these concepts and the theory of taxation see i.a. Atkinson and Stiglitz (1980)
decentralization and just as decentralized decision making can give rise to possible inefficiencies it can also generate inequalities.

Inequality concerns and fiscal decentralization are especially relevant for those countries where some jurisdictions are better endowed with resources than others, and where historical circumstances (such as apartheid) may have created local disparities. Tax bases vary substantially from region to region and from locality to locality, but as discussed above, tax rates cannot do so: a local government with a relatively small tax base cannot compensate by imposing much higher tax rates without losing businesses and residents to jurisdictions with lower taxes. The costs of providing public services may also vary because of regional characteristics such as population density and geographic features. These differences are known as horizontal fiscal imbalances.

In order to compensate for such variations, most decentralized fiscal systems include equalization grants. In other words, transfers are essential to ensure that decentralization does not occur at the expense of equity, especially when the central government relies on programs administered at the subnational level to redistribute income, or if there are large income differences across districts. In most transfer schemes, equalization grants are regarded as crucial to the achievement of an acceptable level of horizontal balance. Martínez-Vázquez and Boex (2002) argue that significant regional variations in fiscal resources often lead to regional tensions and can lead to open conflict or demands for secession.68

In terms of equity and decentralizing taxation, to the extent that equity is viewed as a national policy objective, decentralized taxes can interfere with the achievement of that objective. As in the efficiency case, uncoordinated subnational tax policies may unintentionally induce arbitrary differences in redistributive consequences for residents of different jurisdictions.

According to theory, local attempts to redistribute income from the rich to the poor are likely to provoke inefficient migration. The fiscal federalism literature suggests that central governments are ultimately responsible for ensuring vertical equity: where local

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68 For an example, see the case of Bolivia, where these horizontal imbalances are matched by ethnic cleavages.
economies are intrinsically open and many resources, especially key human resources, are mobile, only limited success should be expected from jurisdictionally focused distributional programs (Litvak and Seddon, 1999).

Still, local governments can and do play very important roles in implementing centrally-defined distributional programs and in determining a host of tax, expenditure, and intralocality transfer schemes, as many of the services that have been decentralized to local governments have important distributional implications. Responsibilities for social services and direct income redistribution are typically shared among different tiers of government that have access to different sets of information and may have different objectives (World Bank, 2000). Theory indicates then that in general, the bulk of the funding needs to remain a central government responsibility, but the better information available to local officials should be tapped by involving local governments in the delivery and management of public services. In these cases, central government needs to retain a monitoring role to ensure that redistributive goals are satisfied (Litvack, 1999).

c. Macroeconomic stability:

Another risk of decentralization is that it can threaten macroeconomic stability by hampering a government’s ability to respond to economic shocks. Per definition, fiscal decentralization reduces the central government’s control over public resources. Decentralization may also pose macroeconomic risks in the form of national or subnational government fiscal deficits. Nevertheless, the evidence connecting decentralization and macroeconomic instability is mixed.

Some of the decentralization of the 1980s, for example, was actually an offloading of fiscal imbalances by central governments to subnational governments. Decentralization processes were used to resolve central government fiscal problems by ‘dumping’ expenditure responsibilities onto subnational governments. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to see a strong association between decentralization and fiscal imbalances at lower levels of government (Ford, 1999).
A relevant dimension of intergovernmental fiscal relations is subnational borrowing. Central governments tend to restrict the borrowing powers of subnational governments so as not to loose degrees of freedom over fiscal policy as a macroeconomic management tool. However, in terms of decentralizing borrowing powers, the academic literature and country experiences do not suggest an a priori adverse link between decentralizing borrowing powers and central government’s ability to maintain fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability. Rather, the key seems to lie in the design of fiscal decentralization in general and, in particular, the design (and enforcement) of the regulatory framework under which borrowing powers are decentralized (Burki et al., 1999). While subnational borrowing does have risks, it has efficiency and (intergenerational) equity advantages associated to the possibility of borrowing to access funds for capital development needs.

Decentralized systems can be designed to avoid destabilizing effects and to ensure correct incentives. Firstly, subnational authorities must operate under hard budget constraints, so that they do not spend or borrow excessively in the expectation of a central government bailout. A hard budget constraint has been recommended as the key to preventing increased macroeconomic exposure to shocks. Secondly, subnational governments need resources commensurate with their responsibilities, thus the guiding principle of revenue assignment is straightforward: finance should follow function. Thirdly, clear regulations and rules, rather than discretion and political bargaining, should guide the system of intergovernmental relations (Bahl, 1999).

3.4 Decentralization theory and developing countries

Conventional economic assumptions do not apply to most developing countries’ contexts, and thus economic arguments for or against fiscal decentralization are of reduced effectiveness in guiding policy makers in the developing world, making second best options more relevant in this context. In other words, determining the correct balance of fiscal decentralization is more difficult in this context, and standard principles of fiscal federalism could be misleading. There are some serious obstacles

(or dangers\textsuperscript{70}) to successful decentralization in the developing world. Scholars have identified various general characteristics which preclude the realization of the theoretical benefits associated with decentralization.

Firstly, as frequently noted, local governments in developing countries seldom have the resources to handle the new responsibilities conferred upon them by decentralization. So even if local politicians wanted to respond to local demands, their hands may be tied. As already mentioned, many decentralization processes have failed to deliver on their promises because they have mainly been used as a way of ‘reducing the state’. In developing countries, administrative responsibilities have frequently been transferred to local levels without adequate financial resources, making equitable distribution or provision of services more difficult. If local governments are short of financial resources, they may transfer the responsibility for the provision of many services to the private sector. In these cases, the development of an adequate regulatory framework that allows local government to keep control over key aspects of service delivery has been recommended, but that is a far cry from what has happened in practice. Due to this, it has often been the case in many developing countries that service delivery has not improved, but has actually declined (Ahmad \textit{et al} 2005; Azfar, 2001; Heller 2001; Oyugi, 2000; Turner, 1997).

For decentralization to succeed, it requires that an equitable transfer of human and fiscal resources accompanies the transfer of responsibility to local authorities: it requires a strong central government and strong local governments. The policy recommendations, as emanating from the theory of fiscal decentralization reviewed in this chapter, tend to produce vertical fiscal imbalances between revenue sources and expenditure responsibilities. Horizontal imbalances also occur due to uneven allocation of revenue raising capacities among the sub-national governments themselves, requiring compensation between levels of government. Because of this, one of the cornerstones of decentralization is the implementation of a transfer system of financial resources between the different spheres of government. At the same time, the involvement of local governments in decisions concerning their income is crucial. The

\textsuperscript{70} One of the classic and controversial papers on this is Prod’homme (1995), which has spurred a constructive debate.
literature has recently been exploring the links between expenditure and revenue responsibilities for its governance implications (Brautigam et al., 2008; Moore, 2007).

Local authorities need these resources to carry out their mandate, to provide services but also to ensure capable human resources to serve their citizens. This leads us to a second obstacle. It has become almost a ‘mantra’ to state that the link between increased responsibilities of local bureaucracies and reduced efficiency or quality of service provision is due to the fact that most local bureaucracies in developing countries lack the required technical capabilities. In fact, lack of capacity at the local level and the need for a massive increase in skilled staff is one of the arguments most frequently invoked against decentralization. Weak budget and financial management tools along with a lack of information and capacity often prevent optimal results from being achieved, as is theoretically held.

Improving local services requires an effective local administration. Flurries of programs geared to strengthening subnational government technical capacity have been implemented in many countries, although the degree of success has varied. Capacity building has become a popular part of the jargon of development agencies, but it is frequently reduced to a few short workshops. Moreover, little is heard about the need to build capacities for other levels of government, the private sector and those that decentralization intends to help, or for the NGOs and CBOs at the frontline of community involvement.

This argument has been contended by those that argue that the capacities of all levels of government increase as decentralized service systems mature. Decentralization can, in itself, be the best way to build local capacity (Momoniat, 2003). Some recent perspectives on ‘citizen-centred’ local governance and decentralization hold that, as local government is no longer the exclusive provider of services, the issue of lack of capacities is less relevant. ‘Local government’s traditionally acknowledged technical capacity becomes less relevant under this framework’ (Shah, 2006, p. 16). This perspective implies that the role of local government is expanded to serve as a catalyst for the formulation, development and operation of a network of both government providers and entities beyond government. If local government roles are redefined and expanded, I would therefore argue that new capacities are required for local
government, as well as other local actors, and thus the issue of capacities is still relevant. To illustrate: new capacities are required in terms of monitoring and evaluating diverse purchase options and regulating the provision of services when carried out by other local actors.

Thirdly, in many countries administrative responsibilities are not clearly defined, either in legislation or in practice. Due to this, local administrations must rely upon higher levels of government for carrying out responsibilities. It is frequently the case then that higher levels of government will impose their own program on lower levels. This clearly compromises local governments’ autonomy and independence. Moreover, as Burki et al, (1999) have noted, without clarity and an appropriate regulatory framework, there can be no accountability (see below).

But fundamentally, decentralization theory assumes that decentralization provides benefits because preferences for public services will be more effectively expressed through lower levels of government, as this allows local governments to provide services according to their communities’ specific tastes. Because of this, fiscal decentralization is conducive to allocative efficiency. This presumption seems to critically depend on the decision-making mechanism of lower level government and on the constraints of local agents—households and firms—either to move from one locality to another in response to their fiscal attractiveness or lack thereof (in other words, to vote with their feet) or to express their preferences through the ballot box.

Fiscal decentralization theory assumes that citizens are presented with a menu of alternative combinations of services and tax levels and can express their preferences by either moving to the jurisdiction which provides the combination that better suit their needs, or by going to the polls (local politics, in this approach, serve to ‘clear the market’ in local public goods and services). However, if there are no effective channels for ‘voice’ and ‘exit’ there is no particular presumption in support of the view that fiscal decentralization enhances allocative efficiency.

Decentralization theory assumes preferences are expressed in votes and constituents choose candidates based on the policy choices they represent. However, it is more often the case in the developing world that even where local elections exist, electoral votes
are determined by patronage and party loyalties. Decentralization might not increase local influence over public policies, and thus a key case for decentralization vanishes (Edmonds, 1998).

Moreover, even if one of the key determinants of the influence of local population on local officials is the formal electoral process, this approach assumes that all citizens have equal access to the political process and that politicians act solely as the agents of voters. Decentralization efficiency advantages also rely on the idea that it will enhance the responsiveness of local institutions. However, elected officials may not have the incentives to respond to local preferences, and frequently, in many developing countries, local level decision making processes are anything but transparent and constituents have a difficult time holding politicians accountable for their decisions and their actions.

Firstly, if top-down models of decentralized governance prevail (subnational governments have little substantial margin of action to decide on expenditure and revenue options and citizens have limited voice and exit options), the governance implications are that the various levels of government will suffer from agency problems associated with incomplete contracts, and roles in the assignment of taxing, spending and regulatory powers remain to be clarified. Intergovernmental bargaining leads to high transaction costs for citizens. Improved information about local needs and preferences is one of the theoretical advantages of decentralization, but there is no guarantee that political leaders will actually act on these preferences unless they feel some sort of accountability to citizens. Nevertheless, the practice of decentralization indicates that local governments are accountable to higher levels of government and citizens are treated as agents rather than as principals.

Additionally, the presumption of some decentralization advocates is that decentralization automatically increases the influence of all strata of society, but conceding power to local governments is no guarantee that all local interest groups will be represented in local politics; it may simply mean that power is transferred from national to local elites. There is no a priori reason to assume that local elites will be any

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71 As I shall discuss in Chapter 4 and 5 this seems to be the case in South Africa, at least for local government elections (Schulz-Hezember, 2007)
more benevolent than those at the national level. As Manor observes, he has ‘yet to
discover evidence of any case where local elites were more benevolent than those at
higher levels.’ (Manor, 1999 p., 91, quoted in Blair, 2000) But there is an equal
possibility that decentralization simply transfers power from national to local elites, and
that improved access of local elites to public resources simply increases opportunities
for corruption72. Therefore, decentralization does not necessarily guarantee an
improvement in public services, at least for the majority of constituents.

The dominant concern in the literature reviewed is that the incentives and
accountability framework faced by various orders of government is not conducive to a
focus on service delivery that is consistent with citizen preferences. Local governments
are not accountable to their constituencies, but to higher levels of government. In order
to prevent this from happening, the literature has emphasised the subsidiarity principle,
the fiscal equivalence principle, and other mechanisms to be implemented for the
minimization of transaction costs to citizens. But this is not enough. More recent
literature has noted that although these principles are useful, they should be integrated
into a broader framework of ‘citizen-centred’ governance, to create an incentive
environment in the public sector that is compatible with a focus on service delivery and
bottom-up accountability (Shah, 2006).

The principles of citizen centred governance focus on citizen empowerment through a
rights-based approach and bottom-up accountability for results. The framework then
highlights reforms that strengthen the role of citizens as the principals and that create
incentives for government agents to comply with their mandates. A model of ‘citizen-
centred’ governance seeks to empower citizens and limit their agents’ ability ‘to
indulge in opportunistic behaviour’ (Shah, 2006, p. 16). A governing for results
framework requires government accountability to citizens for its service delivery
performance. As I have suggested, I would refer to a co-governance approach rather

72 Evidence on the correlation between decentralization and corruption is scarce and contradictory.
Although some authors in some contexts provide an optimistic assessment of the effect of
decentralization on corruption, others claim that the effects are insignificant, ambiguous and context-
dependent, with some at the opposite extreme arguing that decentralization seriously worsens problems
of corruption. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2005) note that the arguments on both sides involve very
different definitions of decentralization, as do underlying assumptions and the specific country
experiences studied. These authors provide a comprehensive assessment of the literature on this
relationship and conclude that the effects of decentralization on corruption and government
accountability are complex and cannot be summarized by simple, unconditional statements.
than a ‘citizen-centered’ approach because the latter could easily be accommodated to perfectly suit those development planning perspectives associated to a Market-based approach.

The literature suggests that the existence of subnational elections, while important, is not sufficient and, as a remedy, incentives and mechanisms for improved accountability and increased participation between elections have been put in place. The key is to shift decision making closer to the people. Direct democracy provisions such as referenda on major issues and projects, the right to veto for legislation and government programmes, participatory budget systems and other participatory spaces have been proposed. Therefore, many of the ‘dangers’ of decentralization can be reduced through more direct forms of citizen participation. Thus, for what has been called ‘democratic decentralization’, participation must be the cornerstone of any local government reform process. Citizen participation is seen as critical to the proper functioning of decentralized local governance. I will now go on to explore the diverse dimensions and approaches to citizen participation, as well as the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation in the next sections.

3.5 A floating signifier (2): From ‘participation in projects’ to ‘participatory development’ and ‘participatory local governance’?

Any discussion of decentralization cannot be divorced from the particular context in which that discussion takes place. The dominant force behind decentralization is political, and understanding the political dimensions of decentralized states is crucial for understanding the overall reform process. Among the political reasons most frequently mentioned in favour of decentralization, it is stressed that decentralization reforms offer a response to failures of highly centralized states in a range of fronts.

It is often noted that decentralization allows greater political representation for diverse political, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in decision-making, and can provide better opportunities for local residents to participate in this process. It has been stressed that decentralization allows for greater ability to protect the rights and values of

73 In South Africa it is associated with the negotiation process to end Apartheid and the inception of a multiparty system. See Chapter 4 of this report. For Latin America see Rojas (2000).
citizens. It can also increase political stability and national unity by allowing citizens to better control public programs at the local level and has been seen as a key strategy for peaceful conflict resolution. As a strategy for maintain political stability, it can provide an institutional mechanism for bringing opposition groups into a formal, ritualized bargaining process (Burki et al, 1999). Decentralization has been an integral part of programmes to restore or deepen democracy in many countries. As these programmes demand the participation of the population and civil society in local decision-making processes, they may result in better governance and democratization as well as greater efficiency and accountability of local governments.

Decentralization, in its democratic-political dimension, has two principal components: participation and accountability. Participation in the tradition of representative democracy is concerned mainly with increasing the role of citizens in choosing their local leaders and in providing inputs into new models of local governance. Accountability is the other side of the process; it is the degree to which local governments have to explain or justify what they have done or failed to do (Burki et al, 1999). As we have seen, improved information about local needs and preferences is one of the theoretical advantages of decentralization, but there is no guarantee that leaders will actually act on these preferences unless they feel some sort of accountability to citizens. Local elections are the most common form of accountability. However, as we have discussed, this has proved to be insufficient and other mechanisms of direct democracy are being explored to complement this. Citizen participation has come to be seen as critical to the proper functioning of decentralized local governance74.

Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) identify different spheres or strands of work around the idea of participation in the development context. Reworking their categorization, in this thesis I will refer to three strands of work. On the one hand, what the authors identify as the approaches to participation which have focused on ‘community’ participation, usually concerned with the civil society sphere in which citizens have been regarded as beneficiaries (or clients) of development programmes. I prefer to refer to this approach as participation in projects. This term has been used to refer to an instrumentalist

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74 Accountability can be seen as the validation of participation. For some scholars, the ‘test’ of whether increased participation is worthwhile is if people can use the participatory channels to hold a local government responsible for its actions.
approach to citizen participation as opposed to participatory development. The definition of participation in development has often been located in development projects and programmes, as a means of strengthening their relevance, quality and sustainability. From this perspective, participation (in its diverse ‘intensity’ levels) could be implemented in all phases of a project cycle.

According to Nelson and Wright (1996), four factors fuelled the debate on participation in projects: Firstly, Northern official development agencies questioned why after more than four decades of top-down and technocratic forms of development, these were not functioning. This was partially attributed to the lack of ownership of development projects by beneficiaries. Secondly, Southern countries that were emerging from dictatorships were disillusioned with the whole development endeavour, which were seen as being excessively paternalistic and driven by an overly centralized state. Thirdly, NGOs began to shift away from centralized control and direct implementation approaches towards decentralization, partnership and greater control by beneficiaries of development projects. Finally, structural adjustment programmes and the rolling back of the state –particularly restrictions on social expenditure-- made ‘self-sufficiency’ a survival imperative and the concept of participation was twisted to cover cost sharing policies and the levying of user charges in this context.

The concern with project efficiency was influential in shaping the outcome of the early participation debate as incorporated into mainstream development theory and practice, being compatible with the dominant paradigm of efficiency –as per the hegemonic neoclassical economics of that time. Participation was then conducive to the extension of this paradigm to the sphere of development assistance. As Nel (2001) notes, by the end of the 1980s these currents had been merged into a proposition that might be paraphrased as: ‘people’s participation in planning development projects is desirable because it makes projects more efficient, effective and sustainable’ (see i.a. Kliksberg, n.d.).

Participation as an essential component of project planning and implementation became widely institutionalized during the 1990s. It emerged out of the Participatory Action Research approaches of the 1980s through various reformulations of Participatory Rural Appraisal. The latter evolved from Rapid Rural Appraisal--a set of informal techniques
used by development practitioners in rural areas to collect and analyze data—
that was developed in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the perceived problems of the
‘development expert’ miscommunicating with local people in the context of
development work.

In the context of development projects ‘citizen participation refers to an active process
whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects
rather than merely receiving a share of project benefits’ (Paul, 1987, p. 2). While these
projects could be funded by the state, participation within them was not seen as related
to broader issues of politics or governance, but as a way of encouraging action outside
the public sphere. In this sense participation was located outside of the state and it could
take a variety of forms, ranging from social movements to self-help groups (Gaventa
and Valderrama, 1999). This interpretation is also at the centre of the overlap that we
identified in Chapter 2 in terms of the neoliberal discourse and the post-development
emphasis on the turn to localities, decentralization and citizen participation as a key
strategy for development.

From the early 1990s the ‘participation in projects’ proposition was tested and refined
through various initiatives of operational experimentation and research. Influential
among these was the World Bank’s Participation Learning Group (World Bank, 1994a,
World Bank, 1996a). The World Bank Sourcebook on Participation presents a
definition of participation as ‘a process through which stakeholders’ influence and
share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them’
(World Bank, 1996a). ‘Community-based development projects’ supported by the
World Bank emphasized collaboration, consultation and information sharing. Paul’s
findings—emerging from the assessment of participatory practices in World Bank’s
projects—actually noted that since the 1970s the World Bank had focused on citizen
participation mainly as cost-sharing by the poor, as well as on efficiency and
effectiveness. ‘While references to effectiveness, efficiency and cost sharing as
objectives of citizen participation are made in World Bank policy documents,
empowerment and capacity building have received much less attention’ (Paul, 1987, p.

75 Chambers and Blackburn (1996) state that Participatory Rural Appraisal can be described as a family
of approaches, methods and behaviours that enable people to express and analyse the realities of their
lives and conditions, to plan themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results.
5). In line with Paul’s findings, the subsequent report by the World Bank Learning Group found that since the 1990s, low intensity forms of participation (information sharing, consultation) have become routine, but higher intensity forms (empowering mechanisms for joint decisions and control by beneficiaries) are much less so (World Bank, 1994a). At the end of the decade, the focus had shifted to ‘Community-driven development projects’ which seek to give communities control over resources and decisions in the design and implementation of projects. As Pozzoni and Kumar (2005) note, however, the line between community based development and community driven development is quite blurred in practice.

Participation at the project level is now part of the standard tool kit of development planning and implementation for governmental, international development agencies and NGOs alike (Green, 2002).

At the same time, the concept of participation in development starts merging with participation in public policies and programmes, as well as, more broadly, in diverse models of governance. Much of the development community has referred to this as ‘popular participation’ which explicitly emphasizes the influence which local people can have over decisions which involve their well-being (OECD, 1992). Resolution 11 of the African Charter for Popular Participation includes the definition of popular participation as the ‘empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve their interests as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits’ (United Nations, 1990).

UNDP’s 1992 Human Development Report’s proposition on participation departs from a project based view and focuses on the analysis of democratic transitions and the role of civil society in shaping the new political and governance contexts that were emerging (UNDP, 1992). From the perspective of political participation, citizens have engaged in ‘traditional’ forms of political involvement --voting, political parties and lobbying-- (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). In the tradition of representative democracy, many authors have argued that the local sphere has the potential to democratize due to its greater capacity for responsiveness and representativeness. Democratic, decentralized governance promises that governments at the local level can
become more responsive to citizens’ desires and more effective in service delivery. As we have discussed, local level elected representatives are, in this approach, supposedly closer to people’s demands and needs and thus can be more effective in service delivery by better matching supply and demand. Under this approach, democratic local governance is highly dependent on the accountability of elected representatives at the local level. This perspective considers the role of citizens in local governance from the logic of representative democracy. The notion of citizenship is one of the voter; citizens participate through electing more accountable and representative local government authorities.

In both the North and the South, new ‘voice’ mechanisms are now being explored which allow for more direct connections between the people and the bureaucracies which affect them. Traditionally, in representative democracies, the assumption has been that citizens express their preferences through electoral politics, and in turn, it was the job of the elected representatives to hold the state accountable. However, there is an increasingly eroded relationship between citizens and their state; the perceived lack of responsiveness of government to citizens’ demands has cast doubt on liberal models of representative democracy. In particular, it has been noted that electoral participation is not sufficient as an accountability mechanism, and this has been raised as a key issue to explain the ‘democratic deficit’, especially for ‘new democracies’. Because these democracies lack formal accountability mechanisms for linking citizens to their representatives, a series of adjectives had been proposed to better characterize them: ‘delegative democracies’ (O'Donnell, 1992) or ‘electoral democracies’ (Diamond, 2002).

In line with deliberative democracy adherents, Barber’s ‘Strong Democracy’ contrasts with traditional concepts of ‘liberal democracy,’ especially in its emphasis on citizen participation in central issues of public debate (Barber, 1984). The practice of direct democracy extends citizens’ political participation beyond the electoral process and also draws on traditions of community participation (or participation in projects). Although citizen participation does not replace representation, it has been proposed as a key complement for representative democracy institutions, creating other forms of

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76 As opposed to the concept of ‘thin democracy’.
accountability mechanisms -what Ackerman calls ‘social accountability’ (Ackerman, 2005)- based on citizens’ direct involvement.

With the popularity of discourses on good governance, people’s agency, development ‘with a human face’, participation has come to be related with the notion of empowerment under a rights-based framework for development. Participation is recast as a human right, as an indispensable one for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The DFID paper on ‘Realising human rights for poor people’ calls for participation of the poor in decisions which affect their lives to be included in the list of universal human rights (DFID, 2000). The right to participate is also linked to rights of inclusion, and to rights to obligation, through which poor people may expect to hold governments more accountable and responsive (DFID, 2000). From this perspective, the importance of the ‘local’ is that, through the processes of decentralization, the local level can provide opportunities for state and citizens to engage, which in turn can potentially evolve to more participatory forms of governance. Then, following the tradition of direct democracy, some authors prioritize an approach to citizen participation that entails a reconceptualization of citizenship, one that goes beyond voting to one where citizens are ‘makers and shapers’ (Cronwall and Gaventa, 2000) of their own destiny. In this sense, citizen participation spills over the boundary of the project and calls for institutional reforms to make governance more participatory by enabling citizens to partake in the making of decisions that affect their lives.

This broadening of participatory approaches can be related to two main issues: Firstly, there is a growing understanding of the importance of re-linking development to the state. As we have discussed in Chapter 2, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the Washington Consensus and related policy prescriptions were characterized by an emphasis on the virtues of the non-interventionist state and the doctrine of the free play of market forces. In the late 1990s, with the proclaimed advent of the ‘Post-Washington consensus’, a growing emphasis was placed on issues of governance and state reform. In particular, the WDR 1997-1998 includes a chapter on ‘bridging the gap between state and citizen’ synthesizing in a way the growing convergence in debates of project (also called community or popular) and political participation (World Bank, 1998). Secondly, as a result of the rapid scaling up of participatory approaches that occurred in the 1990s, often responding to donor pressure, governments have been
urged to adopt participatory approaches in their development policies and as a form of planning, particularly at municipal level. While community participation was scaling up from project level into policy, the meaning of political participation was extended within the good governance agenda to include more direct forms of citizen participation, especially at the local level (Cronwall, 2000). The scaling up of participation necessarily leads those involved in development projects and programmes to engage with the state, and with broader issues of governance, representation, transparency and accountability (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999).

In synthesis, for the last thirty years, the concept of participation has been widely used in the discourse of development. It could be said that in the first two decades, the concept referred to participation at the project level. Nevertheless, both the traditions of project/community participation and of political participation are being progressively re-defined in the sense of a conceptual overlap reflected in the idea of ‘participatory development’ and ‘participatory governance’. These two traditions have been linked to a broader notion of participation as citizenship through the concepts of democratic governance and the rights of citizenship (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). This, in turn, implies a redefinition of governance. Citizens do not only engage with governments through the electoral process, but through new relationships of direct engagement as well. The concept of citizenship under this approach is amplified to include the idea of voter, implementing-agent, client, decision-maker and, as Cronwall puts it, ‘maker and shaper’ of its own destiny. In turn, these new relationships need institutional channels, spaces, rules and mechanisms to develop.

**Figure 3.1: Participation, Citizenship and the State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Relation with the State</th>
<th>Citizen as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in projects / Community participation</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Volunteer Project beneficiary, client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political participation</td>
<td>Through elections</td>
<td>Voter User, chooser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory development/ Participatory governance</td>
<td>Through elections + mechanisms and new spaces, channels for direct democracy</td>
<td>Voter + implementing agent + decision maker + co-creator + partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration
This trend reinforces the call for a broader interaction of public and private actors, especially at the local level. It also intersects with a general trend towards a redefinition of the approach to the development process itself: an emerging rights-based approach to development, in which the rights to participate, the rights of inclusion, along with a renewed concern on questions of identity and diversity receive greater attention (see chapter 2). Realizing these rights, however, poses enormous challenges for local governance, and the new deliberative mechanisms for citizen engagement increasingly associated with them (Nel, 2001).

### 3.5.1 Operationalizing Citizen Participation: Objectives and ‘Intensity’ Levels of Citizen Participation in Development

A flurry of classifications and taxonomies for ‘levels’ of participation have been produced. As early as 1969, Arnstein proposed a ladder of participation which runs from coercion and manipulation to information, consultation, cooptation, partnership, delegated-power and self-management (Arnstein, 1969). Cohen and Uphoff (1977) also detailed an exhaustive list of types of participation which included a range of activities and levels of influence. For these authors, participation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes. (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977). They excluded, however, ‘pseudo-participation’; participation which only involves ratifying decisions and goals made elsewhere. Cohen and Uphoff’s interpretation has had a major influence in terms of identifying the key-stages of the project cycle in which participation could occur: design, implementation, benefits-sharing and evaluation.

In one of the first World Bank discussion papers related to participation issues, Samuel Paul (1987) conducted an assessment which included 40 participatory projects supported by the World Bank. He argued that the diversity and complexity of the literature and world of practice that included participatory issues could be better understood within a conceptual framework which included objectives, instruments and ‘intensity’ levels of community participation and their interrelationships. Paul re-incorporated Arnstein’s scale of participation and reformulated her earlier ideas into a
continuum of levels of intensity that ranged from the low levels of information sharing to the moderate level of consultation and decision making. The highest level of intensity was related to ‘initiating action’.

Although any classification will necessarily be a simplification where categories introduced might overlap each other, for operational purposes it is useful to distinguish between the different levels of ‘intensity’ in the process of citizen participation. These are not fixed categories and these levels refer to a continuum that implies different degrees of commitment and involvement of people and communities in the process. For the empirical assessment of participatory spaces\textsuperscript{77} at the municipal level in South Africa, and following the classification used by Participa (2004), four differentiated levels can be established.

- **Information**: the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion. At this level, the information flux is one-sided and there is no feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed.

- **Consultation**: the objective is to invite citizens to participate by offering their opinions. To develop this level it is necessary to provide channels where citizens’ opinions can be received.

- **Decision making**: the objective is to invite citizens with real possibilities to influence a particular issue. In terms of social programmes and projects, citizens are regarded as executors and managers of programs responding to local problems. In this way, local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a binding character, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted.

- **Co-management**: the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders in a decision-making process that involves more than one specific issue. At this level, citizens acquire capacities and a sense of identity, their organizations and spaces are strengthened and they are empowered to initiate action by themselves.

\textsuperscript{77} The expression ‘participatory spaces’ is used here to refer to the various mechanisms, norms, organizations and institutions created to enable citizen participation in local governance.
To provide information that allows citizen to understand the impact of their decisions is a key element in promoting an active and responsible citizenship (Participa, 2004) and, under this approach, access to information must be considered as a fundamental right. However, it is important to state that the information level, more so than a participation intensity level, should be considered as a precondition for citizen participation to materialize; it should not be considered ‘genuine’ or ‘authentic’ participation (Uphoff, 1991; Souza, 2001). Again, although they should be considered in terms of a continuum of citizen participation, these diverse levels of citizen participation are useful for analyzing and discussing the challenges and possibilities of citizen participation in development.

In the debate about the objectives of citizen participation, Paul identified 5 kinds of objectives related to introducing participatory practices in development projects: cost sharing, efficiency, effectiveness, capacity building and empowerment (Paul, 1987). Moser, in turn, made a distinction between those development efforts which envisaged participation as a means, and those which saw participation as an end in itself (Moser, 1989). Participation as a means refers to the process in which people are mobilized with the purpose of achieving a desired outcome (evaluated in terms of the success of a project according to defined indicators). Participation as an end is not measurable in terms of development projects, but rather in terms of transfer of power. The outcome is itself increasingly ‘meaningful’ participation in the development process; the real objective is to increase the control of marginalized groups over resources and regulations of institutions that affect their lives.

Extending this criterion to participatory development, the objectives of citizen participation, and thus the criteria for evaluating the ‘success’ of these initiatives, can be understood in terms of two broad perspectives. On the one hand, from an instrumentalist perspective, the concern is whether citizen participation promotes more efficient and effective use of resources, whether service delivery is extended and the quality of services improved (participation as means). On the other, from an empowerment perspective, the concern is whether participation enables citizens to take charge of their own situations, to be the shapers and makers (a la Cronwell) of their own destiny and whether citizen participation contributes towards a more democratic and inclusive society (participation as end).
Another relevant distinction is that of formal vs. substantive inclusion in participatory spaces\textsuperscript{78}. As Pozzoni and Kumar (2005) argue, participatory spaces constitute the *locus* of decision-making at the local level, and it is therefore extremely important for community groups and citizens to enter such spaces. On the one hand, formal inclusion concerns the extent to which different community members and citizens are able to enter decision-making arenas. This, however, is not in itself sufficient to guarantee that participants will be able to exert influence over decisions. It has been noted that merely entering participatory spaces does not enable weaker social groups to influence decisions and risks turning participation into legitimization of an apparent consensus, which reflects the wishes of the most powerful groups. Therefore, on the other hand, substantive inclusion captures the extent to which different participants are able to voice their views, and the extent to which these are taken into consideration by other participants (Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005). In other words, there are different levels of participation, both in terms of depth (information sharing to consultation, decision-making and joint management) and breadth (formal to substantive inclusion in participatory spaces).

When participation pervaded the development discourse and practice in the 1980s, it was seen as a key to the greater effectiveness and efficiency of projects. In the late 1990s the focus of the participation debate shifted to policy, governance and institutional concepts, and the linkages with revised concepts of civil society, citizenship and a rights-based approach to development were explicitly considered. Although none of these typologies is incontrovertible nor dissociable, they reflect the changing understanding of participation and its objectives as both a project tool and a key outcome of a more holistic and complex approach to development.

\textsuperscript{78} It is important to note that while, analytically, it is possible and useful to make the distinction between these two dimensions of inclusion, in practice the boundaries between them are blurred. Formal and substantive inclusion does not exist in isolation of one another, and they tend to reinforce one another.
3.6 The relations between participation and decentralization in democratic local governance: an analytical framework

Decentralization and participation are contested concepts and recurrent debates have been held among development practitioners and scholars. The multiplicity of approaches of citizen participation in development policies and projects and the diversity of interpretations of decentralization, as well as the different theoretical conceptualizations and methodologies, make it difficult to evaluate such processes and practices. And even if at the discursive level there seems to be a sort of consensus, it turns out to be contested in practice, when decentralized and participatory development approaches are to be implemented. Moreover, the evidence on the development effectiveness of decentralized, participatory spaces is largely anecdotal and rigorous evaluative studies are lacking. Within such a debate, with the accompanying lack of agreement and sound evidence, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which consensus has been formed in regard to transforming development into a decentralized and participatory process.

As discussed, decentralization may be promoted for a number of reasons, combining administrative, fiscal and political dimensions. Among the reasons often given is to bring government closer to people and enhance their participation and interaction with local government officials in the affairs of the locality. The informational advantage of decentralization is the critical argument for those views that stress the allocative efficiency advantage of decentralization. For this, new channels for direct engagement of local governments with citizens are recommended. It thus entails a new form of relationship between civil society and the local government. As we have discussed, the conventional wisdom and arguments that call for an increased citizen participation related to local governance are threefold: Firstly, it is argued that it will improve the efficiency, efficacy and sustainability of public services. Secondly, it renders local government more accountable. Finally, it will deepen democracy as it will reinforce representative democratic institutions with participatory forms. In this sense, decentralization could be understood as a relevant instrument for democratizing social processes through citizen participation.
However, decentralization is not a panacea. Existing decentralization programmes often fall short of the great expectations that precede them and fail to deepen democracy. Even where decentralization is enshrined in the constitution of the country, which is the case in South Africa, and devolution is prescribed, the outcome is not incontestable. Contrary to what most of the literature seems to suggest or assume as a direct outcome, decentralization may not turn out to be positive for encouraging citizen participation and for achieving more democratic and inclusive development. A few authors have noted that decentralization is not necessarily related to democratic local governance. In some cases, decentralization reforms have taken place, but these processes have been neither participatory and democratic, nor inclusive (Blackburn, 2000; Grindle 2007; Johnson 2001; Johnson and Wilson, 2000; Roodt, 2001 and Schönwälder, 1997).

The relationship between decentralization, participation and democratization are not straightforward. For some scholars, decentralization is regarded as a condition (necessary but not enough) for the promotion of local democracy through increased participation. These authors see local government reform that allows for sharing information, providing a channel for the views and demands of local people, and operating in an accountable manner, as critical to the expansion of citizen participation. Then, a precondition for citizen participation would be to have a decentralized system for local governance. However, decentralization reforms might only reproduce the logic of uneven power distribution and entrench existing inequalities if these issues are not explicitly addressed. Decentralization can thus even inhibit (at least some groups of citizens’) participation (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

But also, as we have seen, some degree of citizen participation is a precondition for ‘effective’ decentralization. In particular, under decentralization reforms, the political objectives of increased political responsiveness and participation at the local level coincide with the economic objectives of better decisions about the use of public resources. As we have noted, conventional arguments in favour of decentralization focus on an informational advantage: local governments have an informational advantage in identifying citizens’ preferences as well as the flexibility to respond to local conditions (Litvack and Seddon, 1999). Thus, local governments must become the most important providers of basic services, especially to the low-income population, in order to improve equity in the provision of public services, in the distribution of
infrastructure and to enhance accountability. Following the rationale of conventional arguments in favour of decentralization, local government responsiveness, one of the main rationales for decentralizing, cannot be improved when there are no mechanisms for transferring information between the local government and its constituents. Therefore, some form of citizen participation is a requirement for successful decentralization, especially if participation in elections does not work as an accountability mechanism. In this case citizen participation in elections should be complemented by direct forms of involvement in local governance.

So what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Some would argue that participation and decentralization have a ‘symbiotic relationship’ (Litvack et al, 1998). On the one hand, successful decentralization requires local participation. Subnational governments’ proximity to their constituents will enable them to respond better to local needs and efficiently match public spending to private needs, but only if information flows between citizens and local governments. On the other hand, the process of decentralization is central to the enhancing of the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at subnational levels of government. However, I suggest, this relation critically depends on how decentralization is conceived and implemented.

Frequently, decentralization reforms have implied more responsibilities for local government, but not increased resources and power. Mismatched financial authority and functional responsibility is a common trait in much of the developing world’s decentralization experiences. However, without increased fiscal autonomy and resources at the local level, political ‘autonomy’ would be meaningless (Garman et al, 2000). I would argue that without this, local government suffers a profound legitimacy crisis in its evolving relationship to civil society, and this in turn does not generate an appropriate background for citizen participation in local governance. On the contrary, in this case decentralization reforms might lead to discouraging citizen participation. Beyond mere discourses on the need to promote participation, a few empirical studies show that participation is neither active, nor free, nor meaningful, resulting in a growing crisis of legitimacy in the relationship between citizens and the institutions that affect their lives (ECA, 2004). This is a critical argument on which I base the analysis for South Africa, as developed in chapter four.
One of the main ingredients in the relationship is the definition and implementation of decentralization. Citizen participation in local governance will not flourish if the privileged type of decentralization is ‘market decentralization’ under privatization forms. Other processes can also be characterized by having involved mainly an administrative dimension under deconcentration forms, where central governments have transferred the delivery of public services to the sub national level, but progress on the political, fiscal and capacity building fronts is not as visible or coherent. Some studies have noted that citizen participation will only happen, firstly, if national regimes are committed to a political strategy in which real opportunities for local-level influence and participation are enhanced (Heller, 2001). Decentralization planned by the central state either to deconcentrate administration while retaining the existing concentration of power in its hands or, on the other hand, to simply reduce the role of the state through privatization, cannot be considered meaningful reform in terms of opening new local spaces for citizen participation, and will have little impact on fostering participation.

The literature and case studies reviewed show that the procedural understandings of democracy, together with the emphasis on the administrative dimension of decentralization processes, has led to exclusion and alienation, not increased citizen involvement in political life (see in particular Afrobarometer, 2004).

Gaventa & Valderrama (1999) analyze various studies on participatory experiences over the last several years, and stress some general findings on the obstacles to more participatory forms of local governance. Among the key themes is the issue of insufficient financial resources at the local level. Financial resources to implement development activities influenced or decided by local citizens come mainly from two sources: central allocations and local revenues. A common barrier for citizen participation in decision-making found in most of the studies was the control of financial resources by higher levels of authority and the meagre resources available for local activities (Blair, 1998 and Mutizwa-Mangiza and Conveyrs, 1996). This was generally due to the inability of local authorities to raise their revenue for various political and technical reasons, and, in some cases, due to insufficient allocation of central revenues, or when funds allocated to subnational governments are conditioned to certain predefined uses.
A revision of case studies developed for those experiences that are considered the most ‘advanced’ or ‘successful’ in terms of decentralized participatory governance (e.g. Porto Alegre, Kerala --see Biarocchi, 2003; Souza, 2001), suggests that a series of factors associated with the fiscal powers and responsibilities of local government have to be in place for experiments in participation in budget and expenditure management to be effective: firstly, the existence of legal frameworks that establish the principle of fiscal decentralization; secondly, clearly demarcated expenditure and revenue assignments for local government and, thirdly, discretionary powers to raise and allocate resources across budget heads (Robinson, 2004).

If this is the case, any exploration into the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation requires analysis of the fiscal framework, examining the composition, size and source of local governments’ finances. This seems critical for contextualizing the extent to which citizen participation mechanisms, spaces and tools will effectively help in making any meaningful decision on allocating funds to certain locally prioritized expenditures.

The macro context in which decentralization and citizen participation is set to occur can not be overlooked. Decentralization and participation can not be unlinked from the broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of decentralized, participatory development to be transformative (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Schonwalder, 1997). Some scholars would argue that some preconditions are required for decentralization to be a means for local democracy, and that political economy considerations should be carefully taken into account. Many have argued that decentralization has not fulfilled its promises because it has not been appropriately designed nor implemented. Although there are many valid reasons and experiences to prove that this statement is correct, it is also relevant to assess decentralization initiatives in terms of the broader context in which these programmes are set.

Schönwälder refers to the pragmatic (vs. political) school of thought on decentralization as uniquely concerned with the practical aspects of decentralization, reflecting fundamental belief on the part of the pragmatic school that it is flaws in the planning and execution of decentralization programs, and not the social, economic, cultural or
political environment in which these programs are set, which ultimately determine their success or failure (Schönwälder, 1997).

Why would a simple transference of the ‘service delivery’ unit (as implied in administrative decentralization reforms –deconcentration, delegation-- or privatization) challenge the ‘vices of the centre’, including political patronage and cronyism? These kinds of narrowly conceived reforms have frequently ended in the transmission of these vices, which have been inherited by the local government structures. Then, the system regenerates itself whereby political elites capture and use local spaces for participation primarily as a means to further their own interests (Katsiaouni, 2003). Some studies have shown that in Latin America, despite the implementation of decentralization reforms, local political cultures have remained clientelistic. If social capital is weak and the local political culture is clientelistic, more participatory forms of local public planning will fail to empower poor citizens or make local government more accountable to them (Blackburn, 2000). The local level does not differ from the national or regional logic, where conflict instead of consensus is central to politics.

The issue of scale would not on its own redress inequalities in terms of the distribution of power and resources, as the local-participatory discourse seems to assume. Contrary to the romanticized vision of ‘the local’ as an unproblematic space, implementing decentralized participation processes fundamentally raises these issues.

Decentralization legislation is understood as the institutional framework for devolving power and responsibility to lower levels of government. Institutional and administrative reforms are needed to facilitate efficient and effective institutional forms that support and promote the mechanisms and spaces for local good governance and citizen participation. However, it is necessary to keep a balanced view of what such laws and administrative reforms can achieve. Despite formal enactment of ‘democratic’ decentralization, there is a powerful, informal dimension constantly influencing such processes. Legislation can change, while organizational structures may remain unreformed (Plummer, 1999, p. 15). Fundamentally, socio-economic and political realities of the context where citizen participation is set to occur can also remain untransformed and can reproduce the current situation of power and resources
distribution. Unless these issues are properly considered and addressed, decentralized local governance will not necessarily mean increased democratization at the local level.

The idea that decision-making fora are neutral, and that by entering into them people can meet on a level playing field, has been criticized by a number of scholars, for it ignores that differences in the distribution of power and resources amongst community members infringe on the process of collective decision-making (Johnson and Wilson 2000; Leach et al, 1999; Molyneux 2002; Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005; Roodt, 2001 and Schönwälder, 1997). This is a crucial issue for the realization of women’s rights (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

Those involved in policy formulation may be idealistic about the potential for involving people in development. The reality is that there are structural constraints to such involvement – beginning with the conception of decentralization reforms, inequalities in the distribution of resources, or political interests which may resist change, and yet have constitutionally enshrined rights (i.e. traditional authorities). Moreover, as we have argued, municipalities or local governments normally have faced growing responsibilities, but without sufficient resources to fulfil them. In terms of participation, they often do not have the human and financial resources and the capacity required to enhance citizen participation in local governance. These constraints have to be explored before realistic development policies can be implemented.

The concept of local governance is positioned at the intersection between decentralization and citizen participation trends as these have forced a re-examination of citizen-state relations and roles. Traditionally, the focus has been on either local governments or community organizations, while neglecting the overall institutional environment that facilitates or prevents interconnectivity, cooperation or competition among organizations, groups, norms and networks at the local level (Shah, 2006).

In examining the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation, issues of capacities of local government, but also of civil society, should be acknowledged. In particular, if a committed political agent is a necessary ingredient for administrative and fiscal decentralization, the democratic empowerment of local government is critically dependent on the associational dynamics and capacities of local actors (Heller, 2000).
Participatory governance is not about replacing, but completing and reinforcing existing democratic institutions. It is about complementary ways to bring citizens and governments closer together and strengthening local governance institutions. These links call for both a strong state--both in its national and subnational levels--and a strong and vibrant civil society. New bridges need to be built between the state and citizens, but also their relations need to change and this requires transforming state institutions. But, because democratic decentralization goes beyond legislative acts and resource reallocations, its effectiveness and sustainability requires far more than the capacities of both the central and local state.

Civil society organizations and social movements have a critical role to play in making the state more democratic. The degree to which local officials are accountable to their constituents determines whether decentralization produces the intended benefits—that is, more efficient and responsive services, and greater local self-determination. Electoral procedures seem insufficient for this purpose. Much depends on the strength of community organizations and their ability to organize. The presence and activities of NGOs and other citizen groups can be a revealing indicator, but it is also important to determine whom these organizations really represent (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

The concept of ‘local community’ with shared interests is very far from real, and local politics are highly conflictive. ‘This localism tended to essentialize the local as discrete places that host relatively homogenous communities’ (Mohan and Stokke, 2000, p. 264). Issues of participation and inclusion are closely linked with issues of representation and legitimacy. The process of decentralization is normally conflictive, rather than harmonious and consensual as most of the theory and practice of participation, civil society, local economic development and decentralization seems to assume. The process involves changes in the existing allocation of resources and power and, as a consequence, there will be losers and winners, some who will resist it and some who will encourage and welcome it. As spaces are opened up for communities to take part in local decision-making processes and for citizens to engage directly in policy-making, different community groups and civil society actors will compete to occupy these spaces (Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005).
Therefore, any assessment of the relation between decentralization and citizen participation requires an examination of political economy dynamics. Is the national, provincial and local government committed to an agenda of decentralized governance? To whom do the local council and spaces created for direct citizen engagement (such as Ward Committees) respond? In which direction does accountability flow? Chapter five explores the context and political economy dynamics embedded in new spaces opened for participatory local governance in South Africa. This is inexorably related to the way the assignment of resources and functions is resolved, and therefore it also follows the analysis developed in chapter four.

I have argued here that, on the one hand, the possibilities for this process to be a means for more participatory forms of local democracy rely on the diverse understandings of the decentralization project. On the other hand, a number of preconditions and macrovariables need to be assessed to ensure that participatory initiatives in decentralized governance have a fair chance of succeeding in terms of facilitating a more democratic and inclusive development model. While this is by no means an exhaustive exploration, it seeks to highlight the complexity of establishing a priori whether any given participatory intervention is likely to be successful. In any assessment it is important to consider the political economy conditions that could favour or hinder decentralized and participatory spaces in achieving their objectives.

Participatory development assessment has been more concerned with the so called project ‘efficacy’ and ‘efficiency’ and, in general, it has been attributed to the implementation of participatory methodologies (Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005). But the evidence on the development effectiveness and democratization potential of participatory spaces is largely anecdotal and rigorous evaluation studies are lacking. There is relatively more evidence that participatory approaches perform better than top-down initiatives, and various studies single out participation as the key element for improved performance (Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005). However, limiting the assessment of the effectiveness of participatory spaces to the attainment of more effective and efficient results would ignore the potential that this has for empowerment (in the scope of decision making power devolved to citizens and the creation of effective mechanisms of downward accountability) and democratization.
Therefore, while important contributions have come from these kinds of studies, more efforts should be concentrated in the area of the relationship between democratic governance, citizen participation and decentralization: What is the relationship between decentralization reforms and citizen participation? Which are the effects in terms democratized local governance and which are the challenges and problems that need to be overcome? For this, it is critical to discuss in operational terms how decentralization and participation is being introduced and sustained. As a consequence, a general framework integrating the diverse definitions and categories provided here would allow evaluation and understanding of the relationship between citizen participation and decentralization, as well as the challenges and opportunities related to these key words in contemporary development theory and policy.

The debates on decentralization and citizen participation require unpacking the rhetoric of participation and decentralization into elements which can be analyzed, discussed and evaluated. To operationalize the concept of citizen participation we will use the categories defined in section 3.5 of this chapter. This will be incorporated into the analysis as a means that will assist in the evaluation and understanding of citizen participation in local governance in South Africa, together with the identification and assessment of spaces, mechanisms and instances for citizen participation as per the policy and legal framework. An analysis of the decentralization process using the diverse dimensions presented in sections 3.3 and 3.4, and specifically focusing on fiscal decentralization, will feed into the macrovariables that are discussed in chapter 4 as key to explaining the relationship between citizen participation and decentralization.

I have also argued that the diverse dimensions (political, fiscal, administrative) and forms (from devolution to divestment) of decentralization are established with diverse objectives. The vision of citizenship, democracy conceptions, objectives and forms of participation, as well as the sources of legitimacy and patterns of accountability, vary accordingly. Viewing people as beneficiaries, customers, users or citizens tends to determine perceptions of what they will be able to contribute or what they are entitled to know or decide, as well as of the obligations of those who seek to involve them (ECA, 2004).
The matrix below presents a synthetic combination of the diverse dimensions and definitions of decentralization and participation, its objectives and intensity levels and their relation to the concept of democracy and citizenship. It outlines two broad models for these relationships which in turn involve diverse relationships between development actors. Although such ideal types are never found in a pure form in practice, I believe the scheme presented here contains considerable taxonomic utility, particularly for understanding the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation, as well as for analysing the obstacles that these processes face in practice. In the next section I will conclude by integrating this discussion with the concepts reviewed in the previous chapter in terms of development planning paradigms.

3.7 Conclusion: participation and decentralization as ‘alternatives’ in development

In the sea of conceptual ambiguity that surrounds the idea of citizen participation and decentralization, a clear trend can be identified in developing countries where their governments are adopting in their legislature and policy frameworks and, to a lesser extent, in practice, the concept of citizen participation. This trend has been accompanied by another clear trend: the introduction of decentralization reforms.

Decentralization proponents consider local authorities as the most relevant governmental agents in terms of the influence they have in connection with the betterment or deterioration of local population’s living conditions. Under
decentralization processes, political, fiscal and administrative power is supposedly ‘devolved’ to local governments, as this level of government is understood as being the closest to the people. We have seen that as a result of these trends, the traditional distinction between community participation (or participation in projects) and political participation (through the tradition of representative democracy tools –voting, political parties, lobbying) is dissolving. As participatory approaches are scaled up from projects to polices, there is a convergence of concern with citizen engagement in policy formulation and implementation, looking at more direct ways in which citizens can influence their governments and hold them accountable.

Even though, over the last two decades, development theorists and practitioners have stressed the centrality of decentralization and participation of people in their own development almost as a matter of faith, some are coming to realise that the concept of citizen participation in local governance has been restricted to the discursive level. At the same time, unfulfilled promises of decentralization programmes have been recognised. ‘The apparent gap between the promise of enhanced participation through democratic decentralization on the one hand, and the everyday realities of participatory politics on the other, suggests the need to understand more fully the barriers and dynamics to participation in local governance, as well as the enabling factors and methods that can be used to overcome them’ (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999, p. 6).

More generally, participation and decentralization have been unlinked form broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of participatory development to be transformative. However, contrary to those idealized notions of participation and democratic local governance, participatory spaces are never neutral and are shaped by the dynamics of power relations.

The relationship between decentralization, participation and democratization is not clear-cut. For some, decentralization is regarded as a condition (necessary but not enough) for local development, participation and democratization. For others, some degree of participation is required for decentralization to achieve its intended objectives of more efficient and responsive local government. We have argued that participation and decentralization might have a ‘symbiotic relationship’, but the conception, definition and objectives of decentralization are critical to this relationship. Moreover,
we have emphasized that political economy considerations are also fundamental for understanding this relationship as well as the characteristics of the social, economic, cultural or political environment in which these programs are developed.

A fallacy of the 1980s and 1990s was the equation of decentralization with a retreat of the state that would be compensated by a growing civil society and private sector. Those who advocate for the need to focus on purely decentralized systems of governance, ‘the local’, and simply argue that development policy formulation and implementation must be decentralized to small, local communities or interest groups do not adequately address the problem: such micro-level development initiatives simply do not have the resources and operate under structural constraints which render them unable to successfully implement the kind of empowering development programmes proclaimed (Hart, 2004).

It has also been noted that many municipalities face increased pressures to promote citizen participation and state reforms, particularly through the decentralization process, and have opened possible spaces for the participation of citizens at the local level. Additionally, more enabling legal frameworks and institutional channels for citizen participation at the local level have been developed in many developing countries. However, disappointment related to unfulfilled promises of decentralization and participation has led some scholars to argue that these concepts should be dismissed.

I am convinced however that the issue is more complex than is portrayed by either side and, as Hart notes, these sorts of abstract invocations are singularly unhelpful in exploring the concrete possibilities for feasible alternatives (Hart, 2004, p. 7). A more balanced analytical position is required.

The widespread engagement with issues of participation and local governance creates enormous opportunities for re-defining and deepening the meanings of democracy, for linking civil society and government reforms in new ways, and for extending the rights of inclusive citizenship. At the same time, there are critical challenges in ensuring that the work promotes pro-poor and social justice outcomes, in developing new models and approaches where enabling conditions are not favourable and in avoiding an overly narrow focus on the local (Gaventa, 2001). These are important challenges for the
broader agenda of promoting both participatory and decentralized development, for theorists and practitioners alike.

As we have discussed in chapter two, development critiques coming from opposite directions converged in the 1990s and both sets of forces, regardless of orientation in the debate on the role of the state in development, have impacted on the system of local governance. As we have seen, the participatory discourse tended to be accommodated between two broad groups. Those who saw it as a process to reduce the state, giving prominence to market approaches to service provision, and those who focussed on civil society empowerment. This would lead to different approaches in promoting and establishing participatory governance (see Figure 3.3). The pendulum seems to have now stopped at an intermediate position and hybridism seems to be the word that best characterizes current development discourses. A co-governance approach, as suggested in Chapter 2, emphasizes accountability and rebuilding democracy through creating new patterns of consultation with local stakeholders, constructing inclusive decision-making mechanisms, and building the capacity of communities – especially the poor - to interact with them. Communities are expected to play an integral and ongoing part in the affairs of the local government, beyond the traditional boundaries of representative democracy. However, local government (and other levels of government) are still considered a crucial actor for development.

But discourses on ‘community empowerment’ and citizen participation ‘must be re-imagined as an open-end and ongoing process of engagement with political struggles at a range of spatial scales’ (Williams, 2004, p. 557). Decentralization and participation can not be unlinked from the broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of decentralized, participatory development to be transformative (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). The corollary is that any assessment of the relation between decentralization and citizen participation requires an examination of political economy dynamics.

Simplistic discourses of an ideal, homogenous and harmonious civil society need to be questioned. Contrary to the view that emphasizes the need for entirely decentralized units, there is both the need, on one hand, for ‘coordinated decentralization’ in which articulation between different government levels allows for resource coordination, the
diffusion of innovation, and information feedback and, on the other hand, for the maintenance of a bounded aggregated authority—the central state—to provide non-local public goods—including regulatory frameworks—to aggressively redress regional inequalities, and to avoid the consequences of regional competitive pressures in terms of race-to-the-bottom processes. A much more fruitful approach involves linking bottom-up and top-down forms of governance to create ‘a new architecture of governance that cuts a middle path between the dichotomy of devolution and centralism’ (Fung, 2002, p. 68). In other words, local and decentralized initiatives have an accumulated experience of their local experiments, but this should be enhanced by the exploration of the interface where top-down and bottom-up approaches interact. An array of extra-local players and dynamics must also be recognized as critical elements for any development policy. Echoing Giddens’ position on globalization, there are forces pulling power and influence away from local communities and nations into the global arena, but which simultaneously bring with them an opposite effect, pushing downwards and creating pressures for local autonomy (Giddens, 1999).

Figure 3.3 Development theories: Participation and Decentralization as alternatives in development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents in Development</th>
<th>Role of the State in Development</th>
<th>Distribution of powers</th>
<th>Model of democracy</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>Form of Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Strong production</td>
<td>Centralised</td>
<td>Representative democracy</td>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>Political participation</td>
<td>Traditional approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Minimum: Decentralisation as privatization</td>
<td>Representative democracy, emphasis on procedural democracy</td>
<td>Participation in projects: self-help, cost-sharing</td>
<td>Political participation in projects as client consumer</td>
<td>Top-down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities, NGOs</td>
<td>Minimum and local gov privileged</td>
<td>Decentralisation as devolution to community</td>
<td>Direct democracy, community participation</td>
<td>Volunteer, user, implementer, decision-maker</td>
<td>Bottom-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State + market + communities Partnerships</td>
<td>Strong state (central and local) and strong civil society</td>
<td>A balance between decentralisation (as devolution) and centralisation</td>
<td>Representative + Direct Democracy: New forms of participation, responsiveness and accountability</td>
<td>Participatory development, Participatory Governance</td>
<td>Bottom-up and top-down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

This eclectic or hybrid approach needs to specifically recognize the challenge of forging institutions that can creatively manage a delicate equilibrium between
representation and participation, as well as national public goods and local preferences. A partnership approach between state and non-state actors is now replacing the ‘crowding-out’ vision. With greater recognition of civil society and increasing discussion of good governance, the concept of participation is shifting from beneficiary participation in state delivered programmes to an understanding of participation as a means of holding the state accountable through new forms of governance that involve more direct state-civil society relations, under a partnership model.

But as Pieterse (2002) asks, what is the nature of this blend, what is gained and what is lost in this act of hybridization? This third approach allows us to understand the potential difficulties and opportunities that reside in the new policy context in South Africa. Clearly, South Africa’s transformation path is characterized by an innovative combination of both strands of development thinking in the wake of neoliberalism’s demise as an hegemonic ideology. The next part of this thesis deals with these issues.

Chapter four discusses the context and some of the ‘macrovariables’ affecting decentralization and citizen participation process. It reviews the legal and fiscal framework for decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa. In particular, it looks at the composition, size, source of revenue, and expenditures of municipal finances to contextualize the extent to which citizen participation tools are able to achieve their objectives, as stated in the legal and policy frameworks. It digs deeper into the intricacies of the fiscal decentralization context for citizen participation. As such, it shifts the focus of the assessment away from citizen participation tools and mechanisms themselves towards a set of key variables affecting ‘the macro level’ where citizen participation is set to occur. It is argued that the system of cooperative fiscal governance and the process of decentralization constrain the power of citizen participation instruments for defining and implementing locally defined agendas.

In chapter five, local government approaches and understandings of citizen participation in decentralized democratic governance are examined and assessed against CSO perceptions. This is also framed on a discussion of the South African legal and policy framework for citizen participation. Later in the chapter the focus shifts to provide an assessment of the citizen participation tools and mechanisms. The combination of both analyses is thought to provide an holistic understanding of the
intersections between decentralization and citizen participation processes in South Africa, which is currently lacking. This combination seeks to contribute towards a more comprehensive understanding of the relations between decentralization, citizen participation and more democratic and inclusive development.
PART II - SOUTH AFRICA: Decentralization and Citizen Participation in Democratic Local Governance

‘Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment’
(South African Government, 1994, p. 5)

‘We can not keep the plans and the community gets disillusioned’
Respondent No. M20. (Survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape)

Chapter 4: The relations between decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa: legal framework and fiscal decentralization institutions

4.1 Introduction

In South Africa, the demise of Apartheid and the first democratic elections brought about profound redefinitions of the content, roles and aims of local governments. As stated in the WPLG, the legacy of Apartheid planning left racially divided business and residential areas; wealthy areas with access to all basic services coexist with badly planned areas for the poor with long travelling distances to work and little access to services. At the same time, rural areas have remained underdeveloped and largely without services (South African Government, 1998a).

Faced with such a challenging scenario, the new approach to local government with a developmental vision, which the country has committed itself to since the Constitutional reform, aims to overcome the poor and unequal planning perspectives of the past. In the new system of local governance, as underlined by the Constitution, legislative acts and policy documents, local governments are viewed as development agents tasked with redressing inequality and poverty, supporting the extension of local democracy, and granting the delivery of basic services.

The Constitution of South Africa defines three spheres of government as separate and distinct: the National government, Provincial government and the Local

79 South Africa is a unitary republican country. At the National level, the legislative branch relies on the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The national assembly is composed by the members of parliament, elected every five years. The NCOP is integrated by the representatives of provincial legislatures and local government. The executive branch is composed by the President of the
government. It is at the constitutional level that decentralization reforms are established through the recognition that local government is an independent sphere of government in itself, and no longer just a function or the administrative-implementing arm of national or provincial governments. Act 108- Section 151 of the Constitution defines local government as a separate sphere of government and recognizes accordingly the status of municipalities. It is relevant to note that the legal framework refers to ‘sphere’ instead of ‘level’. This emphasises the new relationship of cooperation among the spheres of government, moving away from a hierarchical perspective of intergovernmental relations, to a system where each governmental sphere has equal status, is self reliant and inviolable (Reddy, 1996).

The local sphere consists of municipalities vested with legislative and executive authority. The country is now divided into 283 municipalities whose power, functions and type vary according to a series of features defined in the legislation. This authority is protected by the Constitution and municipalities can theoretically govern ‘on their own initiative, although subject to national and provincial legislation’81. Moreover, the three tiers of government conform to a system which must be regulated by the principles of cooperation. However, there are also constraints imposed, paradoxically,
by how the principle of cooperative governance is being translated into practice (I will discuss this issue later in this chapter).

The suite of legislation enacted since 1994 – the Municipal Structures Act (South African Government, 1998b), the Municipal Demarcation Act (South African Government, 1998c), the MSA (South African Government, 2000a), the Municipal Finance Management Act (South African Government, 2003a), the Municipal Property Rating Act (South African Government, 2004a), the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (South African Government, 2005a) and the Municipal and Fiscal Powers and Functions Act (South African Government, 2007a) – forms the foundation of the new local government system, embodying the critical package of policy reforms in local government and in the system of intergovernmental fiscal relations. The legislation aims to make municipalities more accountable, financially sustainable and capable of delivering essential services to their community in order to fulfil their developmental mandate.

Beneath the three spheres of government are wards. The Municipal Structures Act has introduced a Ward Committee system to give effect to the principle of participatory local governance as reflected in key policy documents such as the WPLG (South African Government, 1998a); the Constitution (South African Government, 1996) and other relevant legislation such as the MSA (South African Government, 2000a) which place participation at the core of the system of local governance.

Municipalities are called upon to support social and economic development of their communities and they are mandated to consult and involve the communities in these matters, as the communities are expected to ‘own the development processes’ (South African Government, 2000a). In fact, one of the main themes of the transformation project in post Apartheid South Africa is the creation and expansion of local democracy and institutions that encourage citizen participation.

In first term, the objectives of local government as stated in Section 152 of the Constitution are ‘to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy
environment; and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government’ (South African Government, 1996a).

In the WPLG (South African Government, 1998a) municipalities are called upon to develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation and formulation, monitoring and evaluation of decision making and implementation. Additionally, each municipality is called upon to develop a ‘system of participation’. The MSA creates spaces for public participation in local governance, and the Municipalities Structures Act establishes the requirement for all municipal councils to develop mechanisms for consulting and involving communities and community organizations and to provide for the (optional) establishment of Ward Committees. The latter have been established as a critical space for encouraging citizen participation in local governance.

Furthermore, IDP approach was introduced in the Municipal Structures Act (South African Government, 1998b) as a form of strategic planning for local government which must reflect the needs of local communities. This planning instrument is regarded as a key to redressing past inequalities and overcoming poverty and, at present, is conceived as the key planning instrument that should guide and inform all planning and decision-making in South African municipalities. Local community participation must be included in the planning process followed by each municipality to produce its IDP (as mandated by the Municipal Structures and Systems Acts, South African Government 1998b and 2000a).

Additionally, policy documents concerning the issue of Local Economic Development and Developmental Local Government are built around the notion of participation and consultation. This approach is based on the idea that development of local democracy is an end in itself and also a means of ensuring social and economic development a result of the functioning of local democratic institutions (South African Government, 2003b). Local government is expected to work with local communities to initiate and promote sustainable economic and social development. This is to be achieved by developing links with the community and stakeholders.

Therefore, local governments have the responsibility, established at the constitutional level, of facilitating participation in development issues. The impact local government
has on local development is not only related to what local government does (either by presence or omission), but also to what local governments—and as we shall see, the whole intergovernmental fiscal relations system—allow and encourage other actors to do, and the quality of this relation.

This approach to local government is supposed to create a framework in which municipalities can develop their own strategies for meeting local needs and promoting the social and economic development of communities as embedded in the local government reform process. The reform of the system of local governance implied the creation of formal structures for people to channel their views and concerns and to work in partnership with the governments to tackle development and governance challenges.

However, municipal elections held in March 2006 were preceded by a series of violent protests over the pace and extent of public service delivery. Why do the newly created spaces seem not to be working (or at least are not used) as a way of citizens to express needs and concerns regarding local government performance? This is an example that gives indication that the spaces for citizen participation in local governance are, at best, ineffective. The next sections scrutinize the diagnosis given to explain this issue and the slow progress of local government structures to become more “developmental” in orientation. I firstly review the diagnosis based on the lack of capacity. Most of the literature and policy documents focus their discussion on this issue, and while I recognize its importance (as it is also highlighted by empirical data gathered for this study), I do not believe this is the only crucial factor explaining why the new system of local governance is not delivering on its promise. Two other factors are explored in subsequent sections: the system of intergovernmental fiscal relations and the degree of financial autonomy of municipalities. As some studies suggest (see i.a. Ambert and Feldman, 2002; Atkinson, 2007b; Derichs and Einfeldt, 2006 and IDASA, 2004), I will argue and elaborate that the possibility for the municipalities to develop their own strategies is hampered due to a lack of resources and capacities, and a constraining framework paradoxically set up under the ‘cooperative’ governance approach.

This chapter and the following one include a brief analysis of the local government reform experience, with emphasis on some crucial aspects of the decentralization process, as well as on spaces created for citizen participation in local governance in
South Africa in the last 10 years. The study is conducted using the analytical framework developed in chapter three as an investigative tool.

This chapter will, firstly, consider the political context of decentralization by briefly outlining the historical transformation process. It subsequently reviews the current situation and examines the policy and legal framework applicable to the assignment of powers and functions for local government. It then engages with -and criticizes- the diagnosis of lack of capacities as the sole factor explaining the gap between the promises of citizen participation and decentralization and the underperformance of the new local governance system. The overall system of intergovernmental relations is examined and an overview of fiscal decentralization in South Africa, with special emphasis on revenue and expenditure trends of Eastern Cape municipalities, is included. A key variable to be assessed is the degree of ‘financial autonomy’ (or, to the contrary, the ‘dependency ratio’) of local municipalities. Therefore, this chapter critically reviews the fiscal decentralization process as a key variable in explaining the context in which citizen participation tools and mechanisms are to be implemented.

Firstly, in section two, the historical and political background -where the process of local government reform and citizen participation is situated- is described. This is because I assume that it is not possible to understand the process of decentralization and participation without discussing the political context. The underlying assumption is that decentralization, citizen participation and, in general, local government reforms are, in first term, a political process. Consequently, to understand the trajectory the process has followed it is necessary to analyze the conditioning political background.

Section three describes local government institutional and legal redefinition that followed local government reforms. It reviews the legal and policy framework under which local governments must operate and describes local government structures, powers, competences and functions accordingly. Section four explores the debate regarding the lack of capacities as the main explanation for local government’s inability to deliver. An analysis of government’s efforts to support and build local government capacities is included.
Given the institutional and legal framework described in section three, section five discusses relevant issues of fiscal decentralization. The overall system of intergovernmental relations is examined, and revenue and expenditure trends of South African municipalities, in general, and Eastern Cape municipalities, in particular, are examined, as this gives an indication of local governments’ autonomy and capabilities. The underlying hypothesis is that, for what has been called ‘democratic decentralization’, (i) participation must be at the cornerstone of any local government reform process, and (ii) it is unlikely to be the case unless, national and provincial regimes are committed to a political strategy in which real opportunities for local-level influence and participation are enhanced. In other words, there must be a supportive intergovernmental relations framework and expenditure (and resources) decisions to be made independently, at the local level.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief reflection on how far the political project of decentralization has gone in South Africa. This is relevant to understanding the possibilities, problems and limitations a participatory approach to development at the local level faces, as reviewed in chapter five.

4.2 A brief overview of the process and the political context for decentralization in South Africa

It is crucial to examine the political context in which decentralization and citizen participation in local governance proposals emerge, as local government reform processes are understood as a mainly political process. Therefore, to analyse these processes the conditioning political background must be understood (Garnier, 2004; Przeworski, 2004; Rojas, 1995 and 2000 and Willis et al, 1999). As discussed in chapter three, a critical question to be answered in any analysis of the decentralization and citizen participation processes is: What is the political project and what are the objectives behind the decentralization and citizen participation project? A brief historical overview of the process of local government reform is therefore included here, on the one hand, because it demonstrates that legacies of the past still pose challenges for local government and, on the other, because negotiations in the transition towards democratic dispensation included provincial and local government reform issues that should also be taken into account.
The design of the decentralization process and local government system in South Africa is the product of a restructuring process that implies a systemic change in the country’s political and social orders. Local government reform is the product of a process that reflects not only changes in the formal structure of government, but also radical transformations of society, of the actors and forms of participation, and of the definition of the political system itself.

Previously, white-ruled South Africa was divided into 4 provincial administrations (appointed by the national government) and over 1200 racially based local authorities. Black South Africans were confined to nine ‘homelands’ established in rural areas away from the main centres\(^{82}\). Although supposedly independent, ‘homelands’ were fiscally dependent on the Apartheid government, and their ‘governments’ operated in effect as appointees of the apartheid regime. The many black people living in urban townships in white South Africa were regarded as temporary residents, to be removed to the homelands once their labour was no longer required in white South Africa. The budget of the Apartheid government focused spending chiefly on white residents, while minimal sums were allocated to education, health, housing and other basic needs of black residents (Momoniat, 2003).

The WPLG, in its first chapter, reviews the historical legacy of the apartheid system in terms of its influence in the current local government structures, its illegitimacy in terms of local constituencies, and the current challenges faced by local governments. Racially divided business and residential areas, badly planned areas for the poor with long travelling distances to work and insufficient access to business and other services, great differences between rich and poor areas in the level of services available, sprawling informal settlements and widely spaced residential areas that make cheap service delivery difficult are all consequences of an unequal and fragmented vision of urban and peri-urban spaces. At the same time, rural areas remained underdeveloped and largely without services.

\(^{82}\) Two of them, the Transkai and Ciskai, overlap with an important part of the current Eastern Cape Province.
Furthermore, the Apartheid legacy -beyond the inequalities that persist to date in the distribution and functional logic of the territory- also transmitted the illegitimacy and mistrust in local government authorities. This sense of mistrust towards local government authorities is aggravated by the absence of a ‘municipal culture’ in the context of an historically highly centralized political system. During the apartheid regime local government in South Africa created and perpetuated local separation and inequality. Current policy and legislation formulation on the role of local government in South Africa are driven both by the need to bring the government closer to the people and the need to reverse the consequences of policy and planning of the past. There has been a need to redefine not only legislation and policy formulation, but, in practical terms, the nature and objectives of local government, in an attempt to legitimize this sphere of government.

The crisis in local government was a major factor leading to the national reform process which began in 1990 (Pieterse, 2002). The Black Local Authorities established in 1982 had no significant revenue base. From their inception they were seen as politically illegitimate and were rejected by community mobilization in the mid-1980s. Community level uprisings spurred by the appalling social and economic conditions in townships and Bantustans led to a crisis at the level of local government. National debate about the future of local government then took place in the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) in 1990 that was held alongside the national restructure negotiating process. The LGNF was a dialogue between a ‘statutory’ element of local government (dominated by the National Party) and a ‘non-statutory’ counterpart, the unbanned local structures of the African National Congress (ANC) (Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007).

As Momoniat (2003) notes, decentralization reforms were a political compromise between the main parties, part of the deal that allowed for a negotiated transition to democracy. In this sense, the features of the new decentralized system of governance should be understood as emanating from political and historical factors, rather than purely fiscal decentralization considerations.

Since 1994, the democratic government adopted a systematic and phased approach to local government transformation associated with the key tasks that needed to be
attended to and the diverse urgencies and challenges local government faced. But also, the diverse stages of the design and implementation of the current system of local government are related to the learning process of the ANC in its governmental experience.

The Local Government Transition Act (South African Government, 1993) was to mark the course of local government for the next few years. It established phases for the restructuring of local government, including the establishment of provincial committees and local forums for negotiations to determine the precise form local government would take in each area; this also included decision making about local boundaries (South African Government, 1998a).

Three phases for the reform process were stipulated in the LGTA: Pre-Interim Phase -1994 and 1995-, Interim Phase -from 1995 to 2000- and the Final Phase -2000 and beyond-. The final phase, in turn, includes the Establishment Phase -2000 to 2002-, the Consolidation Phase -2002 to 2005- and the Sustainability Phase -2005 and beyond- (See Figure 4.1).

During the Pre-interim Phase local forums were established to negotiate the appointment of temporary Councils, which would govern until municipal elections could take place. As a consequence, transitional Municipal Councils, Local Councils and Rural Local Councils were set up. In 1995, 843 transitional municipalities were created, combining adjoining white and black areas (South African Government, 1998a).

The Interim Phase began with the municipal elections and lasted until the new local government system was designed and legislated upon. In 1997 the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa came into effect, setting the objectives of local government, its competencies and the relationship with other spheres of government. In this phase the main policy document regarding local government, the WPLG, was formulated along with a series of Acts to provide the key legislation products for the new municipal system. New roles for local government were established in the WPLG and in the subsequent policy documents and legislation pieces as a response to the Apartheid planning legacy.
The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 determined the three different types of municipalities constituting the system of local government. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 introduced relevant innovations that amplified the system of formal institutions for local governance, including the creation of ward committees, IDPs, and performance management. The approval of the Municipal Demarcation Act (South African Government, 1998c) provided criteria and procedures for the determination of municipal boundaries by an independent authority, the Municipal Demarcation Board. The system was redefined and the 843 transitional municipalities were reduced to 283.

The Final Phase involved the establishment of a new local government system and the local government elections that were held in 2000. New municipal boundaries were drawn for the whole country in order to erase the old apartheid divisions. As the new demarcated system, through a process of amalgamation, reduced the number of municipalities from more than eight hundred to less than three hundred, it has created new institutions and administrations as well as areas of jurisdiction of a much larger scale and developmental diversity. This has transformed the fiscal setting of local governance by integrating settlements of widely differing socioeconomic profiles under one fiscal basis. While it may seem paradoxical that a decentralization process occurs at the same time as a reduction in the number of municipalities --which would position local government institutions farther away from citizens--, it was argued that the enlarged and rationalized system would allow for a better institutional scenario for effective decentralization (Momoniat, 2003).

4.3 Legitimating local government: the current structure of local government and the role of citizen participation

During the Interim phase, the core pieces of legislation guiding the transformation of local government were approved. The Municipal Structures Act (South African Government, 1998b) was formulated to provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipalities defined in the Constitution; to provide for an appropriate division of functions and powers between categories of municipality; to regulate the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities and to provide for appropriate electoral systems. In
the Act, the role and functions of Municipal Councils are established. The Act also created three kinds of councils (Metropolitan Councils, District Councils and Local Councils) and the related details for their election, design and operation.

Figure 4.1: The process of Local Government restructure and current configuration

As stated in Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (South African Government, 1998b), both unitary and binary levels are employed in the structure of local government. Major metropolitan areas are governed by a unitary structure (Metropolitan Municipalities - Category A), while district and local council governments represent, respectively, upper (District Municipalities - Category C) and lower (Local Municipalities - Category B) levels of a binary structure. The new local government system currently consists of 6

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83 Metropolitan municipalities -Category A – are those municipalities that have ‘exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area’. Metropolitan municipalities exist in the six biggest urban areas in South Africa. These 6 metropolitan municipalities include: Ekurhuleni Municipality Metropolitan, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan, City of Tshwane Metropolitan, eThekwini Municipality Metropolitan, City of Cape Town Metropolitan, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan. Areas that fall outside of the six metropolitan municipal areas are divided into local municipalities. Local
one-tiered urban metropolitan governments and 231 two-tiered primary municipalities falling under 46 district municipalities. While metropolitan municipalities are responsible for all local services, development and delivery within the metropolitan area, local municipalities share that responsibility with district municipalities. The two-tier system of local and district municipalities was supposedly promulgated to take advantage of economies of scale, to avoid duplication and to improve coordination between local municipalities.

The Municipal Structures Act (in its Chapter 4) also defines the mechanisms envisaged for a Municipal Council to achieve its mandate of consulting and involving the communities in matters of local governance. These mechanisms include: IDP, Performance Management System (PMS), budget preparation, and the establishment of Ward Committees.

The MSA (South African Government, 2000a) establishes the basic principles and mechanisms to give effect to the vision stated in the WPLG. It should be noted that, both in the Municipal Structures and Systems Acts, a municipality is defined as comprising the political and administrative spheres, as well as the community itself, helping to promote an emphasis on the local community as a partner in local governance. By defining the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area, it allows the local community to work in partnership with the municipality’s political and administrative structures. As a

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84 Municipal Demarcation Board webpage as appeared in June 2007.
85 However, in some cases, this division has proven problematic in respect to the division of functions, powers and roles between Local Municipalities and District Municipalities and this has informed the drafting of new legislation (the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act -2005- and the recently approved Municipal and Fiscal Powers and Functions Act -2007). I discuss this issue in the following section.
86 A detailed analysis and assessment of each instrument and space for citizen participation is included in the next chapter.
consequence of these two fundamental Acts for local government, three main kinds of structures can be identified in the system of local governance: political structures, administrative structures and, finally, what I refer to as territorial structures.

In terms of political structures, the legislative power for each municipality rests in a council whose members are chosen in municipal elections, which are separate from the national and provincial ones held every 5 years. The MSA created three kinds of councils: Metropolitan and Local Councils 87, and District Councils 88 and provides the related details for their election, design and operation.

As I have already mentioned, the legislation requires that a municipal council must develop mechanisms to consult the community and community organizations in performing its functions and exercising its powers. Municipal councils have the power to pass by-laws, local laws and regulations concerning any of the functions they are responsible for, although these may not contradict or over-rule any national laws. They also have power to approve budgets and development plans. The council should approve IDP and all projects and planning should happen within this framework. Councils must impose rates, taxes and charges and fix service fees for municipal services as well as impose fines in their municipal circumscription. Finally, they must decide on other issues related to service delivery for their municipal area.

The executive power relies on a mayor. Depending on the case, as defined by the legislation, the mayor is assisted by an executive or mayoral committee, made up of

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87 In a metropolitan or local municipality each voter will vote once for a political party on a proportional representation ballot. Metro councils may also set up sub-councils to serve different parts of their municipality. Sub-councils are not elected directly by voters. Existing councillors are allocated to serve on each sub-council. In addition, the metropolitan area (or each local municipality) is divided into wards. Each voter will also receive a ballot for their ward with the names of the ward candidates. The person receiving the most votes in a ward will win that seat ('first-past-the-post’ system). Ward candidates may stand as representatives of parties or as independents.

88 Every voter in a local municipality (cat B) will also vote for the district council that their local area is part of. The district council then is made up of two types of councillors. Elected councillors are elected to the district council on a proportional representation ballot by all voters in the area -40% of the district councillors. Councillors who represent local municipalities in the area are local councillors sent by their council to represent it on the district council -60% of the district councillors. Each local council will be given a number of seats according to the support that parties have in a specific local council and must send councillors from their ranks to fill those seats. People who live in District Management Areas get a proportional representation ballot for the district council and a proportional representation ballot for the District Management Areas. They do not vote for local councils or wards.
councillors. Council Committees are also established. The specific structures are set out in the Municipal Structures Act. In each province the MEC for Local Government decides what types of structures will be used by different councils. The mayor (and the executive or mayoral committee) coordinates the work of council and makes recommendations to council. The mayor (and the executive) supervises the work of the municipal manager and department heads who, in turn, supervise municipal officials and staff who implement the work of the municipality (administrative structures).

Most councils have a number of council committees that specialize in specific areas or issues. Section 80 committees are usually permanent committees that specialize in one area of work and have the right to make decisions. These committees also advise executive committees on policy matters and make recommendations to council. Section 79 committees are usually temporary and appointed by the executive committee as needed. They are usually set up to investigate a particular issue and do not have any decision-making powers.

In respect to territorial structures, both the Municipal Structures Act and the MSA give effect to Section 152 of the Constitution, which identifies representative and participatory democracy as the primary objectives of local government. This constitutional mandate is translated into practice through the establishment of ward committees in each local municipality. Their primary function is to act as a formal communication link between the community and the council. These ward committees are also envisaged to play a central role in getting communities to participate effectively in the IDP process.

89 An Executive Mayor with no executive or mayoral committee is only used in very small municipalities where the municipal council elects a mayor. The mayor chairs the council meetings and the council as a whole makes the decisions and plans with no delegation on a reduced executive body. In the case of a Mayoral executive, the executive mayor appoints a mayoral committee that will assist in making decisions, proposals and plans that have to be approved by council. The mayoral committee may not consist of more than 10 people or more than 20% of the sitting councilors. The council may delegate any executive powers to the executive mayor. In the case of an Executive Committee (exco) the mayor is still elected by the municipal council as a whole, but the council also elects the executive committee. The elections are on a proportional representation ballot, therefore the parties will have a similar proportion of seats on the exco as they have on the council. The mayor is the chairperson of the executive committee.

90 Portfolio committees are the most common and usually have the same names as the different departments in council e.g. health committee, planning committee, finance committee. Geographically-based committees are set up to deal with issues in a specific area. This system is usually used in large metropolitan municipalities that also have sub-councils. Issue-related committees may be set up to deal with a specific issue in a way that involves people from different committees and ensures coordination and integration of policies.
The Municipal Structure Act (South African Government, 1998b) in Section 72 (3), establishes that ‘the object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government’. Only metropolitan and local municipalities may have ward committees (these are not mandatory, a metropolitan or local municipality chooses whether or not to establish ward committees). A ward committee consists of the councillor representing that ward in the council, who must also be the chairperson of the committee, and not more than 10 other persons.

In terms of administrative structures, the municipal manager and department heads supervise municipal officials and staff who implement the work of the municipality. The mayor (and the executive) supervises the work of the municipal manager. As head of administration, the municipal manager of a municipality is, subject to the policy directions of the municipal council, responsible for carrying out the decisions of the political structures and political office bearers of the municipality. The administration and implementation of the municipality’s by-laws and other legislation is a responsibility of the municipal manager, who must perform her/his duties in accordance with the needs of the local community, facilitate participation by the local community in the affairs of the municipality, and develop and maintain a system whereby community satisfaction with municipal services can be assessed (South African Government, 2000a).

Thus, in the local government reform process three axes or poles have been defined (political, administrative, territorial) and institutionalized: Municipal Councils, Municipal offices and Ward Committees. These institutional structures must work in a coordinated fashion and must complement each other despite their differentiated functions and objectives.

The political axis has implied the redistribution of national and provincial government powers to local governments. Local governments are now conceived as decentralized local political institutions integrated by representatives of the political parties. The

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91 As these are conceived as one of the key spaces for citizen participation in local governance, Chapter 5 further discusses the characteristics, process of establishment and critical issues of Ward Committees.
objective of this pole is to put the representative closer to the represented, the politician closer to the citizen, and it aims to give effect to the principle of representative democracy at the local level.

The territorial axis is materialized in the Ward Committees as organisms representative of the local community interests. By this means, theoretically, direct neighbour participation is materialized through the election of candidates that can be proposed by the community or social organizations of the area, embodying a more active vision of citizenship.

In the administrative axis, municipalities are the implementing, ‘hands-on’ office of the political axis (municipal council) and are subordinate to it. They have the formal hierarchy of municipal services and are managed by a municipal manager and department managers. In this way, the government administrative apparatus is decentralised through the transfer of service delivery responsibilities. The objective is to bring the administration and the service users -or ‘clients’- closer together. They represent municipal government as the centre of imputability in front of local citizenship.

![Figure 4.2: Local Government Structures](source: Own elaboration)
The diverse axes of the system of local governance (territorial, political and administrative) are established with diverse but related objectives, involving different actors, conceptions of democracy, forms of citizen participation and legitimising procedures.

In the administrative axis, legitimacy is based on the efficiency of service delivery and implementation of municipal policies. Thus, legitimacy in this area is judged in terms of results, and citizens are conceived as clients or beneficiaries of a specific policy, programme or service.

In the territorial axis the reform seeks to legitimise the system through the direct participation of citizens and the local community, or ‘the neighbour’. It implies a new form of citizenship that goes beyond the strictly political character towards a territorial character.

In the political axis, legitimacy is again based on procedures and on the proportional representation of the political actors. The principles of representative democracy are reflected in the composition of the municipal council. Here the participation of local citizens is realised through their role as citizen-voter and the collective actors are the political parties.

Thus, through the political process that the country has embraced, local government reform implies, on the one hand, a political and administrative reorganization that is reflected in the establishment of the present structure of three categories of municipalities. On the other hand, it also implies a functional and operative redefinition through the decentralisation of some services. Finally, as the constant references in the relevant policy documents and discourses suggest, it requires a new model of governance that is presented as the distinctive symbol of the local reform process: the model of a developmental local government. This model confers centrality to strategic planning and citizen participation of a territorial nature.

The WPLG ‘establishes the basis for a system of local government which is centrally concerned with working with local citizens and communities to find sustainable ways to
meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives’ (M.Valli Moosa, Minister of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development in the WPLG, South African Government, 1998a, p. 6). The objectives of a developmental municipality, as defined in the WPLG (South African Government, 1998a) are the provision of infrastructure and services; the creation of liveable, integrated towns, cities and rural areas; local economic development, and; community empowerment and redistribution. To fulfill these objectives, the WPLG defines a Developmental Municipality as one that must be able to act as policymaker and innovator92, as agent of social and economic development of the community so as to maximize social development and economic growth93, as leader and coordinator94 and as an institution of local democracy to democratize development.

Municipal Councils therefore play a central role in promoting local democracy. In addition to representing community interests within the Council (representative democracy), council members should make sure that citizens and community groups are involved in the design and delivery of municipal programmes (giving effect to the principles of direct democracy). Ward Committees and community consultation are important ways of achieving greater involvement. It is argued that local democracy could be enhanced through raising awareness of human rights issues and promoting constitutional values and principles and by empowering ward council members as community leaders who should play a pivotal role in building a shared vision and mobilizing community resources for each territory’s development.

92 A Developmental local government implies a more strategic municipality, with a long term vision of the community and a common project to be achieved. Thus, a developmental municipality should play a strategic policy-making and visionary role while seeking to mobilize a range of resources to meet basic needs and achieve developmental goals.
93 A developmental municipality should be able to provide basic household services and infrastructure which includes services such as water, sanitation, local roads, storm water drainage, refuse collection and electricity. Local economic development is another key area for a developmental municipality acting as agent of social and economic development. Municipalities have an important influence in LED of their territories. A report by the DPLG (2003) defines LED as ‘an outcome based on local initiative and driven by local stakeholders’. It involves ‘identifying and using primarily local resources, ideas and skills to stimulate economic growth and development (...) to create employment opportunities for local residents, alleviate poverty, and redistribute resources and opportunities to benefit all’ (South African Government, 2003a, pp. 15-16).
94 In most local areas there are many different agencies that contribute towards the development of the area, such as national and provincial government departments, parastatals, trade unions, community groups and private sector organizations. Developmental local government must provide leadership and coordinate all the efforts of those who have a role to play in achieving local development. As envisaged by the WPLG, one of the most important methods for achieving greater co-ordination and integration is the IDP process.
The WPLG also recognizes three interrelated approaches which can assist municipalities to become more developmental:

1) **Integrated development planning and budgeting**: Integrated development planning is a process through which a municipality can establish a development plan for the short, medium and long-term in which municipal functions are coordinated and integrated with provincial and national departments, as well as the private sector initiatives. IDP is a consultative process that is conceived to contribute to ‘strengthen democracy and hence institutional transformation because decisions are made in a democratic and transparent manner, rather than by a few influential individuals’ (South African Government, 2001, p. 5). Therefore, IDP is considered as a basis for engagement between local government and the citizenry at the local level, as well as with various stakeholders and interest groups.

2) **Performance management systems**: Involving communities in developing municipal key performance indicators increases the accountability of the municipality. It is argued that whatever the priorities be, by involving communities in setting key performance indicators and reporting back to communities on performance, accountability is increased and public trust in the local government system enhanced.

3) **Working together with local citizens and partners**: Various paragraphs in the WPLG stress the need to promote citizen participation in local governance. The WPLG envisages a developmental role for local government and a ‘central responsibility of municipalities to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives’ (South African Government, 1998a, section B).

The WPLG identifies dimensions or areas for citizen Participation in local governance accordingly:

1) **As voters** - to ensure democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote (representative democracy).

2) **As direct participants in the policy process**: As citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences.

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95 The WPLG defines 4 levels for citizen participation in local governance. I consider the last two together, so that three dimensions are analyzed.
3) *As consumers or end-users (clients) and as partners in resource mobilization:* who expect value-for-money and affordable, courteous, responsive service. For many local citizens, the main contact with local government is through the consumption of municipal services. Municipalities need to be responsive to the needs of both citizens and business as consumers and end-users of municipal services. In this sense, the White Paper on Municipal Service Partnership (South African Government, 2000c) states that the direct involvement of communities can be positive and beneficial in the creation of accessible and sustainable services, especially in rural areas and low-income communities. Citizens are expected to play a role as organized partners involved in the mobilization of resources for development via for-profit businesses, non-governmental organizations and community-based institutions.

In other words, it could be said that in the WPLG ‘local citizenship’ appears as a multidimensional category, critical for assuring that local government is developmental. For this reason diverse dimensions of citizenship are prioritized.

**Figure 4.3: Local government structures, citizenship and participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Local Government:</th>
<th>Reform Axis (Local Government structures)</th>
<th>Legitimacy</th>
<th>Participation &amp; citizen’s role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As policymaker and innovator</td>
<td>Administrative Municipal Manager &amp; Municipal Departments</td>
<td>By results: (efficacy and efficiency in service delivery)</td>
<td>As client, consumers and end-users; resource mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As agents of social and economic development of the community</td>
<td>Political Municipal Councils</td>
<td>By procedures: (democratic accountability of the elected political leadership)</td>
<td>As voter - Representative democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Leader and coordinator</td>
<td>Territorial Ward Councils</td>
<td>By procedures: (Ward Committees, IDPs)</td>
<td>As direct participants in the policy process Direct democracy - Territorial citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As institutions of local democracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration

Citizen participation in local governance has been established as an end in itself, but also as a means to achieve the developmental goals of local government. The vision of the WPLG is that the only way municipalities will successfully face the challenges imposed by the new roles and responsibilities related to local government reforms, is by
working together with local citizens, communities and businesses. At the same time, citizen participation is considered a critical ingredient in all the areas that are conceived to help the municipality achieve its developmental role. Thus, it could be said that the WPLG envisages citizen participation as the key for a successful, effective and more democratic developmental local government.

However, Municipal elections held in March 2006 were preceded by a series of violent protests over the pace and extent of public service delivery and the government’s plan to redistrict a number of municipalities into different provinces (Freedom House, 2007). A report notes that there were more than 5,000 service delivery protests in the 2006/07 financial year. In the 2004/05 financial year there were 881 illegal demonstrations and 5,085 legal protests across 90 percent of failing municipalities receiving central government assistance in South Africa (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2007). But if the reform of the system of local governance implied the creation of formal structures for people to channel their views and concerns and to work in partnership with the governments to tackle development and governance challenges, why did massive protests take place in 2005 and 2006? Why do the newly created spaces seem not to be working (or at least are not used) as a way of citizens to express needs and concerns regarding local government performance?

Firstly, it should be noted that municipal elections, as key institutions of representative democracy that allow citizens to punish incumbents for delivery failures at the local level, seem not to work towards this end. In trying to understand why, following a year of nationwide protests over poor service delivery, the 2006 municipal elections did not punish the ANC (the percentage of their vote share even increased in many municipalities), Schulz-Herzenberg argue that turnout figures are instructive when it is considered that they may represent an indirect method of showing dissatisfaction with government performance (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2007).
The first fully democratic local government elections in South Africa were held on 5 December, 2000. In 2006, local government elections again took place. Although the voter turn-out had increased slightly (by 0.3 percentage points), the overall figure for South Africa in the 2006 Local Government elections was very low, only 48.3%. The Eastern Cape voter turnout rate (56%) was higher than the national average, but remained almost unchanged from the previous election. Moreover, when turnout is calculated using figures for all eligible voters, it is clear that a growing proportion of voters decide not to vote. Schulz-Herzenberg calculates that about a quarter of all eligible voters are not registered, and this means that, at best, only half of those who were registered actually voted, in other words, only two-fifths of the population (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2007).

Moreover, political theory indicates that when there is no electoral uncertainty, incumbents are less responsive to voters’ interests. Because of this local elections might not be providing the incentives for incumbents to be responsive and accountable to the citizenry. In other words, if electoral behaviour is not based on service delivery, elections do not function as mechanisms of quality control, and municipal elections, at least, are not working as an opportunity to punish incumbents for delivery failures at the local level (Atkinson, 2007a). Local protests might be suggesting that voters are

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96 Calculated by taking the total number of votes cast and dividing it by the number of registered voters
inclined to hold government to account between elections, not just at the time of elections (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2007 and Williams, 2007).

This, again, gives more prominence to the need to understand why other ‘voice’ channels, -spaces created for the direct participation of citizens such as the Ward Committees- for citizens to express their needs and hold their government accountable, seem not to be functioning. This is a critical issue as these other options were created with the intention of bringing government closer to the people and legitimising this sphere of government. As I will discuss later, whether these new spaces are contributing to the strengthening of democratic local governance remains, at best, a moot point.

The next sections scrutinize the diagnosis given to explain this issue and the slow progress of local government structures to become more “developmental” in orientation. I firstly review the diagnosis based on the lack of capacity. Most of the literature and policy documents focus their discussion on this issue, and while I recognize its importance (as it is also highlighted by empirical data gathered for this study), I do not believe this is the only crucial factor explaining why the new system of local governance is not delivering on its promise. Two other factors are explored in subsequent sections: the system of intergovernmental fiscal relations and the degree of financial autonomy of municipalities.

4.4 ‘Delivery failures as a consequence of local government lack of capacities’: revisiting the diagnosis

A key issue throughout the whole local government transformation process centres on the need to strengthen the capacities of municipalities to meet the growing developmental demands being placed on them. This has been part of the official discourse. It has also been highlighted by most of the literature attempting to explain the delivery failure at local government level.
Indeed, the issue of lack of capacity at sub-national level is one of the most frequently quoted arguments against decentralization\(^97\). However, it has also more often than not been associated with a narrow conception of building individual capacities through providing specific training at the municipal level.

As part of the Consolidation Phase of the local government reform process, the DPLG launched ‘Project Consolidate’ (PC) in 2004. In acknowledgement of the backlogs and challenges facing local government, an emphasis on a hands-on, practical programme of engagement and interaction by national and provincial government with local government for the period 2004 – 2006 was considered necessary.

The specific objectives of this programme were established in terms of: (i) rallying the local government sphere in discharging its service delivery and development mandate; (ii) realizing the ‘peoples’ contract’ and mobilizing social partners around this programme; (iii) entrenching a people-centred orientation in the entire public sector and a new approach to local government’s mode of operation; (iv) establishing a new and practical benchmark for local government performance; and finally (v), having successful local government elections in 2005/6 (South African Government, 2004b, p. 5).

**Figure 4.4: A heterogeneous diagnosis: Project Consolidate Priority Municipalities**

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97 This is not only circumscribed to the academic level, but also political debates have been held around the issue of ‘capacities’. In South Africa, the media has been especially active in feeding and popularizing this debate (i.e. the TV. Show ‘Interface’ -May 25, 2005- entitled: ‘Skills shortage crisis and how it affects service delivery’).
Almost half of South Africa’s municipalities were identified as being in need of support and thus form part of PC. Service Delivery Facilitators have been appointed to visit those municipalities that have been selected as requiring tailored support and to offer hands-on support.

A heterogeneous scenario arises, however, from the PC preliminary evaluations. At the government level, it is recognized that some municipalities are still grappling with basic issues of establishment, while others are addressing challenges of sustainability.

By the end of 2007, a total of 359 Service Delivery Facilitators (facilitators to provide tailored support to municipalities) had been deployed to 105 Municipalities. Between 2005 and 2007, 31 Presidential Imzimbizo were held in all provinces to enable government to hear residents and provide a platform for communities to raise their concerns. However, only 33% of the issues identified during Izimbizo in 2005 and 2006 were resolved (South African Government, 2008b).

Beyond PC, there has been a flurry of initiatives to build capacities in local government. Also, in 2006 the DPLG published the Municipal Performance Management Regulations, providing a uniform framework for the employment and performance management of senior managers in local government. However, as the DPLG acknowledges, at the end of 2007 only 58% of municipal managers had signed performance agreements (South African Government, 2008b).

It is relevant to recall here that massive protests took place in 2005 and 2006 against poor service delivery by municipalities. The protests were widespread and there is a clear correlation between municipalities identified as needing assistance and the place

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98 Some critics argue that even the name has not been properly chosen and reflects an incorrect approach because more than the consolidation of what currently exists, it is local government transformation that it is needed.

99 The Municipal Leadership Development Programme of the Local Government Leadership Academy; Performance Management Regulations, Leadership and skills Programmes, Training associated to the Urban Renewal Programme, with the Integrated Sustainable Programme for Rural Development, the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition, the deployment of Community Development Workers and sector skills plans inter alia.
where protests occurred (protests were recorded in 90% of the municipalities needing assistance).

Despite government efforts and initiatives developed to address the issue of lack of capacities at the municipal level, capacity challenges related to local government were recognized by the DPLG (South African Government, 2008b) and various other official reports (South African Government, 2007b). Key areas requiring attention include concerns regarding the experience of key municipal staff. Moreover, several skills shortages have been identified, most saliently engineering, financial management and planning.

From the perspective of the salient role being assigned to citizen participation, a review of the various efforts and initiatives for capacity building developed included in the report on ‘National Capacity Building Framework for Local Government’ by the DPLG (South African Government, 2008) leads to concern. Of the almost 20 initiatives mentioned, only one truly focuses on the issue of citizen participation. Although it might be overstated, the findings of the empirical study on citizen participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape conducted for this thesis, show that the issue of lack of capacity seems to be considered critical for the promotion of citizen participation in local governance100.

Figure 4.5: Staff has insufficient skills for the promotion of citizen participation

Source: Based on the survey on citizen participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape conducted for this thesis.

100 This issue has been also indirectly addressed by the HSRC Surrey on the implementation of Batho Pele principles (HSRC, 2007).
However, the perceptions of the relevance of this factor differ widely according to the group of respondents. While almost 50% of municipal mayors and managers disagreed with the idea that staff has insufficient skills for the promotion of citizen participation, almost the whole set of representatives from CSOs mentioned that they strongly agreed with this statement.

Accordingly, when asked about the degree of adequacy of current skills for the encouragement of citizen participation in local governance, while 18% of the respondents from the sample of municipalities mentioned that skills were adequate, none of the CSO representatives agreed on this view. On the contrary, more than 50% of the respondents from this group mentioned that there were fundamental skills problems at the local government level which prevented meaningful participation. The rest of the respondents mentioned that there were some skills problems preventing the development of more participatory models of governance at the local level that could be addressed with specific training.

Figure 4.6: Degree of adequacy of current skills for encouraging citizen participation

The survey explored the areas in which further training was required. A recurrent issue mentioned was specifically related to citizen participation mechanisms as defined by the legislation and the lack of understanding by municipal officials of their role as tools for consultation and deliberative decision making. Those concrete areas where local government should strengthen its capacities as per the results of my study are: ‘good governance’ and networking and partnership. Project management and financial and
budget management were also mentioned as relevant areas. The issue of lack of capacities for budgeting processes and financial management was mentioned as crucial because of the relation between lack of transparency and allowing for proper citizen participation.

At this stage, it seems clear that punctual, once-off type interventions are insufficient. Capacity building does require this, but it also requires much more. Capacity-building requires time – for the local recognition of what skills are needed and what further training is required, for the actual intervention, and for the initial slowness in all these processes as people gain experience. As one of the interviewees noted, it is also critical to monitor and learn about the capacity building initiatives and build upon this learning to introduce corrective measures if needed\(^\text{101}\). It is also crucial to coordinate the various efforts being undertaken in this area.

It is now becoming clearer that it was not enough to focus capacity building efforts solely on municipalities. New research suggests that national and provincial government has been less than effective in assisting municipalities to develop viable systems of management, operation, and maintenance of infrastructure. It has been noted that it has also done little to assist municipalities in improving their front-end standards of client service. Municipalities have been left to figure out their own infrastructure maintenance programmes and design their own information systems (Atkinson, 2007a). A very recent report by the DPLG (South African Government, 2008) acknowledges that not only municipalities were in need of capacity development support, but provinces as well. It was recognized that, as provinces play a critical role in facilitating, supporting and monitoring development and good governance at the local level, a lack of capacity at provincial level may undermine the achievement of local government transformation.

While it is critical that capacities need to be strengthened to enable municipal entities to function efficiently, this is also relevant for regional and national government entities, but also for the private sector and especially CBOs and NGOs positioned at the frontline of citizen participation. In an interview with Dr. Tom, this point was

\(^{101}\) Prof. Hennie Van As.
illustrated as follows: ‘But skills are also required in the private sector, for CBOs and NGOs and for other government spheres. It is not just a problem of local government’. A couple of studies undertaken in South Africa seem to confirm my findings and highlight the need for training and workshops to explain to the residents what their rights are in terms of participation, how local government works and what channels they should use to be heard (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008a and IDASA, 2001).

A key informant further argued that ‘capacity is crucial in its broader sense and not only in the public sector’. The task of transforming ‘local government capacities’ should also be expanded to changing attitudes and behaviour. ‘Political will is crucial…It is very important to acknowledge that frameworks and institutions are not enough. We need to have willing participants to be able to drive the process’\(^\text{102}\). This position was echoed by various respondents in my study who shed a different slant on their answers when stating that ‘the issue is not so much about skills as it is about attitude’ (Respondent No.C9). Key informants also supported this view: ‘[T]here is evidence that formal training and capacity is not the sole relevant issue. Political will is crucial: there must be a similar agenda for participatory development’\(^\text{103}\).

The notion of citizen participation is relatively new in South Africa and officials may fear that strong citizen participation could undermine their authority. Capacity building efforts need to be reoriented towards changing the mindsets of officials to facilitate interactions between themselves and the community. This refers to a more basic level of explaining the purpose of citizen participation as well as tools for mediation and negotiation. As my findings suggest, in terms of municipal officials and politicians’ understandings of participation, there is an urgent need to reorient local government officials to become change agents at the grassroots who engage with their stakeholders as planning and implementing partners, assisting them in shifting form a top-down to a bottom-up approach (Pieterse, 2002).

After more than 40 years of functioning under the logic of a top-down system, characterized by a rigid culture of non participation, the task of reorienting the public and its relation to local government and local state institutions is extremely complex.

\(^{102}\) Dr. Mvuyo Tom.  
\(^{103}\) Dr. Mvuyo Tom.
As formal or institutionalized spaces for participation are deployed, citizens and local (but also regional and national) government officials must learn how to interact in these spaces, so that they can seize the opportunity to engineer their own destiny by making decisions which will affect their lives and empower them.

The WPLG noted that relationships between Municipal Councils and the administration, between management and the workforce, and between the municipality and service-users and citizens, need to be improved (South African Government, 1998a). The Batho Pele104 ('People First') principles (South African Government, 1997a), are recalled in the approach to building a culture and practice of customer service. However, the national public sector reform process has already demonstrated that technocratic efforts to increase capability and willingness to act in more developmental ways are not sufficient (Pieterse, 2002).

The WPLG can be easily interpreted and accommodated to different development discourses. It is malleable enough to serve diverse and contradictory interests. And therefore, purely technocratic approaches are not enough. As Pieterse (2002) suggests, the emphasis on efficiency in the WPLG is clearly rooted in NPM approaches. But, at the same time, the WPLG is also influenced by participatory development discourses105. The underlying assumptions, as we have discussed in chapter two and three, are not totally compatible, but there are areas of overlap and complementation. Efficiency arguments are important, if appropriately recast, to ensure that the political debate and institutional system are focused on realizing integrated development

104 In terms of citizen participation, the Batho Pele White Paper notes that the development of a service-oriented culture requires the active participation of the local community. Municipalities need constant feedback from service-users if they are to improve their operations. The ‘Batho Pele’ approach to Public Service is based on eight key principles: consultation: Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public service they receive, and, where possible, should be given a choice about the services which are provided. Service standards: Citizens should know what standard of service to expect. Access: All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. Courtesy: Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration. Information: citizens should be given full and accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive. Openness and transparency: Citizens should know how departments are run, how resources are spent, and who is in charge of particular services. Redress: If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response. Value-for-money: Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value-for-money.’ (South African Government, 1998a).

105 Sections F and G on municipal administration and finance respectively most explicitly embody NPM principles. Section B is closer to participatory development discourses.
It is at this intersection that the current system has to be based, in order to achieve developmental outcomes and address the development challenges that South Africa faces.

The lessons learnt during the consolidation stage of the process of ‘local government transformation’ seem to have informed somewhat the development of the revised National Capacity Building Framework for Local Government (South African Government, 2008). A need for institutionalizing hands-on support to local government and improve inter and intra governmental cooperation in the provision of support to local government is one of the critical areas that has been indicated as requiring attention. It remains to be seen whether this framework is translated into practice or not. However, an issue that should be welcomed is the, at least theoretical, recognition of the relevance of the ‘capacity building environment’ (South African Government, 2008). This has to be positively embraced as a signal that could lead to the recognition that failures should not only be explained as municipalities’ lack of capacity, but as failures of other government spheres and departments as well.

The 2006 crisis in ‘service delivery’ surrounding municipalities reflects an underestimation of the challenges and investment that should be conferred to local government transformation. It could be argued then that the authors of the legal and policy framework regarding local government reform seem to work with a rather simplistic model of the state. More attention to the political nature of translating policy into practices is required. The lack of capacities in the broader sense, as discussed above, the play of patronage and the political conditioning of the development policy process (Grindle and Thomas, 1991), have an impact on the implementation of policies, and a critical assessment of the policy framework as well as new forms of oversight, public scrutiny and input seem to be needed. The process opened, in 2008, by the DPLG to revisit the policy framework for Local and Provincial Government is therefore to be welcomed, as well as the formulation of a renewed approach to capacity building. It is expected that results emanating from this study will feed into this deliberative process.

My own study (also corroborated by other analyses) highlights the lack of training and political education, both of the councilors and of residents and CBOs, as relevant.
elements in explaining why the system of participatory local governance seems not to be working. This is coupled with the novelty of the participatory tools and spaces. However, I would argue that this diagnosis is only partially true. The issue of building the right capacities in municipalities and local communities to be ready to perform their new responsibilities is crucial but can not be approached in isolation from other critical factors and issues. Relevant reasons explaining the dysfunctional participatory system are to be found in how the power structures associated to IDP and Ward Committees are defined\textsuperscript{106}, how the participatory system is articulated with the intergovernmental relation system and the fiscal decentralization process. As acknowledged by the DPLG (South African Government, 2008) platforms for collective development planning across 3 spheres of government needed to be strengthened. But also other areas of the intergovernmental relations system need revision. As a few studies suggest, the problem is not only due to weak systems of capacity building but it is also compelled by unresolved systems of intergovernmental allocation of powers and functions (Atkinson, 2007b; Derichs and Einfeldt, 2006 and IDASA, 2005). I will explore these issues in the next section.

4.5 The assignment of functions and powers to local governments and the practice of ‘cooperative governance’

The Constitution of South Africa defines the functions of local government and its relationship to other spheres of government. It caters for a dynamic relationship and entrenches the ‘principle of subsidiarity’. It also emphasises cooperation between the three spheres of government through the principle of cooperative governance. This means that although the three spheres of government are autonomous, South Africa is a unitary country and the principle of cooperative governance implies that the different levels of government are interdependent and have to work together on decision-making, and coordinate budgets, policies and activities.

In terms of cooperative governance, the MSA establishes ‘a framework for support, monitoring and standard-setting by other spheres of government in order to progressively build local government into an efficient frontline development agency,

\textsuperscript{106} I have dedicated Chapter 5 to examining these issues.
capable of integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall social and economic uplift of communities in harmony with their local natural environment’ (South African Government, 2000a).

The spaces for the interaction between the diverse spheres of government are various. Local government is represented in the NCOP and in other institutions such as the Financial and Fiscal Commission and the Budget Council. Sectorial coordination is required in the various programmes developed by the diverse national and provincial departments such as housing, health and public works. Additionally, numerous intergovernmental forums have been established. The key tool for coordination of functions, however, is the IDP.

It is clear that national government is increasingly looking to local government as a point of coordination and vehicle for the implementation of policies and programmes. Provincial governments are also decentralizing certain functions to local government. At the same time, local government is constitutionally obliged to participate in national and provincial development programmes.

The framework of cooperative governance defines the national government as playing a prominent role as policy maker, with provincial and local governments performing major roles in social and basic service sectors. It establishes that the national sphere sets the framework for nationwide development policy and legislation and implements specific functions in which it has exclusive competence (defence, money supply, legal system). The provincial sphere sets the framework for provincial-specific development policy and legislation and implements specific functions in which it has relatively exclusive competence (health, education, welfare). The municipal sphere sets the framework for municipal-specific development policy and legislation, and implements specific functions in which it has exclusive competence.

There are also functions in which neither sphere has exclusive competency. These are defined sectorially in terms of national ministers and departments. In general, it can be said that the national government sets the legal and policy framework and provides funding in terms of sector programmes, while the provincial sphere performs an administrative role over the implementation of programmes and has a distinct strategic
planning role in terms of setting sector priorities for the province. Finally, municipalities implement multi-sector projects identified in the municipal planning exercises—IDPs--, drawing on the sector funding under the responsibility of the national programmes. Where a function is shared, sectorially defined funding is conceptualized into a national programme which is administered provincially and implemented locally (Ambert and Feldman, 2002).

The responsibility of a function may be split between the services ‘authority’ and the services ‘provider’, which helps to distinguish between assignments and delegations. The role of authority denotes responsibility for administration, fee or tax determination, control of funds, Service Level Agreement (SLA) and pricing policy, legislation, regulation and ownership of assets. The primary role of the provider is the service delivery to the users, though the provider is also responsible for the operation, maintenance and costs of delivery. Allocation of the function through assignment means the authority is transferred in its entirety. Delegation indicates responsibility for the role of provider only. General assignments can be applied to a function for the entire country which requires legislation or specific assignments, whereas specified municipalities acquire a function through agreement and provincial proclamation. Delegations, however, are not controlled by legislation and do not necessarily imply the transfer of resources, which leaves the municipality at risk legally and financially (IDASA, 2004).

Provincial and local government functions consist of exclusive competences and concurrent competences, the latter being responsibilities shared by more than one sphere of government. In broad terms, provinces are mandated to deliver basic services such as education, health and welfare. Local governments have the major responsibility for certain local services and infrastructure such as water, sanitation and electricity. The concept of regulatory relationships implies (as established in the MSA) that national and provincial governments can set standards and monitoring of local municipalities (i.e. sector regulation of the supply of electricity, water and sanitation exists at national level, which defines policies and procedures for all municipalities).

Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution relate to the specific functions and how they are allocated to a sphere or shared between spheres. Local government is responsible for all
the functions listed in Part B of these schedules (see Annex 9.3.1) Municipalities provide different kinds of services; they perform regulatory functions as well, as they must support LED.

In terms of regulatory functions, municipalities regulate the uses of urban areas and make decisions on land use and gives permits and licenses for construction, remodelling and demolition. Other functions in Schedule 4B that can be regarded as regulatory include: building regulations, trading regulations, air pollution, and child-care facilities. In addition, regulatory functions from Schedule 5B include beaches and amusement facilities, billboards, cemeteries and crematoria, control of public nuisances, liquor licensing, boundaries and fencing, noise pollution, street trading, traffic and parking.

In terms of LED, the White Paper on Local Economic Development (LED), argues for the need to transform the focus of local government from the provision of services to the highlighting of the role of entrepreneurialism. The Constitution also makes it mandatory for municipalities to promote LED. Local authorities, through their mandate to promote and facilitate social and economic development, have become centrally placed to coordinate LED projects through Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and planning processes required in terms of the Municipal Systems Act 23 of 2000. However, it has been noted that those resources available for LED are often managed by various central government departments with little coordination (Nel, 2001).

Metropolitan and local municipalities have localized defined powers and functions that include the responsibility to deliver basic services and municipal infrastructure such as water provision, electricity distribution, refuse removal, sanitation, storm water management, municipal roads, cemeteries, fire-fighting, and municipal health. District municipalities’ primary role is to facilitate, fund and execute infrastructure development in the local municipalities within their jurisdictions. Other services vary and can include, i.a, water provision, fire-fighting, safety and security.

Additionally, municipalities complement the provision of some services that are provided by the provincial administration in areas such as health, child and elderly-care, water and housing. IDASA (2004) and Derichs and Einfeldt (2006) point out
challenges in the assignment of functions to municipalities associated to exclusive municipal services and those associated to complementing provincial administration. In terms of exclusive competence, local municipalities are responsible, i.a., for the provision and maintenance of local streets as stipulated in Schedule 5B of the Constitution. However, in addition, municipalities have undertaken provincial road repairs as an agent funded by the provincial government. The establishment of new and district municipalities has necessitated a road classification process to clarify jurisdictional responsibility, which is likely to increase the burden of maintenance on local municipalities. Moreover, some municipal roads are not yet classified as district or local routes and therefore run risks of not being maintained (Derichs and Einfeldt, 2006). The newly-introduced Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) (South African Government, 2004) is designed to improve the national shortfall in road funding, but increased road responsibility may adversely affect the financial sustainability of municipalities. Also, municipal public transport is a Schedule 4B function and the transport plan is a key component of the IDP for the municipality, but this process is hampered by a lack of capacity and funding. Most IDPs have limited integration between land use and transport planning, and little coordination between spheres of government, operators and authorities (IDASA, 2004).

In terms of complementing other spheres of government, this includes services provided on behalf of other spheres of government as a result of ‘delegation’. These include health services, housing services, water services, electricity services, security services and public works.107 Because many of the protests during 2005 and 2006 where related to housing, I will refer to housing services to illustrate the challenges associated to the system of intergovernmental relations.

Many of the larger municipalities do take on aspects of this function, although housing is not a municipal one. Schedule 4 of the Constitution regards housing as a functional area of Concurrent National and Provincial Legislative Competence, the core responsibility lying with the Department of Housing –national sphere- and the respective departments of the provinces. The national government is responsible for determining norms and standards and for monitoring the performance of provincial and

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107 For a thorough overview of each sector and the challenges of the decentralization system see IDASA (2004 and 2005).
local governments. Provinces are responsible for the development of a housing policy. For this portfolio, they receive grants from the national government, approve housing subsidies and projects, and provide assistance to municipalities who should identify needs and backlogs (submitted within their IDPs) and apply to provinces for subsidies. Municipal activities also include the identification of land and beneficiaries for low-cost housing, developing housing projects, internal infrastructure and, lastly, owning and renting houses. It is the provinces who decide on the division of subsidies and who select and pay the developers. In some cases, the developer can be a municipality, in others municipalities might not even be informed about ongoing housing projects (Derichs and Einfeldt, 2006). This illustrates the difficulty inherent in the policy and legal framework for coordinating and implementing transparent procedures. The role of municipalities has increased while that of the provinces has become regulatory and chiefly focused on resource allocation. This raises concerns regarding who should have the authority function for housing, and the lack of coordination between the provincial and local spheres and between the various local municipality departments such as planning, engineering and community services (IDASA, 2004).

Many of the massive protests against local governments in 2005 where related to housing programmes and raised allegations of corruption and mismanagement of various projects by various Eastern Cape municipalities. At a meeting on 25 May with the Eastern Cape Premier, the Mayor, the Provincial Housing Minister and the National Minister of Housing, it was concluded that problems had arisen as a result of inadequate communications between the three spheres of government and the affected communities. ‘Such inadequate communication has been a regular occurrence with municipalities receiving highly contradictory information about budgetary allocations and spending deadlines’ (Atkinson, 2007b, p. 56).

As suggested earlier, apart from the above-mentioned services and responsibilities, national or provincial government can also delegate other responsibilities to municipalities. However, the legal and regulatory framework presents problems of lack of clarity in the division of responsibilities. Municipalities are often expected to take full responsibility for a delegated function (including the financing of it) but ‘they are easily ignored in the processes of delegation and put in positions where their
responsibilities increase without associated increases in revenue raising capacity’ (IDASA, 2004, p. 6).

When municipalities are asked to perform the role of another sphere of government, clear agreements should be made about who will pay the costs in order to avoid the risk of creating an ‘unfunded mandate’. The study by IDASA (2004) on local government powers and functions noted an inconsistent approach to assignment and delegation processes. Various reports echoed IDASA’s point, highlighting the fact that legislation frequently ignores financial implications associated with making such assignments and delegations (i.e. national government might raise standards for the supply of adequate housing but available funding does not reflect the increased costs). Moreover, some functions which are shared by different spheres of government lack a clear delineation of responsibility and therefore run the risk of not being properly delivered. A study by Derichs and Einfeldt (2006) suggested that uncertainties about the nature of the transfer of a function (a function that lies within one sphere of government but that is carried out by another through assignments, delegations or agency agreements) makes municipal planning and budgeting more difficult. These arrangements lead to an increase of financial accounting and reporting responsibilities for municipalities, but there is no provision to take this into account in terms of funding or capacity building to undertake additional responsibilities.

The recently approved Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (2005) sets the framework to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations and to provide for mechanisms and procedures to settle intergovernmental disputes. It requires entering into implementation protocols where the implementation of a policy or the provision of a service depends on the participation of various spheres of government. These development agreements should guide and enforce the coordination, the funding and the quality of projects to be implemented. This might lead, however, to an increase in bureaucracy, but it remains to be seen whether the implementation protocols will contribute to more coordinated and improved service delivery.

As acknowledged by the DPLG (South African Government, 2008), platforms for collective development planning across three spheres of government needed to be strengthened. IDPs are a key tool for ensuring coordination between the three spheres
of government’s development priorities. However, my assessment of IDP (see chapter 5) and various other studies (i.a. Ambert and Feldman, 2002; IDASA 2008 and IDASA, 2004) found that provincial expenditure on services is not always taking into account the development priorities of the respective municipalities as outlined in their IDPs.

As highlighted in IDASA’s report ‘The State of Local Governance in South Africa’ (IDASA, 2008) most Joint Services Forums are ineffective in stimulating cooperation and coordination between various governmental service providers. In my survey, the reason mentioned by most respondents to explain the lack of coordination and coherence between different spheres of government, is the lack of commitment from both departmental and provincial government, which is reflected in the fact that only junior staff members from these institutions appear to attend the intergovernmental relations forum meetings at local level. This aggravates the lack of harmonization between the national plans, the Provincial Growth and Development Strategies and the IDPs in all government spheres.

As discussed earlier, the principle of ‘cooperative governance’ has proven to be problematic in practice, or better said, the principle has been understood, in many cases, as a unilateral, pre-determined decision-making process from central and provincial spheres of government towards local government. In some cases, instead of coordination it would be better to refer to local government’s (unidirectional) alignment with the two other spheres’ plans and expenditure priorities.

These issues can also be related to the definition stipulated in the key piece of legislation that provides for the organization and functioning of local government. The MSA makes (limited) reference to the requirements for cooperative governance practices and only from bottom to top. In other words, it mainly calls for alignment of local government plans with those of higher spheres of government.

It is a welcome sign that, as part of the review process in regard to the lessons from PC, a strategic agenda for strengthening local government, known as the Five Year Local Government Strategic Agenda (2006 - 2011), was developed (South African Government, 2006). The Local Government Strategic Agenda commits government as a whole to strengthening local government over a five-year period by: (i)
mainstreaming hands-on support to local government; (ii) addressing the structure and governance arrangements of the State in order to better strengthen, support and monitor local government; (iii) refining and strengthening the policy, regulatory and fiscal environment for local government and giving greater attention to the enforcement measures. However, despite advances, powers, functions and capacity building responsibilities remain poorly defined in various cases. Also besides the increase in governmental grants to municipalities, more effective and sustained support is required.

Decentralization is essentially about local governments having power to define and implement locally defined agendas. In assessing any decentralization process, the assignment of expenditure responsibilities and functions must be studied against the budgeting framework in which the municipal sphere operates. This is especially relevant in assessing the extent to which municipalities have the power, through their planning processes, to determine investment priorities, as well as decide independently the overall priorities for their municipality. This in turn indicates the effective degree of ‘autonomy’ of municipalities. The pattern of revenue collection and main revenue sources also explain the direction of accountability. This is also relevant in efforts to explain, at least partially, the poor responsiveness of municipalities to citizen grievances. A discussion on these issues follows.

4.6.1 Revenue assignment, taxation and expenditure trends in South African municipalities, with special reference to the Eastern Cape

How much autonomy does a municipality have in deciding on the development priorities for its locality? What sources of funding can municipal governments access, in order to perform both its exclusive functions and those with shared competencies with other spheres? How much of the overall financial pie can municipalities effectively use to meet the development challenges identified by their own planning processes?

108 The analysis in this section is based on the data available from National Treasury on Local Government (www.treasury.gov.za) and on the 2008 Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review.
As suggested by the theory of fiscal decentralization reviewed in chapter three, South Africa’s Intergovernmental fiscal system is characterized by centralized taxation and relatively decentralized service delivery, and thus by dependence of sub-national governments on transfers, which produces vertical fiscal imbalances between revenue sources and expenditure responsibilities. Horizontal imbalances also occur due to uneven allocation of revenue raising capacities among the sub-national governments themselves, requiring compensation between levels of government.

The Municipal Finance Management Act (South African Government, 2003a) establishes the financial sources for municipal governments to be administered and ruled by them. In general terms they can be grouped as taxes (especially Property tax, and until 2006, the Regional Service Council (RSC) levies on payroll and turnover), service charges (tariffs), and fines, fees and penalties for illegalities occurring in their areas. These are the main sources (coming from municipalities’ ‘own’ resources) of operational income.

The Property Tax is used by the municipality to pay for public or semi-public goods in the form of a ‘service charge’ for roads, pavements, parks, streetlights, storm water management, etc. It is an important source of income for many municipalities. Property taxation was not common in the former homelands, and their integration into the new municipalities led to differing valuation years and methods. Exemptions and underassessment are widespread, and in many cases there has been a failure to upgrade the property tax rolls and to force higher rates of compliance. For these reasons, a new Municipal Property Rates Act (2004a) went into effect as of 2 July 2005\[^{109}\].

The RSC levies were, up to 2006, a further important revenue stream for municipalities. These were business taxes paid to district and metropolitan municipalities comprising two elements: a service levy (based on payroll) and an establishment levy (based on turnover). The national government fixed the rate and base of RSC levies and the local

\[^{109}\] Municipalities are required to bring their valuation records up to date within four years of the effective date of legislation. The majority of municipalities, 90%, were targeting for July 2008 or 2009 as the implementation date (South African Government, 2008b). Support for the proper implementation seems essential.
government faced important administration and collection costs\textsuperscript{110}. By 2006 it had been
decided that the RSC levies would be abolished and replaced by a mixture of grants and
alternative taxation instruments. At present, RSC have been replaced by national
transfers (equitable share). This has implications for the degree of autonomy and
responsiveness of local governments to local constituents (I will discuss the latter issue
towards the end of this section).

Service Charges are levied on specific services that can be directly charged to the
household or business. In this case the principle of ‘user pays’ is adopted. User charges
are regressive if there is not a redistributive pricing mechanism in place. Because of
this, and as part of its overall strategy to alleviate poverty in the country, the national
government has put in place a policy for the provision of a free basic level of municipal
services to poor households. For the funding of such services municipalities receive
their part of the equitable share (see below). They can apply for infrastructure grants.
Also, they raise their own revenue through these service charges. Finally, municipalities
apply fines such as traffic fines and penalties for overdue payment of service charges.

In terms of transfers, there are three broad streams: equitable share, infrastructure and
current transfers. The equitable share is an unconditional transfer that a municipality
gets from national government each year\textsuperscript{111}. The capacity building and restructuring
grants are the two main sources of current transfers. In terms of conditional transfers,
these are financial contributions to implement nationally or provincially defined capital
or operating programmes and projects. In particular, municipalities may apply for
Government grants for infrastructure development, such as the MIG.

\textsuperscript{110} Although included as an ‘own-revenue’ source in most municipal statistics, as Martínez-Vázquez and
Boex (2001) note, in this case the term ‘own-revenue’ has been improperly used as municipal
governments do not really have any control over these revenue sources (the rate and base of ‘own source’
taxes are still determined by the central government).

\textsuperscript{111} In our analysis, it should be recalled that from 2006 the equitable share calculation included the RSC
replacement grant for metros and district municipalities. This explains the jump in the equitable share
figures on 2006 and explains part of the growth of transfers to local governments.
Table 4.2: Operating Revenue - South African Municipalities 2003-04 / 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Revenue (R million)</th>
<th>2003-04 (1)</th>
<th>2004-05 (1)</th>
<th>2005-06 (1)</th>
<th>2006-07(2)</th>
<th>2007-08 (3)</th>
<th>2008-09 (3)</th>
<th>2009-10 (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property rates</td>
<td>13980</td>
<td>16396</td>
<td>17401</td>
<td>18521</td>
<td>21486</td>
<td>22770</td>
<td>24136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service charges</td>
<td>36146</td>
<td>38735</td>
<td>40201</td>
<td>44498</td>
<td>49223</td>
<td>51549</td>
<td>54777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Service Levies(4)</td>
<td>4983</td>
<td>7009</td>
<td>7604</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment revenue</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>2115</td>
<td>2357</td>
<td>2970</td>
<td>3845</td>
<td>3818</td>
<td>4133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grants</td>
<td>8980</td>
<td>13742</td>
<td>17398</td>
<td>27223</td>
<td>26571</td>
<td>28311</td>
<td>28491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public contributions and donations</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>695</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other own revenue</td>
<td>8025</td>
<td>8784</td>
<td>10375</td>
<td>11763</td>
<td>17184</td>
<td>16260</td>
<td>16167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73831</strong></td>
<td><strong>87369</strong></td>
<td><strong>96000</strong></td>
<td><strong>106056</strong></td>
<td><strong>118404</strong></td>
<td><strong>122710</strong></td>
<td><strong>127704</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Revenue (% of total revenue)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property rates</td>
<td>18.94</td>
<td>18.77</td>
<td>18.13</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>18.15</td>
<td>18.56</td>
<td>18.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service charges</td>
<td>48.96</td>
<td>44.33</td>
<td>41.88</td>
<td>41.96</td>
<td>41.57</td>
<td>42.01</td>
<td>42.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Service Levies(4)</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment revenue</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grants</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>25.67</td>
<td>22.44</td>
<td>23.07</td>
<td>22.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public contributions and donations</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other own revenue</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>14.51</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>12.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008 (1) output; (2) estimate, (3) Medium-term estimate; (4) RSC levies abolished from July 2006 and grant replacement is included in Governments grants

As shown in table 4.2, the four main sources of operating revenue for municipalities in South Africa for the period 2003-04 / 2006-07 were user charges, property rates, intergovernmental grants and RSC levies –until 2006 when they were eliminated. The ‘other’ source of funding, which is also significant, includes traffic fines, rental of housing stock, recovery of outstanding debt, and the use of previous years’ surplus funds. On average, municipalities generated, until 2003-04, almost half of their operating revenue by trading services such as electricity, water and sanitation. Towards 2006-07 this figure decreased to 42% of total operating revenue for municipalities. Property rates (levied in Metros and Local Municipalities) and RSC levies make up another significant portion, the former making up to 19% of local government revenue for 2003-04, but its share decreases towards 2006-07 to account for 17.5% of total municipal operating revenue. RSC levies were, until being abolished in 2006, a
considerably relevant source of revenue for District Municipalities and Metros, and represented on average 7% of operating revenue of these municipalities.

These decreasing trends in the participation of ‘own sources of revenues’ in total municipal revenue are explained by an increase in national transfers targeted at stepping up funding access to pro-poor basic services (this partially explains the decrease in services charge’s share in total operating revenue) and to compensate for the abolition of RSC levies in 2006-07 (South African Government, 2008b).

Table 4.3: Capital Funding - South African Municipalities 2003-04 / 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Finance</th>
<th>2003-04 (R million)</th>
<th>2004-05 (1)</th>
<th>2005-06 (1)</th>
<th>2006-07 (2)</th>
<th>2007-08 (3)</th>
<th>2008-09 (3)</th>
<th>2009-10 (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Loans</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3315</td>
<td>5278</td>
<td>6543</td>
<td>7621</td>
<td>6678</td>
<td>5909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Contributions and Donations</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and subsidies</td>
<td>4775</td>
<td>6058</td>
<td>8186</td>
<td>8909</td>
<td>20813</td>
<td>22118</td>
<td>14960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3539</td>
<td>3702</td>
<td>3467</td>
<td>5153</td>
<td>10464</td>
<td>9670</td>
<td>8767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10696</td>
<td>13323</td>
<td>17232</td>
<td>20892</td>
<td>39736</td>
<td>39252</td>
<td>30337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008 (1) output; (2) estimate, (3) Medium-term estimate.

External loans, own revenue and grants are the funding sources available for municipalities to fund their capital expenditure. Grants and subsidies are the preferred source of finance. Total sources of capital funding in the form of grants averaged 46% for the period 2003-04 to 2005-06. The jump in the figures for 2007-08 and 2008-09 is explained by the additional funds allocated to Municipalities hosting the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup.

As Table 4.3 shows, although municipalities are increasingly using external loans to fund capital expenditure, borrowing from the private sector remains untapped and the municipal loan market is concentrated on a few lenders and larger urban municipalities (only 26 of 283 use external loans to fund their infrastructure programs). The figure is
as low as 3% in the smaller Eastern Cape municipalities (considering data for 2006-07). Moreover, estimates indicate that there is no indication that the numbers will increase. On the contrary, figures show a sharp decline in the estimated share of external loans. This is specially relevant given the intergenerational equity advantages associated to the possibility of borrowing to access funds for capital development needs.

Finally, municipalities also fund their infrastructure needs with own revenue from surpluses generated from their trading activities or from rates. However, this ‘own source of funding’ for capital expenditure has been declining- from 33.1% in 2003-04 to 20.1% in 2005-06. Although estimates indicate a growth trend in the share of own revenue sources to fund capital expenditure, the figures never reach the relative share at the inception of the period, the estimate for 2009-10 remaining 4.2 points below the 2003-2004 share. Again, as in the case of operating income, the trend in capital funding is that own sources of revenue tend to be replaced by government grants.

Operating expenditure by all categories of municipalities has been increasing annually from 2003-2004 to 2007-08. Table 4.4 shows that personnel costs are the most relevant expenditure category, representing almost 30% of total operating expenditures in the period. Material and Bulk purchases take up almost 22% of municipalities operating budget. As noted in the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008 (South African Government, 2008b), the growth in capital expenditure on new infrastructure assets (see Table 4.7) means costs for new infrastructure maintenance that need to be added to the costs for existing infrastructure maintenance. Expenditure on repairs and maintenance has been growing at a 4.3 percent average annual real increase. However, it remains low, representing only about 6 per cent of total expenditure since 2003-04. If estimates are considered, the picture is more worrisome as these expenditures are projected to remain low (around 7 per cent of total operating expenditures) while the asset base of municipalities is estimated to grow.

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112 Own calculations based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008, data also available in the CD attached to this publication.
113 It is suggested that given existing backlogs, most municipalities should probably be budgeting between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of operating expenditure for repairs and maintenance (South African Government, 2008b).
### Table 4.4: Operating Expenditure - South African Municipalities 2003-04 / 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee costs</td>
<td>21,577</td>
<td>23,433</td>
<td>25,015</td>
<td>27,895</td>
<td>34,820</td>
<td>36,354</td>
<td>38,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration of Councillors</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>1,417</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>4,459</td>
<td>4,868</td>
<td>5,245</td>
<td>5,925</td>
<td>8,532</td>
<td>8,943</td>
<td>9,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>2,505</td>
<td>3,945</td>
<td>4,253</td>
<td>4,980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance charges</td>
<td>4,216</td>
<td>3,409</td>
<td>3,123</td>
<td>3,180</td>
<td>7,483</td>
<td>8,029</td>
<td>8,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and bulk purchases</td>
<td>17,198</td>
<td>18,243</td>
<td>19,480</td>
<td>21,481</td>
<td>23,827</td>
<td>25,027</td>
<td>26,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and subsidies</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>2,141</td>
<td>2,339</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditure</td>
<td>19,742</td>
<td>25,557</td>
<td>27,604</td>
<td>28,884</td>
<td>42,897</td>
<td>43,016</td>
<td>42,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Op. expenditure</strong></td>
<td>71,728</td>
<td>82,263</td>
<td>87,816</td>
<td>96,101</td>
<td>117,559</td>
<td>121,369</td>
<td>126,177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee costs</td>
<td>30.08</td>
<td>28.49</td>
<td>28.49</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>29.62</td>
<td>29.95</td>
<td>30.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration of Councillors</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance charges</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and bulk purchases</td>
<td>23.98</td>
<td>22.18</td>
<td>22.18</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>20.27</td>
<td>20.62</td>
<td>21.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and subsidies</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditure</td>
<td>27.52</td>
<td>31.07</td>
<td>31.43</td>
<td>30.06</td>
<td>36.49</td>
<td>35.44</td>
<td>33.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008 (1) output; (2) estimate, (3) Medium-term estimate.

Operating expenses of South African municipalities are considered largely inflexible, with approximately 70% of the cash costs being non-discretionary or fixed. This figure is projected to increase for the period 2007-08 / 2009-10 to an average of about 75%. As noted earlier, the operating expenditure items mainly comprise bulk water and
electricity purchases, employee costs, bad debt charges, and repairs and maintenance of fixed assets.

The large-scale infrastructure backlogs, coupled with deferred maintenance on existing assets, have resulted in growing capital expenditure budgets and financing requirements. As calculated in the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review (South African Government, 2008), the real growth in capital spending between 2003-04 and 2006-07 was most significant in water and sanitation, at 32 per cent. Growth in housing expenditure, although not a major function of municipalities, also showed an upswing to 18 per cent. This suggests that this is increasingly a function taken up by municipalities.

Table 4.5: Capital Expenditure - South African Municipalities -2003-04 / 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Expenditure (R million)</th>
<th>2003-04 (1)</th>
<th>2004-05 (1)</th>
<th>2005-06 (1)</th>
<th>2006-07 (2)</th>
<th>2007-08 (3)</th>
<th>2008-09 (3)</th>
<th>2009-10 (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>2925</td>
<td>4014</td>
<td>4957</td>
<td>10397</td>
<td>9434</td>
<td>8664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>1267</td>
<td>1599</td>
<td>2295</td>
<td>2725</td>
<td>4426</td>
<td>4255</td>
<td>4063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>1269</td>
<td>3893</td>
<td>4586</td>
<td>4221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and store water</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>1751</td>
<td>2517</td>
<td>3222</td>
<td>5536</td>
<td>6466</td>
<td>5013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5157</td>
<td>6329</td>
<td>7747</td>
<td>8718</td>
<td>15484</td>
<td>14510</td>
<td>8376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10696</strong></td>
<td><strong>13322</strong></td>
<td><strong>17231</strong></td>
<td><strong>20891</strong></td>
<td><strong>39736</strong></td>
<td><strong>39251</strong></td>
<td><strong>30337</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>13.32</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>13.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>13.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>48.21</td>
<td>47.51</td>
<td>44.96</td>
<td>41.73</td>
<td>38.97</td>
<td>36.97</td>
<td>27.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008 (1) output; (2) estimate, (3) Medium-term estimate.

On average, about 85 per cent of total municipal expenditures were operational expenditures, while the remaining 15 per cent was for capital expenditures. Estimates for the period 2007-2008 / 2009-2010 are 77 and 13 per cent respectively.

As we have seen, the growth in government transfers, both for operating and capital expenditure, has occurred at a faster pace than the increase in own revenue generated
by municipalities. Because of this, municipalities are increasingly dependent on grants to fund their operating costs and infrastructure needs.

As shown in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6, municipal dependence on grants as a source of total revenue has risen exponentially. The scenario worsens if metropolitan municipalities are excluded, as these significantly explain the municipal revenue trend and are less dependent on grants. We will specifically explore this situation for the Eastern Cape later in this section.

Table 4.6: Government Grants to South African Municipalities - 2003-04 / 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfers to local government (R million)</th>
<th>2003-04 (1)</th>
<th>2004-05 (1)</th>
<th>2005-06 (1)</th>
<th>2006-07 (2)</th>
<th>2007-08 (3)</th>
<th>2008-09 (3)</th>
<th>2009-10 (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equitable share (4)</td>
<td>6624</td>
<td>7811</td>
<td>9808</td>
<td>18421</td>
<td>21297</td>
<td>25750</td>
<td>31011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIG</td>
<td>2323</td>
<td>4481</td>
<td>5436</td>
<td>5809</td>
<td>8262</td>
<td>8657</td>
<td>10330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other direct transfers</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>4173</td>
<td>3922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums development grant</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>4605</td>
<td>2895</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure -indirect transfers</td>
<td>2727</td>
<td>2126</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1333</td>
<td>2576</td>
<td>2293</td>
<td>2741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other other recurrent transfers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13036</td>
<td>15516</td>
<td>18377</td>
<td>27736</td>
<td>39427</td>
<td>44198</td>
<td>50392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfers to local government (% of total transfers)</th>
<th>2003-04 (1)</th>
<th>2004-05 (1)</th>
<th>2005-06 (1)</th>
<th>2006-07 (2)</th>
<th>2007-08 (3)</th>
<th>2008-09 (3)</th>
<th>2009-10 (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equitable share (4)</td>
<td>50.81</td>
<td>50.34</td>
<td>53.37</td>
<td>66.42</td>
<td>54.02</td>
<td>58.26</td>
<td>61.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIG</td>
<td>17.82</td>
<td>28.88</td>
<td>29.58</td>
<td>20.94</td>
<td>20.96</td>
<td>19.59</td>
<td>20.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other direct transfers</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>9.44</td>
<td>7.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums development grant</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure -indirect transfers</td>
<td>20.92</td>
<td>13.70</td>
<td>10.55</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other other recurrent transfers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Grants as % of total Revenue                       | 15.42      | 15.41      | 16.23      | 21.85      | 24.93      | 27.29      | 31.89      |

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008 (1) output; (2) estimate, (3) Medium-term estimate, (4) Since 2006, it includes replacement grant for RSC.

The only unconditional transfer is the Equitable Share, which is intended for a range of municipal activities. However, its main purpose is funding for the national policy of free service levels provision to poor households. It also supports the general expenditures of municipalities, and many smaller municipalities use their equitable share to pay basic operating expenditures such as personnel costs. The relevance of the equitable share has increased partially due to the importance placed on the policy of...
universal access to basic services, but also due to the abolition of RSC in 2006. Since then, a replacement grant has been included in the Equitable Share calculations.

The other relevant grant that does not have many strings attached is the MIG. The MIG was introduced in 2004-05 through the consolidation of various sector infrastructure grants that were administered by different departments into a single program. The goal was to make the transfers system simpler. MIG funds are distributed to all municipalities based on a formula that takes into account existing backlogs in service delivery. It also incorporates the functions assigned to individual municipalities. However, portions of the MIG allocations are frequently earmarked for specific expenditures by municipalities. Moreover, the consolidation of transfers into the equitable share and the MIG is increasingly being undermined by the expansion in the number of specific purpose conditional transfers. (South African Government, 2008).

![Figure 4.7: Government Grants and Municipal Revenue](image-url)

The significant dependence on grants is more worrisome in a context of declining revenue collection efforts (see Table 4.2). Moreover, an increase in municipal dependence on conditional grants and reduced fiscal autonomy has important implications for local governance, as it reduces independence of municipalities and
shifts the pattern of their accountability to citizens towards the national government. Moreover, it reduces the margin of action for funding locally decided priorities.

The picture depicted above hides, however, relevant differences between municipalities. In South Africa, the 20 largest municipalities make up about 80% of the aggregated local government budget, with the 6 metros representing almost 60% of the combined budgeted expenditure of municipalities in South Africa. This heterogeneity is also reproduced within the Eastern Cape.

Nelson Mandel Bay (NMB) Metropolitan Municipality represents almost 40 per cent of the combined expenditures of Eastern Cape municipalities. Together, all 38 local municipalities account for a similar share, while 6 District Municipalities represent 21 per cent. However, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality’s budget is 225 times greater than the smaller budgeted expenditure of a local municipality in the Eastern Cape (Eastern Cape 103). The second biggest municipality represents half of the budget of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (Buffalo City budget is slightly over 2.3 billion). Indeed, 31 municipalities in the Eastern Cape (of a total of 45) do not surpass R 100m budgeted expenditures.

Figure 4.8: Distribution of capital and operating expenditures by type of municipality in the Eastern Cape (2006-2007)

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008
In terms of the operating budget for 2006-07, while the national average of personnel expenditures was 29%, in the Eastern Cape this figure represents 27% of total operating expenditures. However, again, a heterogeneous picture emerges and for the smaller municipalities (those with aggregated budget less than 100m R, which represent 84% of municipalities in the Eastern Cape) the average share of salaries rises to 40% of total operating budget of these municipalities. This percentage does not include the remuneration of councillors, which absorbs a relative high proportion of municipal operating expenditures in the Eastern Cape -- especially for local municipalities, where for the smaller ones it explains about 10% of total operating expenditures.

Table 4.8: Operating Expenditure: Eastern Cape Municipalities (2006-07)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Expenditure (%)</th>
<th>NMM</th>
<th>DC</th>
<th>LM</th>
<th>Munic budget less than 100</th>
<th>Eastern Cape average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee costs</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration of Councillors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance charges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and bulk purchases</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and subsidies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditure</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008

Aggregated statistics presented before reveal that about 3/4 of municipal activity is self-funded. In other words, the proportion of intergovernmental transfers, grants and subsidies to aggregated municipal income (considering both capital and operating income) for South African municipalities was about 22% for 2006/07 fiscal year (see Table 4.6). However, this is not the case for the smaller municipalities, especially in the Eastern Cape, KZN and Limpopo.

In particular, as shown in Table 4.2, government grants represented 25.6% of municipal operating revenues in South Africa for the year 2006-2007. However, this panorama varies profoundly across provinces and municipalities. In particular, it is important to
note the relevance of grants in the Eastern Cape where this figure rises to 41%. Moreover, while the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality shows the lowest dependency ratio (13%), the average figure for municipalities with budget inferior to R100 billion jumps to 54%.

The unconditional nature of the equitable share means that it is clearly the main source of municipal revenue that those municipalities who do not have a meaningful fiscal base, can use to implement their own development plans. However, if we consider that in these municipalities salaries and remuneration to councillors alone make up more than 50% of total income, and that bulk service purchases also explain a relevant share, this clearly does not leave much room for considering other kinds of municipal led investment.

Table 4.9: Operating Revenue: Eastern Cape Municipalities 2006-07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Revenue (%)</th>
<th>NMM</th>
<th>DC</th>
<th>LM</th>
<th>Munic budget less than 100</th>
<th>Eastern Cape average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property rates</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service charges</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Service Levies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment revenue</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grants</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public contributions and donations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other own revenue</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2008

As we have already discussed, the use of conditional grants is predetermined, as they are defined in terms of national and provincial strategies and programmes. Most of the grant funding falling under conditional grants to municipalities makes explicit requirements that projects to be funded should form part of the IDP and this is a great advance from uncoordinated mechanisms of grant assignment of the past. However, this still leaves little room for decision making on localities. Municipalities must align (using an unilateral understanding of alignment) their plans to those of other departments and spheres of government. This is especially relevant in terms of facilitating citizen participation in local governance. Accessing these grants is conditional on the acceptance of project proposals by the relevant sector/department.
and thus, does not generate any incentive for the municipality to engage in a local decision-making process to respond to locally articulated priorities. ‘It is not locally defined priorities that have a chance at being financially resourced, but rather national priorities’ (Ambert and Feldman, 2002:13).

As figures presented above show, the growth in government transfers has occurred at a faster pace than the increase in own revenue generated by municipalities. This has created a situation where municipalities are increasingly dependent on grants to fund their operating costs. I have also argued that there is great variance between municipalities. The major urban municipalities have relatively strong revenue generating powers and are marginally dependent on transfers. However, many smaller municipalities have a very weak fiscal capacity and are highly dependant on transfers from the national government. This fiscal disparity is accentuated by the greater needs of those areas with the weakest tax base. As I have noted, most of the Eastern Cape municipalities are very small in budgetary terms, and greatly rely on government transfers.

The opportunities for citizen engagement beyond voting and lobbying are very restricted since financial transfers and revenue raising powers of local governments are governed by legislation and subject to fiscal policy constraints set by higher levels of government. Moreover, many local governments encounter problems of enforcing tax collection on account of the reluctance of citizens to pay for poor quality services, or the absence of a perceived link between service provision and payment of taxes. The literature has recently been exploring the links between expenditure and revenue responsibilities for its governance implications (Brautigam et al, 2008 and Moore, 2007). The relation between decentralization and transparency and increased accountability heavily relies on bringing expenditure assignments closer to revenue sources and hence to the citizenry. But if local governments depend to a large extent on grants to finance recurrent expenditures, there are no incentives for local political accountability on the part of elected politicians (Robinson, 2004).
4.6 Conclusion: Decentralization and participatory local governance in South Africa

Local Government in South Africa has substantially improved its service delivery over the past ten years, while the structure of local governments underwent a thorough transformation and they were provided with increased responsibilities and resources. As Butler recognises, a new system of government was created out of the ruins of apartheid. The scale of this achievement, which includes the incorporation of former Bantustans in the creation of new municipalities and provinces, the reconfiguration of the centre of the state, developing an integrated national planning framework and moving to medium term financial planning ‘has gone largely unrecognized’ (Butler, 2007, p. 36). The ANC, Butler argues, needs to be given credit not only for being the engine of these processes of change, but also for its vision of transforming South Africa into a more democratic and inclusive society.

Then, why did 2005 and 2006 see massive protests and confrontations at the municipal level, despite a framework for a developmental and participatory local governance system being implemented and a fiscal system bringing more financial resources down to the municipal level? This chapter has focused on three critical areas. Firstly, the issue of lack of capacities at the local government level has been recognised, re-examined and assessed. I have argued, however, that despite this issue being relevant, the focus has been skewed and disproportionately concentrated on the municipalities themselves.

Beyond the crucial issue of municipal ineffectiveness in service delivery associated with lack of capacities and the conspicuous consumption entailed by a culture of self enrichment on the part of municipal councillors and staff (Afrobarometer, 2006 and Atkinson, 2007b), three issues were examined.

Firstly, I argued that there is a clear need to also focus on capacity development beyond municipalities. My study highlights the need to go beyond municipalities and to help build capacities at other government levels as well as in CBOs, NGOs and the public in general. It also emerges from my study that there is a need to widen the scope of action and definition associated to capacity building. The tasks of transforming local government into a developmental agent require changes in attitudes and behavior, and
again of a set of actors, not only local government. These are significant challenges facing decentralized local governance. But the blame for the problems in changing the society should also be placed on political leaders of the various spheres of government for their failures and omissions, as well as ‘incompetence, nepotism and self-enrichment’ (Buhlunugu and Atkinson, 2007, p. 33). The inherited problems associated with apartheid have proven to be deeply embedded. The South African government underestimated the enormity of the local government transition and the huge administrative and financial resources required, as well as the changes in attitudes of both leaders and citizens that this transition demanded. As I have suggested, the changed mandate of local government, with increasing developmental functions, requires not only capacity building efforts, but also new attitudes and approaches.

Secondly, it was noted that the intergovernmental system has largely failed to adequately support local government. The analysis then focused on the system of cooperative governance and lack of clarity in the division of expenditure responsibilities for local government. Moreover, these processes frequently occur in a context of unclearly defined powers and functions between different levels of government. It is quite apparent that with increasing decentralization of government functions through assignments and delegations, the responsibilities of local government are becoming more and more complex. In South Africa, however, for historical reasons, the voice of local government has been weak in the development of national and provincial policies, even where these directly effect local government. The reform process has still not been able to reverse this trend.

The requirement for an improved coordination of the initiatives from the local, provincial and national agencies to avoid the duplications currently bedevilling a number of projects in the Eastern Cape is noted in a research study conducted by Haines (2004). In addition, a study commissioned by IDASA analyses the contradictions of a decentralization process contextualized in a centralized framework of intergovernmental relations (IDASA, 2004). The activities of these parallel structures are sometimes difficult to incorporate into integrated development plans, and may also undermine the authority of local government to govern within its area of jurisdiction. The study remarked that sectorial legislation has often been used as a vehicle to create new responsibilities for local government (without the adequate process of assignment).
If local government is to govern effectively and play an integrating, coordinating role at the local level, the overall system of intergovernmental fiscal relations needs to be revised. Contrary to the principles of cooperative governance, the process of decentralization has adopted the form of a more unilateral process, while cooperation implies a process of double direction in which the three spheres of government work jointly. Although the new system of intergovernmental fiscal relations makes a relevant advance in terms of the previously centralized state, the intergovernmental institutional and fiscal system remains a substantive obstacle to the achievement of decentralized and participatory governance. The system of intergovernmental fiscal relations continues to entrench authority and remove (discretionary) resources from the sphere of local decision-making.

Thirdly, while it is true that more resources have been allocated to local governments, it is also true that new responsibilities are delegated without totally assessing their financial implications. These results corroborate those found in a previous report commissioned by IDASA (2004), which presents the findings of a national study on the status of finances of municipalities in South Africa. It reveals that the devolution of financial authority has not been undertaken seriously by either central or provincial governments, whose schemes often bypass municipalities, even though the subject matter of these schemes falls under the authority of municipalities as established in the constitution. Municipalities, as key agents of development, are being viewed among higher levels of government in terms of local service delivery only. But if municipalities fail to gain financial autonomy the process of devolutionary decentralization will settle down to deconcentration.

The last section of this chapter highlighted the disparities in the financial and fiscal condition of municipalities across South Africa, in particular in the Eastern Cape. A significant proportion of municipalities do not have a viable fiscal base, and thus are dependent on transfers from other spheres of government. Moreover, data show an increasingly grant dependence. For all those municipalities who do not have a viable revenue base, the degree of autonomy for locally decided priorities is significantly reduced.
This results in initiatives for citizen participation on deciding the local assignment of funds being essentially a futile exercise. This study shows that the majority of municipalities in South Africa, but especially in the Eastern Cape, are heavily depend on government grants. Therefore, to put in place mechanisms to promote the active involvement of the local citizenry in the identification and definition of developmental local priorities, might simply be a waste of time and resources (Ambert and Feldman, 2002). There seems to be little room locally for deciding on what to spend.

To be sure, finding independent sources of financing for these emerging, locally based organs of governance has been one of the central challenges that confront these efforts in most transitional and developing economies. The literature and theory of fiscal decentralization suggests that sources of independent local government revenue are few and far between in poor countries. As a result, most countries design decentralization programmes that depend heavily on intergovernmental transfers from national to local governments. Even where transfers are adequate and reliable, a fiscal regime which compels local actors to depend so heavily on central financial arrangements for practically all of their expenditure requirements undermines the development of lateral rather than vertical relations within the state, with serious implications for public participation and effective accountability.

Integrating a fiscal perspective (by analysing the intergovernmental relations system, the expenditure allocations and revenue raising capacities of municipalities) into the analysis allowed the researcher to explain the relation between decentralized local governance, the levels of participation and the types of outcomes from development policies. The results from this study show that the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation is more complex than can be captured in any single summary statement. Rather than finding that decentralization is always a contributing factor for citizen participation and more democratic models of local governance, the results from this research, both theoretically and empirically, show wide divergences depending on type and conception of the decentralization process, how it is being implemented and key contextual variables.

While citizen participation and decentralized governance holds promise for the future development of localities, government needs to be cognisant of actual constraints and
challenges. In order for the aims of the WPLG to be fully realized, delegation of responsibilities needs to be accompanied by the delegation of resources – human, financial – to municipalities. These comments suggest that participatory development has limits if there is formal delegation but insufficient material and institutional support. This should not be interpreted as a failure of participatory mechanisms in themselves, but should be understood as the consequence of political economy factors that do not facilitate ‘meaningful’ citizen participation in local governance, beyond the enactment of legislation. While the DPLG should be given credit for the extent to which it has provided systems and structures for different sectors of the community to participate in local governance, there is a need to be realistic about what has been achieved.

Inviting citizens to participate in spaces where decisions have already been taken or where there is no meaningful issue to decide on, results in citizens losing their confidence in local government as an institution that is able to respond effectively to the challenges citizens raise. When decision-making power and resources remain at the higher spheres of government, but responsibilities are transferred to more decentralized spaces, the illegitimacy crisis of local government is reinforced by its incapacity to deliver. Decentralization -conceived in this sense- is impeding more than facilitating participatory local governance. Thus, contrary to the common statement that citizen participation in local governance can be an answer to the ‘crisis’ of representative democracy, invitations to participate under this context could be, on the contrary, contributing to the reinforcement of this trend.
Chapter 5: An Assessment of Citizen Participation in Decentralized Governance in South Africa - With Specific Reference to the Eastern Cape

‘A fundamental aspect of the new local government system is the active engagement of communities in the affairs of municipalities of which they are an integral part, and in particular in planning, service delivery and performance management; the Constitution of our non-racial democracy enjoins local government not just to seek to provide services to all our people but to be fundamentally developmental in orientation’ - MSA – (South African Government, 2000a).

5.1 Introduction

At the local level in South Africa, both the relevant policy papers, and the legal framework, reserve a relevant place for citizen participation in the system of local governance. The South African government’s discourses, policy documents and legislation state that municipalities and councillors should be sensitive to community views and responsive to local problems. Partnerships should be built between civil society and local government to address local issues.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that municipalities have the responsibility to make sure that all citizens are provided with services to satisfy their basic needs, in adherence to the vision of a developmental local government. However, it is also envisaged that ordinary citizens can play a role helping municipalities decide what services to provide and how they will be provided. Moreover, a developmental local government means a local government committed to ‘work 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’ (South African Government, 1998a).

The WPLG reflects the idea that local governments are the sphere of government that interacts most closely with communities and are responsible for basic services delivery and infrastructure. In this sense, local government is mandated to ensuring growth and development of communities in a manner that enhances community participation and accountability. Consequently, the general vision of local government in the WPLG is essentially one of a developmental local government committed to work not only for the local community but also with it. In this context, the WPLG seeks to transform municipalities into organs of government with the capacity to construct their own shared future vision that recognises and integrates diversity. This objective is clearly
reflected in the IDP process, as defined in the MSA (South African Government, 2000a). While recognising diversity, the objective is to construct a shared project for the municipality that, in turn, must be integrated into the district vision (in the case of Local Municipalities) and more broadly into terms of the strategic development plans of the provinces as well as into the overall country development strategy.

To give effect to the policy principles envisaged in the WPLG, the Municipal Structures Act and MSA create spaces for citizen participation in local governance. They seek to promote citizen participation in local governance through specific mechanisms and different spaces for citizen participation to be realised. According to the legislation and policy documents, citizens can participate in the local governance processes through ward committees and meetings, budget consultations, the IDP process, public meetings and hearings.

Chapter Four of the MSA explicitly deals with ‘community participation’ in local governance, saying that municipalities must develop ‘a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory government’ (South African Government, 2000a, iv). Municipalities must ‘encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality’ – including the drafting of the IDP. Municipalities must also contribute to ‘building the capacity of the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality, and of councillors and staff to foster community participation’ (South African Government, 2000a, iv).

Citizen participation is understood as a means of improving service delivery, and contributing to more efficient local governments. But citizen participation is also conceived as an end in itself, as a critical element to strengthen local democracy. Therefore, participation is centrally positioned in the local governance reform process.

But, if enabling legal and institutional frameworks that give centrality to the idea of citizen participation have been put in place, why do citizens seem to be increasingly alienated from local government? Why, if new spaces were created for people to communicate their needs, were there massive protests in 2005 and 2006 directed against local governments?
A survey conducted by HSRC (2007) to assess the impact of Batho Pele principles in municipal household services (as per the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service –South African Government, 1997a) indicates that people see a difference in practice between the various principles at the municipal level. The greatest disagreement with the Batho Pele statement relates to ‘Consultation’, which indicates that this is the main gap in implementation. When consultation is considered together with ‘Openness’ and ‘Transparency’ and ‘Providing Information’, there appears to be little agreement that all these aspects are in place. There is also disagreement on evidence of municipal responsiveness. The report highlights that the respondents believe that government is relatively improving delivery but not managing to communicate and respond to people's priorities (HSRC, 2007). This evidence is illustrative of a somewhat generalized belief that formal participatory channels in local governance are not working. In this chapter I will continue with the exploration of the possible causes of this phenomenon.

This chapter reviews the institutions, mechanisms and spaces for institutionalized citizen participation in local governance in South Africa. The chapter starts with an investigation into the theoretical basis and understandings of the notion of participation as assumed by local government authorities. This is then contrasted against the perceptions of representatives of CSOs in the Eastern Cape. It further analyses local government views on the political, legislative and institutional contexts where local governments operate, as this informs and constrains the possibilities of participatory approaches in local development.

The vision of a developmental local government, which confers a central role to the concept of citizen participation, is reflected in the production of various pieces of legislation that are reviewed in section three of this chapter\textsuperscript{114}. An analysis of the key policy documents and the relevant legislation is included as these are understood as
\textsuperscript{114} It is worth noting that the review of the legal and policy framework for local government included here is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it purposed to give a comprehensive list of regulations, laws and policies that refer to local government, but it is intended to describe the background under which local government operates and the perspectives envisaged for citizen participation in local governance. The focus of the present study is on the relations between decentralization and citizen participation in local governance and, accordingly, the legal and policy framework is reviewed with this aim. Annex 9.3.2 include selected paragraphs on citizen participation of key legislation and policy documents.
mainly comprising the legal and institutional framework under which local governments are supposed to operate and encourage participation. This section focuses on the spaces for citizen participation in local governance as introduced by the policy and legal framework in South Africa’s new system of local governance. It is especially centred on the analysis of Ward Committees and IDP processes as the two privileged spaces in the legislation and relevant policy documents for citizen participation in local governance. In this case, the focus of the analysis shifts to provide an assessment of the citizen participation tools and mechanisms. It discusses each of the formal spaces created for citizen participation in local governance and explores the various ‘intensity levels’ of participation that have been discussed in chapter three. Section four of this chapter looks into the most relevant challenges for promoting meaningful citizen participation in local governance. Finally, some critical reflections and concluding thoughts are included in the last section of this chapter.

5.2 Municipal Officials and Politicians Understandings and General Approach towards Citizen Participation in Local Governance

To assess whether participatory approaches are being implemented in local governance and to understand why there seems to be a growing gap between the promises of participatory development as stated in the discourses, policy and legal framework and the everyday local political reality, it is crucial to discuss, in operational terms, how participation is being understood and how it is being introduced and sustained in municipal policies and local development strategies.

As we have discussed in chapter four, to move from the discursive level toward increased participation in development as a meaningful concept, municipalities should receive support and work in an enabling context. They should also improve their capacity to implement these strategies. But they must also be convinced that more participatory models of local governance are desirable, and in most cases this is taken for granted. It is not clear what local government authorities understand by citizen participation and which are the objectives they pursue when they introduce (or are pushed to introduce) citizen participation practices.
This section, therefore, seeks to explore the understandings of the notion of citizen participation and its role in local democracy for key decisions makers in the Eastern Cape local government hierarchies. The viewpoints of a small sample of Ward Councillors are also included. These perspectives are assessed against the opinion emanating from a sample of CSOs working in the Eastern Cape. It is argued that, in particular, the specific understandings of local government representatives will have an impact on the objectives, goals and procedures a municipality develops to promote citizen participation in decentralized governance. As I have argued in the theoretical framework of this thesis, the will and capacity of local government to commit itself to a project of democratized local development will explain the variations in the macro-conditioning context (as defined by the decentralization process developed in the country, by the legislation, etc.). This is especially relevant when, as I will explain, the legal framework introduces a high margin of discretion in terms of the concrete implementation of measures and spaces for citizen participation at the local level\textsuperscript{115}.

When local government authorities were asked about their understanding of citizen participation in local governance, the first pattern that emerges from their answers is that citizen participation is mainly conceived as a consultation process which is highly formalized in character and materializes through the channels for citizen participation in local governance as defined by the legislation. A response provided by a mayor is illustrative of this. ‘[citizen participation] means that there is constant interaction between Ward Councillors and Committees to address issues and communicate information between citizens and council’ (respondent No. M3).

In terms of the diverse definition and approaches reviewed in chapter 3, the privileged perspective is that of ‘participation in projects’, reflecting a more ‘instrumentalist’ approach to community involvement in matters of local governance. Various responses are illustrative in this sense: citizen participation is ‘a consultative approach in initiating projects for future development’ (respondent No. M1); ‘it means the involvement of stakeholders in matters of service delivery’ (respondent No. M12).

\textsuperscript{115} This is discussed in section three of this chapter.
The representatives from CSOs were asked about their perceptions on the match between CSO’s and local government’s approaches to citizen participation. Almost 70% of the respondents stated that their conceptions, definitions and approaches to participatory local governance were different from those of local governments. Furthermore, when asked about local government understandings of citizen participation in local governance, the idea of a highly formalized, but not ‘meaningful’ space for decision making emerged: ‘quite often it is seen as a process of just informing people of decisions, if at all’ (respondent No. C1); ‘Spaces for citizen participation are very structured and formal’ (respondent No. C11); or ‘local government restricts everything that has to do with citizen participation to WCs’ (respondent No. C8); ‘for local government, citizen participation is about Imbizos, public hearings and the establishment of Ward Committees’ (respondent No. C18). The findings suggest that consultation with communities and citizens is, at best, limited to the compulsory consultation moments defined in the various local government Acts.

Again critical voices noted that local government is not truly committed to encourage citizen participation, and that their main motivation is that they are mandated to establish participatory structures by law. Most of the respondents noted that the most frequent approach to citizen participation followed by local government is that government tends to ask communities to endorse processes and policies they have already decided on. A respondent put it this way: ‘local government approach to citizen participation is restricted to meetings with local community to inform people on decisions that have already been taken’ (respondent No. C16). Findings therefore suggest that participation is ‘supported’ for reasons of compliance instead of genuine or meaningful participation and, therefore, it is not connected to decision-making. Roodt (2001) asks: ‘What do we mean by participatory development? Is it a legitimating exercise for top-down implementation?’ (Roodt, 2001, p. 480). Most of the opinions gathered through my study seem to respond affirmatively to Roodt’s question.

However, respondents from both CSOs and municipalities attach a great value to citizen participation in the transformation of local governance processes. Most decision makers (82%) mentioned that citizen participation supports the ongoing transformation of local governance processes.

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116 Data from the survey on citizen participation in local governance conducted for this thesis. Both the municipal database and responses from CSO are available in the CD attached to this report.
processes in the local government sphere. However, when asked for the reasons for this, the responses provided by many of them, again, reflect an instrumentalist approach to citizen participation. Various responses referred to what, in chapter three, has been called the ‘innovation’ and the ‘informational advantage’ of decentralization processes: ‘people have solutions to the problems that might be beyond what politicians and officials have considered’ (respondent No. M4); ‘An informed community makes informed decisions and will assist the local government in making better decisions’ (respondent No. M24). Or ‘because by participating and being informed communities understand how the municipality functions, they are more willing to support the municipality by paying rates and taxes’ (respondent No. M7); ‘the involvement of citizens makes them understand the constraints municipalities face (financial resources) for service delivery’ (respondent No. M8). A Ward Committee councillor mentioned that ‘now they understand when the municipality says there is no money’ (Interviewee No. 6).

Other responses from municipalities were more nuanced and provided a qualified yes: ‘at times citizen participation also constrains because the level of understanding among the bulk of the population is very limited’ (respondent No. M5). Other focussed their concerns on the interplay of local politics, which frequently played a destructive role in the building of a democratic, developmental local government: ‘citizen participation causes for delays through power struggles’ (respondent No. M23).

The perceptions between local government and CSO representatives about the commitment of local government to promoting or encouraging citizen participation in matters of local governance is markedly different, as can be seen in Figure 5.1. While almost 60% of respondents from local government said that citizen participation was being highly encouraged, only 7% of CSO representatives agreed on this statement. 50% of the respondents from the latter group mentioned that it was being moderately encouraged and 34% said that is was either not being promoted enough or not promoted at all.
When asked about the reasons given for their answers, three main clusters of responses can be identified: Firstly, those that mentioned the issue of lack of resources (human and financial resources), capacities and attitudes. This was extensively discussed in Chapter 4.

A second factor that was frequently mentioned reflects confusion as to the roles of citizen participation and democracy conceptions: ‘Local government comes to the community when it needs votes. After the elections they disappear from the eyes of the community’ (respondent No. C2); ‘There are mixed aims and agendas and very little that is substantive in nature flow from these [participatory] events, which are used particularly near election times’ (respondent No. C9).

At the same time most of the responses from local government expressed a vision of representative democracy which does not require being complemented by more participatory forms of democracy. It is quite revealing that those positioned to promote the mechanisms of direct democracy (ward councillors specifically) tend to exclusively consider local democracy as representative democracy. Democracy seems to be confined to representation at the polls. The answer provided by one ward councillor is quite illustrative: ‘there is a relationship between citizen participation and local...’
democracy which is based on the participation of citizens in electing their leaders or public representatives’ (interviewee No. 2). A Ward Councillor even argued that citizen participation and local democracy are vastly different ‘as they move on different levels: citizen participation is moved by developmental issues and democracy is moved by local politics’ (interviewee No. 1).

Thirdly, responses from CSO also reflected a too formalized approach towards citizen participation which is highly dependent on who is driving or managing the process: ‘citizen participation is about holding Imbizos because these are required by the constitution, but local government is not really responding to issues which arise from there’ (respondent No. C8). Another respondent argued that ‘it is more of a going through the motions exercise’ (respondent No. C9).

It is also relevant to examine the viewpoint of those few representatives of CSOs who mentioned that local government was actively promoting citizen participation. In these cases they argued that they do so through ‘the provision of services to the community in an equitable and sustainable manner’ (respondent No. 10). Another respondent noted that local government ‘gives the citizens an opportunity to partake in local governance issues that are directly affecting them –especially on issues regarding service delivery’ (respondent No. C12). Again, even between those that agreed on the affirmation that local government was promoting citizen participation, the underlying idea is that of an instrumentalist approach. Citizen participation seems to be viewed as relevant to improving service delivery.

Figure 5.2 illustrates that almost all respondents from municipalities consider that citizen participation in matters of local governance has increased in the last five years (either substantially or a little), but only a 12% of CSOs consider that it has substantially increased, while 40% said that it has increased a little. It is also relevant to note that more than 30% consider that it has not changed.
Those respondents who considered that citizen participation had increased were also asked whether they considered that the increase in citizen participation had had an impact on changes in the way local government functions. As Figure 5.3 shows, the view of almost 80% of municipal respondents was affirmative while CSOs tended not to see a substantial change in local government daily operations.

When asked about the aspects in which the municipalities have seen their roles being redefined as a consequence of increased citizen participation in local governance, municipal decision-makers stated that there is a better targeting of policies, more fluid communication between local government and citizens and improved cost recovery. The fact that, as a consequence of citizen participation, local government has more information and thus is better positioned to respond to the needs of communities was also recurrently mentioned.

Most of the ward councillors interviewed also stated that in the last 5 years citizen participation has increased. When asked whether citizen participation has materialized in changes in the way the municipality works, they stated that now citizens are ‘involved in IDP and budget processes’ (Interviewee No. 2). Other mentioned that ‘a number of forums have been set up’ (Interviewee No. 8). Other Ward Councillor
indicated that ‘inputs from the community are channelled into the system by way of minutes from Ward Committee meetings, inputs from Imbizos and other consultative processes like specific fora’ (Interviewee No. 5).

More critical perspectives emerged from the group of respondents from CSOs who mentioned that ‘local government pretends to listen but does not respond’ (respondent No. C8); ‘while citizen participation has increased a little it is still business as usual’ (respondent No. C9). At the same time, less than 15% of the CSO representatives felt that some of the basic services have been improved in townships and rural areas or that there is greater responsiveness to needs for infrastructure ‘but not to quality of services’ (respondent No. C6); ‘citizens are able to voice out their needs to the local government and participate in projects related to basic services’ (respondent No. C12).

Figure 5.3: Change in the role and activities of local government as a consequence of citizen participation

![Figure 5.3](image)

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape

The study explored diverse tools and mechanisms used to promote citizen participation either through the legal framework or according to policy documents and discourses of democratic local governance. The study specifically looked at participation: in the provision of services; in municipal investment projects; in municipal budget processes or in the PMS.
Both Municipal and CSO representatives stated that the lowest rates of influence of citizen participation is associated with municipal PMS. They also tended to agree on the statement that the sphere of decisions where citizen participation was most influential was related to the provision of basic services. This confirms responses discussed earlier on the understandings of citizen participation and the tendency to associate participation to efficiency in service provision. CSOs also considered that the influence of citizen participation was nonexistent or low in terms of decisions related to municipal investment projects and in budget formulation and approval, although 52% of Municipal representatives considered that citizen participation has medium to high influence in the latter (see Figure 5.4).

**Figure 5.4: Influence of citizen participation in specific areas and municipal tools**

![Figure 5.4: Influence of citizen participation in specific areas and municipal tools](image)

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape

In terms of service provision, according to the legal and institutional framework, citizens and their organisations are supposed to participate in the planning and implementation of municipal service partnerships, by assisting the municipality in accurately deciding on which services are to be expanded and improved, particularly during the planning stages, and insisting that council consults citizens during decision-
making. Communities can also request the municipality to appoint a committee of community representatives to monitor processes, as well as to advise the municipality on priorities for service extension and improvement. Communities or their representatives can also play some role in the evaluation of potential service providers, the involvement of communities in service provision and monitoring of the performance of service providers (South African Government, 2000a and South African Government, 2000c).

Due to the fact that the manner in which citizen participation should manifest itself in these spaces is not detailed or enforced by legislation, the effective use of these spaces will be highly dependant on the assumption that the local community is aware of the options and possibilities for participation, on whether it has access to information, and on the willingness and openness to consultation on the part of councillors and municipal officials.

When asked about the most relevant reasons for encouraging citizen participation in local governance, (see Figure 5.5) local government representatives’ responses were to better match services to poor people’s needs, and to increase service efficacy and efficiency. For CSOs the most relevant reason was to strengthen local democracy. They also stated that citizen participation should be encouraged because it is a right included in the Constitution. CSOs also recognized the importance of citizen participation in improving efficacy and efficiency of services. But the difference seems to be that the issue of better matching supply and demand of services is framed in terms of local democracy considerations: ‘citizen participation is envisaged as desirable because it supports local democracy as it provides an opportunity to inform the transformation process with the real needs of the community’ (respondent No. M21).

While most of the Ward Councillors interviewed insisted that citizen participation was being encouraged in their spheres of influence, the reasons mentioned recurrently tended to focus on or refer to specific citizen participation spaces. One interviewee mentioned that ‘in my municipality, citizen participation is being encouraged through the diverse fora and public meetings that are held as required by the legislation’ (interviewee No. 2). Other listed some of the spaces used for citizen participation: ‘the formation of WC which meet monthly chaired by ward councillors, consultation for
getting inputs on budgetary and IDP processes, suggestion boxes in municipal offices’ (interviewee No. 7). Another Ward Councillor felt that ‘members of the public are given a hearing when they have concerns’ (interviewee No. 4). It was also suggested that ‘our municipality regards citizen participation as very important because it is a requirement of legislation and it assists both political and administrative leadership to know whether or not they are addressing the people needs’ (interviewee No. 6).

Figure 5.5: Most relevant reasons for encouraging Citizen Participation in Local Governance

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape

Although a few respondents from municipalities mentioned that they regarded citizen participation as a key to democracy, findings reveal that among municipal decision-makers, understanding citizen participation’s relevance in building more democratic local spaces is limited. The emphasis seems to be on delivery and not on citizen participation as a tool for local democracy. A few representatives from local government, however, critically mentioned that there is interaction with local people but there is often no ‘effective’ (or what I have called meaningful or genuine) participation.

Using the theoretical framework and operationalization of the concept of citizen participation developed in chapter 3, the survey also sought to estimate the ‘intensity
levels\textsuperscript{117} of citizen participation as understood by the diverse local actors that participated in this study.

**Figure 5.6: Intensity levels of citizen participation in local government**

![Bar chart showing intensity levels of citizen participation in local government]

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape

Almost 60\% of the local government representatives stated that local government promotes consultation. A Ward Councillor interviewed mentioned that the local government approach ‘goes back to the consultative approach, as if citizen participation is encouraged it allows smooth running of the local development process’ (Interviewee No. 1). Only about 25\% of the respondents from municipalities said that a more ‘meaningful’ form of citizen participation was promoted, either in decision-making or co-management. This last figure, however, drops to only 2\% in the opinion of CSO representatives (Figure 5.6). About 70\% of the respondents in this group stated

\textsuperscript{117} As defined in Chapter 3, information means that the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion (there is no feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed). The information must be opportune, complete, adequate and accessible. Consultation, in turns means that the objective is to invite citizens to actively participate by offering their opinions, to receive their opinions in connection with a topic or issue through questions, dialogue and exchange of ideas (the relation is bidirectional). Decision making means that local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a binding character, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted. Finally, Co-management reflects the idea that the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders to a decision making process (binding character) that involves more than one specific issue.
that either information or consultation was the level that best reflects the local government approach to citizen participation. More specifically, 40% of these respondents said that the local government approach reduces citizen participation to just providing information.

In synthesis, local government understanding of citizen participation in local governance seem to be characterized by an instrumentalist approach. An efficiency-centred approach seems to be pervasive in local government understandings of citizen participation. The underlying conception of democracy is that of representative democracy, and the citizen is mainly conceived as a voter as well as a beneficiary or client.

The findings about the approach and local government understandings of citizen participation are also supported by specific studies that have analysed the difficulties experienced in implementing some of the spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local government (especially in IDPs and Ward Committees). Two of these studies have raised the issue of the conceptual contradictions and different conceptions of the long-term objectives of municipalities, their core functions, and the roles and functions of other local actors in relation to the municipality (FCR, 1999 and Noble, 2004).

These studies argued that a participatory approach to local government is afflicted by conceptual problems, ‘sitting uneasily between three ideal types of municipal planning and administration: the traditional approach, the market-based approach and the (co-)governance approach’ (FCR, 1999, p. 26). The tensions between proponents of these approaches are still evident, as the findings from this thesis confirm.

In terms of the traditional approach defined in Chapter two and three, municipal planning processes would attempt to improve the operation and management of existing municipal activities, through building better rule-sets to guide bureaucratic decision-making (FCR, 1999). The FCR survey of IDP processes in the Western Cape found that municipalities still remained within the traditionalist paradigm (FCR, 1999, pp. 49). As mentioned above, various responses given by politicians and municipal officials surveyed in my study reflected ideas aligned to the traditional paradigm.
In terms of what is called the market-based approach, citizens are considered as ‘customers’ of municipal services that can voice their preferences through market mechanisms (e.g. choosing which services they would like to pay for). My findings suggest that this approach is the one subscribed to by the majority of the municipal decision-makers surveyed in my study. Municipal planning under this approach focuses on the technical issues of contracting and contracts management (FCR, 1999, p. 28). Under this approach, community participation in planning is largely redundant and ‘self-help approaches’ tend to be privileged. These results corroborate Hugo Noble’s findings on the ideological outlook of municipal managers of metropoles and larger urban centres. Noble (2004) argues that in most instances municipal managers subscribe to a notion of ‘global neoliberalism’ rather than a pro-poor and human development perspective. In line with Noble’s findings, my study suggests that, due to the ideological orientations and understandings of citizen participation among municipal decision makers, a specific process of policy deconstruction would be required before more broad-based participation could occur.

In terms of the co-governance approach, spaces created for citizen participation involve the transformation of municipal systems to promote community involvement in development decisions. This perspective is embedded in parts of the WPLG, where the process of reforming local government is anchored in the concepts of ‘participative’ and ‘democratic decentralization’. The reform process was envisaged not only through the decentralization of a municipal policy or a form of citizen participation in a specific policy, but through the decentralization of the institutional apparatus of government, through which some policies are deconcentrated and ‘devolved’ to municipalities, entailing diverse forms of participation in their design, implementation and evaluation. While this approach does not seem to be privileged by municipal officials and politicians, there are some passages of the key policy documents and legislation which are aligned with this approach. In chapter four, I have discussed the contradictions between the decentralization process, the system of cooperative

118 The co-governance approach was not found to be adopted by municipal officials leading the IDP process in the study conducted by the FCR (FCR, 1999) and neither was found in Noble’s assessment of municipal managers (Noble, 2004).
governance and the expectations of citizen participation. In the next section I will examine the legislation dedicated to citizen participation issues and I will argue that this is also part of the problem, as some paragraphs of the legislation suggest that these are not thoroughly supportive of this co-governance approach.

I recognise that there are some grounds for the market-based approach given the urgency of improving service delivery and given that the fiscal constraints facing local governments are also due to non-payment for services. What is a cause of concern is that this view is isolated from the issue of strengthening local democracy, and the causes for concern increase when this view is contrasted with the expectations and perspectives of CSOs. Citizen participation as currently being developed and promoted by local government in South Africa seems to be widening the gap between citizens’ expectations and participatory politics at the local level. In other words, contrary to the expectations being placed on citizen participation by the policy framework and legislation, in practice, citizen participation is widening the gap between the citizen and the local state.

5.3 Instruments, Mechanisms and Spaces for Citizen Participation in Local Governance in South Africa

This section focuses on the spaces for citizen participation as introduced by the policy and legal framework in South Africa’s new system of local governance. It specifically examines Ward Committees and IDP processes as the two privileged spaces in the legislation and relevant policy documents for participation in local governance, but in addition, the section discusses the process of formulating and monitoring municipal budgets. A brief discussion on citizen participation and accountability is also introduced.

Both the relevant legislation, as well as the most relevant policy documents, underline the point that local government must consult local communities in matters of local governance. Municipalities have to hold consultation meetings on a number of issues and should set up IDP representative forums to integrate the local community in the formulation of municipal development plans. Ward Committees are defined as spaces for debate and meeting where ward representatives discuss the problems of the area.
The idea of the policy framework is to bring the politicians closer to the local communities and vice versa, thus reinforcing representative democracy with more participatory forms of democracy.

Regulations and guidelines are established to encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality. A series of instruments, instances and spaces have been defined including IDPs and Ward Committees. In addition, the establishment, implementation and review of the municipality’s PMS by monitoring and reviewing local governments performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance; the preparation of its budget; and strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services should allow for citizen participation.

Figure 5.7: Citizen Participation in Local Governance: instruments, mechanisms and spaces

In the first place, as prescribed in the MSA (South African Government, 2000a, iv), ‘a municipality must communicate to its community information concerning (a) the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation; (b) the matters with regard to which community participation is encouraged; (c) the rights and duties of members of the local community; and (d) municipal governance, management and development’.119

119 The legislation states that when anything must be reported to the local community by a municipality through the media, it must be done (a) in the local newspaper or newspapers of its area; (b) in the
Beyond the diverse mechanisms for informing the local community, and in addition to the IDP process and Ward Committees (separately discussed in following sub-sections), there are different ways for citizens to communicate their problems, opinions or requests to the municipal council that are detailed below.

The relevant legislation (South African Government, 1998b and 2000a) states that the meetings of a municipal council and those of its committees are open to the public, including the media, and the council or such committee may not exclude the public from a meeting. The municipal manager of a municipality must give notice to the public of meetings of municipal councils. The legislation allows for specific circumstances under which closed meetings can be held if ‘it is reasonable to do so having regard to the nature of the business being transacted’. Nevertheless, the public can not be excluded from a meeting when considering or voting on: any draft by-law tabled in the council; a budget tabled in the council; the municipality’s draft integrated development plan, or any amendment of the plan, tabled in the council; the municipality’s draft performance management system, or any amendment of the system, tabled in the council and the decision to enter into a service delivery agreement. However, the legislation states that an executive committee and a mayoral committee may close any or all of its meetings to the public, including the media (South African Government, 1998b, section 42).

Sections 16 and 17 of the MSA (South African Government, 2000a) envisage the development of a culture of community participation and state the regulations to provide for community participation. The Act indicates that a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, and must for this purpose provide for ‘(a) the receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints
lodged by members of the local community; (b) notification and public comment procedures (c) public meetings and hearings by the municipal council and other political structures and political office bearers of the municipality; (d) consultative sessions with locality, recognised community organisations and, where appropriate, traditional authorities; and (e) report-back to the local community’ (South African Government, 2000a, iv). It further highlights the relevance of Ward Committees and IDPs as key spaces for citizen participation.

Either the community or a councillor can draw up a petition to the municipal manager. A petition is used to point out laws or policies of the municipality that are not being applied properly, or to call for a change in them. The officials circulate the petition to the relevant departments who will make recommendations to the relevant portfolio or standing committees. These committees then make recommendations to the mayor and executive committees who make recommendations to council.

Requests are a way to get information or to bring problems to the attention of municipal officials. Councillors or members of the public should make requests directly to officials. However, requests will only be applicable when there is a policy and/or a by-law that says that what citizens are requesting should be granted by the department that the request is being submitted to.

It should be noted that all these are only instruments that allow local officials to inform citizens on specific issues. As was discussed in chapter three, information is the minimum requirement for citizens to participate. In fact, many scholars believe information should not be considered an intensity level of participation, but a precondition for it to be possible.

Some of these mechanisms also allow citizens to express themselves, although they do not include any guarantee that their requests or opinions will be contemplated. The extent to which what local communities manifest through consultation will be translated into concrete measures depends on the openness and responsiveness of the particular authorities. As stated in the legislation and policy documents, the role of ‘participatory democracy’ is conceived to ‘inform, negotiate and comment on the decisions made by the municipal council’, (South African Government, 2001, p. 40) in
the course of the planning/decision-making process. Only the municipal council is legally allowed to make decisions. The legislation clearly states that citizen participation ‘must not be interpreted as permitting interference with a municipal council’s right to govern and to exercise the executive and legislative authority of the municipality’ (South African Government, 2000a, p.16).

5.3.1 Ward Committees

‘The object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government’ (South African Government, 1998b, p. 27). The legislation establishes that only metropolitan and local municipalities may have ward committees. A Ward Committee consists of the councillor representing that ward in the council, who must also be the chairperson of the committee, and not more than 10 other persons.

A metro or local council must make rules regulating the procedure to elect the members of a Ward Committee, taking into account the need for women and a diversity of interests in the ward to be represented. Additionally, the metro or local council must regulate the circumstances under which those members must vacate office, and the frequency of meetings of ward committees. The legislation establishes that a metro or local council may make administrative arrangements to enable ward committees to perform their functions and exercise their powers effectively.

As can be inferred, the concrete legislation or regulation of citizen participation is left to each municipality. This high degree of flexibility was introduced to better allow for the consideration of specific situations in each municipality. In a manual developed by the DPLG (South African Government, 2005b) for the establishment of Ward Committees, the DPLG explains that public participation must be institutionalized in order to ensure that all residents of the country have an equal right to participate. In this sense, institutionalizing participation means setting clear minimum requirements for participation procedures which apply for all municipalities by means of regulations, and providing a legally recognised organisational framework. It is also noted that the principle of structured participation means that most of the new municipalities are too big in terms of population and area to allow for direct participation of the majority of
the residents in complex planning processes. Therefore, participation in Ward Committees and IDPs must be regulated. Finally, it is explained that the principle of diversity implies that the way public participation is institutionalised and structured has to provide sufficient room for diversity, i.e. for different participation styles and cultures. ‘While there has to be a common regulatory frame for institutionalised participation in the country, this frame has to be wide enough for location-specific adjustments to be made by provinces and municipalities’ (South African Government, 2005, p. 40).

Additionally, the general regulation (South African Government, 1998b) stipulates the integration of Ward Committees, general requirements for the ward representative candidates, and the number of people in the committees. The ‘flexibility’ of the process however, while leaving the regulation of Ward Committees establishment processes to the Municipal Councils, left a highly heterogeneous impression. This flexibility has been problematic, especially in the case of the more under-resourced and weaker municipalities. Recently, a document prepared by the DPLG tries to remedy the heterogeneous image the country shows in terms of the establishment and functioning of Ward Committees and has produced the ‘Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees’ (South African Government, 2005b).

Ward committees have no formal powers but can advise the ward councillor or make submissions directly to the municipal council. They should also participate in drawing up the IDP of the area. The roles of Ward Committees are, therefore, to get better participation from the community to inform council decisions, to make sure that there is more effective communication between the council and the community, and to assist the ward councillor with consultation and report-backs to the community. Thus, they consultative and advisor organisms with the possibility to make proposals, evaluate, plan (by their participation in IDP) and control municipal activities.

The survey conducted for the Eastern Cape as part of this thesis, had a section that was specifically focussed on Ward Committees. When asked about the intensity level of citizen participation in Ward Committees, both municipal and CSO representatives agreed that Ward Committees tend to promote a consultation process. While this is in line with the spirit and goals of the Ward Committees as stipulated in the legislation, it
is not easily accommodated with policy documents and discourses which give more prominence to joint decision-making or ‘co-governance’. Moreover, many CSOs consider that Ward Committees are not functioning as consultative spaces and the relative share of those who considered that Ward Committees were mere informative spaces surpassed 30% (Figure 5.8).

**Figure 5.8: Citizen Participation Intensity Levels: Ward Committees**

Both municipalities and CSOs were asked about the degree of influence that decisions being made at the Ward Committee level have in municipal council decisions. Figure 5.9 shows that most respondents from both groups mentioned that they were taken into account sporadically, depending on the issue. However, about 35% of respondents from CSOs were more critical, stating that the local council never takes into account recommendations made at the Ward Committee level.
Finally, the researcher wanted to test the degree of commitment to ‘meaningful’ citizen participation by asking whether respondents considered that legislation should be reformulated to allow for a mechanism in which some specific decisions emanating from Ward Committees could have binding character (i.e. a percentage of resources of each municipality to be allocated on these bases). Almost 80% of the respondents from municipalities argued negatively, while 60% of CSOs took the same position, as shown in Figure 5.10. However, the reasons given for their answers varied significantly.

Municipal decision makers argue that citizens have little understanding of budgetary constraints and that it might be difficult to take binding decisions at that level. Beyond these issues, the underlying vision of representative democracy was again raised through various responses to this question. One respondent suggested that ‘the council is elected to run the local authority, not the Ward Committee or IDPs’ (Respondent No. M19). Another respondent observed that ‘if you allow outside council structures binding authority, that immediately takes power for decision making away from council’ (Respondent No. M1). It was also stressed that ‘the municipal council is the highest decision making body, it should remain as such’ (Respondent No. M9).
The most frequent reasons as stated by respondents from CSOs revolved around the dysfunctional nature of these mechanisms, and of their not being truly representative\textsuperscript{120}. Concerns of political and elite capture (as discussed in Chapter 3) were frequently raised. Various respondents raised the need for support for the organisational development of community associations, particularly in poor, marginalised areas where the skills and resources for participation may be less developed than in better-off areas. Indeed, this is recognised in the legislation where it is stated that the municipality must contribute to building the capacity of the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality. In addition, the capacity of councillors and staff to foster community participation should also be developed. It is stated that for the purpose of implementing these issues a municipality must use its resources and annually allocate funds in its budget.

When asked to assess the functioning of Ward Committees, it is impressive to note that none of the respondents evaluate their functioning as being highly adequate. Figure 5.11 shows that even amongst municipal representatives, only 35% rate their functioning as adequate (this figure drops to 7% for CSOs). Almost 60% of the respondents from municipalities evaluate Ward Committees functioning as inadequate.

\textsuperscript{120} This concern was explicitly highlighted by Prof. Moonty Roodt in an interview held on May 23rd 2005.
This response was pervasive among CSOs (more than 90% stated that Ward Committees were dysfunctional).

Figure 5.11: Overall assessment of the functioning of Ward Committees

![Graph showing assessment of Ward Committees functioning](image)

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape

The reasons given for these statements can be grouped into three main categories:

a) lack of ward councillor commitment and actual understanding of what Ward Committees are for;
b) lack of capacities in its broader sense, at the government level as well as in CSOs (discussed in Chapter four);
c) time (some respondents noted that there is a need for full time councillors) and budget available to enable participation.

Somewhat along the same line of argument as a), many respondents from CSOs repeatedly raised the issue of political interference in Ward Committee functions. It was argued that ‘there is a lack of understanding of the role of Ward Councillors’ (Respondent No. C1). A respondent noted that ‘Ward Councillors deal mostly with political and not developmental issues and are bedevilled by interpersonal rivalries’ (Respondent No. C8). It was also suggested that ‘Ward Councillors are not visible to the communities, except during election times’ (Respondent No. 4). A respondent felt
that ‘local government has to entrench a truly participatory culture within the administration first, and not to put their party politics before the needs of the citizen’ (Respondent No. 40). Other studies (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008a and 2008b; Bezuidenhout and Mautjane, 2004; Hicks, 2006; Nyalunga, 2006 and Putu, 2006) also found that there appears to be no clear understanding of the role that Ward Committees are supposed to perform.

Some problems and challenges for the constitution, establishment and actual functioning of Ward Committees should be specially highlighted as factors in explaining citizen participation and the underlying vision of citizenship. Although the prioritized actors at the inception of Ward Committees seem to have been socio-territorial actors, in practice, political party actors seem to have been more relevant. The political logic appears to be more relevant than the socio-territorial as the key factor for citizen mobilization. This has been reinforced by a trend among political leaders to co-opt ward representatives, demonstrating the ‘partyization’ trend of participation, not only in the election of ward councillors, but also in the ward meetings.

Ward Committees seem to be working as politicized forms of participation, being captured by political parties. However, theoretically, for citizen participation to become a means toward strengthening local democracy it has to be autonomous; i.e., independent from political parties. Nevertheless, it was noted that party members – elected representatives, party affiliated members and organizations– capture Ward Committees and control them through informal mechanisms in order to influence and guide the decision-making process in a way that serves the parties’ and/or the governing elites’ interests, thus undermining social accountability mechanisms. This was also found in a study by Bezuidenhout and Mautjane (2004) where it was noted that, in some cases, there is a lack of understanding of the difference between party-political consultations and ‘broad community’ consultations. The report further argues that this could have the effect of alienating organisations and individuals who are not formal allies of political parties, especially CSOs which are wary of being too closely identified with a specific political party.

As a result of the concern to improve the responsiveness of local government, Ward Committees have enjoyed much affirmation by the DPLG, and the South African
Government in general. In fulfilment of this role ward committees are meant to be non-partisan, representing the interests of the local community as a whole, and not just one political party (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008b). However, as I have argued, the way municipal politicians perceive citizen engagement in governance and the way they implement the formal institutions of participation seems to be an important factor to consider when assessing the performance of participatory mechanisms in improving the quality of democracy at the local level. In fact, my findings tend to point to the fact that Ward Committees are being used by political elites as legitimacy tools. Ward Committees are reinforcing a trend towards politicizing citizen participation in local governance and, therefore, undermining their accountability and effectiveness as spaces for more cooperative relationships.

My findings confirm results from a study by Benit-Gbaffou (2008b). Not only are Ward Committees unlikely to advance neighbour/territorial interests over local party interests, but local leaders are likely to use them to advance power struggles. In short, ward committees are likely to become structures for mostly partisan forms of accountability. Benit-Gbaffou argues further that, while partisan ward committees are of limited benefit for increasing accountability, they may well increase public participation in that more people get access to municipal decision-making. However, this access is likely to be limited to those groups which already influence council through parties, and thus few new voices are likely to be heard in municipal processes. Partisan ward committees will add little of value to local democracy in South Africa (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008b).

5.3.2. Integrated Development Planning

Theoretically, participatory or Integrated Development Planning is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions to achieve long-term development. It is regarded as a key vehicle for local government to fulfil its developmental role, and is the principal planning instrument that guides and informs all planning and decision-making in a Municipality. The IDP describes a single, inclusive and strategic plan that guides and informs all decisions with regard to management and development of the municipality.
South Africa’s legislation requires that all municipalities produce an IDP. Once the IDP is drawn up, all municipal planning and projects should be carried out in terms of the IDP. The MSA also requires that the IDP incorporates a spatial development framework and guidelines for land management systems. The annual council budget should be based on the IDP.

At District Council level, a framework is to be developed in consultation with all local municipalities within the district. This framework will ensure co-ordination, consultation and alignment between the district council and local municipalities.

As we have discussed in chapter four, many government services are delivered by provincial and national government departments at the local level. The IDP are thus central to the planning process, around which the full range of municipal functions are coordinated and integrated with national, provincial and private sector initiatives. Municipalities must take into account the programmes and policies of these departments. But the departments should also participate in the IDP process so that they can be guided on how to use their resources to address local needs.

Through appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established in terms of the relevant legislation and guidelines (South African Government, 2000a, iv and South African Government, 2001), the local community must be called upon to participate in the drafting of the IDP. Therefore, local communities have the chance to participate in identifying their most important needs as the IDP process encourages all stakeholders who reside and conduct business within a municipal area to participate in the preparation and implementation of the development plan. Since the IDP involves participation of a number of stakeholders, it is crucial for the municipality to adopt an appropriate approach and also put in place appropriate structures to ensure effective participation.

The DPLG argues that the IDP is a consultative process that contributes to ‘strengthen democracy and hence institutional transformation because decisions are made in a democratic and transparent manner, rather than by a few influential individuals’. (South African Government, 2001, p. 5). IDP is conceived as one of the most relevant spaces for citizen participation in local governance as it ‘gives local communities an
opportunity to inform the council what their development needs are; it gives them an opportunity to determine the municipality’s development direction; provides a mechanism through which to communicate with their councillors and the governing body; and provides a mechanism through which they can measure the performance of the councillors and the municipality as a whole’ (South African Government, 2001, p. 6). The DPLG has developed Guide Packs on the Integrated Development Planning process, in which IDP is defined as being ‘a very interactive and participatory process’ (South African Government, 2001, p. 4).

Chapter 5 of the MSA (South African Government, 2000a) focuses on IDP and seeks to establish an enabling framework for the core processes of planning, performance management, resource mobilization and organisational change which underpin the notion of developmental local government. Two important ideas are contained in the IDP philosophy. Firstly, local authorities are expected to take on an ‘enabling role’ (i.e. a facilitating and coordinating role), in addition to the role of direct service and infrastructure delivery. Secondly, municipalities need to become ‘strategic’ in their orientation, i.e. plan for longer-term developments, respond in a timely manner to key local issues, and attempt to ensure comparable responses from other actors. Thirdly, municipalities need to be ‘open’ and ‘participatory’ institutions that work together with local communities.

Guide Pack 1 (South African Government, 2001) gives specific orientations in terms of citizen participation in IDPs; it states the principles, tools, procedures and mechanisms for a structured process of public participation. It also provides some guideline for encouraging and creating conditions for public participation. Active encouragement should focus on those social groups which are not well organized and which do not have the power to articulate their interests publicly. This could mean poverty groups, women, or specific age groups. The municipality has to identify the groups and determine appropriate ways of ensuring their representation in the IDP Representative Forum.

The DPLG proposes that an IDP Representative Forum be established to encourage the participation of communities and other stakeholders. The forum may include members of the executive committee of the council, councillors including district councillors,
traditional leaders, ward committee representatives, heads of departments and senior officials from municipal and government departments and representatives from organised stakeholder groups. The purpose of the forum is to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to represent the interests of their constituencies, to provide a structure for discussion, negotiations and joint decision making and to ensure proper communication between all stakeholders and the municipality. Finally, it is expected that it will monitor the planning and implementation process.

The DPLG defines the process to be undertaken to produce the IDP as consisting of five phases. Once the IDP has been produced there will be an additional phase in the process to monitor and control its implementation. The DPLG envisages a different role for citizen participation throughout the various phases. Table 5.1 summarizes these phases and the role of citizen participation as envisaged by the DPLG (South African Government, 2001).

The first phase is the diagnosis; it involves the identification of problems and resources. During this phase information is collected on the existing conditions within the municipality. It focuses on the types of problems faced by people in the area and the causes of these problems. The identified problems are assessed and prioritized. Information on availability of resources is also collected during this phase. The following phase involves the identification of strategies for overcoming problems. To find solutions to the diagnosis established in phase 1, the municipality must develop a vision as to what it would like to achieve in the long run. This, in turn, implies specifying the objectives to be achieved and how they will be achieved (strategies and specific project identification). During the third phase, the municipality works on the design and content of projects identified during Phase 2. Clear targets must be set and indicators worked out to measure performance as well as the impact of individual projects. Once all projects have been identified, the municipality has to check again that they contribute to meeting the objectives outlined in phase 2. This is done in phase 4. Finally, the IDP is presented to the council for consideration and approval. The Council may adopt a draft for public comment before approving a finalized IDP.
Table 5.1: Citizen Participation in diverse IDP phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning phase</th>
<th>Mechanisms and Spaces for Participation</th>
<th>Citizen participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis- Diagnosis</td>
<td>Community Meetings organised by the ward councillor, Stakeholder Meetings, Surveys and opinion polls</td>
<td>** ** **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for overcoming problems</td>
<td>District level workshops of IDPs committees, with representatives of sector departments and stakeholders—district level</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects: (a) projects/programmes with municipality-wide scale</td>
<td>Technical sub-committees with few selected representatives of stakeholder organizations/civil society, Representation of stakeholders on project subcommittees</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Localised community level projects</td>
<td>Intensive dialogue between technical subcommittees and affected communities/stakeholders</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>IDP Representative Forum</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>Public Discussion and consultation with communities and stakeholders, Opportunity for comments from residents</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Implementation</td>
<td>IDP Representative Forum</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from IDP Guide-pack 1 (South African Government, 2001)

***-High involvement of communities, stakeholders, residents, users and partners.

** - Involvement of representative municipal IDP Forum.

* - Small technical committees with selected representatives of the public.

However, again, as clearly stated in a relevant policy document (South African Government, 2001) the elected council is the ultimate decision-making forum on IDPs and makes all the final decisions on the IDP. In this approach, the role of participatory democracy is to inform, negotiate and comment on those decisions, in the course of the planning/decision-making process.

Therefore, IDP involves a process of structured participation, where all areas and groupings in a municipality should be involved through representatives. The IDP guide, accordingly, aims at a broad consultative process; not at a joint decision making process.

According to the data gathered through the survey on citizen participation conducted in the Eastern Cape for the purposes of this dissertation, IDP was rated as the space for citizen participation that allows for more ‘intense’ forms of participation. Again, IDP was most frequently considered a space for consultation (Figure 5.12). However, as the
findings for this thesis confirm, from a CSO perspective the IDP processes have been interpreted in a minimalist fashion. Although the IDP process urges municipalities to consult widely, in general there has not been a fundamental emphasis on active community involvement.

Moreover, the influence of citizen participation in decisions regarding the IDP varies according to the different phases of the IDP. While the assessment of CSOs in terms of the influence of citizen participation is very negative (only about 35% of the respondents in this group rated citizen participation in IDP as influential or highly influential), it decreases as the process evolves into the various stages. As shown in Figure 5.13, this inverse correlation between the level of influence of citizen participation in IDP and the subsequent phases that form part of this process was also found in the responses of municipal officials. There seems to be disappointing progress regarding citizen participation in the IDP process, and as noted by one of the respondents: ‘community and stakeholder attendance often dropped off significantly as the process continued’ (respondent No.C12).

The most serious obstacles for citizen participation in the IDP process have been found in the evaluation phase. The ‘other’ option reflects the opinion of those who considered
that the most serious problems for citizen participation in the IDP process have been found both in the implementation and evaluation phase.

Figure 5.13 Citizen participation in diverse phases of IDP

In the Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE) assessment of the progress municipalities have made towards achieving developmental local government, the CDE states that the IDP process is overambitious, that most IDP are inadequately detailed, and that the process is consultant driven and not responsive to public inputs (CDE, 2003). Moreover, another study noted that consultations are not recorded and ward or community plans are seldom included in the municipal plans or budgets, nor is
feedback to the communities provided on why their plans were not included. CSOs are heard in the planning process, but they lack detailed understanding of the workings of local government and do not know how to lobby and advocate effectively to influence planning and decision-making (PLANACT, 2005).

Rauch (2001) in his IDP assessment, notes that IDPs have advanced from a consultant driven data compilation exercise to a process in which most municipal role players are actively involved in decisions regarding budget and business plans. However, the evaluation conducted by Rauch (2001) assessed the IDP project proposals as participatory, because it is argued that the people were given adequate opportunity to be informed and to comment on the contents of the plan. Thus, even in this case, citizen participation is confined to low intensity levels (information and consultation). As my study confirms, in most cases, public participation was confined to an assessment of prioritized needs, while continuous feedback and involvement in decision-making on strategies and project design was the exception (Buccus et al., 2008; Cole and Parnell, 2000; Hemson, 2007 and Marais and Botes, 2002).

Various studies specifically assessing the IDP found that although much effort has been directed at entrenching IDP in local government, and that each municipality is now maintaining such a plan, the quality of these plans is variable and they are often not financially or operationally viable (IDASA, 2005). In most municipalities, a focused analysis of the current situation was limited to a simple participatory process for the identification of needs and a desk-top consolidation of general information. Strategies on how best to make use of the limited but available resources, within policy guidelines and to suit the people and the locale, were mostly absent. As a result, most project designs did not systematically consider cross-cutting issues such as spatial and environmental planning, poverty and gender (Cole and Parnell, 2000). Where they were addressed, it was inconsistently and arbitrarily or sectorally treated. It is still not a real strategic planning process in which appropriate (i.e. effective and efficient) and policy-framed solutions for the priority issues are formulated (Buccus et al., 2008).

If one reviews the dispersed literature on assessments of IDPs, some stylized facts emerge that tend to confirm those found in this study:

- reduced degree of influence of citizen participation (Buccus et al., 2008);
- lack of understanding between communities, councillors and consultants (Hemson, 2007);
- non-alignment of individual community projects to the broader planning process (PLANACT, 2005);
- not financially or operationally viable (IDASA, 2005)
- loss of a gender perspective (Cole and Parnell, 2000; Sithole et al, 2006)
- low clarity of the linkage between ward and municipal- wide activities; and
- poor relationships between different spheres of government and local structures (Ambert and Feldman, 2002; Atkinson, 2007a and IDASA, 2005).

While the IDP methodology is a major improvement on the technocratic and spatially-oriented planning approaches of the past, other studies found that in practice, IDPs have tended to be driven by municipal officials, consultants, and at best, community leaders. The main argument here is that the envisaged IDP processes have not catered sufficiently for active and sustained community involvement in planning processes.

As I have noted earlier in this chapter, the issue of the overlap between diverse approaches to development, and in particular, the diverse understandings of citizen participation in local development, seems to translate into weak encouragement of community participation and, therefore, into more exclusive rather than inclusive decision-making mechanisms. Despite the philosophy and theory behind ‘developmental local government’, some municipalities seem to have misunderstood the different roles they are expected to play in the new dispensation. It is not clear whether the municipal officials who need to implement an IDP with the participation of local communities fully comprehend the concepts and purposes, and whether they have been exposed to new thinking and training in this regard. Again, a committed approach to meaningful participatory local governance should entail training and motivation of a new breed of local government officials (Pieterse, 2002).

The MSA (South African Government, 2000a, section 24) envisages IDP as part of the philosophy of ‘cooperative government’. On the one hand, it requires municipal planning to be aligned with the development plans and strategies of other municipalities, as well as national and provincial departments, and on the other hand, such departments must consult with local authorities and take reasonable steps to assist
municipalities to compile their IDPs in the time prescribed. There is a considerable
challenge, however, for IDPs to transcend sectoral boundaries and involving and
committing provincial and national departments to the IDP process and product. As this
thesis confirms, there is still an enormous and difficult task to undertake for the IDP to
become part of a recognized, authoritative, and coordinated intergovernmental planning
and budgeting system that is effective between spheres and across sectors of
government.

Two studies confirm my findings by arguing that, in practice, it has proven difficult to
link provincial and national departments to municipal IDPs. Part of the problem is that
different national line departments have different time horizons for their plans (e.g.
Water Services Plans, Transport Plans). Another difficulty is that, frequently, different
sets of consultants draw up sectoral plans, resulting in very little inter-sectoral
integration. In this context, it is impossible for communities to make a meaningful input
into inter-sectoral opportunities for development (Ambert and Feldman, 2002; Hemson,
2007 and IDASA, 2005).

![Figure 5.14: Overall Assessment of the Participation of National and Provincial Government in the Elaboration of IDP](image)

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape

Municipal officials have very negative perceptions regarding the participation of other
provincial and national departments in the IDP process. The majority of respondents
from both the municipalities (among this group this view was reflected in more than
70% of the responses) and CSOs stated that the orientations and institutional framework
provided by central and provincial spheres prevent local government from promoting citizen participation. Both groups of respondents agreed that there is a need for more effective decentralization. This is better illustrated by a response given by a municipal authority: ‘IDP is just a big document that does not relate to the people: the local community participate, but there are no funds to carry out the tasks. The National and Provincial government provide very little help as finances are brought to us with a mandate as to how to use them, there is not much help from them. Then we can not keep the plans and the community then get disillusioned’ (Respondent No. 20). These findings are in line with what was noted in Chapter 4 regarding the implementation of the ‘cooperative governance’ framework and the degree of ‘fiscal’ autonomy of various municipalities, and the effectiveness of citizen participation tools and mechanisms in this context.

Again, when asked about whether the decisions emanating from the forums associated to the IDP should have binding character, a similar pattern of responses –like those concerning WC-- emerged. Respondents from municipalities noted that it is ‘the council that is elected to run the local authority, not the IDP forum’ (Respondent No. M12). Others argued that ‘these local issues may not always coincide with the municipality’s objectives or that of other wards or forums’ (Respondent No. M23). Again, concerns with the inequitable representation of interests and the inappropriate functioning of IDP forums were raised by CSO respondents as the main explanation for their answers.

Figure 5.15: Binding character of decisions of IDPs

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Easter Cape
5.3.3 Citizen Participation in municipal budgets

According to the legislation, local communities, particularly through ward committees, have the right and duty to discuss, ask questions and make recommendations to the municipal council on the best ways to generate income, to keep costs down, prevent corruption and safeguard the assets of the municipality. Moreover, linking community priorities to municipal expenditure and investment programmes is central to the IDP process and should have a mirror effect in budget design.

Municipal Councils must approve municipal budgets before the new fiscal year begins after proper planning and consultation with ward committees and other stakeholder groups in the area. The draft budget should be ready a few months beforehand so that it can be used for consultation. Ward Councillors can also call ward meetings to discuss the budget. Ward Committees should advise councillors on the services needed in the area, affordable charges for the services, and how to ensure that people pay for their services. The community should be involved as much as possible in deciding what should be the spending priorities for the area they live in. Ward Councillors should report to ward meetings about the broad budget plans and consult the residents about programmes and projects that will affect them. All members of the community also have the right to observe the special council meeting at which the budget is debated and voted on. Community organisations should get involved in consultation meetings to discuss efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

However, as noted earlier, more than 90% of CSO respondents stated that the influence of citizen participation in the preparation and approval of municipal budget was none to low (with more than 60% of the respondents stating that it was nil). This contrasted with the perceptions of municipalities that tended to confer more weight to citizen participation in budget formulation and approval (more than 50% stated that citizen participation was medium to highly influential). Various research reports confirm my findings and note that citizen participation in municipal budgeting processes is greatly reduced (see i.a. Smith, 2004).

The legal framework in South Africa does not provide for participatory budget mechanisms as those implemented in various developing countries and best represented
by the experience of Porto Alegre, where the expenditure priorities (associated to a pre-
determined percentage of the municipal budget) are decided by the local community
with binding authority. This survey looked into the opinions of municipal officials and
CSO representatives on whether the legal framework should be extended to include this
mechanism in order to strengthen citizen participation in local governance, or whether
it was not a matter of including new mechanisms but improving and enforcing existing
tools and regulations.

Table 5.2 shows that more than 60% of the respondents from CSO mentioned that they
would like to see the legal framework redefined to include Participatory Budget
mechanisms. This figure dropped to 46% among the respondents from municipalities.
A similar percentage of respondents from both groups noted that no other mechanisms
are required, but the implementation of the existing ones should be improved. Finally,
almost 30% of the respondents from municipalities said that they had never heard about
participatory budgeting.

### Table 5.2: Participatory Budget and other new mechanisms for Citizen Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>CSOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Budget</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other mechanism is required</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other mechanism but improve</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existing ones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never heard about PB</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape

5.3.4 Citizen Participation, Accountability and Responsiveness of Local Government

As I have suggested in chapter three, the demand side of the equation (effective citizen
voice) needs to be met by supply side state responsiveness, which in turn will reinforce
and foster more citizen engagement in a virtuous cycle. Promoting participation is not
sufficient; it needs to be met by reciprocal initiatives on the part of the government for
its effectiveness and sustainability. Accountability should be regarded as the other side
of the citizen participation process; it is the degree to which local governments have to
explain or justify what they have done or failed to do.
Improved information about local needs and preferences is one of the theoretical advantages of decentralization, but there is no guarantee that leaders will actually act on these preferences unless they feel some sort of accountability to citizens. We have also noted that elections in South Africa, at least at the local level, as key institutions of representative democracy that allow citizens to punish incumbents for delivery failures, seem not to work towards this end. We have noted that electoral behaviour in municipal elections appear not to be based on service delivery, and thus, local elections do not function as mechanisms of quality control (Atkinson, 2007b).

This, again, gives more prominence to the need to understand how other ‘voice’ channels - spaces created for the direct participation of citizens in expressing their needs - can contribute to government accountability. In other words, accountability can be seen as the validation of citizen engagement and participation in local policy development. The assessment of citizen participation tools and mechanisms in the Eastern Cape, South Africa is then extended to include accountability, monitoring and evaluation practices as key elements in facilitating effective citizen participation in local governance.

When the study explored the diverse understandings of citizen participation, some of the answers reflected the idea of control, accountability and responsiveness, as illustrated by the following response given by one of the respondents from municipalities: ‘Citizen participation is about consultation through Ward Committee meetings and representative forums such as IDP, LED and tourism forums, where community representatives are given the opportunity to interrogate what the councillors and officials are doing in response to their needs and priorities that might have been expressed during the drafting of the IDP’ (Respondent No. M3).

Respondents were asked whether they considered that there are mechanisms in place which citizens can use to control the activities of the municipality. Most of the respondents agreed that while there are mechanisms in place, as provided by the legislation, these are not frequently used. Only 2% of the respondents from CSOs mentioned that there are mechanisms in place and that it is normal practice for citizens to use them to control municipal activities (the figure is 26% for municipal officials).
### Table 5.3: Control and monitoring mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CSOs</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, frequently used</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but not used</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape

The study also explored specific tools and mechanisms for citizen participation, either from the legal framework or according to policy documents, in monitoring and controlling municipal activities, including the assessment of municipality performance. The MSA (South African Government, 2000a), in chapter 6, states that a municipality must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the municipality’s performance management system and, in particular, allow the community to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets for the municipality.

My findings noted that the information flow from municipal councils to citizens on matters that directly effect citizens, such as council resolutions, budgets and plans and information on council performance, is very poor. According to the data gathered through this survey, both Municipal and CSO representatives associated the lowest rates of influence of citizen participation to municipal PMS (See Figure 5.4). This challenge was also highlighted in two other studies, where it was noted that the lack of a good performance monitoring system in most municipalities makes it difficult for councillors and CSOs to monitor progress and therefore hold the administration accountable (HSRC, 2007 and IDASA, 2008).

### 5.4 Challenges for Citizen Participation in Local Governance

As discussed in chapter three, the presumption of some decentralization advocates is that decentralization automatically increases the influence of all strata of society. However, it was contended that those who advocate the need to focus on purely decentralized systems of governance, ‘the local’, and argue simply that development policy formulation and implementation must be decentralised to small, local communities or interest groups do not adequately address the problem. Such micro-level responses can further entrench existing patterns of political and social inequality.
instead of the desired effect of increasing the voice of the poor and marginalized in local decision-making (Blair, 2000; Leach et al, 1999; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005; Roodt, 2001 and Schönwälder, 1997).

Academic and policy circles have begun to recognize that decentralization and citizen participation have not always been an instrument of local democratization. A key point is thus noting that citizen participation does not always result in strengthened local democracy and a more equal distribution of power. The WPLG argues that power dynamics in a particular community must be recognized. With this perspective, it states that ‘local government is uniquely placed to analyse and understand power dynamics within a community, and ensure that those who tend to be excluded and marginalised can become active and equal participants in community processes and the transformation of the settlements where they live’ (South African Government, 1998a, p. 15). It goes further to recognize that municipalities need to be aware of the divisions within local communities and seek to promote the participation of marginalized and excluded groups in community processes. For example, there are many obstacles to the equal and effective participation of women, such as social values and norms, as well as practical issues such as the lack of transport, household responsibilities, personal safety, etc. Section 1.3 of the WPLG states that ‘municipalities must adopt inclusive approaches to fostering community participation, including strategies aimed at removing obstacles to, and actively encouraging, the participation of marginalised groups in the local community’ (South African Government, 1998a, p. 26).

This survey partially addressed these issues and intended to contribute to the debate on democracy, decentralization and citizen participation. It was considered relevant to assess the perspective of municipal officials and politicians, as well as CSO representatives, on the diverse patterns of participation and local power dynamics for specific ‘marginalized’ groups as defined in the WPLG.

Respondents were first asked whether they considered that all the members of the community have the same possibilities of access to information. Overwhelmingly, both CBOs and Municipalities recognized that access to information is markedly unequal. The subsequent question was intended to evaluate whether any specific actions were
being developed to redress this issue. The answers given, however, tended to provide a list of mechanisms and tools used to better disseminate information:

- ‘Our municipality has established virtual resource and knowledge centres’; (respondent No. M2)
- ‘We are trying to establish more community radio stations as well as support the community Development Welfare programs in the area’ (respondent No. M5);
- ‘Councillors go to communities to talk about municipal programmes and organize meetings’ (respondent No. M17);
- ‘Our municipality is improving the communication strategy’ (respondent No. M6);
- ‘Most of the members of our community are illiterate. Hence more spoken media like radios and talk shows should be held’ (respondent No. M23)
- ‘We encourage Ward Councillors to share information with disadvantaged communities’ (respondent No. M20).

CSOs noted, however, that local governments are not addressing this issue systematically. They called for a need to assess how information about local government was being disseminated and to implement corrective actions accordingly. Various respondents noted that there is a need to improve municipalities’ communication strategy and that ‘this should be done in different ways to address the diverse needs of specific groups, i.e., some municipalities are distributing information leaflets at clinics and other well used service delivery points and this is a good start’ (Respondent No. C13) or ‘local government organizes community meetings with specific disadvantaged groups, but too few and far between’ (Respondent No. C9).

Participants in this survey were also asked their opinions about what concrete measures the municipality was undertaking to encourage women, youth, disabled and poor people to participate in local governance. They were requested to choose among three options: (i) ‘important and adequate measures and steps have been implemented to encourage their participation’; (ii) ‘measures have been implemented but they have not been successful’, or, (iii) ‘no measures have been taken’. They were further questioned on the reasons for their answers, and examples were requested.
Eighty percent of the respondents from municipalities stated that adequate measures have been implemented. The reasons given for their answers can be clustered into three groups of responses:

a) A full time employee hired for coordinating specific activities for these groups: ‘this is one of the tasks of the SPO’; (Respondent No. M3) ‘an employee employed specially for their own activities’ (Respondent No. M9).

b) Specific structures and mechanisms have been set up to address issues pertaining to specific groups: A respondent argued that ‘disabled structures and a women forum have been established to empower the disabled and women’ (Respondent No. M9). Another noted that ‘a youth council [has been] established to encourage participation of the youth’, (Respondent No. M7) while another mentioned ‘a women forum’ (Respondent No. M17). A mayor highlighted that ‘the AIDS council [is] functioning satisfactorily and this is being improved’ (Respondent No. M8) while another stated that ‘the municipality makes sure that there is equal representation of all groups in Ward Committees and IDP forums’ (Respondent No. M22). A municipal representative signalled that ‘they are told of their rights and laws that have been developed to include them in development projects.’ (Respondent No. M18).
c) Specific funding is provided to CSO that work with these groups. A response by a Mayor is illustrative of the various responses along these lines: ‘We provide support to these groups through funding their specific organizations’ (Respondent No. M5).

Perceptions among CSOs were significantly different. Almost 40% said that no measures have been undertaken and 50% of respondents said that some measures were implemented but they have not been successful. Some of the responses clearly illustrate this point: ‘a youth commission has been established but with no budget and program to deliver’, (Respondent No. C33); ‘while there have been instances for these sectors or groups to meet, nothing substantive has emanated from this’; (Respondent No. C9); and ‘measures are highly dependent on the political will to confer adequate spaces for this’ (Respondent No. C28).

Regarding Ward Committees, the MSA (South African Government, 1998b) specifically states that a metro or local council must make rules regulating the procedure to elect the members of a ward committee, taking into account the need for women to be equitably represented and for diversity of interests in the ward to be represented. The survey asked municipal officials and politicians on whether this has been done in their municipality. Half of the respondents answered positively.

Positive responses were mainly focussed on a fixed minimum percentage of women that is required for each ward: ‘the criterion used by the council is that at least 60% are women’, (Respondent No. M2) ‘50-50 measures have been successful in some wards’, (Respondent No. M17) ‘30% at least in each Ward Committee’; (Respondent No. M10) ‘equity when appointing Ward Councillors is often observed but at times this becomes difficult’ (Respondent No. M6).

The survey explored the views of municipal bureaucracies and politicians as well as CSO representatives on how inclusive citizen participation activities and spaces developed by the municipality are in terms of disadvantaged groups (women, poor people, the disabled, youth). Figure 5.17 shows that CSOs tend to have a relatively more favourable (or less critical) view on spaces for citizen participation that are designed to take into account the needs of the poor, although disadvantaged groups
such as women, the disabled and youth do not seem to have been duly considered. This perception contrasts with municipalities’ opinions, specifically regarding spaces for women’s participation, which were evaluated as highly inclusive.

**Figure 5.17: Citizen Participations tools and disadvantaged groups**

![Bar chart showing participation tools and disadvantaged groups](image)

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape

Although unequal power dynamics of local spaces have been recognised – a significant step away from the romantic vision of local communities as idyllic and unproblematic spaces – there seems to be disagreement in terms of what has been achieved in practice. In particular, the issue of women’s rights and the relationship between the roles of traditional authorities in decentralized governance has not been explored in this study. The Traditional Authorities Act (South African Government, 2003c), in particular, has been criticized for the exclusion of women. As Haines noted ‘the flawed process of invoking and, in some instances reinforcing traditional authorities as community and developmental leaders in the ex-homeland rural areas perpetuates structural poverty and unemployment, and retains the Byzantine-like quality of efforts aimed at socio-economic transformation’ (Haines, 2004, p. 22). Gender imbalances and patriarchal relationships constitute a major structural impediment to social mobility, social entrepreneurship and women’s participation.
The survey also intended to analyze more in depth the challenges for encouraging citizen participation as perceived by local community actors. It explored the factors that are considered a problem for municipalities trying to implement participatory approaches to local governance. The survey also explored the perceptions of CSOs on the key factors that prevent government from introducing participatory practices in local governance.

![Figure 5.18: Key Factors that Prevent Implementing Participatory Approaches to Local Governance](image)

Municipalities stated that involving the community in matters of local governance takes more time, and this has been problematic in various areas and policies that urgently need to be formulated and implemented.

As discussed earlier, the issue of lack of financial resources and capacities was also considered relevant from the municipal perspective. On the problem of lack of financial resources for promoting citizen participation, the questionnaire for municipalities also included a question on whether the municipality specifically budgeted for promoting citizen participation and whether there was a specific Community Participation unit. The picture that emerges is divided in almost two equal parts, 52% of the respondents stating that they specifically budget for citizen participation. Moreover, almost 40% of the respondents from the municipalities mentioned that in their municipality there is a specific department or unit that deals with citizen participation issues. While this might
be interpreted as a positive sign in the sense that there is someone who explicitly takes care of this matter, these units are frequently positioned under the department/unit in charge of ‘community development affaires’ which is considered of less hierarchical relevance than more traditional line departments. Therefore, citizen participation is not mainstreamed in all municipal activities, but it is associated with a (less relevant) specific unit.

### Table 5.4: Budget and specific unit for Citizen Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Budget</th>
<th>Citizen Participation unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape

On the other hand, CSOs considered the issues of insufficient resources and municipalities’ lack of skills to be key problems that prevent local government from more effectively encouraging citizen participation. CSOs also found to be relevant the fact that citizen participation raises opposition because it generates insecurity and perceptions of loss of authority among municipal officials. This is congruent with the widely held view of municipal decision makers that -with the implementation of these citizen participation tools and spaces- a model of representative democracy should be promoted, not participatory democracy (see section 5.2). CSOs also acknowledged that there is lack of interest among citizens in participating actively in municipal matters, which was partly explained by the fact that most meetings and budget explanations are too technical for most people to comprehend, and by the fact that citizens are increasingly disillusioned by local government in terms of taking their concerns seriously.
Table 5.5: Challenges and Problems in Participatory Local Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional community based structures sidelined</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller CSO, CBO should receive support</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only a reduced number of larger NGO participate</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Partyization’ of citizen participation</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape

The survey further assessed whether some findings from previous research conducted in South Africa and in other developing countries were still relevant as problems or challenges associated to the promotion of more participatory structures and mechanisms for local governance. The following 4 issues were found to be relevant and most of the respondents from CSOs strongly agreed on these points:

- ‘Traditional community-based structures (civic associations, residents’ associations, etc.) are being sidelined as more attention is given to Ward Committees. This crowding-out effect is more worrisome if these same ward committees are colonised by party agendas, as my findings suggest.
- ‘Municipalities should support the organisational development of associations, particularly in poor, marginalised areas where the skills and resources for participation may be less developed than in better-off areas’.
- ‘Where CSO do participate in these formal structures, participation is often limited to a number of larger, well resourced CSOs, for instance in the IDP forums’.
- ‘There has been a trend among political leaders to co-opt ward representatives. This is showing the ‘partyization’ (sic) trend of participation in the ward committee meetings’. As has been discussed earlier, this frequently emerged through the responses given in my survey.

The survey went on to investigate the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate. From the perspective of the municipal officials and politicians, the issues of education and literacy, lack of time, lack of information and

---

121 1 was used to point to the less relevant factors and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 were used to express opinions in between.
gender discrimination were found to be the most relevant factors affecting the capacity of the citizens to participate in local governance.

**Figure 5.19: Key Factors that Affect the Capacity of Citizens to Participate - the Perspective of Municipalities**

Respondents from the CSO sample also rated as very relevant the issues of education and literacy, lack of information and gender discrimination. But, on the other hand, the issue of lack of trust on the part of the community towards local government was also considered as a relevant factor preventing citizens from participating. This echoes IDASA’s findings (IDASA, 2008).

Finally, the issue of access problems was also raised. In particular, this was noted as associated to difficulties for specific groups to participate, in particular for women. As a respondent put it: ‘one key factor in hampering women’s participation is the venues. Most of the meetings are held over weekends when most women have to care for children; the distances are far and they cannot leave their families for a long time if they want to attend to a meeting or training’ (Respondent No. M16).
The survey further investigated the issue of lack of information and explored CSO perspectives on whether people in the communities where they work are aware of their constitutional rights and whether in particular, they understand the functions and spaces for citizen participation. More than 90% of the responses noted that the local community was not aware of the channels and spaces for citizen participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness of constitutional rights</th>
<th>Awareness of channels for citizen participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the survey included a question to assess the overall process of citizen participation. When asked to rate the process of citizen participation in their municipality, the opinions of municipalities and CSO representatives were opposed. The difference in scores between municipalities (both mayors and managers) and CSOs is the highest on this question. Local government generally assesses participation as desirable (70) or highly desirable (22) while CSOs assess it as poor (not desirable 60).
Judging by the discussions, this might be related to differences in understandings and conceptions of citizen participation and perceptions of what real participation should be.

### Table 5.7: Overall assessment of the process of citizen participation as developed in the municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Munic</th>
<th>NGO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>highly desirable</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desirable</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not desirable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on a survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape

#### 5.5 Conclusion: Institutions, Mechanisms and Spaces for Citizen Participation in Local Governance in South Africa

The WPLG (South African Government, 1998a), the MSA (South African Government, 1998b) and MSA (South African Government, 2000a) transformed the landscape of local government in the country. At the heart of this ambitious legal and institutional background is the idea that local governance and development should be undertaken as a partnership consisting of municipalities and local communities.

This chapter notes that the attempts by democratic governments in South Africa to redress historical exclusions by ‘putting people first’, to use Chambers words, are praiseworthy. And some important steps have been made in terms of legislation and policy formulation. However, there is clear evidence, as recalled in this chapter, that formal participatory channels in local governance are not working. As done in the previous chapter, in this chapter I have explored the possible causes of this phenomenon. I argue that contradictions in the legal and institutional framework, as well as the operationalization of policies and the ‘implementation gap’, raise questions regarding real possibilities for people to be placed at the centre of, and take part in, development initiatives.
To assess whether participatory approaches are being implemented in local governance and to understand why there seems to be a growing gap between the promises of participatory development as stated in the discourses, policy and legal framework and the everyday local political reality, I have discussed and examined, in operational terms, how participation is being understood and how it is being introduced and sustained in municipal policies and local development strategies.

Chapter 4 and this chapter have attempted to examine the extent, in actual practice, to which the legal, political and institutional framework allows meaningful participation. The chapter started discussing the ‘political constraints’ to the encouragement of citizen participation in local governance. Local authorities’ approaches to, and their understandings and perceptions of citizen participation were surveyed and analysed as well as compared with those of representatives of CSOs. The chapter also included a discussion of the legal and policy framework developed in South Africa to promote citizen participation in local governance. Through the responses to the various questions included in the questionnaires and as found in the dispersed literature produced to date (mainly centred around specific assessment of a particular tools or mechanism for citizen participation), the challenges that municipalities face in their attempts to promote citizen participation in local governance were analysed.

The chapter started with an investigation into the understandings of the notion of citizen participation and its role in local democracy for decisions-makers in the Eastern Cape local government bureaucracies. The opinion of Ward Councillors, as well as those emanating from a sample of CSOs working in the Eastern Cape, were integrated into the analysis. In particular, it was argued that the specific understandings of local government representatives have an impact on the objectives, goals and procedures a municipality develops to promote citizen participation in decentralized governance. As I have argued in the theoretical framework of this thesis, the will and capacity of local government to commit itself to a project of democratized local development will explain the variations in the macro-conditioning context (as defined by the decentralization process developed in the country, by the legislation, etc.).

When local government authorities were asked about their understanding of citizen participation in local governance, a first pattern that emerges from their answers is that
it is mainly conceived as a consultation process which materializes through the channels for citizen participation in local governance as defined by the legislation. In terms of the diverse definitions and approaches reviewed in chapter 3, the perspective that municipalities privilege is that of ‘participation in projects’, reflecting more ‘instrumentalist’ approaches to community involvement in matters of local governance.

Most of the responses from local government reflected a vision of representative democracy which does not require more participatory forms of democracy. It is quite revealing that those positioned to promote the mechanisms of direct democracy (ward councillors specifically) tend to equate local democracy with representative democracy. In their views, democracy is confined to representation at the polls. ‘Meaningful’ participation for most of municipal authorities could be summarized as follows: citizens are informed and consulted but the council makes the decisions.

At the local level, the prevailing orientations and approaches to citizen participation in local government held by local government officials and politicians has also impaired the implementation of more participatory modes of governance. In the cases where a basic willingness to promote participation was found, municipal officials often lacked skills and resources, and few policy makers and mangers appear to appreciate the degree of difficulty, capacity building and commitment required in developing effective partnerships at the local level.

Local government understandings of citizen participation in local governance seem to be characterized by an instrumentalist approach. An efficiency-centred approach seems to be pervasive in local government understandings of citizen participation. The underlying conception of democracy is that of representative democracy and the citizen is mainly conceived as a voter and a beneficiary or client. My findings suggest that what was called the market-based approach is the one subscribed to by the majority of the municipal decision-makers surveyed in my study. Under this approach, community participation in planning is either largely redundant or ‘self-help approaches’ tend to be privileged.

In terms of the co-governance approach, spaces created for citizen participation involve the transformation of municipal systems to promote community involvement in
development decisions. This perspective is embedded in parts of the WPLG, where the process of reforming local government is anchored in the concepts of ‘participative’ and ‘democratic decentralization’. The reform process was envisaged not only through the decentralization of a municipal policy or a form of citizen participation in a specific policy, but through the decentralization of the institutional apparatus of government, through which some policies are deconcentrated and ‘devolved’ to municipalities, essaying diverse forms of participation in their design, implementation and evaluation. While this approach seems not to be privileged by municipal officials and politicians, there are also passages of the key policy documents and legislation that impairs the development of a co-governance approach.

I recognise that there are some grounds for the market-based approach given the urgency for improving service delivery and given that the fiscal constraints faced by local governments are also due to non-payment of services. What is a cause of concern is that this view is isolated from the issue of strengthening local democracy. This concern is reinforced when this view is contrasted with the expectations and perspectives of CSOs. Citizen participation as currently being developed and promoted by local government in South Africa seems to be widening the gap between citizens’ expectations and participatory politics at the local level. In other words, contrary to the expectations being placed on citizen participation by the policy framework and legislation, in practice, citizen participation is widening the gap between citizen and the local state.

As we have discussed in section three, the legal approach to citizen participation caters for an intensity level of consultation and it is highly dependent on the political will of local authorities. It seems as if key policy documents go further in terms of citizen participation than what the legal framework actually encourages.

Following this line of argument, the gap between policy discourses on citizen participation and practice can be partially attributed to a limitation introduced by the legal framework itself. Strengthening of participation in local governance has to do with the strengthening of direct citizen involvement in decision-making by individuals or groups in public activities, often through newly established institutional channels such as Ward Committees and development planning forums, etc. In other words, a gap
between policy objectives and vision is established in terms of what the legal framework actually encourages local government officials to do. Municipalities are requested to create conditions for citizen participation and, moreover, to encourage it. However, after reviewing the legal and institutional framework, this only gives the possibility to ‘consult’ with the community. While a wide variety of organs and modes of participation included in the legal frameworks have been set up at the municipal level, the majority of these mechanisms had a consultative character, such that participation in even the best of cases was associated with the stages of plan formulation or execution of programs, but not with decision-making.

One relevant aspect that emerged from the discussion and revision of the legal framework for citizen participation in local governance, is that the decisions on appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation is largely left to the municipality. Although minimum requirements exist, leaving the decision on the actual regulations for the implementation of the diverse ways and means of public participation to each municipality results in confusion on the part of most municipalities. They find it difficult to determine appropriate procedures of their own and deny residents their right to participate by avoiding setting minimum requirements which specify that right. As the case of Ward Committees illustrates, while the legislation provided for the establishment of Ward Committees, the statutes remained vague about procedures and powers, resulting in dysfunctional institutions highly dependant on the political will of municipal officials and politicians to promote citizen participation.

Moreover, in terms of the IDP, these structures were expected to contribute to more balanced and integrated development, and to facilitate more substantive local economic development (South African Government, 2001). My study suggests that the logistics of this exercise are considerable and the institutional and human resources requirements have still to be fully conceptualized. As stated by this thesis and various other evaluations of the first round of IDPs (e.g. Ambert and Feldman, 2002; Buccus et al, 2008; Cole and Parnell, 2000; Hemson 2007; IDASA, 2005; Marais and Botes, 2002 and PLANACT, 2005) citizen participation in the drafting of the plans was organised in a way which did not comply with any of the general principles stated in the WPLG
This was also acknowledged in a multi-country study (Cunill-Grau, 1991) that examined this claim in the Latin American context. Cunill-Grau findings showed that legislation exists in which civil society organizations are recognised and have the right to information and to address demands and petitions, but the formal spaces where these groups participate are not widely used as arenas where decisions are made. This also seems to be happening in the South African municipal context.

The legal framework provides for citizen participation of a low level of intensity that only extends to consultation. As clearly stated in the legislation, the role of ‘participatory democracy’ is conceived to inform, negotiate and comment on the decisions made by the municipal council, in the course of the planning/decision-making process (Municipal Systems Act, 2000). Only the municipal council is legally allowed to make decisions. It is up to the municipal officials and politicians’ approaches then to carry citizens’ visions forward and to empower them with effective decision-making power.

This introduces a wide discretionary margin in terms of ‘meaningful’ citizen participation in local governance for municipal political and administrative office bearers. How much of the information and consultation with local communities will be reflected in policy outcomes and will be further implemented is highly dependant on the will of municipal officials and politicians. If my findings are correct, this is more worrisome when one adds local government authorities’ understanding of participation to the analysis.

If ‘meaningful’ participation is about participation in decision making, in implementation and development of programmes and projects, in the monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects, in sharing the benefits of development (Davids et al, 2005, pp. 19-20), then there is still a long way to go, not only in terms of capacity building of a new breed of officials, but in terms of more progressive environments and enabling legal frameworks.
Despite its limitations, the law has opened unprecedented spaces for the exercise of direct democracy at the local level. Although the legislation has statutorily empowered Ward Committees for development planning and social audit and has created tools for citizen participation to materialize such IDPs, the lack of resources, mobilization and capacity building have not allowed these spaces to realize their full potential.

In many cases, more work will need to be done on the pre-conditions of participatory governance, including awareness building on rights and citizenship; building civil associations and social movements engaged in governance issues; and strengthening institutions of governance, both at the local and more centralized levels. Lack of information and awareness on constitutional rights on citizen participation and high degrees of illiteracy prevent citizens from participating in local governance. Information is the key to citizen participation and it should become second nature for citizens to be able to access it.

The inability of weaker sections of the community to participate effectively in the structure of local governance calls for the construction of new relationships between ordinary people and institutions that affect their lives and rebuilding these institutions requires working on both sides of the equation. Successful stories reflect the ability to construct a common agenda of popular democratic participation and socio-economic development for ordinary people where it counted with the institutional design and support of committed political elites and civil society activism (Heller, 2001). The study of the various participatory mechanisms and strategies that seek to bridge the gap between the citizen and state at the local level shows that the way forward in bridging this gap should rely on both a more active and engaged civil society which can express demands of citizenry and a more effective and responsive state to secure the delivery of public services. This requires a strong state and a strong civil society.

In fact my study also suggests that the ideological orientations and understandings of citizen participation by municipal decision makers would need a specific process of policy deconstruction before more broad-based participation can occur. There is a need to reconsider the structures through which policy operates and also to revisit the relevant discourses and, most especially in this case, local government officials actions through which policy is articulated. In this sense, it is useful to revisit Shore and
Wright’s ‘anthropology of policy’ and their observation that ‘policies are most obviously political phenomena, yet it is a feature of policies that their political nature is disguised by the objective, neutral, legal-rational idioms in which they are portrayed’. This masking of the political and ideological under the cloak of neutrality, requires of process of policy deconstruction. As Shore and Wright argue, policy is always informed by ideological considerations, and often codifies morality, functioning like a Foucauldian “political technology” which masks its political origins and the relations of power that it helps to reproduce (Shore and Wright, 1997, pp. 6-7). In other words, my study suggests that there is a need to illuminate the operationalization of policy in different domains to reveal how ‘policies work as instruments of governance, as ideological vehicles’ (Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 26).

Some problems and challenges for the constitution, establishment and actual functioning of Ward Committees should be specially highlighted in regard to the factors that explain citizen participation and the underlying vision of citizenship. Although the prioritized actors at the inception of Ward Committees seem to have been socio-territorial actors, in practice, political party actors seem to have been more relevant. The political logic appears to be more relevant than the socio-territorial as the key factor for citizen mobilization. This has been reinforced by a trend in political leaders to co-opt ward representatives. This demonstrates the ‘partyization’ trend of participation, not only in the elections of ward councillors but also in the ward meetings. I suggest that Ward Committees are being used as legitimacy tools by political elites. Ward Committees are reinforcing a trend towards politicizing citizen participation in local governance and, therefore, undermining their accountability and effectiveness as spaces for more cooperative relationships.

My findings confirm results from a study by Benit-Gbaffou (2008b). Not only are Ward Committees unlikely to advance neighbour/territorial interests over local party interests, but local leaders are likely to use them to advance power struggles. Benit-Gbaffou (2008b) further argued that, while partisan ward committees are of limited benefit for increasing accountability, they may well increase public participation in that more people get access to municipal decision-making. However, this access is likely to be limited to those groups which already influence council through parties, and thus few
new voices are likely to be heard in municipal process. Partisan ward Committees will add little value to local democracy in South Africa (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008b).

If policy discourses advance a conception of participatory governance that is not yet implemented in practice due to the various constraints analysed in this chapter, inviting citizens to participate in dysfunctional or too limited spaces might only reinforce the illegitimacy crisis of local governments and weaken local democracy.

The spirit of this critical approach is to understand what does not work and to learn about the practical implications of policy formulations. My objective is to allow for a better understanding of the dynamics at play so as to be able to act upon them. With this goal in mind, the next chapter summarizes the main findings of the study and seeks to provide policy-oriented suggestions in order to give tangible effect to the democratic and developmental principles embedded in the WPLG.
6.1. Introduction

The Eastern Cape Province shows indicators of severe and widespread poverty and inequality and presents a crude panorama in terms of economic growth, human capital and infrastructure, along with a serious degree of backlog in service delivery to poor communities. Deep fragmentations are evident throughout the province in an era of much greater local autonomy – due to the democratic dispensation in South Africa – in which local authorities and communities have, in principle, gained access to new spaces for taking greater control over their future development. The new system of intergovernmental relations implies serious challenges for local governments, which are ultimately responsible for redressing inequality and poverty, supporting the extension of local democracy and ensuring the delivery of basic services.

Despite the introduction of this new framework for a developmental local government, various studies suggest that citizens are becoming increasingly alienated, and there seems to be no sign that the massive restructuring has had any positive impact in terms of greater public esteem towards local government. Moreover, if the reform of local governance systems included the creation of formal structures for people to channel their views and concerns, and to work in partnership with the governments in tackling development and governance challenges, why did massive protests take place during 2005 and 2006? Why do these new spaces seem not to be working (or at least not to be used) as a way of voicing citizens’ needs and concerns regarding local government performance?

If decentralization and citizen participation hold so much promise (as reflected in international summit declarations and a growing body of literature, and especially in South African legal and policy framework for local governance), why does there appear to be a wide gap between the promised land of participatory and decentralized development and everyday reality?
Given this reality, it was deemed appropriate to investigate whether decentralization and participatory development can help, and actually are helping, to address these issues, and if they can offer a development alternative. The urgency of redressing the social and economic situation of the province and remedying the backlog in service delivery justified a study that focused on the possibilities, challenges and relationships between participation and decentralization for inclusive and democratic development in the province. In conducting this analysis, I argued that any assessment of the relation between decentralization and citizen participation needs to incorporate considerations of political economy.

Through the case study I therefore sought to shed light on the following specific questions:

- What are the problems faced in the implementation of participatory approaches in local governance? What implementation constraints do municipalities face? Do they have the required capacities? Is the national and provincial government truly committed to an agenda of decentralized governance?

- What is the relationship between fiscal decentralization and citizen participation? To what extent is citizen participation in local governance influenced by the share of government revenue raised locally or transferred from higher levels of government? Is there any evidence of new systems of accountability and greater responsiveness of administration and political organs of government to local needs and thus increased efficiency?

- What does citizen participation mean for local government authorities?

- What are the consequences of citizen participation in local governance in terms of changes in policy and improved governance? Has this diversified the types of voices heard and considered in political processes? To whom do the local council and spaces created for direct citizen engagement (such as ward committees) respond? Which is the direction of accountability flow?

These questions emerge from the theoretical discussion developed in chapters two and three, and my empirical study sought to ground this discussion on the case study conducted in the Eastern Cape. This chapter summarizes key findings from the
empirical study and synthesizes the responses to the above-mentioned questions. It also includes suggestions and policy recommendations for addressing the challenges identified in the study.

6.2 Citizen participation and Decentralization in the Eastern Cape: summary of key findings

The most frequently mentioned argument both in the literature and official discourses to explain the gap between the promises of decentralized participatory governance and what in fact occurs on the ground is the issue of lack of capacity. Although I recognise that building the right capacities in municipalities and local communities to be ready to perform their new responsibilities is crucial, this issue can not be viewed as the sole explicative variable, nor can it be approached in isolation from other critical factors. My study suggests that the key reasons for the dysfunctional decentralized participatory system are to be found in how the participatory system is articulated with the intergovernmental relation system and the fiscal decentralization process; in how local government authorities understand citizen participation and their overall development approach; and in how the power structures associated to IDP and Ward Committees are defined and are actually implemented. In the following paragraphs I summarize key findings on each of these issues.

6.2.1 Lack of capacities

A key issue throughout the whole local government transformation process has centred on the need to strengthen the capacities of municipalities to be able to meet the growing developmental demands being placed on them. This has been part of the official discourse and has been highlighted by most of the literature that tries to explain the delivery failure at local government level. However, it has also more often than not been associated with a narrow conception of building individual capacities through providing specific training at the municipal level.

Although it may be overstated, the findings of the empirical study on citizen participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape conducted for this thesis showed that the issue of lack of capacities is considered critical in explaining the slow progress
in terms of making local governance systems more participatory. The survey explored the areas where further training was required. Beyond the most frequently recognized areas requiring capacity development122, a recurrent issue mentioned in my study was specifically related to citizen participation mechanisms as defined by the legislation and the lack of understanding by municipal officials of their role as tools for consultation and deliberative decision making.

Despite government efforts and initiatives developed to address the issue of lack of capacities at the municipal level, capacity challenges related to local government were recognized by the South African government (as stated in the report by the DPLG - 2008). However, from the perspective of the central role being assigned to citizen participation, a review of the various efforts and initiatives on capacity-building raises concern. I found that of the almost 20 initiatives mentioned in the Capacity Building Strategic Framework for Local Government (South African Government, 2008b), only one systematically focuses on the issue of citizen participation.

Some recent perspectives on citizen-centred local governance (often meaning a recasting of market-based approaches to local governance and planning, as I have discussed) and decentralization present the argument that, as local government is no longer the exclusive provider of services, the issue of lack of capacity is less relevant. ‘Local government’s traditionally acknowledged technical capacity becomes less relevant under this framework’ (Shah, 2006, p. 16). When recast under the co-governance approach, however, this perspective implies that the role of local government is expanded to serve as a catalyst for the formulation, development and operation of a network of both government providers and entities outside of government. Therefore, I prefer to argue that if local government is to play a new role (a role of active presence, not being supplanted by civil society organizations) new capacities are required for both local government and local actors. In this sense, the issue of capacities is still relevant.

My study (also corroborated by other analyses) highlights the lack of training and political education, of the councilors as well as of residents and CBOs, as relevant.

122 Project Management, financial and budget Management.
elements in explaining why the system of participatory local governance does not seem to be working. This is coupled with the relative novelty of the participatory tools and spaces for local governance. I argued that there is a clear need to also focus on capacity development beyond municipalities. My study demonstrates that there is a need to widen the scope of action and definition associated to capacity building. Fundamentally, the tasks of transforming local government into a developmental agent require changes in attitudes and behavior, and again of a set of actors, not only local government.

6.2.2 Intergovernmental fiscal relations and the framework of cooperative governance

The Constitution of South Africa defines the functions of local government and its relationship to other spheres of government, emphasising cooperation between the three spheres of government through the principle of cooperative governance. However, it has been noted that the intergovernmental system has largely failed to support local government adequately. The analysis looked at the system of cooperative governance and lack of clarity in the division of expenditure responsibilities for local government. Moreover, the processes of dividing responsibilities frequently occur in a context of unclear powers and functions between different levels of government.

As acknowledged by the DPLG (South African Government, 2008b), platforms for collective development planning across three spheres of government needed to be strengthened. Despite new legislation and relevant advances made, intergovernmental relationships remain problematic. Powers, functions and capacity building responsibilities remain poorly defined in various cases, and beyond the increase in governmental grants to municipalities, more effective and sustained support is required.

IDPs are defined as the key tool for ensuring coordination between the three spheres of government’s development priorities. However, various studies found that provincial expenditure is not always taking into account the development priorities of the respective municipalities as outlined in their IDPs. Moreover, respondents from both CSO and local government in my survey argued that national and provincial departments do not take their participation in municipal planning exercises seriously.
As discussed, the principle of ‘cooperative governance’ has proven to be problematic in practice. Or better said, it has been understood, in many cases, as a unilateral, pre-determined decision-making process from central and provincial spheres of government directed towards local government. In some cases, instead of coordination, a better term would be: local government (unidirectional) alignment with the 2 other spheres’ plans and expenditure priorities. While cooperation implies a process in which the three spheres of government work interconnectedly, the process of decentralization has adopted a form closer to a unilateral process of alignment.

While it is true that more resources have flowed into local governments, it is also true that new responsibilities are delegated without totally assessing their financial implications. Although the new system of intergovernmental fiscal relations has made considerable advances in terms of the previously centralized state, the intergovernmental institutional and fiscal system remains a serious obstacle to the achievement of decentralized and participatory governance. It continues to entrench (discretional) resources and thus removes authority from the sphere of local decision-making. Beyond the ‘developmental’ rhetoric, this suggests that municipalities are more often than not being viewed by higher levels of government in terms of local service delivery only.

If local government is to govern effectively and play an integrating, coordinating role at the local level, the overall system of intergovernmental fiscal relations needs to be revised.

6.2.3 Lack of (autonomous) financial resources

I have argued in chapter three that the ways in which central governments decentralize their powers have very different policy implications and the focus of accountability changes in each case. Decentralization is essentially about local governments having power to define and implement locally defined agendas. In assessing any decentralization process, the assignment of expenditure responsibilities and functions must be studied against the budgeting framework in which the municipal sphere operates. This is especially relevant assessing the extent to which municipalities have any power to determine –through their planning processes—investment priorities and
thus independently decide on the priorities for their municipality. This tells the effective
degree of the ‘autonomy’ of municipalities. The pattern of revenue collection and main
revenue sources also explain the direction of accountability. This is also relevant in at
least partially explaining the poor responsiveness of South African municipalities to
citizen grievances.

How much autonomy does a municipality have in deciding on the development
priorities affecting its locality? What sources of funding can municipal governments
gain access to, to perform both its exclusive functions and those shared with other
spheres? How much of the overall financial pie can municipalities effectively use to
meet the development challenges identified by their own planning processes?

It is frequently mentioned that South African municipalities have a relatively high
proportion of ‘own revenue’ sources as part of their total financial pie. I have noted that
the picture depicted earlier hides important differences between municipalities. This is
especially relevant for those smaller local municipalities in the Eastern Cape that are
highly dependent on government transfers, as examined in chapter four. I have argued
therefore that this picture needs to be assessed taking into account the nature and size of
their expenditure responsibilities. This is relevant as this tells the degree of flexibility
that a municipality has in deciding on the use of their own sources of funding. I noted
that it was also critical to pay due attention to the highly heterogeneous panorama
within municipalities.

I have further shown that the use of unconditional grants (equitable grants) is mainly
dedicated to paying salaries and bulk services purchases. At the same time, the use of
conditional grants is predetermined, because they are defined in terms of national sector
strategies and programmes. This clearly does not leave any room for considering other
kinds of municipal led investment. As figures presented in chapter 4 showed, the
growth in government transfers for both operating and capital expenditures has
occurred at a faster pace than the increase in own revenue generated by municipalities
(actually, the share of revenue from taxes in total municipal income has been
decreasing). Because of this, municipalities are increasingly dependent on grants to
fund their operating costs and infrastructure needs. This is especially relevant in terms
of facilitating citizen participation in local governance.
I have shown that the majority of municipalities in South Africa, but especially in the Eastern Cape, heavily depend on government grants. Thus, to put in place mechanisms for promoting active involvement of the local citizenry defining local developmental priorities might simply be a waste of time and resources (Ambert and Feldman, 2002). There seems to be little room for deciding locally on what to spend. This makes initiatives for citizen participation in deciding on local assignment of funds futile at best. Inviting people to participate, but not allowing them to make any meaningful decisions – or not putting their decisions into practice -- also contributes to delegitimizing local governments, discouraging citizen participation and further alienating citizens.

Beyond reducing the margin of action for funding locally decided priorities, an increase in municipal dependence on conditional grants and reduced fiscal autonomy has important implications for local governance as it reduces independence of municipalities and shifts the pattern of accountability from local governments to national government.

Moreover, I noted that many municipalities encounter problems in enforcing tax collection on account of the reluctance of some citizens to pay for poor quality services. But this could also be explained by the absence of a perceived link between service provision and payment of taxes. Recent literature has explored the links between expenditure and revenue responsibilities and their implications for governance (Brautigam et al, 2008). The relation between decentralization and transparency and increased accountability heavily relies on bringing expenditure assignments closer to revenue sources and hence to the citizenry.

The dependence of governments on non-tax sources of funding is likely to have adverse effects on their accountability and responsiveness (Moore, 2007 and Robinson, 2004). Even in the case of South Africa, where transfers are relatively adequate and reliable, a fiscal regime which compels local actors to depend so heavily on central financial arrangements for practically all of their expenditure requirements undermines the development of lateral rather than vertical relations within the state, with serious implications for public participation and effective accountability.
6.2.4 Legal and Policy Framework on Citizen Participation in Local Governance

I have argued that the policy documents and the legal framework for local government in South Africa give centrality to the issue of participation. However, after a review of the key policy documents and legislation pieces, I have suggested the ‘intensity level’ of participation envisaged in the legal and policy framework is that of information and, at best, consultation. Most mechanisms created allow for informing citizens on local government issues. Some of these mechanisms also allow citizens to express themselves. However, this does not include any guarantee that their requests or opinions will be contemplated.

This introduces a wide discreional margin for municipal political and administrative office-holders in terms of allowing for ‘meaningful citizen participation in local governance’. How much of the information and consultation with local communities will be reflected in policy outcomes and will be further implemented, is highly dependant on the will of municipal officials and politicians and on their understanding of the process and relevance of citizen participation for democratic local governance.

While being areas of great potential for citizen participation, the legislation that created formal spaces does not detail or enforce (beyond broad guidelines) the way in which citizen participation should manifest itself within these spaces. Therefore, the effective use of these spaces will be highly dependent on the assumption that the local community is aware of the options and possibilities for participation, and whether it has access to information, and on the will of councillors and municipal officials and their openness to consultation. The legal framework introduces a high margin of discretion in terms of the concrete implementation of measures and spaces for citizen participation at the local level. If my findings are correct, this is even more worrisome when one adds local government authorities’ understanding of participation to the analysis.

I have also suggested that the main policy document guiding the approach to local government, the WPLG, can be easily interpreted and accommodated to different development discourses. As Pieterse (2002) suggests, the emphasis on efficiency in the WPLG is clearly rooted in New Public Management approaches. But, at the same time,
the WPLG is also influenced by participatory development discourses. In other words, market-based governance approaches and co-governance approaches can be easily accommodated in the WPLG. These oscillations in the WPLG that allow for various interpretations make it crucial to examine the municipal managers’ and mayors’ understandings of citizen participation.

### 6.2.5 Local Government Approach and Understandings of Citizen Participation

Apart from the enactment of legislation and establishment of institutional spaces, it is also necessary to keep a balanced view of what such laws and administrative reforms can achieve. In addition to the limitations in the institutional framework, as in the case of South Africa, there is a powerful, informal dimension constantly influencing such processes. Legislation may be changed while leaving organizational structures unreformed (Plummer, 1999, p. 15). As we have discussed in chapter four, to move from the discursive level toward increased, meaningful participation in development, municipalities should receive support and work in an institutional and fiscally enabling context. They should also improve their capacity to implement these strategies. But they must also be convinced that more participatory models of local governance are desirable, and in most cases this is taken for granted.

The research went on to consider local government and local community understandings of participation, ‘intensity’ levels and challenges with respect to integrating participatory approaches in the local governance process. To assess whether participatory approaches are being implemented in local governance and to understand why there seems to be a growing gap between the promises of participatory development as stated in the discourses, policy and legal framework and the every day local political reality, I argued that it is crucial to discuss, in operational terms, how participation is being understood and how it is being introduced and sustained in municipal policies and local development strategies. I suggested that the specific understandings of local government representatives in particular will have an impact on the objectives, goals and procedures a municipality develops to promote citizen participation in decentralized governance.
The field research included authorities positioned in local government bureaucracies, municipal managers, and elected officials (mayors) who have an affect on strategic direction, interpretation and implementation of mechanisms and structures in relation to citizen participation in local governance. The viewpoints of a small sample of Ward Councillors were also included. These perspectives were assessed against the opinions from a sample of CSOs working in the Eastern Cape.

When local government authorities were asked about their understanding of citizen participation in local governance, a principal pattern that emerged from their answers was that citizen participation is mainly conceived as a consultation process which is highly formalized in character and is realised through the channels for citizen participation in local governance as defined by the legislation. Citizen participation seems to be viewed as relevant to improving service delivery.

Most of the responses from local government reflected a vision of representative democracy that does not require complementary forms of participative democracy. It is quite revealing that those positioned to promote the mechanisms of direct democracy (ward councillors specifically) tend to exclusively consider local democracy as representative democracy; democracy seems to be confined to representation at the polls. Although some respondents from municipalities mentioned that they regarded citizen participation as key to democracy, these viewpoints were few, and the findings reveal that many municipal decision-makers have a limited understanding as to the relevance of citizen participation for building more democratic local spaces. The emphasis seems to be on delivery and not on citizen participation as a means for local democracy.

In synthesis, an efficiency-centred approach seems to be pervasive in local government understandings of citizen participation. In terms of the diverse definitions and approaches reviewed in chapter 3, the perspective privileged by municipalities is that of ‘participation in projects’, reflecting more ‘instrumentalist’ approaches to community involvement in matters of local governance. The underlying conception of democracy is that of representative democracy, and the citizen is mainly conceived as a voter, a beneficiary, or a client.
The literature rarely examines these concerns, but two studies have raised the issue of conceptual contradictions and different conceptions of the long-term objectives of municipalities, their core functions, and the roles and functions of other local actors in relation to the municipality (FCR, 1999 and Noble, 2004). My findings suggest that what was called the market-based approach is the one subscribed to by the majority of the municipal decision makers surveyed in my study. Under this approach, community participation in planning is largely redundant, and ‘self-help approaches’ are those that tend to be privileged.

I agree with Pieterse (2002) in that there are some grounds for the market-based approach given the urgency for improving service delivery and given that the fiscal constraints facing local governments are also due to non-payment of services. What is a cause for concern is that this view is isolated from the issue of strengthening local democracy.

Therefore, at the local level, the prevailing orientations and approaches to citizen participation in local governance held by local government officials and politicians have also impaired the implementation of more participatory modes of governance. In the cases where a basic willingness to promote participation was found, municipal officials often lacked skills and resources, and few policy makers and managers appear to appreciate the degree of difficulty, or the capacity building and commitment required to develop effective partnerships at the local level. The causes for concern increase when this view is contrasted with the expectations and perspectives of CSO. Citizen participation as being currently developed, ‘promoted’ and sustained by local government in South Africa seems to be widening the gap between citizens’ expectations and participatory politics at the local level.

6.2.6 The actual functioning of key spaces for citizen participation in South Africa

As a result of the concern to improve the responsiveness of local government, Ward Committees have enjoyed much affirmation by the DPLG, and the South African Government in general. In carrying out their role, ward committees are meant to be non-partisan, representing the interests of the local community as a whole, and not just one political party (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008). However, according to the results of my study,
some problems and challenges for the constitution, establishment and actual functioning of Ward Committees should be specially highlighted in what concerns citizen participation and the underlying vision of citizenship. Although the prioritized actors at the inception of Ward Committees seem to have been socio-territorial actors, in practice, political party actors have been more relevant.

Ward Committees seem to be working as politicized forms of participation, being captured by political parties. Theoretically, for citizen participation to become a means of strengthening local democracy it has to be autonomous, i.e. independent of political parties. However, it was noted that party members –elected representatives, party-affiliated individuals and organizations– capture Ward Committees and control them through informal mechanisms in order to influence and guide the decision-making process in a way that serves the parties’ and/or the governing elites’ interests. This, in turn, undermines social accountability mechanisms. The political logic appears to be more relevant than the socio-territorial as the key factor for citizen mobilization. This has been reinforced by a trend in political leaders to co-opt ward representatives, which demonstrates the ‘partyization’ trend of participation, not only in the election of ward councillors but also in the ward meetings.

I have argued that the way municipal politicians perceive citizen engagement in governance and the way they implement the formal institutions of participation seems to be an important factor to consider when assessing the performance of participatory mechanisms for democratic local governance. In fact, my findings tend to point out the fact that Ward Committees are being used as legitimising tools by political elites. Ward Committees are reinforcing a trend towards politicizing citizen participation in local governance and, therefore, undermining their accountability and effectiveness as spaces for more cooperative relationships.

My findings confirm results from a study by Benit-Gbaffou (2008). Not only are Ward Committees unlikely to advance neighbour/territorial interests over local party interests, but local leaders are likely to use them to advance power struggles. While Ward Committees might be facilitating access to municipal decision-making, this access is being limited to those groups which already influence council through parties, and does not allow for new voices to be heard though participatory local governance. As Benit-
Gbaffou (2008) suggests, partisan ward committees will add little of value to local democracy in South Africa.

My research also confirmed that traditional community-based structures (civic associations, residents’ associations, etc.) are being sidelined as more attention is given to Ward Committees. If my findings are correct, this crowding-out effect is more worrisome, as these ward committees are governed by party agendas. Therefore, Ward Committees are not only failing to advance territorial interests, but are also supplanting organizations which, to an extent, did advance these interests.

At the same time, IDPs are being conceived as the key strategic planning instrument for coordination of development plans. Citizen participation is understood as an essential ingredient in this process. However, as the data gathered for this thesis confirms, from a CSO perspective the IDP processes have been implemented in a minimalist way: although the IDP process urges municipalities to consult widely, in general there has not been a fundamental emphasis on active community involvement. At best, public participation was confined to an assessment of prioritized needs, while continuous feedback and involvement in decision-making on strategies and implementation of the plan was rare.

The review of various IDP assessments confirms another difficulty. Sectoral plans have often been draw up by different sets of consultants, resulting in very little inter-sectoral integration. In this context, it is impossible for communities to give meaningful input regarding inter-sectoral opportunities for development.

My findings also highlighted that the flow of information from municipal councils to citizens on matters that directly affect citizens, such as council resolutions, budgets and plans and information on council performance, is very poor. Information is a key to citizen participation and citizens must have easy access to it.

Moreover, as per the data gathered through this survey, both Municipal and CSO representatives associated the lowest rates of influence of citizen participation to municipal PMS. The lack of a good performance monitoring system in most municipalities makes it difficult for councillors and CSOs to monitor progress and
therefore to hold the administration accountable. The issue of lack of capacities for budgeting processes and financial management was mentioned as being crucial because of the relationship between transparency and proper citizen participation.

6.3 Implications and policy recommendations

The attempts by democratic governments in South Africa to redress historical exclusions by ‘putting people first’, to use Chambers words, are praiseworthy, and despite its limitations, the law has opened new spaces for the exercise of direct democracy at the local level. However, the contradictions in the legal and institutional framework, as well as the ‘implementation gap’, raise questions as to the real possibilities of people being placed at the centre and taking part in development initiatives. So, while citizen participation and decentralized governance holds promise for the future development of more democratic and inclusive localities, the South African government needs to be aware of actual constraints and challenges.

As I have noted above, although the legislation has statutorily empowered Ward Committees and IDPs to bridge the gap between local communities and local government, the lack of resources, mobilization and capacity building have not allowed these spaces to realize their full potential. But there is still a long way to go in terms of more progressive environments and enabling legal frameworks. Firstly, for the system to function, coherency between the diverse spheres of government is essential. Moreover, the degree of financial autonomy of municipalities is a crucial concern that needs to be carefully assessed. In order for the aims of the WPLG to be fully realized, delegation of responsibilities needs to be accompanied by the delegation of resources – human and financial– to municipalities. These might require further advances in the process of decentralization expenditure responsibilities and new sources of for municipal government resources.

My study highlights the need to go beyond municipalities and to help build capacities at other government levels as well as in CBOs, NGOs and the public in general. It has been recognized that where CSOs do participate in the new participatory formal structures, participation is often limited to a number of larger, well resourced CSOs (as occurs in the IDP forums). The problems inherited from apartheid have proven to be
deeply embedded. Lack of information and awareness on constitutional rights and on citizen participation and high degrees of illiteracy prevent citizens from actively participating in local governance. The South African government underestimated the enormity of the local government transition and the huge administrative and financial resources required, but also the changes in attitudes of both leaders and citizens necessary for this transition.

The apparent consensus on capacity development needs to be further understood as, essentially, an endogenous process: It is critical that the review of the local government framework takes into account the informal aspects of the way municipalities work and how they are influenced by their social and political environment.

It was noted that support is required for the organisational development of associations, in particular in poor, marginalised areas where the skills and resources for participation may be less developed than in better-off areas. Therefore it seems that more work will need to be done on the ‘pre-conditions’ of participatory governance, including awareness building on rights and citizenship; building civil associations and social movements engaged in governance issues; and strengthening institutions of governance, both at the local and more centralized levels.

As I have noted, if a committed political agent is a necessary ingredient for active citizen participation, the democratic empowerment of local government is critically dependent on the associational dynamics and capacities of local actors. Trust needs to be re-built between local communities and the local state. Institutional forms that promote effective participation and relations of trust between governments and citizens need to be put in place. The minimum condition that information is available, properly packaged and disseminated in a timely manner should be assured (and enforced by law, including timings and ways of presenting the information).

The empirical study has thus identified critical obstacles for the establishment of more participatory models of local governance, such as; at the macro level, the pattern of revenue and expenditure assignments that clearly conditions the potential impact of citizen participation; and the legislation which allows for only low intensity levels of citizen participation. As I have noted earlier in this chapter, the issue of the overlap
between diverse approaches to development, and in particular, the diverse understandings of citizen participation in local development, seem to translate into weak encouragement of community participation and not inclusive decision-making mechanisms.

Despite the philosophy and theory behind ‘developmental local government’ some municipalities seem to have misunderstood the different roles they are expected to play in the new dispensation. It is not clear whether the municipal officials who need to implement an IDP with the participation of local communities fully comprehend the concepts and purposes, and whether they have been exposed to new thinking and training in this regard. Ward Councillors do not seem to understand that the spirit of Ward Committees lies in being spaces for territorial participation and not a place for party politics. Again, a committed approach to meaningful participatory local governance should entail training and motivation of a special new breed of local government officials.

Moreover, I have noted that a participatory approach to local governance is afflicted by conceptual problems, ‘sitting uneasily between three ideal types of municipal planning and administration: the traditional approach, the market-based approach and the co-governance approach’ (FCR, 1999, p.26). The tensions between these approaches are still evident, as the findings from this thesis confirm. Also in line with Noble’s findings (Noble, 2004), my study suggests that the ideological orientations and understandings of citizen participation among municipal decision makers raises the need for a specific process of policy deconstruction before more broad-based participation can occur.

Inviting citizens to participate in spaces where decisions have already been taken, or where there is no meaningful issue to decide on, results in citizens losing their confidence in local government as an institution that is able to respond effectively to the challenges citizens raise. When decision-making power and resources remain at the higher spheres of government, but responsibilities are transferred to more decentralized spaces, the illegitimacy crisis of local government is reinforced due to its incapacity to deliver. Decentralization -conceived in this sense- is impeding more than facilitating participatory local governance. Thus, contrary to the common statement that citizen participation in local governance can be an answer to the ‘crisis’ of representative
democracy, it could be, on the contrary, contributing to reinforce this trend. In other words, contrary to the expectations being placed on the framework for citizen participation and developmental local government, in practice, citizen participation is widening the gap between the citizen and the local state.

This is not to dismiss the idea of citizen participation and decentralization, but government needs to be realistic about what can be achieved and not raise groundless expectations among the population. A more careful approach to citizen participation and decentralization may require consideration of the following necessary conditions: i) resource availability (especially some degree of financial autonomy); ii) supportive higher levels of government and system of intergovernmental fiscal relations; iii) supportive local government authorities and political commitment from local government as well as form other spheres of government; iv) capable local governments and civil society, and; v) effective structures of accountability.

The 2006 crisis in ‘service delivery’ surrounding municipalities reflects an underestimation of the challenges and investment that should be conferred to local government transformation. It could be argued then that the authors of the legal and policy framework regarding local government reform seem to work with a rather simplistic model of the state. More attention to the political nature of translating policy into practices is required. The lack of capacities in the broader sense, as discussed above, the play of patronage and the political conditioning of the development policy process (Grindle and Thomas, 1991) impact on the implementation of policies, and a critical assessment of the policy framework as well as new forms of oversight, public scrutiny and input seem to be needed.

Congruence between community preferences and public policies does not seem to be happening. Municipal institutional responsiveness needs to be strengthened. This implies that there is a clear need to move from the level of consultation to the level of involving citizens in the process of decision making. This might require revising the legal framework for citizen participation and the introduction of novel approaches to participation, such as participatory budgets. However, as has been highlighted in this thesis, a change in the legal and institutional environment would mean little (and could even be counterproductive) if issues of capacities, resources and approaches are not
explicitly addressed. Fundamentally, even if the legal and institutional framework changes, socio-economic and political realities that citizen participation is intended to address may remain unchanged.

Given the above-mentioned challenges, the process opened by the DPLG in 2008 to revisit the policy framework for Local and Provincial Government is to be welcomed, as well as the formulation of a renewed approach to capacity building. It is hoped that results emanating from this study will feed into this deliberative process and contribute to strengthening citizen participation and decentralization for the development of more democratic and inclusive models of local governance in the Eastern Cape in particular, and South Africa in general.
Chapter 7: Conclusion: Citizen participation and Decentralization as Alternatives in Development

7.1 Introduction and overview of the research thesis

Growing skepticism about the efficacy of narrowly conceived measures emphasizes the need to reform development, both theoretically and in practical terms. There is a greater convergence of opinions, or an emerging ‘consensus’, regarding the fact that ‘traditional’ development approaches and policies need to be reformulated, and ‘decentralization’ and ‘citizen participation’ have been proposed as remedies for previous development failures. In this thesis I have argued that these two words have been positioned at the heart of current development discourses, both internationally and in South Africa.

It is frequently stated that citizen participation will improve the efficiency and efficacy of public services; it is meant to render local government more accountable and it should contribute to deepening democracy as it will reinforce representative democratic institutions with participatory forms. At the same time, decentralization reforms have been proposed as a response to the failures of highly centralized states. From a political perspective, it is argued; decentralization reforms can help the central state gain legitimacy and have been seen as a strategy for maintaining political stability. It has been repeatedly suggested that physical proximity makes it easier for citizens to hold local officials accountable for their performance. From an economic perspective, decentralization can improve the match between the mix of services produced by the public sector and the preferences of the local population. It has also been noted that people are more willing to pay for services that respond to their priorities, and that increased competition between local governments generates spaces for more creative responses adapted to local needs.

But then, can decentralization and citizen participation live up to the faith and expectations that they have inspired? Why there seems to be a growing gap between the promises associated with participatory and decentralized development and everyday realities? The research thesis sought to provide an answer to this question. The question
was dealt with by means of a theoretical discussion, which was then grounded on a case study conducted in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Beyond the discursive consensus on the need to decentralize development and make it participatory, it was pointed out that the degree of consensus in terms of implementation of this ‘new’ agenda is a moot point, and that it could be interpreted as a consequence of the conceptual ambiguity underpinning divergent approaches associated with decentralization and citizen participation.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the literature commonly over-emphasizes the role of citizen participation and decentralization in development and what these processes and reforms can achieve. Much of the evidence is anecdotal in nature and tends to neglect the specific contexts in which these processes take place. Also largely ignored are political economy considerations, as well as a critical exploration of the relationship between these two key words. At best, when their interrelationships are addressed, decentralization and citizen participation are conceived as based on a symbiotic relationship. I suggest, however, that the relationship between these two processes is not clear-cut, as most of the literature assumes. I argue that citizen participation and decentralization can, in fact, be at odds.

This study has focused primarily on the nature of the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation. The meanings of these two key words in current development lexicon were explored and critically assessed. I argued that whether the rise in prominence of these two words actually means the emergence of a new development agenda is a moot point. It critically depends on the understandings of these ambiguous terms. The thesis adopted a political economy approach. Combined with this was an awareness of the broader historical and socio-economic context in which citizen participation and decentralization take place. I argued that recognizing these broader issues is critical to contextualizing the possibilities, or the potential, of participatory development to be transformative.

The thesis applied these ideas by triangulating diverse research methods and data sources. This triangulation of the various sources of information was deemed essential in doing justice to the complexity of the subject under examination. But triangulation
here was not solely understood as a combination of various data sources; it was also meant to integrate different research methods. Both qualitative and quantitative research has been combined. A literature review and documentary analysis, a survey conducted with municipal authorities and civil society organizations in the Eastern Cape, as well as structured interviews with Ward councillors and with key informants were all part of the methodological approach. As I have noted, triangulation and interdisciplinarity in these cases did not merely aim to validate findings. It was also used to achieve innovation in the conceptual framework.

The diverse intellectual strands that inform the concept of participation and decentralization were analyzed through an extensive literature review. At the same time, this informed the discussion and analysis of South Africa’s legal and policy frameworks associated to local government reforms and citizen participation processes. A critical analysis of citizen participation and decentralization regulations, laws, policies and practices was undertaken by merging the information collected through diverse tools and methods. The study focused on the viability and policy coherence of the institutional arrangements of decentralization and citizen participation.

A core set of research questions constituted the major investigative focus of the field research. These were derived from the theoretical discussions and adapted to the South African policy and legal framework. These questions were also drawn up based on discussions with key informants. They also provided useful information on the substance of this research, which was integrated into the analysis. Finally, the questionnaires were piloted and (where applicable) reformulated and subjected to position-role specific adaptations (Municipal Mayors and Mangers, Ward Councillors and CSO representatives). These questions were applied using self-administered questionnaires. A small sample of Ward Councillors was also interviewed and the questions in the above mentioned questionnaire were adapted to this specific analytical unit and research method. An empirical assessment of the fiscal decentralization process in South Africa, as per the theoretical framework designed, was also undertaken. The data gathered through the above-mentioned means were assessed, summarized and synthesized to produce the findings detailed in this thesis.
From a theoretical perspective, the study laid a foundation for understanding the relationship between development policies outcomes and the nature of citizen participation and decentralization in developing countries. This, in turn, provided a basis from which the relationship between citizen participation and decentralization processes in South Africa were assessed and understood. Therefore, the dialectic between theory and practice in decentralized and participatory development was discussed in this thesis through an empirical study carried out in the Province of the Eastern Cape, Republic of South Africa.

In South Africa, the Constitution, legislative frameworks, and policy documents such as the White Paper on Local Government, define the role of local government as developmental. Participation is given high priority; but what does that mean for local government authorities? What are the problems faced in the implementation of participatory approaches in local governance? What are the implementation constraints that municipalities face? In particular, what is the relationship between fiscal decentralization and citizen participation? To what extent is citizen participation in local governance influenced by the share of government revenue raised locally or transferred from higher levels of government? What are the consequences of citizen participation in local governance in terms of changes in policy and improved governance? Is there any evidence of new systems of accountability and greater responsiveness of municipal administration and politicians to local needs and thus increased efficiency? Has this diversified the types of voices heard and considered in political process?

The thesis presented evidence from a case study of the Eastern Cape, South Africa in order to respond to these specific questions. By revealing how different dimensions of decentralization and citizen participation operate and intersect, the findings demonstrated that, contrary to most studies and literature, citizen participation and decentralization are frequently at odds. Moreover, contrary to what has frequently been stated, the research also showed that opening new spaces for participation in decentralized local governance can result in fewer changes and disappointing results at best, but could also go on to undermine the transformative potential of the concepts of participation and decentralization, and could even deepen citizens’ lack of trust in local governments, producing an image of illegitimacy.
The introductory chapter of this thesis discussed the objectives and guiding research questions and the justification for this research study, as well as detailed the methodological approach and examined key limitations of the research approach. Chapter two focused on the current trends that can be identified in development discourses, with emphasis on the turn towards ‘localizing’ development. An historical understanding of the evolution of development theories and policies was included, as this was required for comprehending the so-called shift in development approaches, or the dichotomist tension between ‘alternative’ and ‘traditional’ perspectives towards development. The chapter centered the analysis on a number of selected themes and implicit debates at macro and meso-levels in the development literature with contemporary policy relevance, in particular in relation to decentralization, participation and democratic local governance. Key features of contemporary development discourses were identified, focusing on the ‘return to places’ and a new localism in economic action. It was argued that although ontologically different and coming from different avenues of thought, these trends sharpened the focus on decentralization and citizen participation.

Chapter three went on to discuss the diverse concepts of citizen participation and decentralization and examined their interrelations. It was built on a variety of intellectual sources and disciplines, particularly on the fiscal federalism literature as well as on political science, organizational and institutional perspectives. It reviewed the different meanings given to these terms and addressed the justifications for embarking on these processes. The assumed advantages and disadvantages of decentralization and participation were reviewed in light of the developing countries perspective. The chapter proposed a possible operationalization of the concepts of participation and decentralization that was used to guide the analysis developed in Chapter four and five. An analytical framework which integrated the different understandings of the development process, the associated development management approaches, the operational definition of citizen participation and the various meanings and dimensions of decentralization, was developed to unpack the rhetoric of citizen participation and decentralization in local governance.
While looking at the relationship with development paradigms and development planning approaches, it was argued that each of the three main approaches as identified in chapter two (the traditional approach, the market based approach –including also the so-called citizen-centered or community-based related counterparts- and the co-governance approach) involve a particular understanding of what citizen participation and decentralization mean and what their main objectives are, and therefore have different implications for policy and practice. The ambiguity surrounding ‘floating signifiers’ such as citizen participation and decentralization allows them to fit into any of these approaches and then, as general statements, these could be incorporated into highly contradictory development discourses.

Because of the ambiguity in these concepts, the thesis argued that it was critical to understand and explore the meanings, definitions and interrelationships between citizen participation and decentralization. And the study found that even when decentralization and citizen participation are incorporated in mainstream development discourses, this incorporation does not necessarily mean a reformulation of the development agenda. As most frequently understood (and this was found in the case of municipal officials and politicians in South Africa, as well as partially in the logic and rationale underpinning the legal framework and policy documents) decentralization and citizen participation are not providing the bases for a revision of development approaches. Its core fundamentals can remain unreformed even when advocating for more participatory and decentralized forms of policy.

The arguments and definitions developed in Chapters two and three provided a framework for better understanding how, and under what conditions, citizen participation and decentralization can contribute to democratic local governance. In particular, this conceptualization assisted in the evaluation and understanding of the patterns of decentralization and citizen participation in local governance in South Africa, and helped to identify factors that can influence local government attempts to promote participation and their outcomes. It provided the conceptual framework for evaluating how much of the participatory and decentralized local governance discourse is translated into concrete experiences, and for understanding and assessing their policy and policy outcomes implications.
Critical issues to take into account, as emerging from the theoretical framework, are the degree of financial autonomy, the overall system of interrelationships with other spheres of government, the issue of capacities, political commitment and attitude of local government, but also of other levels of government as well as civil society. Fundamentally, as in the case of South Africa, where the legal framework is ambiguous and leaves a high margin of action to local governments, understandings of what citizen participation means and the reasons why citizen participation is encouraged are critical issues to take into account.

Under the conceptual framework developed in chapter two and three, Chapter four discussed some of the above defined variables affecting decentralization and the citizen participation process, reviewing the legal and fiscal framework for decentralization and citizen participation in South Africa. The chapter considered the political context of decentralization by briefly outlining the historical transformation process. It subsequently reviewed the current situation and examined the policy and legal framework applicable to the allocation of powers and functions for local government. It reviewed and criticized the diagnosis that lack of capacities is the sole factor explaining why the new system of local governance is not delivering on its promise. I argued that while this diagnosis is relevant, other factors need to be taken into account. The intricacies of the fiscal decentralization context for citizen participation were then analyzed. The chapter explored the system of cooperative fiscal governance and the relationship with the potential of citizen participation instruments for defining and implementing locally defined agendas. The chapter also looked at the composition, size, source and expenditure of municipal finances to contextualize the extent to which citizen participation tools are able to achieve their objectives as stated in the policy framework. This is considered a relevant contribution to the literature in South Africa, which is considered to be afflicted by relatively little explicit engagement with emerging debates regarding the relationships between decentralization, citizen participation and democratic local governance.

The context and challenges within which local government has to operate were further investigated in chapter five. Local government views on the political, legislative and institutional constraints where local governments operate were revised, since this informs and contextualizes the possibilities of participatory approaches in local
governance. The research went on to investigate the theoretical basis and understanding of the notion of participation as assumed by local government authorities at the municipal level. The relevance of this kind of analysis was highlighted by the fact that the specific understandings of citizen participation, as held by decision-makers at the local level, defines procedures and objectives of the particular municipality with respect to promoting citizen participation in local governance. This was then contrasted against the perceptions of a sample of CSOs in the Eastern Cape.

An assessment of the legal and policy framework for citizen participation in South Africa was conducted. Chapter five also focused on the spaces for citizen participation in local governance as introduced by the policy and legal framework in South Africa’s new system of local governance. In particular, IDP and Ward Committees were analyzed, as these were defined as key spaces for citizen participation in local governance by the legislation and relevant policy documents. The focus of the analysis shifted to the process of citizen participation in itself, providing an assessment of citizen participation tools and mechanisms.

The combination of the analyses made in Chapter four and five has provided a holistic understanding of citizen participation and decentralization processes in South Africa. Chapters four and five offered the basis for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between decentralization, citizen participation and the outcomes of development policies. Together, these chapters allowed for an in-depth assessment of the operations of citizen participation and decentralization in democratic local governance. Chapter six has drawn these together while presenting implications and main findings of the study.

This last, concluding chapter summarizes the overall findings of the study and highlights their implications and main contributions for theory in general, and for citizen participation and decentralized democratic governance in South Africa in particular. These contributions are assessed against the main limitations of the research and directions for future research are suggested.
7.2 Summary and discussion of the research findings

This thesis provided an in depth exploration into the concepts of participation and decentralization by discussing their various definitions, stated advantages and objectives, and critically assessing both their conceptual coherence and their utility as operational and policy tools. My study provided an operationalization of both concepts that allows for assessing the extent to which such practices are being implemented; for exploring the nature of the problems and challenges faced during their implementation; and establishing what is required to fulfill the promises associated to these key words in the contemporary development lexicon.

In describing and assessing the causes for the rise to prominence of decentralization and citizen participation, this dissertation looked at the broader theoretical context and concepts relevant to the subject-matter. It looked at changes in development theories to provide a framework for discussion of the rationale for decentralization and citizen participation in development. Relevant theoretical paradigms and changes in development theory were outlined.

It was noted that current debates within and about development theories have moved away from grand narratives and towards more local, empirical and inductive approaches. This shift has in turn been accompanied by a parallel move in development practice towards participation, empowerment and decentralization. Areas such as institution building, organizational strengthening, the ‘ownership’ of development policies, participation, social capital, human development, people-centered development, sustainable development, good governance and democratization to mention a few, have been brought into the centre of the international policy debate. This is reflected in the (re)incorporation of concepts and categories into mainstream development, in a supposed recognition of the failures of the ‘exclusively’ market-led development strategies that gained force during the eighties. Although views have differed widely as to the nature of the concrete measures entailed, a growing consensus has emerged: On the one hand, it is recognized that long term development requires more comprehensive approaches and polices that go beyond macro structural adjustment, and, on the other hand, there is acknowledgement of the importance of a (revised) role for the state and other non-governmental development actors.
For some, this implied the (at least rhetorical) recognition by major development agencies (particularly the World Bank) of past failures and a positive shift away from both market-led and traditional top-down centralized approaches towards an ‘alternative’ or emergent approach. For others, however, this incorporation has implied the loss of the radical perspective embedded in the so-called alternative approaches (Kothari and Minogue, 2002). As Ocampo asks, is this so-called new consensus an indication that the development agenda is in fact changing? (Ocampo, 2004).

The reasons for the advancement of local development and participation to the core of development discourses were discussed as having been due to a concurrence of events at the beginning of the new millennium. The sharp criticism of development discourses given the failures of past experiences, a need to increase efficiency of development aid, and unfulfilled promises of democratization were suggested as being at the heart of this revision of old concepts and approaches that has defined a new development language.

As has been argued, the promotion of decentralization processes and discourses of local development can be related to the questioning of previously prevailing development models that were highly centralized in character and urban biased, including sharp criticism directed at the way in which the ‘local’ dimension was approached in such conceptualizations. Local responses of self-management emerged in the form of claims that it is the local society itself who tries to resolve its problems, independently of the state apparatus.

In particular, regarding the ‘democratic crisis’, the perceived lack of government responsiveness to citizens and of real connections between them, diverse forms of institutionalizing participation have been proposed for bridging this gap. The crisis of the relationship between citizens and the state is positioned at the centre of this shift towards decentralized democratic governance.

There are many arguments that call for decentralization reforms and new ways of involving citizens in local governance, both from an economic and political rationale. This shift is understood in mainstream development discourses as a government closer to the people and more responsive to their needs. It is argued that, as local government
is regarded as the part of the public sector that is closest to the inhabitants it is therefore indispensable in its role of promoting their general welfare. Decentralization legislation is understood as the institutional framework for devolving power and responsibility to lower levels of government and allowing for diverse forms of citizen participation in matters of local governance.

In the wake of the demise of ‘crude’ neoliberal policy recommendations, political and institutional aspects come to the centre of the discussion. Calls for a government closer to the people and more responsive to their needs implied the need to revisit decentralization reforms. In addition, it was noted that people’s political empowerment as a key element of the human rights framework for development and citizen participation in local governance has been promoted.

It is frequently stated that citizen participation will improve the efficiency and efficacy of public services; it is meant to render local government more accountable and it should contribute to deepening democracy as it will reinforce representative democratic institutions with participatory forms. At the same time, decentralization reforms have been proposed as a response to the failures of highly centralized states. From a political perspective, it is argued that decentralization reforms can help the central state gain legitimacy, and have been seen as a strategy for maintaining political stability. It has been repeatedly suggested that physical proximity makes it easier for citizens to hold local officials accountable for their performance. From an economic perspective, decentralization can improve the matching of services produced by the public sector to the preferences of the local population. It has also been noted that people are more willing to pay for services that respond to their priorities, and that increased competition between local governments generates spaces for more creative responses adapted to local needs.

The rise of citizen participation and decentralization has also been central to South African development discourses and policy documents. Citizen participation in local governance has been established as an end in itself, but also as a means to achieving the new developmental goals of local government. The WPLG envisages citizen participation as the key for a successful, effective and more democratic developmental local government.
However, practices and promises of participatory development seem to be very different things. In the case of South Africa, while the reform of the system of local governance implied the creation of formal structures for people to channel their views and concerns and to work in partnership with the governments in tackling development and governance challenges, massive protests took place during 2005 and 2006. The new spaces created do not seem to be working (or at least are not used) as a way of voicing citizen needs and concerns regarding local government performance.

The study argued that the reasons for this gap between decentralization and citizen participation discourses and practice can be found in the ambiguity of these concepts. When one carefully explores the participatory and decentralization rhetoric, one finds that these key words, which have become incorporated into mainstream development lexicon, have very diverse meanings associated with different perspectives on the objectives, the role of key actors and the design of development policies. The consistency and depth of this new language has not been subject to much scrutiny. I have highlighted that the policy coherence of these two processes should be a matter of debate and that an uncritical assumption of a direct relationship between decentralization, citizen participation and inclusive and more democratic models of local governance should be handled with care and subjected to painstaking examination.

These relationships are not clear-cut. For some, decentralization is regarded as a condition (necessary but not enough) for the promotion of local democracy through increased participation. For others, some degree of citizen participation is a precondition for effective decentralization. Some would even argue that even if decentralization leads to increased citizen participation, this does not necessarily make a governance system more pro-poor, inclusive or democratic. I have argued that the nature of this relationship will critically depend on how decentralization is conceived and implemented, and I have also suggested that the wider political economy conditions where decentralization and citizen participation are called to occur are crucial to explaining the relationship.
On the one hand, the very essence of the association of increased participation with more deconcentrated forms of power is being questioned. There are examples that shows that increased citizen participation may be associated to power concentration instead of power decentralization. On the other hand, some authors have noted that there are no a priori reasons why more localized forms of governance would be more pro-poor, inclusive or democratic.

Mismatched financial authority and functional responsibility is a common trait in much of the developing world’s decentralization experiences. However, without increased fiscal autonomy and resources at the local level, political ‘autonomy’ would be meaningless (Garman et al, 2000). I have argued that without this, local government suffers a profound legitimacy crisis in its evolving relationship to civil society and this in turn does not generate an appropriate background for citizen participation in local governance. On the contrary, in this case decentralization reforms would lead to discouraging citizen participation, resulting in a growing crisis of legitimacy in the relationship between citizens and the local state. This is a critical argument on which I based part of the analysis developed in chapter four for South Africa.

The results from this study showed that the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation is more complex than can be captured in any single summary statement. Rather than finding that decentralization is always a contributing factor for citizen participation and more democratic models of local governance, the results from this research, both theoretically and empirically, show wide divergences depending on type and conception of the decentralization process, how it is being implemented and other contextual variables.

This conclusion does not invalidate the promise of decentralization and citizen participation for more efficient and democratic local governance, but highlights the importance of effective structures of accountability, resources availability (adequacy of financial resources but specially some degree of financial autonomy), political commitment and supportive higher levels of government and the system of intergovernmental fiscal relations; supportive local government authorities, capable local government and civil society (civil society mobilization, and local government technical capacity) are all critical factors shaping positive outcomes.
The corollary of the previous statements is that if these conditions are not met, then decentralization and citizen participation may not be an appropriate strategy for the promotion of more democratic and inclusive models of local governance.

The explicit exploration of the linkages between decentralization and citizen participation is considered to be a distinctive contribution of my study to the relevant body of research and literature in South Africa.

Three development planning approaches have been identified as associated to different ‘grand narratives’ of development. The ‘traditional approach’ was associated to modernization perspectives, the ‘market-based approach’ and ‘community-centered’ (and even ‘citizen-centered’) approaches were associated to neoliberalism and postmodernism. The ‘co-governance approach’ was associated to what I have identified as the ‘eclectic’ paradigm. It was argued that the recent wave of enthusiasm for decentralization, citizen participation, the localization agenda and community self-help as an ‘alternative’ strategy for development, needs to be critically examined.

The traditional approach to local development management and planning involves ‘top-down’ planning because of the degree of control exercised by the central state over the entire regional development and planning process. The emphasis on conventional bureaucratic service delivery, based on the conscientious application of rules and procedures, is also characteristic of this approach to local planning and development. The approach regards citizens essentially as ‘beneficiaries’ of public programmes. In turn, the market-based approach emphasizes involving private sector management techniques, minimizing the role of the local state, privatization and outsourcing of service delivery. This approach regards residents as ‘customers’ of municipal services that can voice their preferences through market mechanisms (e.g. choosing which services they would like to pay for).

Interpreted under the Market-based approach, citizen participation and decentralization could be mere ‘add-ons’ to what is, by and large, the same policy agenda, with new generations of reforms and associated new words simply being appended to what are regarded essentially as the correct foundations (Ocampo, 2001). If this is the approach
that is privileged then the new orthodoxy should not be understood as an ‘alternative’ to previous development paradigms, and decentralization and citizen participation are not contributing towards enhanced critical reflexivity on its essential features.

On the other hand, a co-governance approach is not about replacing, but completing and reinforcing existing democratic institutions. It is about complementary ways to bring citizens closer to governments and strengthening local governance institutions; it is not about substituting the latter with the former (as implicit in market-based approaches, but also in citizen centered governance approaches). These links call for both a strong state --both in its national and sub national levels-- and a strong and vibrant civil society. New bridges need to be built between the state and citizens, but also their relations need to change and this requires transforming state institutions. But, because democratic decentralization goes beyond legislative acts and resource reallocations, its effectiveness and sustainability requires far more than the capacities of both the central and local state. In particular, as it was highlighted, if a committed political agent is a necessary ingredient for decentralization and citizen participation, the associational dynamics and capacities of other local actors are also critical (Heller, 2001).

Improving local services requires an effective local administration. Capacity building has become a popular part of the jargon of development agencies and flurries of programs geared towards strengthening sub national government technical capacity have been implemented in many countries. However, little is heard about the need to build capacities for other levels of government and those that decentralization ‘intends to help’, for the NGOs and CBOs at the frontline of community involvement. I have argued that in examining the relationship between decentralization and citizen participation, issues of capacity of local government, but also of civil society, should be acknowledged and properly assessed.

In South Africa, my study (also corroborated by other analyses) highlighted the lack of training and political education, both of the councilors and of residents and CBOs, as relevant elements to explain why the system of participatory local governance seems not to be working. This is coupled by the relative novelty of the participatory tools and spaces for local governance. I argued that there is a clear need to also focus on capacity
development beyond municipalities. Beyond what is stated in the literature, it emerged from my study that there is a need to widen the scope of action and definition associated to capacity building. Fundamentally, the tasks of transforming local government into a developmental agent require changes in attitudes and behavior, and again of a set of actors, not only local government. I have suggested that the apparent consensus on ‘capacity development’ needs to be further understood as, essentially, an endogenous process. In South Africa, it should be critical that any review of the local government framework takes into account informal aspects of the way municipalities work and how they are influenced by their social and political environment.

At the same time, the review of the policy documents and legal framework allowed the researcher, by the act of deconstruction and critique, to provide some guidelines on the kind of legal and policy framework obstacles that might impede effective decentralization and citizen participation in local governance, and how these obstacles could be overcome to facilitate the relationship between decentralized and more participatory forms of policy.

I have also noted that the main policy document guiding the approach to local government, the WPLG, can be easily interpreted and accommodated to different development discourses. As Pieterse (2002) suggests, the emphasis on efficiency in the WPLG is clearly rooted in NPM approaches. But, at the same time, the WPLG is also influenced by participatory development discourses. In other words, market-based governance approaches and co-governance approaches can be easily accommodated in the WPLG. In terms of the co-governance approach, spaces created for citizen participation involve the transformation of municipal systems to promote community involvement in development decisions. This perspective is embedded in parts of the WPLG, where the process of reforming local government is anchored in the concepts of ‘participative’ and ‘democratic decentralization’.

These oscillations in the WPLG that allow for various interpretations, as well as the high degree of flexibility associated to the legal framework regulating the implementation of participatory spaces (e.g. Ward Committees), make it crucial to examine what the municipal managers’s and mayors’s understandings of citizen participation are. While some aspects of the traditional approach and the market-based
approach seems to be privileged by municipal officials and politicians, there are also passages of the key policy documents and legislation that impairs the development of a co-governance approach. I found that the legislation is conceived to only allow for low intensity levels of citizen participation. The issue of the overlap between diverse approaches to development, and in particular, the diverse understandings of citizen participation in local development, seems to translate into weak encouragement of community participation and not inclusive decision-making mechanisms.

Besides a verification and validation of the theoretical approach itself, the empirical study highlighted that the concepts of decentralization and citizen participation, as embedded in the WPLG and as reflected by municipal politicians and officials, are capable of coexisting with different conceptions of development. The tensions between these approaches are evident as the findings from this thesis confirm. In line also with Noble’s findings (Noble, 2004), my study suggests that the ideological orientations and understandings of citizen participation by municipal decision makers would require a specific process of policy deconstruction before more broad-based participation can occur.

I have suggested that there is a need to reconsider the structures through which policy operates and also to revisit the relevant discourses and, most especially in this case, local government officials actions through which policy is articulated. My study suggests that there is a need to illuminate the operationalization of policy in different domains to reveal how ‘policies work as instruments of governance, as ideological vehicles’ (Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 26).

An efficiency-centered approach seems to be pervasive to local government understandings of citizen participation. In terms of the diverse definition and approaches reviewed in chapter 3, the perspective that municipalities’s privilege is that of ‘participation in projects’, reflecting more ‘instrumentalist’ approaches to community involvement in matters of local governance. The underlying conception of democracy is that of representative democracy, and the citizen is mainly conceived as a voter as well as a beneficiary or client. Being construed as beneficiaries, customers, users or partners tends to determine what people are perceived to be able to contribute
or are entitled to know or decide, as well as the perceived obligations of those who seek to involve them.

According to some authors, in South Africa a negotiated democratic transition and commitments to building democratic developmental local government have given way to concerted political centralization, the expansion of technocratic and managerial authority and a shift from democratic to market modes of accountability (Heller, 2001)...

The way the political project of local government reform is being understood and implemented seems not to support the transformative potential of citizen participation and decentralization.

I agree with Pieterse (2002) in that there are some grounds for the market-based approach, given the urgency for improving service delivery and given that the fiscal constraints faced by local governments are also due to non-payment for services. What is a cause of concern is that this view is in isolation from the issue of strengthening local democracy. Some aspects of this approach should be recast under the principles of a co-governance approach, which confer centrality to the issues of human rights and conceives the citizen, but also the local state, as key agents that should be partners in any development strategy.

Despite the philosophy and theory behind ‘developmental local government’, some municipalities seem to have misunderstood the different roles they are expected to play in the new dispensation. It is not clear whether the municipal officials who need to implement an IDP with the participation of local communities fully comprehend the concepts and purposes, and whether they have been exposed to new thinking and training in this regard. Ward Councillors seem not to understand the spirit of Ward Committees as spaces for territorial participation and not a place for party politics. Again, a committed approach to meaningful participatory local governance should entail training and motivation of a special new breed of local government officials (Pieterse, 2002).

Inviting citizens to participate in spaces where decisions have already been taken, or where there is no meaningful issue to decide on, results in citizens losing their confidence in local government as an institution that is able to respond effectively to the
challenges they raise. When decision-making power and resources remain at the higher spheres of government, but responsibilities are transferred to more decentralized spaces, the illegitimacy crisis of local government is reinforced by its incapacity to deliver. Decentralization -conceived in this sense- is impeding more than facilitating participatory local governance. Thus, contrary to the common stance that citizen participation in local governance can be an answer to the ‘crisis’ of representative democracy, it could be, on the contrary, contributing to reinforce this trend. In other words, contrary to the expectations being placed on the framework for citizen participation and developmental local government, in practice, citizen participation is widening the gap between the citizen and the local state.

Integrating a fiscal perspective (by analyzing the intergovernmental relations system, the expenditure allocations and revenue raising capacities of municipalities) into the analysis allowed the researcher to further explain the relationship between decentralized local governance, the levels of participation and the types of outcomes from development policies. I have argued in chapter three that the ways in which central governments decentralize their powers have very different policy implications and the focus of accountability changes in each case. Decentralization is essentially about local governments having power to define and implement locally defined agendas.

The Constitution of South Africa defines the functions of local government and its relationship to other spheres of government, emphasizing cooperation between the three spheres of government through the principle of cooperative governance. It was noted, however, that the intergovernmental system has largely failed to adequately support local government. As discussed, while cooperation implies a process of double direction in which the three spheres of government work interrelatedly, the process of decentralization has, however, adopted a form more similar to a unilateral process of alignment. Although I recognize that the new system of intergovernmental fiscal relations makes relevant advances in terms of the previously centralized state, the intergovernmental institutional and fiscal system and the principle of ‘cooperative governance’ has proven to be problematic in practice. If local government is to govern effectively and play an integrating and coordinating role at the local level, the overall system of intergovernmental fiscal relations needs to be revised.
Including a fiscal perspective is also especially relevant for assessing the extent to which municipalities have any power to determine—through their planning processes—expenditure priorities and thus independently decide on the priorities for their municipality. This deals with the effective degree of ‘autonomy’ of municipalities. In South Africa, I have further shown that in many cases, especially for those smaller municipalities, the use of unconditional grants (equitable grant) is mainly dedicated to paying salaries and bulk services purchases. At the same time, the use of conditional grants is predetermined, because they are defined in terms of national sector strategies and programmes. I have shown that the majority of municipalities in South Africa, but especially in the Eastern Cape, heavily depend on government grants. Thus, there is little room for locally deciding on what to spend. Inviting people to participate, but not allowing them to make any meaningful decisions—or not putting their decisions into practice—also contributes to delegitimizing local governments, discouraging citizen participation and further alienating citizens.

The pattern of revenue collection and main revenue sources also explain the direction of accountability. This is also relevant in at least partially explaining the poor responsiveness of South African municipalities to citizens’ grievances. In terms of accountability, decentralization establishes a complicated set of principal-agent relationships in which sub national governments act both as agents of higher levels of government and as agents of their constituents in the delivery of local services (Burki et al, 1999).

In South Africa, coupled with the issue of lack of electoral uncertainty and lack of relationship between government performance and local elections results, the issue of grant dependence is also critical to explaining why local government officials are not accountable to their constituencies, but instead to higher levels of government. Even in the case of South Africa, where transfers are relatively adequate and reliable, a fiscal regime which compels local actors to depend so heavily on central financial arrangements for practically all of their expenditure requirements implies the development of vertical relations within the state, with serious implications for public participation and effective accountability. The dependence of governments on non-tax sources of funding is likely to have adverse effects on their accountability and responsiveness (Moore, 2007; Robinson, 2004). There is a clear need to build an
incentive environment in the public sector that is compatible with a focus on service delivery as well as bottom-up accountability and strengthening of local democracy.

My study has highlighted the key challenges and contradictions faced during the actual implementation of citizen participation and decentralization discourses and provided a distinctive contribution to the understanding of how and under what conditions citizen participation and decentralization can contribute towards more democratic and inclusive models of local governance.

The attempts by democratic governments in South Africa to redress historical exclusions by ‘putting people first’, to use Chambers words, are praiseworthy and, despite its limitations, the law has opened new spaces for the exercise of direct democracy at the local level. However, the contradictions in the legal and institutional framework, as well as the ‘implementation gap’, put to question the real possibilities for people to be placed at the centre and take part in development initiatives. It seems as if the South African government underestimated the enormity of the local government transition and the huge administrative and financial resources, as well as the changes in attitudes of both leaders and citizens that this transition would require. So, while citizen participation and decentralized governance holds promise for the future development of more democratic and inclusive localities, the South African government needs to be aware of actual constraints and challenges.

7.3 Some limitations and directions for future research

In the course of this research it became evident that a number of related issues need further investigation. Firstly, it is important to realize that this research, by definition, does not provide an exhaustive picture of the interactions between local government and citizens, as the study is focused on local government authorities and a small sample of developmental NGOs and CBOs working in the Eastern Cape. Some additional inferences are obtained from the structured interviews with ward councillors and from previous research on CSOs in South Africa. Given the heterogeneity that is characteristic of what actually constitutes a ‘local community’ and ‘community
organizations’, further research should be conducted to assess the problems and obstacles local communities face to effectively participate in local governance.

Secondly, issues of participation and inclusion are closely linked with issues of representation and legitimacy. The roles played by intermediary organizations, such as NGOs vs. grassroots community organizations, require particular attention. Accountability issues within civil society groups often constitute another problem. Where civil society organizations claim to represent the voice of the poor, attention must be paid to the actual process in which the poor engage in articulating, aggregating and representing their interests to these groups (ECA, 2004). Questions of internal democracy and organization, their grassroots structure and internal culture as well as the nature of their leadership are critical for establishing whose voice is really being promoted through NGOs and other civil society organizations. The concept of ‘local community’ with shared interests is very far from real and local politics are highly conflictive. ‘This localism tended to essentialize the local as discrete places that host relatively homogenous communities’ (Mohan and Stokke, 2000, p. 264). The different capacity of various types of civil society organizations to marshal resources, formulate priorities and exercise influence is also a factor that merits more analysis. It is also important to determine who these organizations really represent (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

Thirdly, as Pozzoni and Kumar (2005) argue, participatory spaces constitute the locus of decision-making at the local level, and it is therefore extremely important for community groups and citizens to enter such spaces. One the one hand, formal inclusion concerns the extent to which different community members and citizens are able to enter decision-making arenas. This, however, is not in itself sufficient for guaranteeing that participants will be able to exert influence over decisions. It has been noted that merely entering participatory spaces does not enable weaker social groups to influence decisions and risks turning participation into legitimization of an apparent consensus which reflects the wishes of the most powerful groups. Therefore, on the other hand, substantive inclusion captures the extent to which different participants are able to voice their views, and the extent to which these are taken into consideration by other participants (Pozzoni and Kumar, 2005). While some insights are provided in terms of the level and extent of involvement in participatory spaces as a function of age.
and gender, these factors, along with others such as class and ethnicity, condition the forms of participation associated with different forms of policy engagement and influence the outcomes of participatory processes. This study can only be understood as scratching the surface regarding these aspects.

Fourthly, this research study only focuses on those participatory spaces opened up by government. It is concentrated on institutionalized spaces for participation or ‘invited participation’ (ECA, 2004). In other words, the focus is on spaces created from above through government intervention. Political spaces, however, are constantly being created and reshaped where different actors and interests interact. Other forms of participation constantly occur and their interaction with formal or institutionalized spaces needs to be better understood.

The literature is not conclusive on the relationship between institutionalized (formal spaces) and spontaneous spaces. Some noted that these two are not mutually exclusive and can be complementary, and found that a ‘push and pull’ approach (combining bottom-up with top-down efforts) works best (CIVICUS, 2008). Others argue that there might be some crowding out effect taking place, more institutionalized (and resourced) spaces displacing more ad-hoc ones. This seems to be partially the case in Venezuela, where the newly created ‘consejos comunales’ are actually having some positive impact on the ‘symbolic’ dimensions of political inclusion but, at the same time, they are also weakening and displacing other spaces for citizen participation, as these newly created spaces are monopolizing public resources\textsuperscript{123}. I have partially discussed this issue in the case of South Africa with the establishment of Ward Committees, but more efforts should be made in exploring the interface and dynamics between institutionalized and spontaneous spaces for participation.

Fifthly, this research study has not focused on the role of traditional authorities. However, this is a key area for fully understanding the patterns of citizen participation in local governance in a province such as the Eastern Cape. Traditional authorities remain a relevant source of local power and a relevant actor in the local governance system. Bank and Minkley have noted that the transition to democracy has not broken

\textsuperscript{123} See research being undertaken by Margarita Lopez Maya at CENDES, Venezuela.
the power of chiefs and the tribal authority systems in the rural areas. They argue that while new democratic forms of local governance have been introduced in rural spaces, they continue to coexist with traditional authorities that have remained influential and politically organized locally, but also regionally and nationally (Bank and Minkley, 2005). Therefore, for fully understanding the patterns of citizen participation in local governance in a province such as the EC, this is a key area that needs attention.

For some scholars, the absence of debate and analysis of the role of traditional authorities in the social economy of the former Ciskei and Transkei regions, and an evaluation of the possible effects of the perpetuation and reinforcement of their powers through legislative measures is of high concern. It is significant that the legislation recently faced a challenge in the Constitutional Court for undermining women’s rights to the land. Research has shown how gender imbalances and patriarchal relationships constitute a major structural impediment to social mobility and social entrepreneurship. As Haines argues, the flawed process of invoking, and in some instances reinforcing, traditional authorities as community and developmental leaders in the ex-homeland rural areas perpetuates structural poverty and unemployment, and retains the intricate and labyrinthine type of efforts required for social transformation (Haines, 2005). From a broad political economy perspective; the analyses of chieftainship and poverty, the relationship between traditional and local government authorities and the rest of the community, as well as their interaction in a framework of democratic, decentralized governance deserve attention.

Finally, it is expected that this thesis has addressed the frequent neglect as regards exploring the links between fiscal decentralization and citizen participation, and it is further hoped that this research serves as a catalyst for further analyzes in these

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124 During the debates on the new system of local government, traditional authorities sought concessions from the government to preserve their local level power by demanding fifty per cent of the seats in local government. Although the government did not agree to this, it nevertheless increased their participation in local councils from ten to 20 per cent (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

125 IDRC is supporting various research projects exploring how decentralized land administration and management systems in Southern Africa, as well as emerging cultural and political trends under decentralization, impact on women’s claims for land rights. Issues affecting women’s strategic interests include poor access to rural community structures because of control by traditional leaders, the upholding of customary marriage laws and women’s poor inheritance rights under these, as well as restricted access to communal land. On November 18-21 2008 IDRC organized an international conference in Mexico City which convened 300 policy-makers, academics and women’s rights activists from around the world to explore the impact of decentralization on women’s rights. Some of the discussions focused on the relationship between decentralization, traditional authorities and women rights.
relatively uncharted and all too often forgotten arenas. I have noted that finding independent sources of financing for emerging local structures of governance has been one of the central challenges confronted by decentralization in most countries. The literature and theory of fiscal decentralization suggest that sources of independent local government revenue are few, and this is more relevant in poor countries. As a result, most countries design decentralization programmes that depend heavily on intergovernmental transfers from national to local governments. Because of this, I believe that a generation of studies which revisit the theoretical framework for fiscal decentralization issues, including the issue of accountability alongside with efficiency and equity considerations, should shed light on more balanced approaches to the distribution of power, functions and revenues. Also, research could investigate best practices on innovative mechanisms for improving tax collection, again, framed under an approach which addresses issues of transparency, accountability and citizen participation. In particular, experiments such as participatory budgets, but working on the other side of the public sector fiscal equation, should be explored. Further research on the issue of the design of intergovernmental grants and incentives for revenue collection and their interrelation with citizen participation should also be welcomed.

7.4 Conclusion

This research thesis sought to identify key features of current development theory and policy specifically related to the emergence of decentralization and citizen participation discourses. It also designed, tested and implemented –through a case study in South Africa- an assessment framework for decentralization and participatory spaces in local governance. It is expected that this will contribute to both theoretical interpretations and applied policy.

The thesis discussed the concepts of participation and decentralization, their various meanings, contradictions and intersections. It provided an overview of these concepts by reviewing their definitions, stated advantages and objectives, and critically assessed both their conceptual coherence and their utility as operational and policy tools. This study provided an operationalization of both concepts in order to be able to assess the extent to which these practices are being implemented and which problems and challenges are being faced during their implementation. This helped to indentify the
conditions and to understand how citizen participation and decentralized local governance can contribute to more inclusive and democratic social change.

This thesis aimed to construct an analytical framework that facilitated the assessment of the degree to which the decentralization and participatory discourse is translated into practice, and to explore the causes of the implementation gap or shortfalls. This conceptual framework for assessing citizen participation in decentralized governance provided a model to define the issues that should be considered and prioritized in the formulation and evaluation of decentralization and participatory strategies for democratic local governance.

The relationship between citizen participation and decentralization has been critically assessed and deconstructed, and a framework for the assessment of their interrelations has been added to the existing body of knowledge.

The possibility to deal effectively with such ambiguous concepts as citizen participation and decentralization, through a new approach that was not only developed but also implemented and used to assess citizen participation and decentralization in the South Africa context is considered a relevant contribution.

The integration of this conceptual mapping with existing but partial and unconnected local knowledge, and its application to understanding citizen participation in South Africa, is regarded as an additional contribution of the research.

In particular, this conceptualization assisted in the evaluation and understanding of the patterns of decentralization and citizen participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The research assessed the extent to which municipalities’ developmental role is being conceived through the incorporation of participatory practices. Additionally, it explored local government authorities’ understandings of citizen participation and provided an evaluation of the ‘intensity levels’ of citizen participation as understood by local government authorities, while comparing these answers with the perceptions of CSO. It identified and analyzed the key challenges and constraints restricting the incorporation of participatory development approaches in local governance.
After establishing this diagnosis, the research included some suggestions on possible strategies for overcoming the problems and limitations that explain the gap between theory, policy formulation and practice. This thesis discussed the suitability and potential of decentralization and citizen participation in the Eastern Cape province, and more generally in South Africa, and suggested policy guidelines in light of these findings.

This study examined the complex relationship between decentralization and the role of citizen participation in democratic local governance. It developed a general framework that allows local governments’ perspectives, problems, views and opportunities attached to participatory approaches in local governance to be evaluated and understood while recognizing the broader issues of political economy that contextualize the possibilities or the potential of participatory development to be transformative. I argued that if these issues are not properly dealt with, the efforts to promote citizen participation will result in fewer changes and disappointing results at best, undermining the transformative potential of the concepts of participation and decentralization.

The research was intended to record and appreciate the varieties, dynamics and gaps between development discourses and practice that are relevant for the work of development practitioners and for the enrichment of the academic debate, as well as for the review of policy frameworks.

I expect that this research will provoke more critical inquiry and debate as to the potentialities of participation and decentralization for development to effectively expand people’s freedoms and opportunities. I truly expect that the outcomes of this research could help reformulate our approaches to development and bring about sustainable forms of citizen participation for more inclusive and democratic local governance.

My study ascertains that recognizing the complexities related to the implementation of citizen participation and decentralization approaches, and their weaknesses and contradictions, does not imply helplessness. On the contrary, I believe that recognizing these issues implies the concrete possibility to transform development discourses; to
effectively translate citizen participation and decentralization into tools for more inclusive and democratic social change.
Chapter 8: Bibliography


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9.1 Research questionnaires

9.1.1 Municipal officials and Mayors

Introductory letters and questionnaire

It is with great pleasure that I am addressing to you in connection with a research work being conducted in the Eastern Cape: ‘A survey on citizen participation in local governance’. It argues that if Citizen Participation is going to be a meaningful concept, there is a growing need to appreciate the nature, dynamics and methods of participation and to understand the barriers and constraints to participation in local governance. As a consequence, it develops a general framework that allows evaluating and understanding local governments' perspective, problems, views and opportunities attached to participatory approaches in local development policies and local governance. It further contextualizes the study in a broader analysis of South Africa local government process of reform and legal framework for public participation, understood as the institutional, legal and political background of the study. The research is being conducted for the Dissertation for the DPhil degree on Development Studies at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)\textsuperscript{126}.

I think the subject of the research is particularly relevant for South Africa at this moment. The first period of local government, in its currently demarcated form, is finalizing. It is therefore important for the forthcoming period of local government, and for the improvement and consolidation of participatory approaches to examine these issues. In addition, the research results and the data obtained will be of strategic use for your municipality.

The research is being conducted mainly through self-administrative questionnaires that are being distributed to Municipal Mayor and Managers in the Eastern Cape as well as to NGOs and other institutions based in the province. It is in this respect that I am addressing to you to see whether both the Honourable Mayor and Municipal Manager could complete the attached questionnaire. Due to time constraints I would appreciate if you could consider this request as soon as possible. I expect to conclude this phase of the research before the 31st September. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you could send the completed questionnaire before that date.

The information you are asked to provide is required for research purposes only and will not be used to jeopardise your position or compromise in any way the integrity of your office, job or status. Any information that you will provide will be kept in strict confidence and used solely for the purpose of this study. To assure this, the only specific information asked is whether your position is that of a municipal manager or mayor, whether your municipality is a local, district or metropolitan municipality as well as whether it serves mainly a rural or urban area (if applicable).

Should you have any doubt or suggestions please do not hesitate in contacting me. I trust you will find the study interesting and useful. Hoping to receive your response and looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

Carolina Robino

Visiting Lecturer: Development Studies Unit – NMMU /PhD Candidate: Development Studies – NMMU
Phone: 041-5044275          Cell: 072-5610328           E-mail: Carolina.robino@nmmu.ac.za

Please send the completed questionnaire to Ms. Carolina Robino

\textsuperscript{126} The research supervisor is Prof. Richard Haines –Director Masters in Development Studies Unit, NMMU (see attached letter).
This is to introduce you to Ms Carolina Robino who is a member of staff of the Development Studies Unit, and a PhD candidate supervised by me.

She is researching the topic of ‘Citizen Participation in Local Governance in the Eastern Cape’ and would benefit by being given your support by participating in this research. The research has as main research tool a self-administrative questionnaire. I would appreciate it greatly if she were to be given due encouragement and support for this very important piece of research by completing the above-mentioned questionnaire. The findings of this research will be made available to you and your Municipality.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Richard Haines
Professor and Chair of Sociology &
Director: Development Studies Unit

Phone: 041 5042729/2146
Cell: 082 9294379
E-mail: richard.haines@nmmu.ac.za
NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT
A survey on Citizen Participation in Local Governance
Self-administrative questionnaire- Municipal Manager and Mayors

The information you are asked to provide is required for research purposes only and will not be used to jeopardise your position or compromise in any way the integrity of your office, job or status. Any information that you will provide will be kept in strict confidence and used solely for the purpose of this study. To assure this, the only specific information asked is whether your position is that of a municipal manager or mayor, whether your municipality is a local municipality or a district municipality as well as whether it serves mainly a rural or urban area. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

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<td>Mainly rural areas</td>
<td>Mainly urban areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position:</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>Municipal Manager</td>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education Level (please only mark the level you completed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Post secondary</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**a. General approach towards participation**

1. The Constitution of the RSA establishes that it encourages ‘involvement of communities, community organizations and civil society in matter of local government’. What do you understand by citizen or community participation (CP) in matters of local government?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. In your opinion, does citizen participation support or constrain the ongoing transformation processes in local government sphere?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, it supports</th>
<th>No, it constrains</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Other- specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please give reasons for your answer……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option:
3.1. To increase effectiveness and efficiency of policy and projects
3.2. To provide infrastructure and services that are more relevant to poor people’s needs and priorities
3.3. To establish cost sharing arrangements
3.4. To increase people ownership of services
3.5. To increase accountability
3.6. To ensure investments and policies meet the needs of marginalized groups (such as women, youth, disable)
3.7. To strengthen local democracy
3.8. Because it is required by the Constitution and relevant legislature and policy framework
3.9. Any other?

4. Is Citizen Participation (CP) in local governance (LG) being encouraged in your municipality? Please mark the option you consider the most adequate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, CP in LG is being highly encouraged</th>
<th>Yes, CP in LG is being moderately encouraged</th>
<th>No, CP in LG is not been widely promoted</th>
<th>No, CP in LG is not being promoted at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.1. Please give reasons for your answer...

4.2. If your answer to 4 was YES, which level of participation do you promote? (Please mark the option(s) you consider the most adequate)

- **Information**: the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion (there is no feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed). The information must be opportune, complete, adequate and accessible.
- **Consultation**: the objective is to invite citizens to actively participate by providing their opinions, to receive their opinions in connection with a topic or issue through questions, dialogue and exchange of ideas (the relation is bidirectional).
- **Decision making**: local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a binding character, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted.
- **Co-management**: the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders in a decision making process (binding character) that involves more than one specific issue.

5. Would you say that Citizen Participation in your municipality has changed in the last 5 years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Increased significantly</th>
<th>b. Increased a little</th>
<th>c. Did not change</th>
<th>d. Don’t know</th>
<th>c. Other-specify:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5.1. If participation did increase, do you think the role and activities of the municipality have changed as a consequence of this increase in Citizen Participation?

- a. Yes, a lot
- b. Yes, in some aspects
- c. Not much
- d. Nothing at all

Please explain...

b. Instruments, mechanisms and spaces for Citizen Participation used in the municipality

6. In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate.
7. In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1. In the elaboration of the municipal IDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2. In the implementation of the IDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3. In the evaluation of the IDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4. In decisions related to basic services provision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5. In decisions related to municipal investment projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6. In the budget formulation and approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. In the establishment of Performance Management System (PMS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8. In the implementation and review of PMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. In general, do you think all the members of the community have the same possibilities of access to Municipal information?  
Yes  No

8.1. If not, what do you think it can be done to redress this issue? .................................................................
 ........................................................................................................................................................................
 ........................................................................................................................................................................

9. In relation to your municipal IDP, in which of the following processes do you think there have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation. Please explain (you can mark more than one option):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1. How would you rate the participation of national departments and provincial government in IDP elaboration process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly adequate Adequate Inadequate Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2. Do you think the way national and provincial departments participated in the IDP has constrained the potential of the IDP as a means for meaningful CP in LG?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes No Don't Know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. In relation to Ward Committees, how would you evaluate their functioning in your Municipality?

| Highly adequate Adequate Inadequate Don’t know                           |

10.1. In relation to Ward Committees, which have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation? Please specify one or more of these obstacles..........................................................
 ........................................................................................................................................................................
 ........................................................................................................................................................................
 ........................................................................................................................................................................

10.2. The Municipal Systems Act states that “a metro or local council must make rules regulating the procedure to elect the members of a ward committee, taking into account the need for women to be equitably represented in a ward committee and for a diversity of interests in the ward to be

Yes No
represented”. Has this been done in your municipality?

10.3 If your answer to 10.2 is Yes, please give examples of how this is being done. If no, please give reasons for your answer.

10.4 In your opinion, does the municipal council take into account the recommendations of Ward Committees?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Do you think the proposals from Ward Committees and the IDPs representative forums should have binding authority? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider the most adequate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Other-specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11.1 Ward committees
11.2 IDP Rep. forum

If not, please give reasons for your answer.

12. In your opinion, are there mechanisms in place which the citizens can use to control the activities of the municipality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, and it is a normal practice</th>
<th>Yes, but they are not frequently used</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13. In general, in relation to the mechanisms for citizen participation in your municipality, do you think they are designed to take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged groups?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13.1 Please give reasons for your answer.

14. In your municipality, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) in terms of the disadvantaged and marginalized groups (women, poor people, disabled people, young people)? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly inclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Highly exclusive</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14.1 Women
14.2 Poor
14.3 Disabled
14.4 Young

15. What do you think it is being done in your municipality to encourage women, young, disabled and poor people to participate in Local Governance? Please, choose between the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important and adequate measures and steps have been implemented to encourage their participation</th>
<th>Measures have been implemented but they have not been successful</th>
<th>No measures have been taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
15.1 Please specify…………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………..
c. Degree of adequacy of the mechanisms, spaces and instruments for CP in terms of the reality of your municipality

16. When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree

16.1. It takes more time 1 2 3 4
16.2. Staff has insufficient skills and knowledge 1 2 3 4
16.3. There are insufficient resources 1 2 3 4
16.4. It raises opposition as it generates insecurity, perceptions of loss of authority by municipal officials 1 2 3 4
16.5. The local community is not interested in participating in local governance 1 2 3 4
16.6. Other…………………………………..………………………………………………………… 1 2 3 4

17. In terms of the characteristics of your municipality, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in the White Paper on LG 1998) to be:

| 17.1. For the deepening of local democracy | adequate | Relatively adequate | Inadequate |
| 17.2. Given the socio-economic characteristics of your municipality | adequate | Relatively adequate | Inadequate |
| 17.3. Given the administrative and technical capacities of your municipality | adequate | Relatively adequate | Inadequate |

18. Is there a specific budget for promoting citizen participation in your municipality? Yes No

19. Is there a specific Community Participation unit in your municipality? Yes No

19.1. If yes, please explain its location in the structure of the municipality…………………………..
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………

20. Do you think the policies followed in the national and provincial sphere provide an enabling environment and tools for promoting Citizen Participation (CP) in your locality?

a. Yes, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres are adequate
b. No, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres prevent Local Government to promote CP. There is a need to more effective decentralization.
c. Don’t Know
d. Other…………………………………………………………………………………….

21. Do you think legislation (MSA) is inhibiting municipal action in terms of effective CP in LG? a. No, legislation is adequate b. Yes, legislation should be revised c. Don’t know

22. Other countries have implemented other mechanisms to promote CP in local governance. Which of the following do you think it would be interesting to consider for SA? (You can mark more than one option)

Participatory budget- Many countries have introduced participatory budget initiatives being Porto Alegre’s (Brazil) experience quoted as a referent. There, a percentage of the municipal budget is decided by the local community with binding authority.

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Vigilance committees - Bolivia’s Vigilance Committees have been frequently quoted as an interesting sub-ward space for citizen participation where ward representatives (apart from the ward councillors) form part of the municipal council.

I had never heard about these mechanisms

No other mechanisms are required as the current situation is acceptable

No other mechanisms are required but the implementation of the existing ones should be improved

Any Other?

23. Do you think the municipal officials have the skills to encourage Citizen Participation (CP) in Local Governance (LG)? Please choose the most adequate option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a. the skills are adequate and do not present an obstacle for encouraging CP in LG</th>
<th>b. there are some skills problems that could be addressed with specific training</th>
<th>c. there are fundamental problems regarding skills and Local Government approach is preventing CP to effectively materialize. This calls for an overall revision of local government officials capabilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please indicate the area-mechanisms of citizen participation in terms of which the municipal officials should receive more training……

24. How would you consider the process of citizen participation in your municipality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a. Highly desirable</th>
<th>b. Desirable and could be improved</th>
<th>c. Not Desirable</th>
<th>d. Don’t Know</th>
<th>e. Other, specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

25. Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.

|   | a. Lack of trust of the community towards government | b. Lack of time | c. Education and literacy | d. Cultural beliefs and practices | g. Opposition, blockages, Group dynamics | f. Gender discrimination – other forms of discrimination | h. Lack of information | i. Other Problems? |
|---|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|

26. What challenges do you think your municipality faces in its attempts to promote CP in Local Governance?

...
27. Is there any other comments that you would like to include?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
9.1.2 CSOs Introductory letters and questionnaire

It is with great pleasure that I am addressing to you in connection with a research work being conducted in the Eastern Cape: ‘A survey on citizen participation in local governance’. It argues that if Citizen Participation is going to be a meaningful concept, there is a growing need to appreciate the nature, dynamics and methods of participation and to understand the barriers and constraints to participation in local governance. As a consequence, it develops a general framework that allows evaluating and understanding local community’s perspective, problems, views and opportunities attached to participatory approaches in local development policies and local governance. It further contextualizes the study in a broader analysis of South Africa local government process of reform and legal framework for public participation, understood as the institutional, legal and political background of the study. The research is being conducted for the Dissertation for the DPhil degree on Development Studies at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)127.

I think the subject of the research is particularly relevant for South Africa at this moment. The first period of local government, in its currently demarcated form, is finalizing. It is therefore important for the forthcoming period of local government, and for the improvement and consolidation of participatory approaches to examine these issues. In addition, the research results and the data obtained will be of strategic use for your institution.

The research is being conducted mainly through self-administrative questionnaires that are being distributed to Municipal Mayor and Managers in the Eastern Cape as well as to NGOs, CBOs and other institutions and organizations based in the Eastern Cape. It is in this respect that I am addressing to you to see whether you could participate in this research by completing the attached questionnaire. Due to time constraints I would appreciate if you could consider this request as soon as possible. I expect to conclude this phase of the research before the 31st September. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you could send the completed questionnaire before that date.

The information you are asked to provide is required for research purposes only and will not be used to jeopardise your position or compromise in any way the integrity of your office, job or status. Any information that you will provide will be kept in strict confidence and used solely for the purpose of this study. To assure this, the only specific information asked is your main programme areas as well as whether your organization serves mainly a rural or urban area (if appropriate).

Should you have any doubt or suggestions please do not hesitate in contacting me. I trust you will find the study interesting and useful. Hoping to receive your favourable response and looking forward to hearing from you soon,

Yours Sincerely,

Carolina Robino

Visiting Lecturer: Development Studies Unit – NMMU/ PhD Candidate: Development Studies – NMMU
Phone: 041-5044275 - Cell: 072-5610328
E-mail: Carolina.robino@nmmu.ac.za

Please send the completed questionnaire to Ms. Carolina Robino

e-mail: Carolina.robino@nmmu.ac.za or Fax: 041 5042573 041- 5042731

127 The research supervisor is Prof. Richard Haines –Director Masters in Development Studies Unit, NMMU (see attached letter).
To Whom it may Concern

This is to introduce you to Ms Carolina Robino who is a member of staff of the Development Studies Unit, and a PhD candidate supervised by me.

She is researching the topic of ‘Citizen Participation in Local Governance in the Eastern Cape’ and would benefit by being given your support by participating in this research. The research has as main research tool a self-administrative questionnaire. I would appreciate it greatly if she were to be given due encouragement and support for this very important piece of research by completing the above-mentioned questionnaire. The findings of this research will be made available to you and your organization.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Richard Haines
Professor and Chair of Sociology &
Director: Development Studies Unit

Phone: 041 5042729/2146
Cell: 082 9294379
E-mail: richard.haines@nmmu.ac.za
NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT
A survey on Citizen Participation in Local Governance
Self-administrative questionnaire
Civil society perceptions of Citizen Participation in Local governance

The information you are asked to provide is required for research purposes only and will not be used to jeopardize your position or compromise in any way the integrity of your organization, office, job or status. Any information that you will provide will be kept in strict confidence and used solely for the purpose of this study. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Organization’s Main Programming area(s):

|……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………|

Your Organization serves: Mainly rural areas Mainly urban areas Both

**a. General approach towards participation**

1. Do you think local government’s approach to Citizen Participation (CP) is similar to yours?  
   Yes  No

   1.1. If your answer to 1 was No, what do you think local government understands by CP in Local Governance (LG)?

   2. In your opinion, does CP support or constrain the ongoing transformation processes in the local government sphere?

   Yes, it supports  No, it constrains  Don’t Know  Other- specify ……………………………..................

   3. Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Please rate each option. Use a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important)

   | 3.1. To increase effectiveness and efficiency of policy and projects | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   |---------------------------------------------------------------|
   | 3.2. To provide infrastructure and services that are more relevant to poor people’s needs and priorities | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.3 To establish cost sharing arrangements                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.4 To increase people ownership of services                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.5 To increase accountability                                  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.6 To ensure investments and policies meet the needs of marginalized groups (such as women, disable, youth) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.7 To strengthen local democracy                              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.8 Because it is required by the Constitution and relevant legislature and local government policy framework | 1 2 3 4 5 |
   | 3.9 Any other?.......................................................................................................................................................

   4. Do you think Local Government is currently encouraging Citizen Participation (CP) in Local Governance (LG)? Please mark the option you consider the most adequate.

   Yes, it highly  Yes, it moderately  No, it is not open  No, it is really
4.1. Please give reasons for your answer.

4.2. If your answer to 4 was Yes, which level of participation do you think Local Government promotes? Please mark the option you consider most adequate.

- a. **Information**: the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion (there is no feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed). The information must be opportune, complete, adequate and accessible.

- b. **Consultation**: the objective is to invite citizens to actively participate by providing their opinions, to receive their opinions in connection with a topic or issue through questions, dialogue and exchange of ideas (the relation is bidirectional).

- c. **Decision making**: local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a binding character, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted.

- d. **Co-management**: the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders in a decision making process (binding character) that involves more than one specific issue.

5. Would you say that Citizen Participation in local governance has changed in the last 5 years?

- a. Increased significantly
- b. Increased a little
- c. Did not change
- d. Don’t know
- e. Other-specify:

5.1. If participation did increase, do you think the role and activities of local government have changed as a consequence of this increase in Citizen Participation?

- a. Yes, a lot
- b. Yes, in some aspects
- c. Not much
- d. Nothing at all

Please explain.

6. Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Our institution has not participated</th>
<th>information</th>
<th>consultation</th>
<th>Decision making</th>
<th>Co-management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Ward Committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 IDPs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Public Hearings &amp; Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Public opinion polls or surveys</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Advisory panels or committees</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.6 Municipal Budget elaboration</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate):

- 7.1 In the elaboration of the municipal IDP
- 7.2 In the implementation of the IDP
- 7.3 In the evaluation of the IDP
- 7.4 In decisions related to basic services provision
- 7.5 In decisions related to municipal investment projects
7.6 In the budget formulation and approval

7.7 In the establishment of Performance Management System (PMS)

7.8 In the implementation and review of PMS

8. In general, do you think all the members of the community have the same possibilities of access to information?

Yes No Don’t Know

8.1. If not, what do you think local government is doing to redress this issue?

9. In relation to municipal IDPs, in which of the following processes do you think there has been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation. Please explain (you can mark more than one option):

a. in the process of elaboration?
b. in the process of implementation?
c. in the process of evaluation?
d. don’t know

e. other

9.1. How would you rate the participation of national departments and provincial government in the IDP elaboration process?

Highly adequate Adequate Inadequate Don’t know

9.2. Do you think the way national and provincial government participated in the IDP elaboration has constrained the potential of the IDP as a means for meaningful Citizen Participation in Local Governance?

Yes No Don’t Know

10. In relation to Ward Committees, how would you evaluate their functioning in your area?

Highly adequate Adequate Inadequate Don’t know

10.1. In relation to Ward Committees, which have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation? Please specify one or more of these obstacles:

10.2 In your opinion, does the municipal council take into account the recommendations of Ward Committees and other that emerge from other spaces of citizen participation?

Always Sometimes Never

11. Do you think the proposals form Ward Committees and the IDPs representative forums should have binding authority? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider more adequate.

11.1 Ward committees

11.2 IDP Rep. forum

11.3 If not, Why?
12. Please read the following statements and establish whether you agree or disagree using the following scale: 1- strongly disagree – 4 strongly agree, 2 and 3 can be used to state intermediate positions.

12.1 “Traditional community-based structures (civic associations, residents’ associations, etc.) are being sidelined as more attention is given to Ward Committees”

12.2 “Where Civil Society Organizations (CSO) do participate in these formal structures, participation is often limited to a number of larger, well resourced CSOs, for instance in the IDP forums”

12.3 “There has been a trend in political leaders to co-opt ward representatives. This is showing the partidization trend of participation, not only in the elections of councillors but also in the ward meetings”.

12.4 “Municipalities should support the organisational development of associations, in particular in poor marginalised areas where the skills and resources for participation may be less developed than in better-off areas”.

13. In your opinion, are there mechanisms in place which the citizens can use to control the activities of the municipality?

Yes, and it is a normal practice | Yes, but they are not frequently used | No

14. In general, in relation to the mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance, do you think they are designed to take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged groups?

Yes | No | Don’t Know

14.1 Please give reasons for your answer.

15. In your opinion, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) in terms of the disadvantaged groups (women, poor people, disabled people, young people)? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider the most adequate.

15.1 Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly inclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Highly exclusive</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15.2 Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly inclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Highly exclusive</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15.3 Disabled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly inclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Highly exclusive</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15.4 Young

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly inclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Highly exclusive</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16.1. What do you think local government is doing to encourage women, young, disabled and poor people to participate in Local Governance? Please, choose between the following options:

| Important and adequate measures have been implemented to encourage their participation |
| Measures have been implemented but they have not been successful |
| No measures have been taken |

16.2 Please explain your answer.

17. Which of the following factors do you think prevent government introducing participatory practices in local governance? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree

17.1 It takes more time

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

17.2 Staff has insufficient skills and knowledge

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
17.3 There are insufficient resources
17.4 It raises opposition as it generates insecurity, perceptions of loss of authority by municipal officials
17.5 Local Community is not interested in participating in matters of Local Governance

| 18. | Taking into account the characteristics of the local community, do you consider the instruments and spaces for Citizen Participation in Local Governance to be: |
| 18.1 | For the deepening of local democracy | adequate | Relatively adequate | Inadequate | Don’t know |
| 18.2 | Given the socio-economic characteristics of your municipality | adequate | Relatively adequate | Inadequate | Don’t know |
| 18.3 | Given the administrative and technical capacities of your municipality | adequate | Relatively adequate | Inadequate | Don’t know |

19. Do you think the policies followed in the national and provincial sphere provide an enabling environment and tools for promoting CP in your locality?
Yes, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres are adequate
No, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres prevent LG to promote CP. There is a need to more effective decentralization.
Don’t Know

20. Do you think the legal framework is inhibiting municipal action in terms of effective CP in Local Governance?
a. No, legislation is adequate  b. Yes, legislation should be revised  c. Don’t know

21. Other countries have implemented other mechanisms to promote CP in LG. Which of the following do you think it would be interesting to consider for SA? Please mark (you can mark more than one option)
a. Participatory budget- Many countries have introduced participatory budget initiatives being Porto Alegre’s (Brazil) experience quoted as a referent. There, a percentage of the municipal budget is decided by the local community with binding authority.
b. Vigilance committees - Bolivia’s Vigilance Committees have been frequently quoted as an interesting sub-ward space for citizen participation where ward representatives (apart from the ward councillors) form part of the municipal council
c. Both
d. No other mechanisms are required as the current situation is acceptable
e. I had never heard about these mechanisms
f. No other mechanisms are required but the implementation of the existing ones should be improved

22. Do you think the municipal officials have the skills to encourage Citizen Participation (CP) in Local Governance (LG)? Please choose the most adequate option:
a. the skills are adequate and do not present an obstacle for encouraging CP in LG  
b. there are some skills problems that could be addressed with specific training
| 22.1 | Please indicate the area-mechanisms of citizen participation in terms of which the municipal officials should receive more training………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………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23. How would you consider the process of citizen participation in your locality?

- a. Highly desirable
- b. Desirable and could be improved
- c. Not Desirable
- d. Don’t Know
- e. Other, specify

24. Do you think in your community people are aware of their constitutional rights and how to realize them, such as the channels for CP?  

Yes  No

25. In particular, do they understand the functions and spaces for CP?  

Yes  No

26. Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.

- 26.1 Lack of trust of the community towards government
- 26.2 Lack of time
- 26.3 Education and literacy
- 26.4 Cultural beliefs and practices
- 26.5 Gender discrimination – other forms of discrimination (specify)
- 26.6 Accessibility problems (i.e. meetings are too far and the meeting time is not appropriate)
- 26.7 Lack of information

27. What challenges do you think local government faces in its attempts to promote CP in Local Governance?

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28. Is there any other comments that you would like to include?

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
9.1.3 Ward Councillors questionnaire

NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT
A survey on Citizen Participation in Local Governance
Ward Councillors Interviews

The information you are asked to provide is required for research purposes only and will not be
used to jeopardise your position or compromise in any way the integrity of your office, job or
status. Any information that you will provide will be kept in strict confidence and used solely for
the purpose of this study. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Municipality category: Local Municipality  District Municipality  Metropolitan Municipality

Gender:  M  F

Education Level (please only mark the level you completed):
Primary  Secondary  Post secondary  University

a. General approach towards participation and development

1. Do you consider there is a relation between community participation and the strengthening of
local democracy? Of which kind?
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2. The constitution of the RSA establishes that it encourages ‘involvement of communities,
community organizations and civil society in matter of local government’. What do you understand
by citizen or community participation?
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3. In your opinion, does community participation support or constrain the ongoing transformation
processes in local government sphere? Please give reasons for your answer……..........................................................................................
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4. Under your sphere of influence, is Citizen Participation being encouraged? If Not, please give
reasons for your answer………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
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4.1. If yes, which level of participation do you promote?

a. Information: the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion (there is no
feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed). The information must be
opportune, complete, adequate and accessible.

b. Consultation: the objective is to invite citizens to actively participate by providing their
opinions, to receive their opinions in connection with a topic or issue through questions, dialogue and exchange of ideas (the relation is bidirectional).

c. **Decision making**: local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a **binding character**, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted.

d. **Co-management**: the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders in a decision making process (binding character) that involves more than one specific issue.

5. Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please indicate the level of relevance of the diverse reasons according to your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Level of Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To increase effectiveness and efficiency of policy and projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide infrastructure and services that are more relevant to poor people’s needs and priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish cost sharing arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase people ownership of services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure investments and policies meet the needs of marginalized groups (such as women, youth)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To strengthen local democracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is required by the Constitution and relevant legislature and policy framework (MSA 2000, WPLG 1998)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Any other? ........................................................................................................................................................................................................

6. Would you say that Citizen Participation in your municipality has changed in the last 5 years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Increased significantly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Increased a little</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Did not change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Other-specify:...........</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6.1. If CP has increased, do you think the role and activities of the municipality have changed as a consequence of this increase in Citizen Participation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes, a lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Yes, in some aspects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Not much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Nothing at all</td>
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</table>

Please give examples........................................................................................................................................................................................................
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b. **Instruments, mechanisms and spaces for Citizen Participation used in the municipality**

7. How do you identify the needs of the community? Please state how this has been done........................................................................................................................................................................................................
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8. Do you have feedback of the perceptions of citizens – community of your policies, projects services, etc? By which means or mechanisms?........................................................................................................................................................................................................
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9. In general, do you think all the members of the community have the same possibilities of access to information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

9.1. If not, what do you think it can be done to readdress this issue? ........................................................................................................

384
10. In general, in relation to the mechanisms for citizen participation in your municipality, do you think they are designed to take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged groups? Please give reasons for your answer

11. In your municipality, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) in terms of the disadvantaged groups (women, poor people, disabled people, young people)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly inclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Highly exclusive</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

11.1. What do you think it is being done in your municipality to encourage women, young, disabled and poor people to participate in Local Governance?

12. What factors and issues you think make difficult for women to participate? (i.e. time of meetings, safety, child care facilities) and for the most marginalized?

13. What percentage of your Ward Committee members are women?

14. Are women organizations represented in the Ward Committee? Yes No

15. And in the last IDP forum, could you tell how many of the participants are women?

16. What do you understand by Integrated Development Planning (IDP)?

17. In your opinion, how influential has been Citizen Participation in the last IDP process? Please give examples.

18. Do you think the proposals from Ward Committees and the IDPs representative forums should have binding authority? Why?
c. Degree of adequacy of the mechanisms, spaces and instruments for CP considering the reality of your municipality

19. When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2. disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It takes more time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff has insufficient skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There are insufficient resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The local community is not interested in participating in Local Governance</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It raises opposition as it generates insecurity, perceptions of loss of authority by municipal officials?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

20. Do you think the policies followed at the central and provincial level provide an enabling environment and tools for promoting CP in your locality? Please state the reasons for your answer.

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21. Do you think institutional and funding frameworks and resources are in place for local government to be able to achieve its developmental role? Please state the reasons for your answer.

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22. Is legislation inhibiting municipal action in terms of promoting effective CP in LG? Please state the reasons for your answer.

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23. Is there a specific budget for promoting citizen participation in your municipality?

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24. Is there a specific Community Participation unit in your municipality?

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If yes, please explain its location in the structure of the municipality.

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24. Do you think the municipality officials have the skills to encourage CP in LG?

24.1. If no, is staff capacity being developed to encourage and support participation? How?

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25. Do you think the municipality has the necessary resources to encourage participation fully in LG?

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26. Do you think the current legal framework in terms of CP in LG allows for a “meaningful participation”?

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27. Do you think in your community people is aware of their constitutional rights and how to realize them such as the channels for CP? Do they understand the functions and spaces for CP?

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28. How would you describe the process of citizen participation in your municipality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Highly desirable</th>
<th>b. Desirable and could be improved</th>
<th>c. Not Desirable</th>
<th>d. Don’t Know</th>
<th>e. Other, specify</th>
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</table>

29. Which in your opinion are the factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Lack of trust of the community towards government</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Employment – time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Education and literacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Cultural beliefs and practices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Gender discrimination – other forms of discrimination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Lack of information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Other Problems?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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30. What challenges do you think your municipality faces in its attempts to promote CP in Local Governance?

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31. How do you think these challenges should be faced?

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32. Is there any other comment that you would like to include?

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Thank you for agreeing to being interviewed.
9.1.4. Data Codes for the Survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape: Municipalities database

**Question:** Respondent Number
**Variable Label:** RespNo
**Values:** 1-23
**Value Labels:** n-a
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Type of Municipality
**Variable Label:** MunType
**Values:** DM, LM, M
**Value Labels:** DM= District Municipality; LM=Local Municipality; M=Metropolitan Municipality
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Your Municipality serves mainly rural or urban areas
**Variable Label:** rur-urb
**Values:** 1, 2, 12, 0
**Value Labels:** mainly rural=1; mainly urban=2; both=12, 0=no answer
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Current Position
**Variable Label:** Res_Position
**Values:** mayor, municipal manager, other
**Value Labels:** n-a
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** gender
**Variable Label:** gender
**Values:** 1,2
**Value Labels:** male=1, female=2
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** education level
**Variable Label:** edu_level
**Values:** 1,2,3,4, 0
**Value Labels:** primary=1, secondary=2, post second=3,university =4, 0=no answer
**Note:** only mark the level you completed

**Question:** The Constitution of the RSA establishes that it encourages ‘involvement of communities, community organizations and civil society in matters of local government’. What do you understand by citizen or community participation (CP) in matters of local government?
**Variable Label:** q1
**Values:** open question
**Value Labels:** n-a
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, does citizen participation support or constrain the ongoing transformation processes in local government sphere?
**Variable Label:** q2
**Values:** 1,2,3, 0
**Value Labels:** Yes, supports=1, No, constraints=2. Don't know=3. 0=no answer
**Question:** Please give reasons for your answer to q2

**Variable Label:** q2.1  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To increase effectiveness and efficiency of policy and projects  
**Variable Label:** q3.1  
**Values:** 1-5, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To provide infrastructure and services that are more relevant to poor people’s needs and priorities  
**Variable Label:** q3.2  
**Values:** 1-5, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To establish cost sharing arrangements  
**Variable Label:** q3.3  
**Values:** 1-5, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To increase people ownership of services  
**Variable Label:** q3.4  
**Values:** 1-5, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To increase accountability  
**Variable Label:** q3.5  
**Values:** 1-5, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To ensure investments and policies meet the needs of marginalized groups (such as women, youth, disable)  
**Variable Label:** q3.6
Values: 1-5, 0
Value Labels: 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To strengthen local democracy
Variable Label: q3.7
Values: 1-5, 0
Value Labels: 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: Because it is required by the Constitution and relevant legislature and policy framework
Variable Label: q3.8
Values: 1-5, 0
Value Labels: 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Is Citizen Participation (CP) in local governance (LG) being encouraged in your municipality? Please mark the option you consider the most adequate.
Variable Label: q4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: Yes highly encouraged=4, Yes moderately =3, No not interested in encouraging CP =2, No it constrains CP=1, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Please give reasons for your answer to 4.
Variable Label: q4.1
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: If your answer to 4 was YES, which level of participation do you promote? (Please mark the option(s) you consider the most adequate. Information: the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion (there is no feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed). The information must be opportune, complete, adequate and accessible. Consultation: the objective is to invite citizens to actively participate by providing their opinions, to receive their opinions in connection with a topic or issue through questions, dialogue and exchange of ideas (the relation is bidirectional) Decision making: local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a binding character, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted. Co-management: the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders in a decision making process (binding character) that involves more than one specific issue.
Variable Label: q4.2
Values: 1-4; 0
Value Labels: information=1, consultation=2, decision-making=3, co-management =4, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Would you say that Citizen Participation in your municipality has changed in the last 5 years?
Variable Label: q5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=increased significantly, 3=increased a little, 2=did not change, 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: If participation did increase, do you think the role and activities of the municipality have changed as a consequence of this increase in Citizen Participation?

Variable Label: q5.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=a lot, 3=in some aspects, 2=not much, 1=not at all, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Please explain your answer given to q5.2

Variable Label: q5.2
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Ward Committees

Variable Label: q6.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making, 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. IDP

Variable Label: q6.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making, 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Public Hearings and Meetings

Variable Label: q6.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making, 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Public opinion polls or surveys

Variable Label: q6.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making, 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a
**Question:** In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Advisory panels or committees

*Variable Label:* q6.5  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, which level of participation do the following mechanisms and spaces for citizen participation promote as implemented in your municipality? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Municipal Budget elaboration

*Variable Label:* q6.6  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the elaboration of the municipal IDP

*Variable Label:* q7.1  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the implementation of the municipal IDP

*Variable Label:* q7.2  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the evaluation of the municipal IDP

*Variable Label:* q7.3  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In decisions related to basic services provision

*Variable Label:* q7.4  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In decisions related to municipal investment projects
**Variable Label:** q7.5  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the budget formulation and approval

**Variable Label:** q7.6  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the establishment of Performance Management System (PMS)

**Variable Label:** q7.7  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the implementation and review of PMS

**Variable Label:** q7.8  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In general, do you think all the members of the community have the same possibilities of access to Municipal information?

**Variable Label:** q8  
**Values:** 1,2, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes=1, No=2, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** If your answer to 8 was NO, what do you think it can be done to redress this issue?

**Variable Label:** q8.1  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In relation to your municipal IDP, in which of the following processes do you think there have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation. Please explain (you can mark more than one option):

**Variable Label:** q9  
**Values:** 1-5, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1. elaboration, 2. implementation, 3. evaluation, 4. don’t know, 5. other, 0 no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** How would you rate the participation of national departments and provincial government in IDP elaboration process?

**Variable Label:** q9.1
Values: 1-4,0
Value Labels: 4=highly adequate, 3=adequate, 2=inadequate 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

**Question:** Do you think the way national and provincial departments participated in the IDP has constrained the potential of the IDP as a means for meaningful CP in LG?
*Variable Label:* q9.2
*Values:* 1-3,0
*Value Labels:* Yes=1, No=2, 3=Don't know , 0=no answer
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In relation to Ward Committees, how would you evaluate their functioning in your Municipality?
*Variable Label:* q10
*Values:* 1-4, 0
*Value Labels:* 4=highly adequate, 3=adequate, 2=inadequate 1=don't know, 0=no answer
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In relation to Ward Committees, which have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation? Please specify one or more of these obstacles
*Variable Label:* q10.1
*Values:* open question
*Value Labels:* n-a
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** The Municipal Systems Act states that “a metro or local council must make rules regulating the procedure to elect the members of a ward committee, taking into account the need for women to be equitably represented in a ward committee and for a diversity of interests in the ward to be represented”. Has this been done in your municipality?
*Variable Label:* q10.2
*Values:* 1-3,0
*Value Labels:* Yes=1, No=2, 3=Don't know , 0=no answer
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** If your answer to 10.2 is Yes, please give examples of how this is being done. If no, please give reasons for your answer
*Variable Label:* q10.3
*Values:* open question
*Value Labels:* n-a
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, does the municipal council take into account the recommendations of Ward Committees?
*Variable Label:* 10.4
*Values:* 1-3, 0
*Value Labels:* 3=always, 2=sometimes 1=never, 0=no answer
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** Do you think the proposals from Ward Committees should have binding authority? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Ward Committees
*Variable Label:* 11.1
*Values:* 1-3, 0
*Value Labels:* Yes=1, No=2, don’t know=3, 0=no answer
*Note:* n-a
**Question:** Do you think the proposals from the IDPs representative forums should have binding authority? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider the most adequate.  
**Variable Label:** q11.2  
**Values:** 1-3, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes=1, No=2, don’t know=3, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** If your answer to 11.1 and/or 11.2 was NO, please give reasons for your answer  
**Variable Label:** q11.3  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, are there mechanisms in place which the citizens can use to control the activities of the municipality?  
**Variable Label:** q12  
**Values:** 1-3, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes, frequ. Used=3, Yes, but not used=2, no=1, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In general, in relation to the mechanisms for citizen participation in your municipality, do you think they are designed to take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged groups?  
**Variable Label:** q13  
**Values:** 1-3, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes=1, No=2, Don’t know=3, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Please give reasons for your answer  
**Variable Label:** q13.1  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your municipality, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for women? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:  
**Variable Label:** q14.1  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your municipality, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for young people? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:  
**Variable Label:** q14.2  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your municipality, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for the poor? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:  
**Variable Label:** q14.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your municipality, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for disabled people? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:
Variable Label: q14.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: What do you think it is being done in your municipality to encourage women, young, disabled and poor people to participate in Local Governance? Please, choose between the following options:
Variable Label: q15
Values: 1-3, 0
Value Labels: 1=no measures, 2=measures implemented but unsuccessful, 3= adequate measures implemented to encourage their participation, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Please specify
Variable Label: q15.1
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- It takes more time
Variable Label: q16.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- Staff has insufficient skills and knowledge
Variable Label: q16.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- There are insufficient resources
Variable Label: q16.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4.
Strongly agree -- It raises opposition as it generates insecurity, perceptions of loss of authority by municipal officials

Variable Label: q16.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: When trying to implement participatory approaches, which of the following factors are considered a problem for you? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree, 3. agree, 4. strongly agree -- The local community is not interested in participating in local governance

Variable Label: q16.5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In terms of the characteristics of your municipality, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in the White Paper on LG 1998) to be: -- For the deepening of local democracy

Variable Label: q17.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=adequate, 3=relatively adequate, 2=inadequate, 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In terms of the characteristics of your municipality, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in the White Paper on LG 1998) to be: -- Given the socio-economic characteristics of your municipality

Variable Label: q17.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=adequate, 3=relatively adequate, 2=inadequate, 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In terms of the characteristics of your municipality, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in the White Paper on LG 1998) to be: -- Given the administrative and technical capacities of your municipality

Variable Label: q17.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=adequate, 3=relatively adequate, 2=inadequate, 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Is there a specific budget for promoting citizen participation in your municipality?

Variable Label: q18
Values: 1, 2, 0
Value Labels: yes=1, no=2, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Is there a specific Community Participation unit in your municipality

Variable Label: q19
Values: 1, 2, 0
Value Labels: yes=1, no=2, 0=no answer
Note: n-a
Question: If your answer to 19 was yes, please explain its location in the structure of the municipality
Variable Label: q19.1
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: Do you think the policies followed in the national and provincial sphere provide an enabling environment and tools for promoting Citizen Participation (CP) in your locality?
Variable Label: q20
Values: 1,2,3, 0
Value Labels: Yes, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres are adequate=1, No, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres prevent Local Government to promote CP. There is a need to more effective decentralization=2, 3=don’t know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Do you think legislation (MSA) is inhibiting municipal action in terms of effective CP in LG?
Variable Label: q21
Values: 1,2,3, 0
Value Labels: Yes=1, no=2, 3=don’t know
Note: n-a

Question: Other countries have implemented other mechanisms to promote CP in local governance. Which of the following do you think it would be interesting to consider for SA?
Variable Label: q22
Values: 1-6, 0
Value Labels: 1=Participatory budget, 2=vigilance committees, 3=both, 4=no other mechanisms are required the current situation is OK, 5= no other mechanisms are required but implementation of the existing should be improved. 6= never herd about these mechanisms, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Do you think the municipal officials have the skills to encourage Citizen Participation (CP) in Local Governance (LG)? Please choose the most adequate option:
Variable Label: q23
Values: 1-3, 0
Value Labels: 3=skills are adequate, 2=some skills problems to be addressed with specific training 1=fundamental problems with skills, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Please indicate the area-mechanisms of citizen participation in terms of which the municipal officials should receive more training
Variable Label: q23.1
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: How would you consider the process of citizen participation in your municipality?
Variable Label: q24
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=highly desirable, 3=desirable and could be improved, 2=not desirable 1=don’t know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between. --Lack of trust of the community towards government
Variable Label: q25.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between. --Lack of time
Variable Label: q25.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.-- Education and literacy
Variable Label: q25.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.-- Cultural beliefs and practices
Variable Label: q25.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.-- Opposition, blockages, Group dynamics
Variable Label: q25.5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.-- Gender discrimination – other forms of discrimination
Variable Label: q25.6
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a
**Question:** Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.— Lack of information

*Variable Label:* q25.7
*Values:* 1-4, 0
*Value Labels:* 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

**Question:** What challenges do you think your municipality faces in its attempts to promote CP in Local Governance?

*Variable Label:* q26
*Values:* open question
*Value Labels:* n-a

*Note:* n-a

**Question:** Is there any other comments that you would like to include?

*Variable Label:* q27
*Values:* open question
*Value Labels:* n-a

*Note:* n-a
9.1.5. Data Codes for the Survey on Citizen Participation in the Eastern Cape: CSO database

**Question:** Respondent Number  
**Variable Label:** RespNo  
**Values:** 1-46  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Organization’s Main Programming Area  
**Variable Label:** PA  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Your Organization serves mainly rural or urban areas  
**Variable Label:** rur-urb  
**Values:** 1, 2, 12, 0  
**Value Labels:** mainly rural=1; mainly urban=2; both=12, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** gender  
**Variable Label:** gender  
**Values:** 1,2  
**Value Labels:** male=1, female=2  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Do you think local government’s approach to Citizen Participation (CP) is similar to yours?  
**Variable Label:** q1  
**Values:** 1,2,0  
**Value Labels:** Yes=1, No=2, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** If your answer to 1 was No, what do you think local government understands by CP in Local Governance (LG)?  
**Variable Label:** q1.1  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, does citizen participation support or constrain the ongoing transformation processes in local government sphere?  
**Variable Label:** q2  
**Values:** 1,2,3, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes, supports=1, No, constraints=2. Don't know=3. 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Please give reasons for your answer to q3  
**Variable Label:** q2.1  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a
**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To increase effectiveness and efficiency of policy and projects

**Variable Label:** q3.1

**Values:** 1-5, 0

**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To provide infrastructure and services that are more relevant to poor people's needs and priorities

**Variable Label:** q3.2

**Values:** 1-5, 0

**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To establish cost sharing arrangements

**Variable Label:** q3.3

**Values:** 1-5, 0

**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To increase people ownership of services

**Variable Label:** q3.4

**Values:** 1-5, 0

**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To increase accountability

**Variable Label:** q3.5

**Values:** 1-5, 0

**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To ensure investments and policies meet the needs of marginalized groups (such as women, youth, disable)

**Variable Label:** q3.6

**Values:** 1-5, 0

**Value Labels:** 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: To strengthen local democracy

**Variable Label:** q3.7
Values: 1-5, 0
Value Labels: 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

**Question**: Here is a list of different reasons stated to encourage Citizen Participation in Local Governance. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 the least important and 5 the most important) please rate each option: Because it is required by the Constitution and relevant legislature and policy framework

Variable Label: q3.8
Values: 1-5, 0
Value Labels: 1=least important…5=most important, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

**Question**: Do you think Local Government is currently encouraging Citizen Participation (CP) in Local Governance (LG)? Please mark the option you consider the most adequate.

Variable Label: q4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: Yes highly encouraged=4, Yes moderately =3, No not interested in encouraging CP =2, No it constrains CP=1, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

**Question**: Please give reasons for your answer to 4.

Variable Label: q4.1
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

**Question**: If your answer to 4 was YES, which level of participation do you do you think Local Government promotes? (Please mark the option(s) you consider the most adequate. Information: the objective is to provide information on the issue under discussion (there is no feedback or direct negotiation in terms of what it is being informed). The information must be opportune, complete, adequate and accessible. Consultation: the objective is to invite citizens to actively participate by providing their opinions, to receive their opinions in connection with a topic or issue through questions, dialogue and exchange of ideas (the relation is bidirectional) Decision making: local citizens participate in a negotiation process, after which agreements are established with a binding character, and thus they have real influence in the final decision adopted. Co-management: the objective is to invite citizens and stakeholders in a decision making process (binding character) that involves more than one specific issue.

Variable Label: q4.2
Values: 1-4; 0
Value Labels: information=1, consultation=2, decision-making=3, co-management =4, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

**Question**: Would you say that Citizen Participation has changed in the last 5 years?

Variable Label: q5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=increased significantly, 3= increased a little 2=did not change 1=don’t know, 0= no answer
Note: n-a

**Question**: If participation did increase, do you think the role and activities of the municipality have changed as a consequence of this increase in Citizen Participation?

Variable Label: q5.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=a lot, 3=in some aspects 2=not much, 1=nothing at all, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Please explain your answer given to q5.1
Variable Label: q5.2
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Ward Committees
Variable Label: q6.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. IDP
Variable Label: q6.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Public Hearings and Meetings
Variable Label: q6.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Public opinion polls or surveys
Variable Label: q6.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Advisory panels or committees
Variable Label: q6.5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Have you participated in and/or used any of the following spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance? In your opinion, which level of participation do they promote? For each option please mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Municipal Budget elaboration
Variable Label: q6.6
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=information, 2=consultation, 3=decision making 4=comanagement, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the elaboration of the municipal IDP
Variable Label: q7.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the implementation of the municipal IDP
Variable Label: q7.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the evaluation of the municipal IDP
Variable Label: q7.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In decisions related to basic services provision
Variable Label: q7.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In decisions related to municipal investment projects
Variable Label: q7.5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=high, 3=medium,2=low,1=none, 0=no answer
Note: n-a
**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the budget formulation and approval

*Variable Label:* q7.6  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium, 2=low, 1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the establishment of Performance Management System (PMS)

*Variable Label:* q7.7  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium, 2=low, 1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how influential is citizen participation in the following (Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate): In the implementation and review of PMS

*Variable Label:* q7.8  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=high, 3=medium, 2=low, 1=none, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In general, do you think all the members of the community have the same possibilities of access to Municipal information?

*Variable Label:* q8  
*Values:* 1, 2, 0  
*Value Labels:* Yes=1, No=2, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** If your answer to 8 was NO, what do you think local government is doing to redress this issue?

*Variable Label:* q8.1  
*Values:* open question  
*Value Labels:* n-a  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In relation to your municipal IDP, in which of the following processes do you think there have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation. Please explain (you can mark more than one option):

*Variable Label:* q9  
*Values:* 1-5, 0  
*Value Labels:* 1. elaboration, 2. implementation, 3. evaluation, 4. don't know, 5. other, 0 no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** How would you rate the participation of national departments and provincial government in IDP elaboration process?

*Variable Label:* q9.1  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=highly adequate, 3=adequate, 2=inadequate 1=don't know, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a
Question: Do you think the way national and provincial departments participated in the IDP has constrained the potential of the IDP as a means for meaningful CP in LG?
Variable Label: q9.2
Values: 1-3, 0
Value Labels: Yes=1, No=2, 3=Don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In relation to Ward Committees, how would you evaluate their functioning in your area?
Variable Label: q10
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=highly adequate, 3=adequate, 2=inadequate 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In relation to Ward Committees, which have been the most serious obstacles for citizen participation? Please specify one or more of these obstacles
Variable Label: q10.1
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: In your opinion, does the municipal council take into account the recommendations of Ward Committees?
Variable Label: q10.2
Values: 1-3, 0
Value Labels: 3=always, 2=sometimes 1=never, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Do you think the proposals from Ward Committees should have binding authority? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider the most adequate. Ward Committees
Variable Label: q11.1
Values: 1-3, 0
Value Labels: Yes=1, No=2, don’t know=3, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Do you think the proposals from the IDPs representative forums should have binding authority? Please, for each option mark in the column you consider the most adequate.
Variable Label: q11.2
Values: 1-3, 0
Value Labels: Yes=1, No=2, don’t know=3, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: If your answer to 11.1 and/or 11.2 was NO, please give reasons for your answer
Variable Label: q11.3
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: Please read the following statements and establish whether you agree or disagree using the following scale: 1- strongly disagree – 4 strongly agree, 2 and 3 can be used to state intermediate positions. “Traditional community-based structures (civic associations, residents’ associations, etc.) are being sidelined as more attention is given to Ward Committees”
Variable Label: q12.1
Values: 1-4, 0
**Question:** Please read the following statements and establish whether you agree or disagree using the following scale: 1- strongly disagree – 4 strongly agree, 2 and 3 can be used to state intermediate positions. “Where Civil Society Organizations (CSO) do participate in these formal structures, participation is often limited to a number of larger, well resourced CSOs, for instance in the IDP forums”

**Variable Label:** q12.2

**Values:** 1-4, 0

**Value Labels:** strongly agree=4, agree=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Please read the following statements and establish whether you agree or disagree using the following scale: 1- strongly disagree – 4 strongly agree, 2 and 3 can be used to state intermediate positions. “There has been a trend in political leaders to co-opt ward representatives. This is showing the partidization trend of participation, not only in the elections of councillors but also in the ward meetings”.

**Variable Label:** q12.3

**Values:** 1-4, 0

**Value Labels:** strongly agree=4, agree=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Please read the following statements and establish whether you agree or disagree using the following scale: 1- strongly disagree – 4 strongly agree, 2 and 3 can be used to state intermediate positions. “Municipalities should support the organisational development of associations, in particular in poor marginalised areas where the skills and resources for participation may be less developed than in better-off areas”.

**Variable Label:** q12.4

**Values:** 1-4, 0

**Value Labels:** strongly agree=4, agree=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, are there mechanisms in place which the citizens can use to control the activities of the municipality?

**Variable Label:** q13

**Values:** 1-3, 0

**Value Labels:** Yes, frequ. Used=3, Yes, but not used=2, no=1, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** In general, in relation to the mechanisms for citizen participation in local governance, do you think they are designed to take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged groups?

**Variable Label:** q14

**Values:** 1-3, 0

**Value Labels:** Yes=1, No=2, Don’t know=3, 0=no answer

**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Please give reasons for your answer

**Variable Label:** q14.1

**Values:** open question

**Value Labels:** n-a

**Note:** n-a
**Question:** In your opinion, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for women? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:

*Variable Label:* q15.1  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for young people? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:

*Variable Label:* q15.2  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for the poor? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:

*Variable Label:* q15.3  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In your opinion, how inclusive are Citizen Participation activities and spaces (ward committee meetings, IDP representative forums, etc.) for disabled people? Please mark for each option in the column you consider the most adequate:

*Variable Label:* q15.4  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4=highly inclusive, 3=inclusive, 2=exclusive, 1=highly exclusive, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** What do you think local government is doing to encourage women, young, disabled and poor people to participate in Local Governance? Please, choose between the following options:

*Variable Label:* q16  
*Values:* 1-3, 0  
*Value Labels:* 1=no measures, 2=measures implemented but unsuccessful, 3= adequate measures implemented to encourage their participation, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** Please specify

*Variable Label:* q16.1  
*Values:* open question  
*Value Labels:* n-a  
*Note:* n-a

**Question:** Which of the following factors do you think prevent government introducing participatory practices in local governance? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree  -- It takes more time

*Variable Label:* q17.1  
*Values:* 1-4, 0  
*Value Labels:* 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer  
*Note:* n-a
Question: Which of the following factors do you think prevent government introducing participatory practices in local governance? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- Staff has insufficient skills and knowledge

Variable Label: q17.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which of the following factors do you think prevent government introducing participatory practices in local governance? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- There are insufficient resources

Variable Label: q17.3
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which of the following factors do you think prevent government introducing participatory practices in local governance? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- It raises opposition as it generates insecurity, perceptions of loss of authority by municipal officials

Variable Label: q17.4
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which of the following factors do you think prevent government introducing participatory practices in local governance? Use the following scale: 1. strongly disagree, 2.disagree 3. agree 4. Strongly agree -- The local community is not interested in participating in local governance

Variable Label: q17.5
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4= strongly agree3=agree 2=disagree,1=strongly disagree, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In terms of the characteristics of your local community, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in the White Paper on LG 1998) to be: -- For the deepening of local democracy

Variable Label: q18.1
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=adequate, 3=relatively adequate, 2=inadequate, 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In terms of the characteristics of your local community, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in the White Paper on LG 1998) to be: -- Given the socio-economic characteristics of your municipality

Variable Label: q18.2
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 4=adequate, 3=relatively adequate, 2=inadequate, 1=don't know, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: In terms of the characteristics of your local community, do you consider the legal framework (as established in the M Structures Act 1998, M Systems Act 2000 and as envisaged in
the White Paper on LG 1998) to be: -- Given the administrative and technical capacities of your municipality.

**Variable Label:** q18.3  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=adequate, 3=relatively adequate, 2=inadequate, 1=don’t know, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Do you think the policies followed in the national and provincial sphere provide an enabling environment and tools for promoting Citizen Participation (CP) in your locality?

**Variable Label:** q19  
**Values:** 1,2,3, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres are adequate=1, No, the orientations and institutional framework provided by central and provincial spheres prevent Local Government to promote CP. There is a need to more effective decentralization=2, 3=don’t know, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Do you think legislation (MSA) is inhibiting municipal action in terms of effective CP in LG?

**Variable Label:** q20  
**Values:** 1,2,3, 0  
**Value Labels:** Yes=1, no=2, 3=don’t know  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Other countries have implemented other mechanisms to promote CP in local governance. Which of the following do you think it would be interesting to consider for SA?

**Variable Label:** q21  
**Values:** 1-6, 0  
**Value Labels:** 1=Participatory budget, 2=vigilance committees, 3=both, 4=no other mechanisms are required the current situation is OK, 5= no other mechanisms are required but implementation of the existing should be improved. 6= never herd about these mechanisms, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Do you think the municipal officials have the skills to encourage Citizen Participation (CP) in Local Governance (LG)? Please choose the most adequate option:

**Variable Label:** q22  
**Values:** 1-3, 0  
**Value Labels:** 3=skills are adequate, 2=some skills problems to be addressed with specific training 1=fundamental problems with skills, 0=no answer  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** Please indicate the area-mechanisms of citizen participation in terms of which the municipal officials should receive more training

**Variable Label:** q22.1  
**Values:** open question  
**Value Labels:** n-a  
**Note:** n-a

**Question:** How would you consider the process of citizen participation in your locality?

**Variable Label:** q23  
**Values:** 1-4, 0  
**Value Labels:** 4=highly desirable, 3=desirable and could be improved, 2=not desirable 1=don’t know, 0=no answer
**Question:** Do you think in your community people are aware of their constitutional rights and how to realize them, such as the channels for CP?

*Variable Label:* q24

*Values:* 1, 2, 0

*Value Labels:* 1=yes, 2=no, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

**Question:** In particular, do they understand the functions and spaces for CP?

*Variable Label:* q25

*Values:* 1, 2, 0

*Value Labels:* 1=yes, 2=no, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

**Question:** Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.

---Lack of trust of the community towards government

*Variable Label:* q26.1

*Values:* 1-4, 0

*Value Labels:* 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

---Lack of time

*Variable Label:* q26.2

*Values:* 1-4, 0

*Value Labels:* 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

---Education and literacy

*Variable Label:* q26.3

*Values:* 1-4, 0

*Value Labels:* 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

---Cultural beliefs and practices

*Variable Label:* q26.4

*Values:* 1-4, 0

*Value Labels:* 1=the less relevant…4= the most relevant, 0=no answer

*Note:* n-a

---Opposition, blockages, Group dynamics

*Variable Label:* q26.5

*Values:* 1-4, 0
Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.— Gender discrimination – other forms of discrimination
Variable Label: q26.6
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant...4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: Which in your opinion are the key factors that affect the capacity of citizens or the community to participate? Use the following scale where 1 means the less relevant and 4 the most relevant, 2 and 3 can be used to express opinions in between.— Lack of information
Variable Label: q26.7
Values: 1-4, 0
Value Labels: 1=the less relevant...4= the most relevant, 0=no answer
Note: n-a

Question: What challenges do you think local government faces in its attempts to promote CP in Local Governance?
Variable Label: q27
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

Question: Is there any other comments that you would like to include?
Variable Label: q28
Values: open question
Value Labels: n-a
Note: n-a

9.2. A survey on Citizen Participation in local governance in the Eastern Cape: Additional data

Table 9.2.1: Eastern Cape Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Mayor</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>email</th>
<th>fax</th>
<th>tel.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY (EC300)</td>
<td>Mr NC Facu</td>
<td>Mr M Mebebe</td>
<td></td>
<td>415054512</td>
<td>4155063431</td>
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<td>0415063431</td>
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<tr>
<td>CACADU DM</td>
<td>Mr MG Mvoko</td>
<td>Mr D M Pillay</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cgoeda@cacadu.co.za">cgoeda@cacadu.co.za</a></td>
<td>[041] 508 71</td>
<td>33 Secret. Clarisse</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>[041] 508 711</td>
<td>415087114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMDEBOO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC101)</td>
<td>Mr D Japhta</td>
<td>Mr Samuel Lennon Arris</td>
<td><a href="mailto:townclerkkrtmun@intekom.co.za">townclerkkrtmun@intekom.co.za</a></td>
<td>[049] 892 4319</td>
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<td>[049] 892 2121</td>
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<td>BLUE CRANE ROUTE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY(EC102)</td>
<td>Ms MC Mjadu</td>
<td>Mr D Claassen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:someast@netactive.co.za">someast@netactive.co.za</a></td>
<td>[042] 243 1548</td>
<td>Secret. Sissette</td>
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<td>[042] 243 1333</td>
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<td><strong>IKWEZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC103)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Mr. MH. Sithole</td>
<td>Mr W J da Pisanie</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bunabazn1@telkomsa.net">bunabazn1@telkomsa.net</a></td>
<td>049] 836-0105 Jimmy</td>
<td>049] 836-0021</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BAVIAANS LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC107)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>E.L. LOOCK</td>
<td>Mr E G Taljaard</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bavianns@mweb.co.za">bavianns@mweb.co.za</a></td>
<td>044] 923 1122 - Benanise</td>
<td>044] 923 1004</td>
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<td><strong>KOUGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC108)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr J Cawood</td>
<td>Dr N Botha</td>
<td><a href="mailto:registry@ec108.org.za">registry@ec108.org.za</a></td>
<td>042] 293 1114 - Loretta</td>
<td>[042] 293 1111 200 2212</td>
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<td><strong>KOU-KAMMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC109)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr N O’Connel</td>
<td>Mr M Ndokweni</td>
<td><a href="mailto:florenceg@lonet.org.za">florenceg@lonet.org.za</a></td>
<td>[042] 288 0797 - Florence</td>
<td>[042] 288 0303</td>
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<td><strong>MAKANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC104)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr VG Lwana</td>
<td>Mr P Naidoo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pravine@makana.gov.za">pravine@makana.gov.za</a></td>
<td>[046] 622 9700</td>
<td>[046] 603 6132</td>
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<td><strong>NDLAMBE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC105)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr V M Balura</td>
<td>Secret. Amanda</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dklassen@ndlamb.co.za">dklassen@ndlamb.co.za</a></td>
<td>[046] 624 2727 / 624 2669 Amanda</td>
<td>[046] 624 1140</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUNDAY’S RIVER VALLEY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC106)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr ZA Lose</td>
<td>Mr MJ Ralo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:srv@telkomsa.net">srv@telkomsa.net</a></td>
<td>[042] 230-1799</td>
<td>[042] 230-0310</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AMATOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (DC12)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr S Somyo</td>
<td>Mr X W Msweyi - not willing to participate</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xolelam@amatoledm.co.za">xolelam@amatoledm.co.za</a></td>
<td>043] 742-2656 or [043] 742 0337</td>
<td>043] 701-4000</td>
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<td><strong>MBHASHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC121)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr N Ndindwa</td>
<td>Mr N Madyidi</td>
<td>N-A</td>
<td>[047] 491-3667/3729</td>
<td>[047] 491-4121/3625</td>
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<td><strong>GREAT KEI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC123)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms NM Kema</td>
<td>Mr O S Ngqele</td>
<td>N-A</td>
<td>[043] 831 1306</td>
<td>[043] 831 8311325</td>
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<td><strong>AMAHLATI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC124)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr T. Jonas</td>
<td>Mr N C Magwangqana - not willing to participate</td>
<td><a href="mailto:manager@amahlathi.co.za">manager@amahlathi.co.za</a></td>
<td>[043] 683 1127</td>
<td>[043] 683 1100</td>
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<td>Cllr S Maclean</td>
<td>Mr M B Tsika</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nadin@buffalocity.gov.za">nadin@buffalocity.gov.za</a></td>
<td>[043] 743 8568 / 7051029 Pem</td>
<td>Tel: [043] 705 1045</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr S Maclean</td>
<td>Mr M B Tsika</td>
<td><a href="mailto:juliete@buffalocity.gov.za">juliete@buffalocity.gov.za</a></td>
<td>437221024</td>
<td>Tel: [043] 705 2000</td>
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<td>Cllr NP Ncawe</td>
<td>Mr M Somana</td>
<td><a href="mailto:msomana@ngqushwarman.co.za">msomana@ngqushwarman.co.za</a></td>
<td>Fax: [040] 673 3771</td>
<td>Tel: [040] 673 3095</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr HM Mdleleni</td>
<td>Mr S D Mdila</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nsubukwe@nkonkobe.co.za">nsubukwe@nkonkobe.co.za</a></td>
<td>Fax: [046] 645 1775 - Mimisa</td>
<td>Tel: [046] 645 1136</td>
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<td>Cllr M Mhana</td>
<td>Mr de Lange</td>
<td><a href="mailto:admuntlc@corpdel.co.za">admuntlc@corpdel.co.za</a></td>
<td>Fax: [046] 684-1931 de nuevo</td>
<td>Tel: [046] 684-0034</td>
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<td>Contact Person 1</td>
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<td>Email Address 1</td>
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<td>CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (DC13)</td>
<td>Mr MS Sigabi</td>
<td>Mr M Mene-Tendi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chani@awe.co.za">chani@awe.co.za</a></td>
<td>[045] 838-1582</td>
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<td>CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (DC13)</td>
<td>Mr MS Sigabi</td>
<td>Mr M Mene-Tendi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:miteit@chrishanidm.co.za">miteit@chrishanidm.co.za</a></td>
<td>[045] 838-1582</td>
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<td>INXUBA YETHEMBA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY</td>
<td>Mr M Zenzile</td>
<td>Mr S J Dayi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tsolwanamun@telkomsa.net">tsolwanamun@telkomsa.net</a></td>
<td>[045] 846 0025</td>
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<td>Mr S Mokwena</td>
<td>Mr S J Dayi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mokwena@engcobolm.org.za">mokwena@engcobolm.org.za</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:tsolwanamun@telkomsa.net">tsolwanamun@telkomsa.net</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:tsolwanamun@telkomsa.net">tsolwanamun@telkomsa.net</a></td>
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<td>UKWAHLAMBA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (EC14)</td>
<td>Mr XYZ Goduka</td>
<td>Mr M Mene-Tendi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chani@awe.co.za">chani@awe.co.za</a></td>
<td>[045] 838-1582</td>
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<td>SENQU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY</td>
<td>Mr Z Dumzela</td>
<td>Mr M Mene-Tendi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chani@awe.co.za">chani@awe.co.za</a></td>
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<td>MALETHSWAI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC143)</td>
<td>Ms EN Sokudela</td>
<td>Mr H Hendricks</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mokwena@engcobolm.org.za">mokwena@engcobolm.org.za</a></td>
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<td>GARIEP LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC144)</td>
<td>Cllr X Solani</td>
<td>Mr M Mene-Tendi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mokwena@engcobolm.org.za">mokwena@engcobolm.org.za</a></td>
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<td>O R TAMBO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (DC15)</td>
<td>Ms R N Capa</td>
<td>Mr M Mene-Tendi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chani@awe.co.za">chani@awe.co.za</a></td>
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<td>MBIZANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC151)</td>
<td>Mr MM Twabu</td>
<td>Mr S Mlomo</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Fax: [039] 251-0040</td>
<td>Tel: [039] 251-0230</td>
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<td>NTABANKULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC152)</td>
<td>Cllr PS Matshoba</td>
<td>Ms N Mazwi</td>
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<td>Fax: [039] 2580003</td>
<td>Tel: [039] 258-0056</td>
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<td>Quakeni Local Municipality (OR Tambo)</td>
<td>Mr P S Kango</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td><a href="mailto:municipality@ntabankulu.org.za">municipality@ntabankulu.org.za</a></td>
<td>039] 252 0699</td>
<td>039] 252 0131/61</td>
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<td>PORT ST JOHNS LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC154)</td>
<td>Mr WM Mtakati</td>
<td>Mr Z Helu</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Fax: [047] 555-0202</td>
<td>Tel: [047] 555-0332</td>
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<td>NYANDENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC155)</td>
<td>Mr PM Diniso</td>
<td>Mr Z Buyana</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Fax: [047] 555-0202 0343 0475550066</td>
<td>Tel: [047] 555-0332</td>
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<td>MHLONTLO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC156)</td>
<td>Mr MW Bada</td>
<td>Mr M Mabono</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Fax: [047] 553 0189</td>
<td>Tel: [047] 553-0011</td>
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<td>KING SABATA DALINDYEBO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC157)</td>
<td>Cllr DV Mgudlwa</td>
<td>Mr L M Msimboti</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Fax: [047] 532-5198</td>
<td>Tel: [047] 501-4238/9</td>
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<td>ALFRED NZO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (DC44)</td>
<td>Mr M Segoni</td>
<td>Mr X H Jakuja</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jakuja@alfrednzondm.org.za">jakuja@alfrednzondm.org.za</a>, <a href="mailto:nhlelembanal@alfrednzondm.org.za">nhlelembanal@alfrednzondm.org.za</a></td>
<td>Fax: [039] 254 0818 0343</td>
<td>Tel: [039] 254 0320</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMZIMKULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC05b1)</td>
<td>Mr BMP Dzanibe</td>
<td>Mr T V Dyonas</td>
<td>n-a</td>
<td>Fax: [039] 259-0552or 259 0427</td>
<td>Tel: [039] 259-0216</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMZIMVUBU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (EC05b2)</td>
<td>Mr JZ Munyu</td>
<td>Mr Z H Sikhundla</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sikhundlaz@elections.org.za">sikhundlaz@elections.org.za</a></td>
<td>Fax: [039] 254 0033</td>
<td>Tel: [039] 254 0239</td>
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<tr>
<td>organization-institution</td>
<td>email/fax</td>
<td>main area of work</td>
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<td>Abahlali Housing Association (AHA)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mplan@iafrica.com">mplan@iafrica.com</a></td>
<td>Corporate Social Investment, Housing, Land, Local Government, Urban</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adelaide Advice Centre (AAC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:adelaide@lda.org.za">adelaide@lda.org.za</a></td>
<td>Community Development, Information, Legal Services, Counselling</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Adult Literacy Centre - Lirungelo Lethu (ACLCL)</td>
<td>437420341</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
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<td>Adult Basic Education Project (ABEP)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kobese@ufh.ac.za">kobese@ufh.ac.za</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
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<td>Afesis-Corplan (A-C)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:corplan@wn.apc.org">corplan@wn.apc.org</a> 0437432200</td>
<td>Housing, Information, Local Government, Research, Tourism</td>
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<td>Africa Co-operative Action Trust (ACAT)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:acatee@wn.apc.org">acatee@wn.apc.org</a> 047 536 0147</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education, Agriculture, Rural, Training, Water</td>
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<td>African Culture Community Development Association (ACDDA)</td>
<td>043 7437410</td>
<td>Arts and culture, community development, training</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Medical Mission (AMM)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ammsa@wildcoast.co.za">ammsa@wildcoast.co.za</a></td>
<td>HIV/AIDS, Community Development, Corporate Social Investment, Early Childhood Development, Funding, Health, Youth, Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture Opportunity Centre (AOC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aoc@africa.com">aoc@africa.com</a> 040 6350329</td>
<td>Agriculture, Poverty Relief, Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Saints Education Development Centre (ASEDC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:asc@iafrica.com">asc@iafrica.com</a></td>
<td>Capacity Building, Education, Rural, Environmental Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dfiffable@iafrica.com">dfiffable@iafrica.com</a> 0437221811</td>
<td>Capacity Building, Disability, Health, Rehabilitation, Welfare</td>
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<td>Association for the Physically Disabled - Eastern Cape (APDPE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:apdpe@iafrica.com">apdpe@iafrica.com</a> 0414847909</td>
<td>Disability, Training</td>
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<td>Berlin Literacy Programme</td>
<td><a href="mailto:berlin@lda.org.za">berlin@lda.org.za</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Sash Advice Office</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sashpe@mweb.co.za">sashpe@mweb.co.za</a></td>
<td>Advocacy, Democracy, Human Rights, Legal Services, Women</td>
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<td>Border Rural Committee (BRC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@bro21.co.za">info@bro21.co.za</a> 0437438898</td>
<td>Advocacy, Community Development, Food Security, Land, Rural</td>
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<td>Border Training Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:btc@intekom.co.za">btc@intekom.co.za</a> 0437612515</td>
<td>Capacity Building, Entrepreneurship, Housing, Training</td>
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<td>Border-Kei Chamber of Business (BKCOB)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bkcob@iafrica.com">bkcob@iafrica.com</a> 0437432249</td>
<td>Business and Commerce</td>
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<td>Cala University Students' Association (CALUSA)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sani@calusa.org.za">sani@calusa.org.za</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education, Capacity Building, Early Childhood Development, Information</td>
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<td>Centani community district development institution (CCDDI)</td>
<td>047 491 4068</td>
<td>Agriculture, youth</td>
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<td>Community education and resource centre (CERC)</td>
<td>047 531 0220</td>
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<td>Community Environment Network (CEN)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cennet@iafrica.com">cennet@iafrica.com</a> 041 4671436</td>
<td>Community Development, Environment, Poverty Relief, Social Awareness, Environmental Education</td>
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<td>Community Women's institute CWI</td>
<td>040 6565638</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Bread Charitable Trust (DBCT)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dbread@iafrica.com">dbread@iafrica.com</a></td>
<td>Community Development, Funding</td>
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<td>Daliwe Advice Centre (DAC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:daliwe@lda.org.za">daliwe@lda.org.za</a></td>
<td>Community Development, Legal Services</td>
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<td>Delta Foundation</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fnndelta@iafrica.com">fnndelta@iafrica.com</a></td>
<td>Urban, Networking, Development Management, Corporate Social Investment, Community Development</td>
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<td>Development and Human Resources Centre (DHRC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:humanrc@iafrica.com">humanrc@iafrica.com</a></td>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
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<td>Duncan Village Development Forum</td>
<td>043 7332747</td>
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<td>Dordrecht Legal Advice &amp; Community Development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dordrecht@lda.org.za">dordrecht@lda.org.za</a></td>
<td>Community Development, Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Cape Agricultural Research Project (ECARP)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ecarpadmin@imagin8e.co.za">ecarpadmin@imagin8e.co.za</a></td>
<td>Agriculture, Capacity Building, Community Development, Labour, Land, Policy, Research, Rural development</td>
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<td>East Cape Rural Industries (ECRI)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ecri@sn.apc.org">ecri@sn.apc.org</a></td>
<td>Business and Commerce, Entrepreneurship, Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>East London Children's Home (ELCH)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elchild@mweb.co.za">elchild@mweb.co.za</a></td>
<td>Children, Social Awareness, Volunteerism, Community Development, HIV/Aids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastcape Training Centre (ETC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:etctrain@mail.icon.co.za">etctrain@mail.icon.co.za</a></td>
<td>Capacity Building, Community Development, Human Resource Development, Job Creation, Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethembeni Enrichment Centre (EEC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mwecc@mweb.co.za">mwecc@mweb.co.za</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Beaufort Advice Office (FABO)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fortbeaufort@lda.org.za">fortbeaufort@lda.org.za</a></td>
<td>Business and Commerce, Legal Services, Training, Counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GADRA Advice and Community Work (GADRA)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:gadraadvice@imaginet.co.za">gadraadvice@imaginet.co.za</a></td>
<td>Training, Education, Poverty Relief, Networking, Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gqebe Development Trust (GDT)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:gqeberatrust@telkom.net">gqeberatrust@telkom.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA Education)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:gadra.ed@mailbox.ru.ac.za">gadra.ed@mailbox.ru.ac.za</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education, Bursaries, Career Guidance, Information Technology</td>
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<td><strong>Harlem Education Trust (HET)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:harlem@agnetsa.co.za">harlem@agnetsa.co.za</a></td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td><strong>Health Care Trust (HCT)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:healthcare@awe.co.za">healthcare@awe.co.za</a></td>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy People, Happy Communities</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ymiles@worldonline.co.za">ymiles@worldonline.co.za</a> 043743 0285</td>
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<td><strong>Helping Hands Community Builders</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Heritage Training Foundation</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:herbst@intekom.co.za">herbst@intekom.co.za</a></td>
<td>Leadership, Training</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ikaheng Adult Development Project (IADP)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:tlholo@telkomsa.net">tlholo@telkomsa.net</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education, Research, Training, Environmental Education</td>
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<td><strong>Ikhala Trust (Ikhala Trust)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ikhala_admin@telkomsa.net">ikhala_admin@telkomsa.net</a></td>
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<td><strong>Ikhwezi Lokusa Rehabilitation and Sheltered Employment Workshop</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ikrehab@intekom.co.za">ikrehab@intekom.co.za</a></td>
<td>Job Creation, Labour, Rehabilitation</td>
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<td><strong>Imbizo Arts of South Africa (IASA)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:iasa@ananzi.co.za">iasa@ananzi.co.za</a></td>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
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<td><strong>Initiative for Participatory Development (IPD)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ipdev@mweb.co.za">ipdev@mweb.co.za</a></td>
<td>Gender, Leadership, Networking, Organisational Development, Rural, Training</td>
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<td><strong>Institute of Education and Training for Capacity Building (ITEC)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mail@iteced.co.za">mail@iteced.co.za</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education, Early Childhood Development, Training</td>
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<td><strong>ISANDLA Partners in Development (ISANDLA)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ipdsa@iafrica.cofrica.com">ipdsa@iafrica.cofrica.com</a> 0414870554</td>
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<td><strong>Kei Farmers Support Centre Association (KFSCA)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kfsca@intekom.co.za">kfsca@intekom.co.za</a> 0475322580</td>
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<td>Khanyisa Education &amp; Development Trust</td>
<td><a href="mailto:khanyisa@agnet.co.za">khanyisa@agnet.co.za</a></td>
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<td>Khanyiselani Development Trust (KDT)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:khanyiselani@telkomsa.net">khanyiselani@telkomsa.net</a></td>
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<td>Khululeka Community Education Development Centre (KCEDC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chantal@khululeka.org.za">chantal@khululeka.org.za</a></td>
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<td>King Sandile Development Trust</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ceo.ksdt@border.co.za">ceo.ksdt@border.co.za</a> 0406350246</td>
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<td>King William’s Town Child and Youth Care Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:naccwkt@iafrica.com">naccwkt@iafrica.com</a></td>
<td>HIV/AIDS, Childcare, Community Development, Family Services, Human Resource Development</td>
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<td>Lake Farm Centre Aid Association</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lakefarms@mweb.co.za">lakefarms@mweb.co.za</a></td>
<td>Adult Basic Education, Disability</td>
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<td>Langa kwaNobuhle Self-Help and Resource Exchange (SHARE)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:share@sn.apc.org">share@sn.apc.org</a></td>
<td>Childcare, Disability, Poverty Relief, Women, Youth</td>
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<td>Living Waters</td>
<td><a href="mailto:admin@livingwaters.org.za">admin@livingwaters.org.za</a></td>
<td>Capacity Building, Job Creation, Women, Employment, Child abuse</td>
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<td>Masifunde Education and Development Project (MEDP)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:masifunde@intekom.co.za">masifunde@intekom.co.za</a></td>
<td>Advocacy, Capacity Building, Community Development, Education</td>
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<td>Masimanyane Women’s Support Centre (MWSC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maswsc@iafrica.com">maswsc@iafrica.com</a> 0437439176</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:masonwabewsc@mweb.co.za">masonwabewsc@mweb.co.za</a></td>
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<td>Matat/ Environmental Development Agency Rural Development Programme (EDA)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:edamatat@wn.apc.org">edamatat@wn.apc.org</a></td>
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<td>Matatiele Advice Centre (MAC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mac@lda.org.za">mac@lda.org.za</a></td>
<td>Community Development, Information, Legal Services</td>
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<td>Mdantsane Youth Academy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:athi@iafrica.com">athi@iafrica.com</a></td>
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<td>Metroplan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:plan@mplan-pe.co.za">plan@mplan-pe.co.za</a> 0413731838</td>
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<td>Molteno Community Development &amp; Legal Advice Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:neels@molteno-sa.co.za">neels@molteno-sa.co.za</a> 0459670076</td>
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<td>Mount Ayliff Development Agency (MADA)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mada@wildcost.co.za">mada@wildcost.co.za</a> 0392540210</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship, Job Creation, Rural, Training, Women, Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Eastern Cape Business Resource, Information and Advice Centre (NECBRIAC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:necbriac@sn.apc.org">necbriac@sn.apc.org</a></td>
<td>Business and Commerce, Community Development, Entrepreneurship, Information, Networking, Research, Training</td>
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<td>Port Elizabeth Self-Help and Rehabilitation of Disabled (PESHBARD)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.idesign.co.za/peshard">www.idesign.co.za/peshard</a></td>
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<td>Project for Conflict Resolution and Development (PCRD)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pcrd@pcrd.org.za">pcrd@pcrd.org.za</a></td>
<td>Capacity Building, Community Development, Conflict Resolution, Education, Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:psam-admin@ru.ac.za">psam-admin@ru.ac.za</a></td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td>Queenstown Benevolent &amp; Child Welfare Society (QBCW)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:qtnchildwelfare@eci.co.za">qtnchildwelfare@eci.co.za</a></td>
<td>Childcare, Child abuse</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready for Business Initiative (RFB)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:skyeblue@caseynet.co.za">skyeblue@caseynet.co.za</a></td>
<td>Business and Commerce, Career Guidance, Education, Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Support Services (RSS)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbulelo@rss.co.za">mbulelo@rss.co.za</a> 0437432503</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS, Capacity Building, Gender, Health, Rural, Water, Sanitation</td>
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<td>Sikhona Marketing Cooperative (SMC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bcrl@sn.apc.org">bcrl@sn.apc.org</a></td>
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<td>Siyabona Educational Trust</td>
<td><a href="mailto:siyabona@mweb.co.za">siyabona@mweb.co.za</a></td>
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<td>Siyakha Skills Centre (SSC)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:enquiries@siyakha.org.za">enquiries@siyakha.org.za</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Siyanakekela Community Development (SCD)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:siyana@telkomsa.net">siyana@telkomsa.net</a> 27 3973736666</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, Gender, Rural development, Children</td>
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<td>Small Projects Foundation (SFF)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:spfinf@intekom.co.za">spfinf@intekom.co.za</a></td>
<td>Capacity Building, Community Development, Development Management, Training, Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society for Education and Rehabilitation of marginalized youth SERMY</td>
<td>041 4870128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Africa Development, Research and</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sadrat@intekom.co.za">sadrat@intekom.co.za</a> 0413824155</td>
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9.2.2 Decentralization in SA: Additional tables and charts

**Figure 9.2.2.1: EC municipalities - Disparities in total municipal budget**

![Bar chart showing disparities in total municipal budget for EC municipalities.](chart.png)

Source: Own elaboration based on figures from Intergovernmental fiscal Review 2004

**Table 9.2.2.1: Eastern Cape Municipalities- Capital Expenditure**

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Source: Own elaboration based on figures from Intergovernmental fiscal Review 2004
### 9.2.3 Some Development Indicators for the Eastern Cape

#### Table 9.2.3.1 Percentage of people below poverty line – Eastern Cape Municipalities (2000 – 2005)

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Source: ECSECC (2005)

Table 9.2.3.2: Human Development Index (Eastern Cape municipalities)

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Source: ECSECC (2005) and [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_ZAF.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_ZAF.html)

Chart 9.2.3.4 Functional Literacy: Age 20+, Completed Grade 7 Or Higher (Eastern Cape Municipalities)
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<th>Registered Voters</th>
<th>Qualified Voters</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
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<td>43,655</td>
<td>61,956</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Sabata Dalindyebo</td>
<td>EC157</td>
<td>83,713</td>
<td>137,247</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umzimkhulu</td>
<td>EC05B1</td>
<td>68,989</td>
<td>96,428</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umzimvubu</td>
<td>EC05B2</td>
<td>38,006</td>
<td>65,234</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Mandela Metro</td>
<td>NMM</td>
<td>113,354</td>
<td>647,589</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ECSECC (2005)
9.3. The legal and policy framework for citizen participation and decentralization in SA

9.3.1 Decentralization and the Constitution: Schedules 4 and 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule 4 - Functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence Part B The following local government matters to the extent set out in section 155(6)(a) and (7):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Air pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child care facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Electricity and gas reticulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Firefighting services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal airports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal public transport only in respect of the needs of municipalities in the discharge of their responsibilities to administer functions specifically assigned to them under this Constitution or any other law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pontoons, ferries, jetties, piers and harbours, excluding the regulation of international and national shipping and matters related thereto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stormwater management systems in built-up areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trading regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Water and sanitation services limited to potable water supply systems and domestic waste-water and sewage disposal systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule 5 - Functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence Part B The following local government matters to the extent set out for provinces in section 155(6)(a) and (7):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Beaches and amusement facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Billboards and the display of advertisements in public places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cemeteries, funeral parlours and crematoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cleansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control of public nuisances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control of undertakings that sell liquor to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities for the accommodation, care and burial of animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fencing and fences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Licensing of dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Licensing and control of undertakings that sell food to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local sport facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal abattoirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal parks and recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Municipal roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Noise pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refuse removal, refuse dumps and solid waste disposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Street trading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3.2 Key legislation and policy documents: Selected passages on Citizen Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Constitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Values of human dignity, non-racialism and non-sexism and a multi-party system to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Bill of rights including equality, human dignity, freedoms, environment, as well as rights to housing, health care, food, water, social security, education, access to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>National, provincial and local spheres of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>Objects of local government – to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195(e)</td>
<td>Basic values and principles governing public administration – people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>White Paper on Developmental Local Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>In the past local government has tended to make its presence felt in communities by controlling or regulating citizens’ actions. While regulation remains an important local government function, it must be supplemented by leadership, encouragement, practical support and resources for community action. Municipalities can do a lot to support individual and community initiative and to direct community energies into projects and programmes which benefit the area as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipalities need to be aware of the divisions within local communities, and seek to promote the participation of marginalised and excluded groups in community processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Municipalities require active participation by citizens at 4 levels:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• As voters, to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• As citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• As consumers and end-users, who expect value for money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• As organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via for-profit businesses, NGOs and CBOs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As participants in the policy process: Municipalities should develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation and formulation, and the M&E of decision-making and implementation. The following approaches can assist to achieve this:

• Forums to allow organised formations to initiate policies and/or influence policy formulation, as well as participate in monitoring and evaluation
• Structured stakeholder involvement in certain Council committees, in particular if these are issue-oriented committees with a limited lifespan rather than permanent structures
• Participatory budgeting initiatives aimed at linking community priorities to capital investment programmes (…)
• Support for the organisational development of (community) associations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Allows for a Category A municipality with a subcouncil or ward participatory system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Allows for a Category B municipality with a ward participatory system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 (3) (h)</td>
<td>Executive committees must … annually report on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 (3) (g)</td>
<td>Executive Mayors must…. annually report on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Ward committees – the object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Functions and powers of ward committees – a ward committee may make recommendations on any matters affecting its ward, to the ward councillors, through the ward councillor to the metro or local council… and has such duties and powers as the metro or local council may delegate to it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 (b)</td>
<td>A municipality consists of the political and administrative structures of the municipality and the community of the municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (c) (e)</td>
<td>The council has the duty to… (c)encourage the involvement of the local community (e) consult the community about the level quality, range and impact of municipal services provided by the municipality, either directly or through another service provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (a)</td>
<td>Members of the community have the right… (a) to contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality and submit written or oral recommendations, representations and complaints to the municipal council… (c) To be informed of decisions of the municipal council.. (d) To regular disclosure of the affairs of the municipality, including its finances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 4 Community participation**

| 16 (1)   | A municipality must develop a culture of municipal, governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance and must for this purpose: (a) Encourage and create conditions for the community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in …the IDP…performance management system..monitoring and review of performance…preparation of the budget..strategic decisions re municipal services (b) Contribute to building the capacity of the local community participate in the affairs of the municipality and councillors and staff to foster community participation… |
| 29 (b)   | Process to be followed in developing an IDP – must through appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures..allow for: (i) The local community to be consulted on its development needs and priorities (ii) The local community to participate in the drafting of the IDP… |
| 41 (e)   | Monitoring and review of performance management system – a municipality must in terms of its performance management system….establish a process of regular reporting to…the public and appropriate organs of state |
| 42       | A municipality, through appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures …must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the municipality’s performance management system, and in particular, allow the community to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets of the municipality |
| 51 (a)   | A municipality must within its administrative and financial capacity establish and organise its administration…to be responsive to the needs of the local community |