



An exploration of public participation in policy making amongst Cape Town civic organisations

By

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Mini dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Social Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of Cape Town

2021

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the role played by civic organisations in policy formulation through public participation. A qualitative research design was used in which two sample sets were purposively selected to participate in the study. The first sample set comprised of general members of civic organisations, while the second comprised of stakeholders in the community such as members of the business community, non-governmental organisations, and the municipal council. In-depth interviews were conducted and facilitated through a semi-structured interview guide. The interviews were guided by the overall aim and objectives of the study which included exploration of participants' perceptions regarding the following: their understanding of public participation, different forms of public participation, roles of civic organisations in policy making, influence of public participation in decision-making at local level, ways in which public participation can be improved at local level; and public participation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The study found that civic organisations' roles were indispensable in policy formulation as they facilitate meaningful public engagement with local government structures, legislatures, and key stakeholders in their communities in the context of policy making. Further, civic organisations enhance democracy through holding local authorities and policy-makers accountable for their actions in development. The findings also show that public participation is a fundamental and inclusive process for citizens in decision-making processes, whether directly as interest groups or individuals, or indirectly through their elected representatives. Participants from civic organisations perceived different forms of public participation as voting, public meetings, and petitions. However, key informants highlighted that most public participation practices were 'tick-box' exercises because they did not facilitate meaningful participation for citizens. Finally, the study found that the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic severely affected public participation processes. Because many civic organisations' activities had to stop, service delivery in some communities was affected.

The study's major recommendation is that local government authorities such as ward councilors and municipal managers should aim to facilitate collaborative governance with civic organisations and citizens. This could be done through forming meaningful partnerships between civic organisations, stakeholders, and the local government. The study argues that this will ensure working towards an Integrated Development Plan and a people-centered approach to development in policy making.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all civic organisations that took part in this research, namely, Observatory Civic Organisation (OCA), Woodstock Residents' Association (WRA), BoKaap Civic Association (BCA), Maitland Garden Village Housing Forum (MGVHF), and all the civic associations fighting for change and justice through active citizenry and public participation.

The fight for inclusion in matters which affect our daily lives must never end!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give special acknowledgement to my supervisor, A/Professor Thulane Gxubane, who walked me through this journey, and taught me how to be an effective academic writer through his constructive criticism even during his sabbatical leave. Special mention also goes to the UCT Knowledge Co-op for funding my studies, and Barbara Schmid's support with all communication with community partners who took part in this study. I also appreciate the Development Action Group (DAG) and Citizen Action for Public participation (CAPP) for their contribution to this study. Finally, and most importantly, I acknowledge my family and friends for their support throughout my master's journey. It goes without saying that above all else, God Almighty sailed me through, and I continue to appreciate His grace throughout my studies.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAPP	Citizens Action for Public Participation
DAG	Development Action Group
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
PPM	Public Participation Model
PPPF	Public Participation Policy Framework
SAWPLG	South African White on Local Government
UNDP	United Nations Development Plan

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Civic organisations refer to a wide array of non-profit and non-governmental organisations. These have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or those of others based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, or religious considerations (World Bank, 2016).

Citizens refers to persons legally recognised as members of a country or state, who have rights because of being born there or because of being given rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996)

Public participation is the process by which Parliament and provincial legislatures consult with the people and interested or affected individuals, organisations, and government entities before making a decision. It is a two-way communication and collaborative problem-solving mechanism to achieve better and acceptable decisions White Paper on public participation, 2005).

Policy making refers to the process of making rules and regulations, acts, ordinances, by-laws, or memoranda (Nzimande, 2012).

Stakeholders means any individual, group of individuals or organisations that have a specific and clearly definable interest in any decision taken or likely to be taken, and any process undertaken or likely to be undertaken by Parliament.

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Chapter 1: STUDY ORIENTATION AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The South African White Paper on Local Government (SAWPLG) (1998) highlight that the principles of public participation and democracy should involve communities and civic organisations in matters of local government. Since the inception of the SAWPLG in 1998, communities and civic organisations have partnered the local government in influencing policy formulation, and in realising key development objectives. Public participation, therefore, ensures that the distance between community members and local authorities or elected officials is narrowed while ensuring there is inclusion in decision-making processes. Posing (2003) has stated that developmental local government is a local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs thus improving the quality of lives.

This dissertation has six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study background and orientation. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical, legislative framework and the literature review that guides this study. Chapter 3 focusses on the study's methodology while Chapters 4 and 5 discusses the findings of the study. Lastly, Chapter 6 presents the main conclusions and recommendations of the study.

This chapter presents the contextual background of the study, the rationale, motivation for undertaking the study, significance of the study, and its overall aim and objectives. Lastly, the key ethical considerations used in the study are discussed.

1.2 Contextual background

Public participation in policy making is not a new phenomenon. Studies have been done in South Africa and globally around the concept. Nzimande (2012) argued that in South Africa public participation was limited and not supported by legislation before the inception of democracy in 1994. However, the introduction of the democratic Constitution of the Republic of South Africa enlarged the scope of public participation through the provisions of Sections 152 (1) and 195 (1) which encourage involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government and policy-making through public participation (Nzimande, 2012).

Posing (2003) has argued that public participation in policy making is an important tool of public administration. It is also an essential ingredient of community development and democracy. Masango (2001) further pointed out that lack of adequate consultations and participation of citizens in policy making processes could lead to increased mistrust between the people and their governments due to lack of accountability and transparency by local authorities and elected officials. Masango's (2001) findings on public participation at the Port Elizabeth Municipality, South Africa, suggests that this is the case in many South African communities. Many people are excluded from decision-making processes that affect their everyday lives (Masango, 2001). As such, this study argues that civic organisations could play an important role in policy making because they work with people at grassroots level. They also challenge government actions in relation to service delivery through advocacy, information dissemination or protests.

In 2017 the Civic Action for Public Participation (CAPP), which is a coalition of civic organisations in Cape Town, was formed out of collective dissatisfaction with participatory processes which they felt were 'problematic, unproductive, and tokenist engagements' leading to loss of trust in public participation (DAG report, 2018). The loss of trust described by CAPP can be attributed to the idea that participation is more of a tick-box exercise, lacks important information, is technocratic and exclusive (Couvert, 2017). As part of its work Development Action Group (DAG), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Cape Town which advocates for active citizen participation alongside CAPP and other stakeholders, conducted and hosted workshops and a city-wide review of developments that were being contested by civic organisations (DAG report, 2018). The review, presented by DAG, has shown that civic organisations were unable to influence development processes and decision making at local government level due to limited participation mechanisms (DAG Report, 2018).

Consequently, lack of or inadequacy in public participation results in bad governance especially in local governance structures where participation mechanisms are mere 'tick-box' exercises done to meet legislative requirements (Couvert, 2017). Additionally, the DAG's (2018) city-wide review found that citizens and civic organisations had limited influence in participatory processes. This was a result of public participation being tick-box exercises, lack of access to information on policy making and development, and exclusion of civic organisations and citizens in decision

making processes at local level (DAG Report, 2018). These challenges will be discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

1.3 Rationale for the study

According to the DAG (2018), most communities are characterised by social problems including, but not limited to, safety and security, gentrification leading to lack of affordable housing, homelessness and loss of heritage sites, and poor service delivery in health, sanitation, education, and transportation. In trying to fight and advocate for justice, democracy, development, and service delivery in their communities, civic organisations work closely with community members and citizens through public participation and community-based planning which foster inclusive development (Rowe, 2016).

The values and principles of public participation, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) (hereinafter the Constitution), are premised on the belief that people affected by a decision have a right to participate in the decision-making processes. This study is also premised on the understanding that development should be people centred. The UNDP Report (2018) stated that citizens' active involvement in policy-making and development ensures that development is people-centred. This study, therefore, is of the view that civic organisations should be empowered to gain understanding and control over the development processes in their communities as this is a vital tool in realising their important role in policy making through public participation. The study unpacks how civic organisations facilitate development and policy making through public participation in their various communities.

1.4 Motivation of the study

This study was motivated by persistent challenges in public participation processes that civic organisations face in Cape Town communities. The researcher completed a four-month internship at DAG, in conjunction with the University of Cape Town (UCT) Knowledge Co-op, as part of requirements to complete her Masters' studies in Social Development. During the internship, she worked with various civic organisations and community forums from Cape Town communities. The researcher observed that the main challenges civic organisations faced regarding public participation included lack of adequate information on policy and development issues, and lack of resources for effective performance of their roles in communities. Interaction with civic

organisations and community stakeholders revealed that civic organisations' members were excluded from key decision-making processes like development and housing policies. This affected their contribution to social and economic development. Members of civic organisations also pointed out that there was lack of transparency and accountability from local authorities in development processes and service delivery.

The suggestion, from responses by members of the civic organisations, is that the main challenges they faced emanated from lack of consultations by the local government and limited citizens' involvement in decision making processes. Against this backdrop, the researcher developed an interest to explore public participation in policy making among civic organisations. This involved exploration of how civic organisations could contribute to policy making and development in their communities through facilitating constant and meaningful public engagements among citizens and local government.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study seeks to contribute to better understanding of the significant role civic organisations play in policy making through enhancing public participation. The study's findings and recommendations will guide various departments in local government such as housing, transportation, health, and all policy makers at large, about the importance and benefits of engaging citizens in decision-making. In addition, the study provides new analysis and bring attention to the value of public participation in decision-making and the key role civic organisations play in promoting integrated development through participation in policy making initiatives.

1.6 Overall aim and specific objectives of the study

The study aimed at fostering better understating of the important role civic organisations play in policy making as a result of their facilitation of public participation in community matters in Cape Town. Civic organisations' representatives and key community stakeholders in Cape town were interviewed to explore their perceptions regarding the following:

1. Understanding of public participation;
2. Understanding regarding different forms of public participation;
3. Understanding of roles civic organisations play in policy formulation;

4. Perceptions regarding the potential influence of public participation in decision making at local level;
5. Opinions on different ways in which public participation can be improved at local level and;
6. Views on different ways that public participation could be promoted in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

1.7 Key ethical considerations

Ethics refer to a set of moral principles and/or values suggested by an individual or group and are widely accepted for conduct towards experimental subjects and participants (Babbie, 2005). According to Creswell (2014), the fact that human beings are the objects of study in social sciences brings the consideration of ethical problems to the fore. This means that one need to consider ethics since data should not be obtained at the expense of human beings (ibid.). This study conformed with the ethical norms and standards of research on human subjects in the social sciences. The researcher sought ethical clearance from the University of Cape Town to conduct the study and the ethical clearance was obtained through the Department of Social Development ethics committee (see Appendix A). The ethics which were considered in this study include the following:

Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation refers to participants' willingness to take part in a study without being forced or deceived to do so (Strydom, 2011). In this study, participants were informed of their voluntary will to participate and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The researcher made sure that every participant was fully informed about their rights of voluntary participation prior to taking part in the study. As asserted by Babbie and Mouton (2012), before taking part in the study participants should be informed about their right to voluntarily participate through signing a consent form.

Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to a process by which participants have a full understanding of the research before they take part in it (Babbie & 2012). The researcher informed the participants about the study's aims and objectives and their right to participate voluntarily. It was ensured that the

participants were legally and psychologically competent to participate in the study. The consent form was signed voluntarily by the participants before taking part in the study (see Appendix B). Strydom (2011) states that research participants must be in a position legally and psychologically to decide to take part in a study. They should not be forced or coerced to do so.

Deception of participants

Neuman (2000) defines the deception of subjects as deliberate misrepresentation of facts to make another person believe what is not true. This may be in the form of withholding information, or offering incorrect information, to ensure participation of subjects when they would have decided otherwise (Neuman, 2000). Babbie and Mouton (2012) noted that researchers may deceive participants through disguising the real objective of the study, which in this case was only for academic purposes. The researcher ensured that the study remained guided by its academic objectives which were explained to participants prior to their participation in the research.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to avoiding the sharing of information divulged by participants to researchers with other parties (Strydom, 2011). Strydom argued that it is important to not disclose to the public, information gathered from research participants. The researcher adhered to confidentiality while conducting the study by ensuring that information collected was not shared or discussed with anyone except the academic supervisor, for supervision purposes. Strydom (2011) maintains that confidentiality places a strong obligation on researchers to keep shared participants' information to themselves.

Privacy

Strydom (2011) describes privacy as an individual's right to decide where they want the research to take place and where they feel secure and comfortable. Further, it also refers to the extent to which their attitudes, beliefs and behavior should be revealed. Participants' privacy was safeguarded by ensuring that interviews took place in safe and secure spaces. Babbie and Mouton (2012) reminds researchers of the importance of safeguarding the identity and privacy of participants, and handling that with the necessary sensitivity.

Anonymity

Anonymity means that identities of research participants remain secured. No one should be able to identify participants' names after the research (Strydom, 2011). Babbie and Mouton (2012)

argues that anonymity ensures that no one, including the researcher, should be able to identify the subject afterwards. In this study, pseudonyms were used for the purposes of anonymity.

Avoidance of harm

Strydom (2011) defines avoidance of harm as the prevention of deliberate harm to participants, be it physical or emotional. The researcher avoided questions with potential to cause or predispose participants to physical or emotional distress by informing them of the nature of the study and its potential impact. The researcher was always responsive and alert to identify any signs of discomfort during the interviews. Strydom (2011) noted that the easiest way to avoid harm to participants is to discuss their feelings about the study immediately after the interview session to take note if there has been any emotional or physical harm. Where necessary, the researcher referred participants who needed professional counselling to relevant sources.

Debriefing of participants

Debriefing of participants refers to an opportunity given to them to express any discomforts that may have arisen during the research interview (Strydom, 2011). The process allows the researcher to detect possible harm that may have arisen during the research interview. As Strydom (2011) has noted, emotional harm is often hard to detect. The researcher did a debriefing session after each interview with participants to identify if some discomfort had arisen during the interview.

1.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to an awareness of the researcher's role in the research based on his/her understanding of the object under study (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). Given that the researcher had spent time with most of the civic organisations during her internship at the DAG, she undertook critical analysis of research issues objectively. To ensure neutrality and lack of bias, the purpose of the study was explained before interviews were conducted. The researcher explained the differences between her time as an intern, and her research programme. According to Strydom (2011), a qualitative researcher should think critically at all times and should not mislead participants when conducting research based on what she/he is familiar with.

The next chapter presents the literature review, theoretical and legislative frameworks that guided this study.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature from previous studies on public participation in policy making. It discusses case studies that demonstrate the role civic organisations play in policy making and development through facilitating public participation. The case studies cover countries such as the United Kingdom and Italy and are compared to public participation in South Africa.

The first part of the chapter presents the theoretical, policy and legislation frameworks used to analyse the role civic organisations play in policy making through public participation. The people-centred approach to development and Amartya Sen's Capability approach constitute the theoretical frameworks for the study. The 2005 White Paper on Public Participation, the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, and provisions on public participation in section(s) 51,78 and 108 of the Constitution of South Africa provided the policy and legislative frameworks for the study. As noted earlier, the second part of the chapter discusses various case studies and literature focusing on the role of civic organisations in policy making through public participation.

The researcher formulated themes from the study's overall aim and objectives and used them to guide the review of the literature. Such themes include how public participation is understood, forms of public participation, roles of civic organisations in policy making, the influence of public participation in policy making, ways in which public participation can be improved at local level, and public participation in the context of the covid-19 pandemic. The Public Participation Model (PPM), adopted by the Parliament of South Africa from Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation (as cited in Popay et al., 2007), is presented and used to analyse the main forms of public participation. The PPM is used also, in Chapters 4 and 5, to analyse ways in which public participation could be improved at the local level.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theories, policies and legislative procedures in public participation all work together to encourage citizen participation. They also facilitate formation of close relationships between the local government, civic groups, and all community residents which enable effective and meaningful public participation in policy formulation. Below are the theories and legislations that underpinned this study:

The people-centered Approach to Development

The people-centered approach to development contends that while development can mean different things to many people, human development is about expanding the choices available to people to live valuable lives (UNDP, 2018). People must be at the center of their development, both as beneficiaries and drivers, and as individuals and part of groups (UNDP, 2018). In the context of public participation, development places emphasis on democratic processes, government accountability and access to relevant information on policy and development issues (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report [OECD], 2019).

The people-centered approach to development was used in this study because it places value on societal and human development. Aspalter (2006) purports that societal development includes aspects of the individual and the community/society's social and cultural capabilities. This study is of the view that greater societal perspectives are enhanced through inclusive public participation in policy formulation. A people-centered approach to development empowers citizens to take center-stage in their own development and contribute to decision-making processes (UNDP, 2018). Community members' knowledge and skills, abilities, and potential to influence policy and development must be trusted and respected. According to Midgely (2017), people should be placed at the center of all political, cultural, and economic development to assess and address social and societal problems.

The Capability Approach

Another approach or theory that guided this study was Amartya Sen's (1999) Capability Approach. The theory describes development in terms of human capabilities and bundles of freedom (Sen, 2005). There are many ways in which someone may be deprived of his or her options to live. Examples include cultural and social discrimination, and lack of a peaceful environment characterised by crime, corruption, or violence (Sen, 2005). Regarding social discrimination, examples include lack of participation or exclusion from matters that affect one's welfare state (Newman-Williams & Sabatini, 2000). Sen's bundle of freedoms, which includes political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security, are necessary for human development (Aspalter, 2006). Two of these freedoms, that is political freedom and transparency guarantees, were explored in this study. The two freedoms were

chosen because they contribute directly to some forms of public participation such as political participation, voting in elections and service delivery at local level.

Political Freedoms

Political freedoms refer to free opportunities citizens have, to determine who should govern them, and on what principles for instance, the right to vote (Sen, 2005). Enshrined in this opportunity is the right to evaluate and criticise authorities, free press and freedom of expression, and participation in the political processes involving development (Sen, 2005). This freedom also entails citizens' right to full participation in issues affecting their day to day lives despite their political affiliation. For instance, the local government should provide opportunities for all citizens to participate in development initiatives irrespective of the political parties they belong to.

Transparency guarantees

Citizens should be provided guarantees for openness, necessary disclosures, rights to information and tangible evidence of trust. This ensures clear definition of social contract clauses between the administration and citizens (Education and Training Unit, 2017). According to Sen (2005), transparency guarantees entail absence of corruption, mechanism for seeking justice and access to protection guaranteeing accountability and collaboration between government actors and citizens. For this study, it would mean that citizens and civic organisations are guaranteed transparency and freedom to participate openly on issues affecting them. It also means that members of the council should be fully accountable to citizens for their actions or development and policy initiatives.

2.3 Policy and legislation

Since the inception of the democratically elected government of South Africa (1994-1999), legislations containing provisions for public participation in policy making have evolved. The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994 (Notice 154 of 1994); the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995); the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997 (Notice 1459 of 1997); the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 (Notice 423 of 1998); and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) are examples of legislation that contains provisions for public participation. The legislation and policies relevant to this study include the White Paper on Local Government (1998), the Municipal Systems Act (2000), the

Public Participation Framework, 2005 and provisions for public participation contained in sections 59, 72 and 118 of the Constitution of South Africa.

Provisions relating to Public Participation in the White Paper on Local Government (1998)

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

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

Furthermore, Section B (3.3) of the WPLG also suggests approaches which could be adopted to promote public participation in policy making. These include initiating forums in or outside local government so that organised bodies such as civic organisations can make and/or help formulate policies. Moreover, stakeholders should be involved in council committees and formulation of participatory budgeting initiatives which encourage links between community priorities and capital investment programmes.

Provisions relating to Public Participation in the Municipal Systems Act (2000)

In terms of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of (2000), municipalities are obliged to put people first in the way they run their administrations. Chapter 3 of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) makes provisions for public participation in the local government sphere. It provides stipulations for municipal councils, highlighted in sub-section(s) 7 (1) and 8(1). Some of these

stipulations are to promote the development of a culture of public participation through constant engagements and public consultations.

In the Act, the municipal councils are mandated to facilitate mechanisms for public participation through capacity building, admission of members of the public to council meetings and hearings and providing the public with access to information via inclusion of the media and stakeholders to meetings, where applicable. Subsection (s) (10) and (11) of the Municipal Systems Act states that a municipal council must give public notice of the time, date, and venue of every municipal council meeting. Municipal councils and their committees are, subject to subsection (2), open to the public including the media, except when it is reasonable not to do so due to the nature of the matter being discussed.

Public Participation Policy Framework (2005)

The Public Participation Policy Framework (2005) has the following key principles which speaks directly to public participation in policy formulation as highlighted in the Constitution (RSA, 1996):

- To ensure political leaders remain accountable and work within their mandate;
- To allow citizens (as individuals or interest groups) to have continuous input into local politics;
- To allow service consumers to have input on the way services are delivered; and
- To afford organised civil society the opportunity to enter partnerships and contracts with local government for purposes of mobilising additional resources.

Provisions of public participation in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

The South African Constitution entrenches public participation as a crucial element of democracy. It makes it a key requirement of government decision-making processes for both legislative and executive powers. The Constitution stresses that South Africa is a representative and participatory democracy, meaning that people elect representatives to defend the public interest and govern the country on their behalf (RSA, 1996). In a representative context, the Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the views of the electorate while in participatory democracy the public is actively involved in decision-making processes such as law-making and oversight.

Sections 59 and 72 of the Constitution compel the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), respectively, to:

- facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Assembly and the Council and their committees.
- conduct their business in an open manner, and hold their sittings, and those of their committees, in public. The Constitution, however, permits reasonable measures to be taken to regulate public access, including access of the media, to the Houses and their committees, provided that the exclusion is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society. Section 118(1)(a) imposes a similar obligation on the provincial legislatures. This is reinforced by the Joint Rules of Parliament, as well as the Rules of the NA, of the NCOP and of individual provincial legislatures; and
- Sections 56(d) and 69(d) of the Constitution authorise the National Assembly, and the National Council of Provinces or any of their committees, respectively, to receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested persons or institutions.

2.4 Understanding public participation

‘Public participation’ is derived from the terms ‘public’ and ‘participation’. According to Young (2000), public refers to all the people in a country and participation means the involvement of the public in legislative and other processes involving their welfare. The Public Participation Policy Framework (PPPF) (2005) clarifies the concept ‘public participation’ as a fundamental right of all people, designed to narrow the social distance between the electorate and elected institutions. This means that it is an open, accountable process in which individuals and groups in communities can exchange views and influence decision-making (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2005:1) The Constitution of South Africa (1996) defines public participation as the process by which Parliament consults with people before decisions are made. For this study, public participation is a two-way communication and collaborative problem-solving mechanism for better and effective decisions. Thus, the study understands public participation to offer a channel to the public, through community and stakeholder involvement, to provide input into decision-making processes in the context of policy-making and development.

According to Lane (2005), the demand for public participation emerged from two sources — the failure of democracy, and the failure of bureaucracy in the United States of America and parts of Europe (England, Germany, and Italy). In those areas, the failure of democracy was evident in the inability to facilitate effective public participation in town and political meetings (Lane, 2005). Urbanisation, professionalism, and mobility of modern life isolated residents and pushed them further from centres of decision-making. Thus, public participation was designed to enable inclusion of marginalised people in the decision-making processes (Polleta,2012). In the United Kingdom (UK), and mostly England, public participation has been gaining attention in the last decade (Polleta, 2012). Commonly known as ‘citizen participation’, the UK government introduced a number of initiatives to increase the scale of public participation. These include a Participatory Budgeting Strategy, which sets out the Government’s intention to bring citizens into the budgeting process. Other indicatives include the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, which increases opportunities for citizen action, including calls for community action, and the Empowerment White Paper (2008) which embeds public participation and empowerment in central government policy, among others (Communities and Local Government [UK], 2008).

As was the case in the UK, in South Africa public participation also has roots in what is known as ‘community participation’. It developed as a theory during the apartheid period when many people, mainly from the marginalised communities, came together to fight for service delivery and the end to the Apartheid regime (Gumede, 2012). Public participation has since evolved following the first democratic elections. According to Gumede (2012), the South African Constitution of 1996 radically transformed the nature of public participation. The Constitution asserts that South Africa is a constitutional democracy which upholds representative and participatory democracy. In a representative context, Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the electorate while the public is actively involved in decision-making processes such as law-making and oversight, in a participatory democracy (RSA Constitution, 1996). The intention of public participation and involvement in democratic processes is primarily to influence decision-making processes to reflect “*the will of the people*” (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2019).

According to Quick and Bryson (2016), public participation involves direct or indirect involvement of stakeholders in decision-making about policies, plans or development programs. Included among stakeholders are persons, groups or organisations that may influence or be

affected by policy decisions (Freeman,2010). Stakeholders may, through public participation, interact with government agencies, political leaders, non-profit organisations, and business organisations involved in development programmes and policy formulation or implementation. (Freeman, 2010). For Quick and Bryson (2016), in democracies citizens are important stakeholders who participate directly or indirectly through elected representatives, in the formation, adoption and implementation of laws and policies that affect them. This study argues that the relationship between local government and citizens is crucial in the process of meaningful public participation. This point will be revisited later in the study.

2.5 Forms of public participation

As noted earlier, public participation is integrated into legislative processes globally. Many speeches by political office bearers, community leaders and civic organisations highlight the importance of public participation (Polleta, 2012). The question, however, is what form of public participation can facilitate meaningful participation of the public in policy making and development? Such kind of public participation should ensure that there are efforts from policy makers and the government to include citizens in the decision-making processes. This section highlights some forms of public participation, also known as methods of public participation, and approaches that were used in other countries and regions to ensure public participation in policy making and decision-making processes.

A number of public participation practices were labelled as mere ‘tick-box’ exercises done to meet legislative requirements due to lack of transparency and accountability (Quick & Bryson, 2016). South Africa, in particular, has extensive legislation supporting public participation in local governance (State of Local Governance [SoLG], 2008). However, the Afesis-corplan (2011) has argued that most municipalities in South Africa still lack participation which genuinely empower, as opposed to token consultation or outright manipulation. The overwhelming perception, especially from civic organisations, is that local government imposes rather than engage, resulting in the undermining of people’s influence on decision-making (Afesis-Corplan, 2011). Next, the forms of public participation including consultations, public meetings, committee meetings, voting/elections and petitions are discussed (Mergel, 2013).

Consultations

Public consultation refers to a process of communication between the government and the governed, aimed at dealing with issues concerning citizens' lives (Cook and Jacobs, 2014). The goal is to ensure that the interests of policy beneficiaries and/or the general public are included in the decision-making process Rowe (2016). The intention is to develop policies that consider information delivered to decision-makers by citizens. Consultation is a form of participation where information is provided, and the views of participants prompted. Such participation can occur through, among other means, the use of questionnaires, public meetings, and surveys (Mann and Omstein, 2012).

According to the Afesis-Corplan (2011), citizens are encouraged to participate in local government matters through constant consultation and involvement in decision making processes. That is a sign of good governance. In its study, the Afesis-Corplan carried a survey in five municipalities in Cacadau District of the Eastern Cape Province. The survey findings showed that few respondents were aware of consultations or public engagement in decision-making. These findings confirm that when it comes to decision making processes, there is little information or lack of consultations at local level (Afesis-Corplan, 2011).

Public Meetings and Committee Meetings

Mergel (2013) states that public meetings at local government level should be free for all members to comment or give input on issues affecting their wellbeing, such as budget planning. On one hand, because not every person or citizen can attend committee meetings, committee meetings comprise of people appointed or elected to examine or deal with a particular matter (Louw, 2016).

When committee meetings are used as a method of participation, representatives of relevant groups should serve on committees dealing with matters affecting them. Committee meetings are forms of participation for members capable of undertaking in-depth discussions on matter(s) under consideration (Louw, 2016). Normally, the people included in committee meetings are highly ranked residents of a community such as business personnel or those considered to have knowledge on the matter under discussion (Louw, 2016). On the other hand, public meetings are open to many citizens. They convey openness and transparency about a process and are held to engage a wide audience in information sharing and discussion (Quick and Bryson, 2016).

In the Afesis-Corplan (2011) case study above, participants were asked if they were aware of public or committee meetings. They responded that they had little or no knowledge of public or committee meetings taking place in their communities. The participants cited various reasons for not attending council meetings. They ranged from poor notices, poorly timed invitations, inconvenient meetings times, inaccessible venues and use of languages most people were not comfortable or conversant in (Afesis-Corplan, 2011). Nonetheless, the Afesis-Corplan (2011) study showed that few people confirmed the existence of ward committees. The Department of Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) (2020) stressed the importance of ward committees as a vital link between ward councilors, the community, and the municipality. Ward committees participate in core municipal processes such as Integrated Development Planning, municipal budgeting, and municipal performance management. The ward committees were established to help improve communication between local municipalities and communities (CoGTA, 2020).

Voting/Elections

Voting is a process where the electorate choose among candidates who are all eligible for a certain vacancy (Soss, 2011). Public representatives in a democratic country, who are political office bearers and members of Parliament, are normally elected this way. The right to vote is probably the main political right many people exercise in South Africa and the world over (Sobela, 2011). John Gaventa (2006) argues that traditionally, in representative democracies, the assumption has been that citizens express their preferences through electoral politics. In turn, it was the job of the elected representatives to hold the state or municipalities accountable. Thus, an election is the main formal mechanism of political participation in the modern world (Gaventa, 2006). However, according to Communities and Local Government UK (2008) new mechanisms which argue for more direct connections between people and bureaucracies are now being contested in both the global North and the South. In the UK, for instance, the White Paper on Modern Local Government (2008) puts emphasis on more active forms of citizenship, and the concept of public participation. In this sense, the connection between citizens and the state must be based on participation and inclusion, and not the ballot as argued by Mergel (2013).

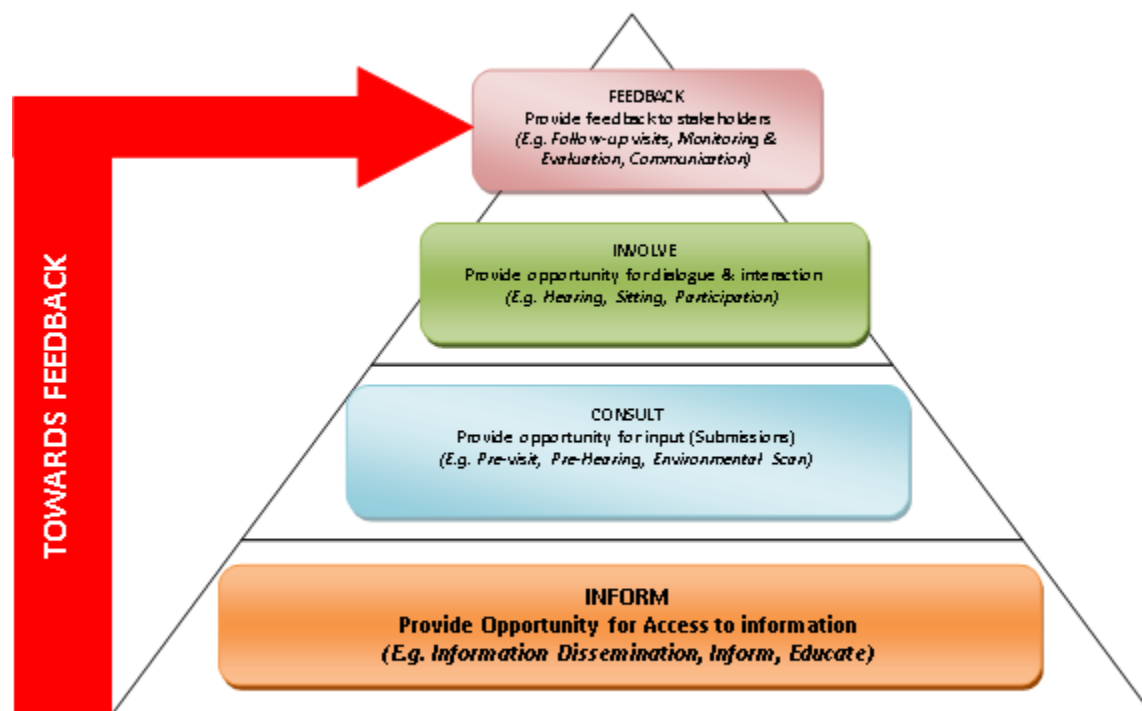
Petitions

The PPPF (2005) states that a petition is a written request, complaint, or representation addressed to an institution by an individual or group after having exhausted other avenues. This can either be on service delivery or policy matters affecting the wellbeing of citizens. Sections (56d), (69d), and (115d) of the Constitution of South Africa states that petitions must be formally presented by a Member of Parliament (MP) on behalf of a group of people with similar interests or grievances. Petitions presents the views or opinions of the public on a matter or a piece of legislation. As such, these are considered important ways for the public to provide input directly into the committees' work (RSA Constitution, 1996).

The Public Participation Model

The Public Participation Model (PPM) in Figure 1 below was adopted by the Parliament of South Africa in 2004 as a model for practicing effective public participation. It was extracted from Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, as cited in Popay et al., (2007). The PPM summarizes the forms of public participation and levels and stages in which civic organisations, individuals, stakeholders, and local authorities can work together.

Figure 1: Public Participation Model (PPM)



Source: Extracted from Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) (2008)

The above model provides a shared understanding on participation and set guidelines for involvement of the public in the legislative and other processes of decision making at local, provincial, and national governments (PMG, 2008). Further, the Model attempts to set out goals and objectives of public participation mechanisms (CoGTA, 2020). It shows the importance of information dissemination and meaningful public participation through constant feedback channels.

2.6 Roles of civic organisations in policy formulation

In the Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 1969 cited in Popay et al., 2007), the stages of public participation are to inform, consult, involve and give or get feedback from local authorities and the community. In these stages, civic organisations play a critical role in policy formulation as the

main link between citizens and policy makers. Civic organisations also hold state actors accountable in matters that affect the wellbeing of citizens (Gaventa, 2006). According to Susanne Posing (2003), civil society or civil organisations play a very important role in the development of communities through enforcing public participation. In many countries, governments rely on strong civil society to ensure a close relationship with their citizens through facilitation of public participation in policy and development (Inglehart, 2006). Putman (2000) and Skocpol (2003) both argue that for much of our history civic associations have served as schools of democracy for millions of people, in particular the Americans whom they taught leadership skills, democratic governance, and public engagement. Civic associations are accountable to their membership. They teach the practice of democracy by engaging citizens in working together on common goals (Putman, 2000). Thus, civic associations develop leaders, engage their members, and influence public participation to bring change in communities.

This study explores the role of civic organisations in policy formulation in Cape Town. Ben-Zeev and Waterhouse (2012) stated that since 1990 one striking change in South African politics has been the rise of civic organisations or civics. Between 1990 and 1993 civics played an active role in local and national politics (Ben-Zeev et al., 2012). At the local level, civics were prominent in local government restructuring and development initiatives. At regional and national levels, the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) was formed in 1992, with previously independent civic organisations becoming its branches. However, in practice most continued to operate with much autonomy as before (Gumede, 2012). Between 1992 and 1993 SANCO played a leading role in the negotiated transformation of local government, and in initiatives around urban housing and infrastructural development (Magubane, 2007).

Similarly, civic organisations and non-profit organisations such as CAPP and DAG partnered with various local and national government bodies to resolve issues of policy and development in Cape Town. Although individual organisations have their own agendas in different communities, the overall aim and goal of CAPP as a coalition of civic associations is to reclaim and redefine public participation in urban development (Covert, 2017). In the city-wide review conducted by DAG (2018), the findings were that many civic organisations had resorted to using a range of strategies and tactics to hold government to account, and influence decision-making. Over the past decade,

DAG has been working tirelessly with community-based civic associations in Cape Town to curb the housing crisis and lack of basic service delivery such as water and sanitation (DAG, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, civic organisations involve citizens in issues or matters that affect them. They can do that through submitting petitions, advocacy, protests and through legal forms (Williams, 2006). For instance, in late 2020 DAG and its partners on the social housing problem in Cape Town managed to submit, to the Presidency, a call for the release of under-utilised land parcels to curb the housing crises exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic (Cape Argus, December 2020) Civic organisations played an advocacy role through consulting, informing, and integrating various key players in land and housing policies (Watson, 2020).

Civic organisations also play a networking role including developing and strengthening communication and exchange systems between organisations and or individuals (UNDP, 2018). In this sense, civic organisations bring the community together for activities which enhance public participation, such as training, capacity building and bringing development strategies to the community (DAG, 2018).

2.6 The influence of public participation in decision-making at local level

The European Institute for Public Participation (EIPP) (2009) report has noted that it is not clear how well participation processes are working to influence decision-making. In fact, many reports fail to show ways of making them better. For Mergel (2013), it can be argued that the contribution of citizens to decision-making is one of the pillars of democracy. However, in modern democracies participation is largely restricted to elections and political decision-making (Power Inquiry UK, 2005: 29). According to the Power Inquiry UK (2005), citizens are called to polls once every number of years to exercise their right of voting, which is a form of public participation that allow them to influence decision-making regarding who win the election. The EIPP (2009) report defined public participation as a deliberative process, where interested or affected citizens, civil society organisations and government actors get involved in policy-making before a political decision is taken. This definition not only suggest that public participation is crucial for political decision-making but also recognises the diversity of aims and values which enable collaborative problem-solving, decision making and policy formulation. Public participation is therefore intended to

complement conventional modes of policy-making where elected representatives take decisions based in part on their perception of their constituents' preferences (Cohen, 2004).

In Europe, public participation is established as a popular alternative for making decisions and resolving conflicts (Cohen, 2004). Most EU member states have arrangements that allow for direct involvement of citizens in policy making and decision-making (EIPP, 2009). Such arrangements are in areas such as urban development, planning, environmental questions, and security policies (ibid.).

Public participation in the UK

A research paper by Trevor Boutall (as cited in the Power Inquiry, 2006) reported that the United Kingdom (UK) is determined to ensure that citizens contribute to the policy-making processes within all levels of government. The Local Government White Paper (2008) highlights the importance of building strong and prosperous communities and more responsive central government public services through public participation (Communities and Local Government, 2008). England's government policy and practice created opportunities for individuals to make their voices heard at all levels through Web 2.0 (Power Inquiry UK, 2006). Citizens were given a stronger voice in decision making, and where appropriate, transfer of control of assets to citizen groups. For example, the White Paper *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power* (2008) and the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Bill (2008) require local authorities to promote democracy and facilitate petitions (Communities and Local Government, 2008).

To support capacity for participation in policy and decision making, the UK government identified social problems such as health and sanitation, security, and transportation and established a number of initiatives to facilitate the decision-making processes (Power Inquiry UK, 2006). Among them was the creation of The Ministry of Justice's Democratic Engagement Branch which supports all central government departments in engaging citizens (Power Inquiry UK, 2006). Other initiatives included the creation of the Department of Communities and Local Government (2008) and the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government [IDeA] (2009). IDeA is an agency of the Local Government Association which represent all local authorities. It supports and promote best practices in engaging citizens at local level (Communities and Local Government, 2008).

According to Fung (2006), the UK government developed support mechanisms in terms of finance for small organisations and the civil society to improve public participation in decision-making processes. Beneficiary organisations include Involve, a small Non-Profit Organisation that promote and facilitate good engagement practices through publications, general communication, feedback, and dissemination of information to the public to enlighten the latter with knowledgeable on policy issues (Fung, 2006). Regardless of all these initiatives, research has shown that there are other varying factors impeding public participation and influence on decision-making at both local and national levels (Inglehart, 2006). In a study focusing on Engagement for Change Policy Development, Involve (2007) concluded that while the three main UK political parties (Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat) try to occupy the same middle ground and have policies closely aligned, the Liberal Democrats, who are poorly represented at national level, control many local authorities because their grassroots activities in communities bring them closer to people.

The case study discussed above mirror the experiences of the South African Government and its relationship with local governments. Political parties involved with people at local level do not have enough representation at the national level (Quick & Bryson, 2016). This study is of the view that there could be underlying issues which prohibit citizens' participation and their influence on decision making. For the Power Inquiry (2006), in the context of the UK, some of these challenges include exclusion of the marginalised, lack of solid communication between local government, civil society and citizens, and lack of political will at national and local levels.

Public participation in Italy

In Italy, the influence of public participation can be understood through the government policy and practice (Moini, 2012). Bartoletti and Faccioli's (2016) study on civic engagement by the Municipality of Bologna showed that there was no systematic approach to participation unlike in other European countries. The main aim and objectives of their study was to evaluate ways which can improve collaboration of the civics through public participation to influence decision-making at local government level. The research considered a set of experiences of public engagement promoted by the Municipality of Bologna (Italy) through "collaborative governance of the commons" (in Italian the so-called "amministrazione condivisa" (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016).

Bartoletti and Faccioli (2016) argued that the absence of public participation from the political agenda was rather unfortunate. They raised three critical issues regarding public participation's influence in decision-making. These are the relationship between representative democracy and deliberative democracy, the relationship between local governments and their citizens, and the possibility of citizens' empowerment through involvement in policy-making. Bartoletti and Faccioli (2016) observed that on one hand civic engagement experiences were divided into top-down forms experimenting new forms of governance, while on the other hand there were bottom-up approaches promoted by citizens, sometimes in partnership with public institutions.

This study argues that the top-down and bottom-up activities are examples of partnerships between public administrations and "active citizens" aimed at improving the quality of life through collaborative decision-making. However, with regards to top-down approaches citizens are mostly at the receiving end with little influence on decision-making in policy or development matters (Moini, 2012). The Bologna case is viewed one with deep collaborative governance of the commons in Italy (Frimstone & Coleman, 2015). It was the first to be activated in Italy, in May 2014, with a sufficiently large degree of implementation to provide elements that could help the future development of public participation in decision-making process through collaborative governance (Frimstone & Coleman, 2015). Against this backdrop, collaboration among civil organisations and with the government entails new, uncontroversial civic practices more tailored to suit inclusiveness in decision making.

Cape Town civics adopted a similar approach when they formed a collective involving themselves and citizens through a coalition called Civic Action for Public Participation [CAPP] (Couvert, 2017). In his speech at the 'City as a democratic common' in Cape Town, Couvert indicated that CAPP was taking cue from Bologna's experience. They drafted a new municipal by-law laying down the terms for public participation and interaction between citizens and the public administration with potential to influence decision making at local level.

2.7 Ways to improve public participation at local level

The previous sections discussed a number of challenges that civic organisations face in a bid to influence policy making at local level. The challenges included lack of access to information on policy and development issues, lack of resources and solid relationships with local authorities, in some instances. Gumede (2012) highlighted that the civic organisations were marginalised or

excluded in policy and decision-making processes due to political differences with local structures. For Gaventa (2006), civic organisations are also seen as threats against state protocols who incite radicalism in development. To improve public participation at the local level, next, the study focuses on the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in policy making. It will highlight aspects such as Taking Parliament to the people and collaborative governance and their relationship with improvement of public participation.

Towards an Integrated Development Plan

An Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a master plan for an area that gives an overall framework for development. It aims to co-ordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all the people living in an area (UNDP, 2018). According to the UNDP (2018), an IDP should consider the existing conditions, problems, and resources available for development. The plan should look at economic and social development for the area.

Local municipalities in South Africa use the term ‘integrated development planning’ as a method to plan future development in their areas (CoGTA, 2020). Cape Town’s IDP for the period 2017-2022 narrates the city’s vision in planning and guiding decision making and implementation. The question, however, is whether this IDP is inclusive of all citizens and civic organisations in its planning and implementation. Public participation in the IDP aims at public engagement, capacity building, informing and continuous engaged communities. As noted earlier, there is lack of implementation of the IDP processes as there are still challenges in public participation mechanisms. Noyoo (2021) suggest a call for viable partnerships between the local government and civil society and creating a supportive environment for those partnerships to make collaborative development. According to the OECD (2019), this would improve meaningful public participation practices at local level.

The City of Cape Town is believed to have a good track record in meeting the legal and constitutional requirements for public participation (Ben Zeev & Waterhouse, 2012). However, it would seem that the City of Cape Town aims at improving on its open and transparent dialogue with residents in planning, implementing, and monitoring projects or programmes (City of Cape

Town, 2017). This will be underpinned by values of mutual trust, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in policy making and development (ibid.).

Taking Parliament to the people

As part of its provisions for improving public participation in legislations the Parliament of South Africa, along with the Department: Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), has embarked on a process of inclusive governance in budget planning, project/programme planning and other decision-making processes through a mechanism of taking the Parliament to the people. The Taking Parliament to the People Programme (TPTP) initiative involves the sitting of a House and its committees outside the ordinary precincts of Parliament (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), 2008). This normally take place in remote areas where there is little or no infrastructure to accommodate public hearings and the House sittings (PMG, 2008).

The Programme serves the purposes of exposed the marginalised to the working of Parliament and involving them in its processes and create interactions on issues of service delivery and promoting co-operative government (PMG, 2008). This brings together National Cabinet Ministers, provincial Members of the Executive Council (MECs) and Municipal Councilors. The product is direct interaction between citizens and public representatives from all three spheres of the state (PMG, 2008). Examples are public hearings, public meetings, oversight visits by committees to predetermined sites and the ordinary sittings of the House.

2.8 Public participation in the context of covid-19 pandemic

A deadly virus emerged in late 2019 and spread across the whole world in 2020. President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a state of national disaster after the first case was recorded in South Africa on 5 March 2020. This was followed by a lockdown beginning 26 March. The lockdown, which was initially 21 days, turned into months as measures to reduce the spread of the virus had to be put in place. As such, public engagements were halted meaning there were no face-to-face interactions in communities. A study by Makwela (2020) of Planact suggested that most civic engagements, such as public meetings, protests or demonstrations were stopped in the hard lockdown. More so, the Covid-19 measures lacked input from members of the public (Makwela, 2020). Thus, most of the measures put in place during the pandemic were top-down approaches.

While there was perhaps no time to consult or engage communities in decision making, the state did not consider the effect of the pandemic on already existing social and economic issues such as homelessness, safety, and hygiene. Noyoo (2021) argues that the policies or measures put in place during the hard lockdown built on existing ones aimed at curbing poverty and inequality which deepened during the pandemic. According to Makwela (2020), governments do not usually involve the public in crisis policy-making. Many policymakers remain skeptical about the contributions of the public to policies during crisis (Makwela, 2020).

Yi Yang and Zijun Mao (2020), in their study on promoting public engagement during the covid-19 crisis, highlighted that in the context of China local governments needed to continue engaging citizens through various social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Weibo. They argued that although social media engagements had previously been ignored and more complex than thought as means for information dissemination, they played an important role in facilitating citizen engagement during the pandemic. In light of this, governments should support networking and continued engagement between civic organisations, local governments, and society by providing financial assistance or reduced data costs. Assistance should be provided to civic groups for them to continue to actively engage their communities during the pandemic.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical, policy and legislative frameworks that underpin the study. Policies and legislation relevant to the study were highlighted. Lastly, the literature review was discussed along with the main themes drawn from the objectives of the study, as outlined in Chapter One. The next chapter discusses the methodology and research design adopted in this study.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology of the study. The discussion focuses on the research design, study population, sampling strategy, data collection strategy and the research tool(s) used. Data analysis and study limitations will also be discussed.

3.2 Research Design

Babbie and Mouton (2012) describe a research design as a plan or blueprint of how a researcher intends to conduct the study once a research problem has been formulated. There are generally three types of research designs — qualitative, quantitative, and mixed design. A qualitative research design was applied in this study. It was chosen because it is suitable for an exploratory study. It is compatible for generation of the kind of information required for the study. The researcher applied a grounded theory approach where theory emerged while analysing the data collected. Nieuwenhuis (2007) argues that a researcher will select a design that is compatible to his or her philosophical assumptions, and most appropriate for generating the kind of data required to answer the research questions.

According to De Vos (2011), a qualitative approach is used to answer questions about complex phenomena, the purpose being to describe and understand phenomena from participants' perspectives. This design was specifically chosen because it is exploratory in nature, as highlighted above. Babbie and Mouton (2012) state that an exploratory study seeks to examine phenomena that are relatively new, and its core function is to help the researcher to yield insights into a topic for better understanding.

3.3 Population of the study

A population is a group of individuals, objects or items which are taken for a study or measurement (De Vos, 2011). The population for this research consisted of two sets. The first one was drawn from general members of civic groups that fell under the Civic Action for Public Participation (CAPP). This is a coalition of civic associations formed in 2017, as noted in Chapter 1. According to one of the chairpersons, in an interview with the Cape Argus (2017), CAPP consists of more

than twenty civic organisations with eighty to one hundred members each. Four civic organisations participated, which are Bo Kapp Civic Association (BoKCA), Observatory Civic Association (OCA), Woodstock Residents Association (WRA) and Maitland Garden Village Housing Forum (MGVHF).

The second set comprised key informants who were members of the stakeholder's community. These included chairpersons of the selected civic groups above. Other stakeholders were ward councilors, municipal workers, members of the business community and NGOs and local government representatives. During her internship, the researcher observed that these two sets of populations engage with each other at different levels. They also play different roles in public participation. According to the White Paper on Local Government (1998), these chosen sets of informants work together in the formulation of policies or making of decisions at local government level.

3.4 Sampling strategy

Sampling is the process of selecting research participants in a study (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). Babbie and Mouton (2012) stated that researchers study a set of the population of interest to draw adequate conclusions on the research phenomenon under study. There are two basic approaches to sampling, which are non-probability and probability sampling (De Vos, 2011). The non-probability sampling method can be based on the availability of a limited number of participants who are not necessarily representative of the broader group being studied while probability sampling is a process in which the researcher chooses samples from a larger population using random selection (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). Purposive sampling method is one example of probability sampling which the researcher used in this study. Strydom (2011) refers to purposive sampling as one in which the researcher uses personal judgement to select the subjects that are representative of the population. Probability sampling presumes that each member in the population has the same known probability of being selected (Strydom, 2011).

This study adopted a non-probability sampling method because the researcher relied on readily available participants who were willing to participate in the research voluntarily. Two sets of samples were purposively targeted from the two sets of the population. Regarding the first sample set, the researcher selected at least two members from each group to make a total of ten participants. For the second sample, two key informants were selected from each group of

stakeholders listed above, from each community under study. Thus, the sample consisted of ten key informants and ten participants from the first sample set.

Sampling Criteria

For the first sample set, the requirement was that participants should have stayed in the selected communities for at least five years and above. They were supposed to have attended civic meetings in the past year for at least three consecutive times prior to the study. The researcher selected these participants from file records which contained all members' information, including their biographies. The researcher was able to access these record files from the civic chairpersons since she had worked with the civic organisations as an intern.

In choosing the first sample, the researcher considered equal gender representation as well as youth representation. In this regard, both men and women were selected, with the youth represented in each group. In this study youths are people aged 15-35 years, according to the latest StatsSA (2018) report.

The second sample set consisted of key informants who included civic chairpersons, ward councilors or local government officials and representation from the business community and NGOs. There was no age or gender restriction for these key stakeholders. The researcher selected these based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study.

3.5 Data Collection Approach

Legard (2003) describes data collection as a process of obtaining information required in the study. There are several methods of data collection in qualitative research which include interviews, focus group discussions and observations (De Vos, 2011). In this research in-depth interviews were used for data collection, for both sets of samples. The researcher selected this approach because it does not have time limits, or interruptions since this was mainly a conversation between the researcher and the participant. Strydom (2011) notes that interviews are often described as a form of conversation used with a purpose to deeply deduce what the participants will be conveying.

3.6 Data collection tool

A data collection tool refers to an instrument used for gathering or collecting data (De Vos, 2011). The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide as a data collection tool for both sample

sets (see Appendix C). This tool was used because it allows for free flow of conversation between the researcher and the participant. Strydom (2011) stated that a semi-structured interview helps to gain a detailed in-depth picture of the participants' beliefs, perceptions, and substantive information on a topic.

Data Recording

An interview recording refers to recording information when conducting interviews during research (Strydom, 2011). The researcher recorded all interviews using a mobile-recording device. This is done to capture all information correctly while ensuring the interviewer pay attention to the participants. De Vos (2011) states that researchers who use interviews as a data-collection strategy should also use a recorder which allows a fuller recording compared to note taking. Recording also enable the interviewer to pay maximum attention to the participants.

3.7 Data Verification

Data verification refers to elements which enhance trustworthiness of a qualitative research (Babbie and Mouton, 2012). Babbie and Mouton (2012) put forward the following mechanisms which they argue enhances the validity of information collected in qualitative research:

Dependability

Dependability refers to a process where a researcher's role is to provide the audience with evidence that if the research were to be repeated in the same manner or with similar participants in the same context, the findings would still be the same (Babbie and Mouton, 2012). The researcher ensured dependability by using the semi-structured interview to collect data. The methodology section for this study is clearly laid out such that anyone else can, under the same conditions, verify the data collected using the same methods. The researcher documented every step of the research, including how data was analysed, for other researchers and readers to verify the data collected. Babbie and Mouton (2012) states that when a research process is well documented, logical, and audited, then dependability is achieved.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the ability to measure what is intended in the study, such as a participant's thoughts and opinions in research (Babbie and Mouton, 2012). Babbie and Mouton (2012) argue

that credibility is concerned with the accuracy of the way the subject is identified and described, whereby the researcher clarifies the boundaries around the research. The researcher ensured credibility by comparing the participants' responses, noting any points of concern for further analysis. In addition, the researcher also compared the research findings from studies done in other parts of the world as highlighted in the literature review chapter. A thorough review was done by the researcher and the supervisor who took note of any biases while the study was being conducted the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings are a product of the focus of inquiry, and not of the biases of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). The researcher allowed the participants to freely provide their views during interviews without influence or interference. To avoid bias, the researcher distanced herself from interfering with the participants' responses and research findings during data analysis. According to Babbie and Mouton (2012), it is imperative for the researcher to distance himself/herself from the study based on the knowledge or experience that they may have with regards to the study.

3.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis refers to a process which entail an effort to formally identify themes and construct hypotheses as suggested by data and attempt to demonstrate support for those themes and hypotheses (Schurink, Fouche & De Vos, 2011). The main aim is to reduce and synthesise information to make sense out of it (ibid.). In qualitative research, data analysis begins during the process of data collection (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The main reason for this is because early data analysis allows timely theorizing about results.

The researcher used Tesch's 1990 model of analysing data. Firstly, collected data was transferred from the mobile recorder to transcripts. After that, the transcripts were carefully read one at a time to obtain a sense of what themes could be categorised together. A list of all the themes or topics were made based on the research objectives and questions. The themes or topics were abbreviated as codes highlighted in different colors, which were written next to the appropriate segments of the transcripts. After all that had been done, the researcher put the data material belonging to each category together and performed an analysis. The researcher constantly listened to the data

recordings a few times during the analysis process. This was done because the research was an iterative process (De Vos, 2011). Therefore, going back and forth helped the researcher to form effective data analysis for the research. The researcher used existing material from the literature review, compared and analysed it to arrive at conclusions and recommendations of the study. De Vos (2011) argues that the findings of the study should be related to existing theoretical frameworks and the literature, showing whether this can be supported or falsified.

3.9 Challenges and limitations of the study

De Vos (2011) state that although qualitative research has gained some acceptance as an approach, it also has some inevitable limitations. In this study the limitations included the qualitative research design that was used, the data collection approach and the sample size.

3.9.1 Qualitative research design

A qualitative research design has inherent limitations as it relies greatly on subjectivity, and the findings are not easily generalisable (Gxubane, 2012). The researcher depended heavily on participants' responses. The research findings could not be easily generalised. However, the study provided better understanding regarding the role that could be played by civic organisations in policy making through facilitating public participation when addressing matters affecting their communities.

3.9.2 Data collection approach

The researcher had intentions to do in-depth face to face interviews. But due to the covid-19 pandemic which ushered in strict regulations on physical distancing, the researcher carried out interviews using online platforms such as zoom and skype, as well as the telephone. However, this did not affect the study outcomes and quality of data. The participants provided in-depth knowledge on the research topic.

3.9.3 Sample size

The researcher interviewed only twenty participants. This was a small sample size compared to the study's population size. However, this did not affect the study outcomes and quality of data as participants provided in-depth knowledge on the topic.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of various aspects of the research design and methodology used in the study. A qualitative research design was used. This is an exploratory way of analysing social phenomenon. The chapter also highlighted the population, sampling technique, sampling criteria and ethical considerations observed in the research. The data collection approach and the research tool were also discussed. Tesch's (1990) eight steps approach for data analysis, adopted for this study, were also explained. Finally, the limitations of the study were also highlighted.

The following chapter discusses the data for the first sample set — the civic organisations' members.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF THE DATA ON PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIC ORGANISATION MEMBERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses data from civic organisation members. The participants' profiles are presented in Table 1. Table 2 present the data analysis framework in the form of themes, sub themes and categories that emerged from analysis of data. That analysis was guided by the overall aim and specific objectives of the study. Ten participants sampled from different civic groups were interviewed in-depth to explore their perceptions on public participation in policy making among civic organisations. The study explored the participants' perceptions regarding their understanding of public participation, different forms of public participation, roles of civic organisations in policy making, influence of public participation in decision making, ways to improve public participation at local level and their perceptions of public participation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2 Profile of Participants

Table 1 below presents the profiles of civic organisations' members. It informs the reader of the age, gender, level of education, residential area, and the number of years the participants lived in that area when the study was conducted. Their positions in the civic organisations, if any, are also presented. Thereafter, the profiles are discussed to evaluate their significance to the study.

Table 1: Participants' Profiles

Participants (P)	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Residential area	Number of years living in the area	Position in the civic organisation
1	46	F	University degree	Woodstock	19	Secretary
2	44	F	College certificate	Woodstock	10	Member
3	70	F	Education certificate	Bo Kaap	46	Secretary
4	26	F	Matric	Bo Kaap	10	Member
5	56	M	College Certificate	Bo Kaap	25	Vice chairperson
6	50	M	University degree	Observatory	30	Member
7	35	F	Matric	Observatory	36	Member
8	30	M	Matric	Maitland Garden Village	30	Member
9	27	F	College certificate	Maitland Garden Village	5	Secretary
10	43	M	College certificate	Maitland Garden Village	23	Member

Source: Interview data

4.3 Discussion of participants' profiles

Participants' ages

The researcher was interested to know if age influenced participants' perceptions on public participation. The interest was also on knowing whether all age groups were represented in civic

organisations. All participants interviewed were above the age of 18 years, meaning that according to research ethics of human subjects in South Africa they did not need parental consent (Babbie and Mouton, 2012). Four out of ten participants fell into the youth bracket (15 - 34 years). According to the National Youth Policy of South Africa (2015), the youth are persons between the ages fifteen and thirty-four. The seemingly low representation of youth in the sample is explored further in the study, in relation to their overall representation in civic groups.

Gender

There were six women and four men in the sample set. The representation of women in majority in the sample seems to be attributed to women's involvement in community-based development in which most women are taking the initiative to deliberate issues that affect their development (StatsSA, 2018). The researcher aimed at equal gender representation, but the participants interviewed were subject to availability. Gender is significant in this study because the researcher was interested to know if there would be any differences in the perceptions on public participation between men and women. Further, it the study sought to explore if there is equal representation between men and women in positions of power within civic organisations.

Level of education

The researcher wanted to explore if education levels influenced participants' perceptions on public participation and its influence on policy making. Five out of ten participants had college certificates, three had matric certificates while two had university degrees. The significance of the level of education to this study shall be explored further in the data analysis.

Residential area and number of years living in the area.

The residential area of participants and the number of years they have lived in that area was significant to the study. The researcher was interested to know the perceptions on public participation practices and experiences of people who had lived in those areas long enough to comment on their involvement in policy and decision-making processes in their communities. Nine out of ten participants had stayed or lived in their communities for more than ten years, with most of them highlighting that they had been born in those areas. Only one participant had lived in the area for five years, having moved there upon marriage.

Position in the civic organisation

This theme sought to explore if the perceptions of the general civic members differed from those of key informants. Six out of ten participants had no positions in their civic organisations, three were secretaries while one was a vice chairperson. Most civic members represent citizens in their communities. Their understanding on public participation will be explored further in the study.

4.4 Presentation and discussion of civic organisation members' data

Table 2: Framework for analysis of civic organisation members' data

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
4.4.1 Participants' understanding of public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to speak freely • Involvement in policy and development issues 	
4.4.2 Participants' understanding regarding different forms of public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marches • Public meetings • Voting 	
4.4.3 Roles of civic organisations in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform the community on policy and development initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A link between the community and local authorities • Effective communication with residents and local authorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To lead the community in public participation processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A voice for the voiceless • Leading in consultation processes on behalf of policy makers
4.4.4 The influence of public participation in decision making at local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate information on policy issues by citizens and civic organisations. • Challenges with costs and time involved in participation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making impacted by lack of solid relationships between local government and civic organisations. 	
4.4.5 Ways in which public participation can be improved at local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for transparency in local governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to public meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultations must be improved in communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant engagement on policy issues with local authorities
4.4.6 Public participation in the context of covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pandemic did more harm than good in the communities 	

4.4.1 Participants' understanding of public participation

In exploration of the participants' understanding of public participation, various meanings were depicted. This was mainly based on participants' own experiences or what they had heard or read. The participants associated their understanding of public participation mainly with *ability to speak freely and involvement in policy making and development issues*.

Ability to speak freely

Most participants described their understanding of public participation as the ability to speak freely to influence policy or decision making:

'... for me public participation is when individuals can speak freely and influence change in the current policies that affect them. I would say it's a form of direct democracy...' (P1)

'...being able to speak freely and express your opinion is what I would consider as public participation' (P6)

'I think public participation is when people can speak freely on development issues with their local authorities without fear or shame' (P4)

Involvement in policy and development issues

Most participants argued that involvement in policy and development issues were indicators of public participation. For them, this allowed them to express opinions on issues that affected their daily lives:

'Public participation is basically being involved in matters that affect our lives every day. For example, the issue of affordable housing and healthcare systems' (P8)

'Public participation is public involvement on policy and development issues...' (P10)

'My understanding of public participation is to be involved in all our community development issues, and being able to give our input...' (P4)

'Being involved and included in decision-making processes in our community is what I would consider public participation' (P2)

The data show that participants have a common understanding of what public participation means. Their perceptions of public participation are mainly associated with citizens being able to speak freely and having freedom to influence decision making without fear. According to the Public Participation Policy Framework (PPPF) (2005), public participation is the involvement of people and/or the public in decision making processes that affect their lives. Thus, public participation is a fundamental right for all, designed to narrow the distance between the electorate and the elected institutions (PPPF, 2005). Public participation also ensures that local authorities remain accountable and allow citizens to have continuous input into local politics (State of Local Governance (SoLG), 2008). Participants understand public participation as a democratic process in which the public can contribute to policy and development issues that affect their everyday lives without fear or shame. As Quick and Bryson (2016) put it, public participation entails direct or indirect involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes regarding policies, plans or development programs. Stakeholders include persons, groups or organisations that may influence, or be affected by policy decisions.

The above is reflective of the evolvement of public participation over decades. Arnstein (1969) (cited in Popay et al., 2007) described public participation as a ‘ladder’ for increasing citizen influence and authority over government decision-making. The Civil Rights Movement and other community organisations’ efforts in the United States are good examples of civic organisations that used public participation to transform social dynamics and gain power (Polletta, 2012).

4.4.2 Participants’ understanding regarding different forms of public participation

Participants understood different forms of public participation to include *marches, public meetings, and voting*:

Marches

Most participants noted that marches were a form of public participation they had experienced or been part of in their communities:

‘...we do march here and there if there is a concern we want to voice out. For example, when we want employment opportunities. No one forces us to do it, but we just decide as a forum’ (P10)

'I was part of a peaceful march in our community for affordable housing... we held placards and moved around with the police escorting us' (P9)

'For me marches are the best form of public participation because we show unity as a community for a common cause, and when we come together to voice our concerns as one, we are normally heard' (P4)

The participants associated public participation practices with their experiences in communities. They had been involved in public participation processes through marching. Quick and Bryson (2016) argued that people have a choice to participate in a democracy, known as voluntary participation. In such cases, participation can take place during an exercise such as marching, where community members voluntarily co-operate to solve common problems (Quick and Bryson, 2016). In that regard participation provides an opportunity for participants to voluntarily enhance their own capacities to influence decision-making (Sen, 2000), thereby contributing to policy formulation.

Public Meetings

Most participants also cited 'public meetings' as a form of public participation with most of them taking part in or having heard of them:

'... I often hear of a call to public meetings, but I have never attended one because sometimes I will be at work or just not available' (P9)

'There is always some sort of community mobilisation happening around, and there are often public meetings with the local authorities where the community gather around to discuss its concerns, or comment on a public matter such as the budget.' (P7)

'...public meetings are the best form of public participation because everybody gets to contribute and be involved in decision-making...' (P6)

Like marches, public meetings as a form of public participation seemed relevant to most participants as they had either been directly or indirectly involved. According to Abbers (2019), direct participation occurs when participants take part in the performance of an activity which affect their lives. Indirect participation is when the public entrust those in power or those whom

they have voted for to represent them in decision-making processes. In this manner, when one is not able to attend a public meeting, they would get some feedback of what transpired in the meeting by their civic organisation leaders. One participant said:

'...our chairperson and all the leaders in the civic group always give us feedback from the public meetings they attend. They tell us what is happening in the community' (P2)

Mergel (2013) has argued that citizens should comment and give input on particular local government matter in public meetings, such as those for budget planning. Public meetings, also known as committee meetings, sometimes consist of appointed or elected representatives who examine or deal with a particular matter. In regard, public meetings are not always inclusive (Mergel, 2013). This shows that to some extent, there are development issues which are not perceived to be of public interest. This goes against the notion of involving citizens in decision-making (Soss, 2011). Thus, committee meetings are perceived as forms of participation among members who capable of undertaking in-depth discussions about matter(s) under consideration. The people normally included in such committee meetings are highly ranked community residents such as business personnel or those considered to have knowledge of the matter under discussion. Consequently, the majority of citizens are excluded (Soss, 2011).

Voting

Voting was also cited by most participants as the best practice which is democratic:

'...voting is probably one of the most democratic public participation exercises. I have voted before, and I believe in the majority voice' (P7)

'With voting, I feel like I am practicing my right and my voice is heard'. (P3)

'Voting is the best form of public participation although many people think the results are not usually fair. For example, there is always some rigging in elections...' (P8)

'Nowadays we vote for everything, even in our community, for example when we want something to be done, we always vote for or against before a resolution'. (P1)

The data suggests that participants perceive voting as a right, and the best public participation practice. The right to vote is also perceived as the only political right that most people in the world

can exercise (Bryson, 2016). In terms of political freedoms, Sen's capability approach notes that citizens have the right to determine who should govern them and on what principles (Sen, 2000). Against this background, it seems participants are eager to exercise their right to vote as a form of public participation, which they believe would deepen democracy in policy and decision making. Posing (2003) argues that voting could be used by policy makers to analyse perceptions and reactions of society by using poll surveys — thereby giving citizens an opportunity to exercise their political right.

4.4.3 Roles of civic organisations in policy formulation

The participants' perceptions on the roles of civic organisations in policy formulation were explored. Among others, they highlighted civic organisations' roles *include informing their communities about development initiatives and leading the community in the public participation processes.*

To inform the community on policy and development initiatives

Most participants mentioned that civic organisations were a *link between the community and local authorities. They also assisted with effective communication.*

A link between the community and local authorities

The participants who perceived civic organisations as a link between the community and local authorities said:

'Civic organisations are a link between the community and the local authorities or stakeholders for most development initiatives. Therefore, they keep us informed ...' (P2)

'The civic organisations inform the community of any policy or development programs in the area that we may or may not be aware of. Therefore, they are a link between us and the local authorities...' (P7)

'The civic organisations act as mediators between the community and the local authorities...' (P5)

Effective communication with residents and local authorities

Regarding communication, the participants had the following to say:

‘Civic organisations ensure effective communication amongst residents and local authorities by informing them of any programs happening in the area...’ (P9)

‘My civic organisation always ensure that we receive information to do with any program in the community through making it accessible to everyone, either via WhatsApp, Facebook or even moving door to door’ (P4)

‘Civic organisations’ main role would be to assist with effective communication between residents and community stakeholders’ (P1)

Participants understood one of the roles of civic organisations as giving and receiving information in relation to development matters from local authorities to the community, and vice versa. This is making sure that people are well-informed and information flow is both sent and received in an effective manner by the residents and stakeholders (Rowe, 2016). The civic organisations provide information to residents on policy and development issues thereby ensuring that citizens contribute to policy formulation. The participants understood civic associations to contribute to knowledge and information that the citizens may already have. This helped citizens to understand more and participate in policy and decision making. As one participant noted, some civic organisations would ensure that information dissemination is easily accessible to community members through information dissemination on online platforms such as television, WhatsApp, Facebook, or twitter. As highlighted in the Public Participation Policy Framework (PPPF) (2005), every citizen has the right to freedom of access making access to information a tool for public participation. In this manner, political freedoms and transparency guarantees as theorised by Sen’s (2000) capability approach can be achieved through making sure that citizens are well informed of what is happening in and around their communities.

To lead the community in public participation processes

Civic organisations play a leading role in public participation. Many participants noted that civic organisations would lead in the public participation processes through acting as *a voice for the voiceless and leading in consultation processes regarding policy makers:*

A voice for the voiceless

Most participants noted that civic organisations were a voice for the voiceless in the community when it comes to public participation processes:

‘The civic groups are a voice of the people in public participation, and they ensure that they fight for our rights in the community’ (P2)

‘They speak on behalf of the community which makes them our voice!’ (P4)

‘Civic organisations always take the lead in fighting for our rights and development issues in the community’ (P11)

‘Civic organisations help us to know and understand the public participation processes by taking a leading role in some of the processes, for example, campaigning for affordable housing and submitting objections to the local authorities on our behalf’ (P8)

The data shows that participants believe that civic organisations play a leading role in the public participation process. From the participants’ view, civic organisations play a leading role because they are well informed regarding what is happening within communities in policy development initiatives. Most civic groups are considered to be activist groups which act as a voice for the communities. They seem to be well knowledgeable about issues affecting their communities (Rowe, 2016). The study by Bartoletti and Faccioli (2016) in Bologna, Italy, suggested that civic organisations played a leading role in policy formulation through their supply of information to citizens. They are the voice for the voiceless, and lead in public participation processes.

Leading in consultation processes on behalf of policy makers

A few participants noted that the civic organisations also played a consultative role within the community. They help the policy makers know and understand what residents want in their communities in terms of policy and development:

‘Civic organisations work with the people in the community. Therefore, they consult on behalf of the municipality and stakeholders on policy and development matters’ (P7)

‘The civic organisations lead most consultation processes in the community on behalf of policy makers because they know and understand what residents need’ (P1)

The data show that participants understand that civic organisations do not only lead the community in public participation processes, but also consult with community members on behalf of policy makers making sure they represent every voice. This shows that civic organisations also represent democratic practices in community development through consultative public participation. Putman (2000) and Skocpol (2003) both argue that for much of our history, civic associations have served as schools of democracy for millions of people, in particular, Americans to whom they taught leadership skills, democratic governance, and public engagement. With that in mind, civic organisations thrive to develop and engage members of the community in policy making by consulting them and incorporating their opinions on policy and development issues.

4.4.4 The influence of public participation in decision-making at local level

The participants' perceptions on the influence of public participation at local level indicate that there is *no influence* and also that *decision making was mainly impacted by lack of solid relationships between the local government and civic organisations*:

No influence

The few participants who reported that there was no influence in decision-making at the local level mentioned that there is *lack of adequate information on policy issues by citizens and civic organisations*. There were *challenges with costs and time in the context of public participation processes*:

Lack of adequate information on policy issues by citizens and civic organisations

Most participants highlighted that there was no influence in policy making because the citizens and civic organisations did not have adequate information on policy issues:

'I think the citizens and civic organisations lack adequate information on some policy issues. Therefore, there is no influence they can make' (P1)

'We normally do not have adequate information on these policy issues. So, we end up not making any impact on decision-making' (P11)

‘Civic organisations and citizens cannot make an impact in decision making when they do not have adequate information on the issues at hand. The local authorities already know what they want before they consult with citizens’ (P4)

The participants are of the view that civic organisations fail to make an impact or influence in policy and decision-making processes at local level due to lack of adequate information on policy issues. It would also seem that the participants believe that civic organisations and citizens fail to influence the decision-making process because the local authorities already know what they want to achieve, before they consult with citizens. This notion is supported by Kim Lanegran (2005) who argues that there is information censorship in governance, and that local governments already have ‘preconceived ideas’ of what they deem appropriate for the citizens. They already know the kind of responses they want and are not willing to engage meaningfully with citizens so that they can make informed decisions. It seems that public engagements at local level are not done for purposes of inclusive decision-making, but also done by government entities to fulfil legal requirements (Lanegran, 2005). In his research, Lanegran (2005) suggested that civic organisations in South Africa were marginalized in decision making processes causing them to lack influence in negotiated forums.

Challenges with costs and time involved in public participation

A few participants noted that civic organisations lacked influence in decision making due to challenges with costs and time involved in the public participation processes:

‘Sometimes the costs involved with public participation, for example costs of litigation, are just too much. Civic organisations cannot afford that’ (P5)

‘There is a lot of time that has to be put in public participation and most times we just fail to commit to that’ (P10)

The above data show that participants associate failure to influence decision-making processes to cost and time involved in public participation. Participants understand that there is a lot of time commitment that has to be put in the public participation processes by both citizens and civic organisations. However, it is difficult to do so. According to Gumede (2012), the collapse of civic society or failure to influence decision making emanated from financial challenges which affected

some public participation processes such as litigation. The same would also apply for public participation forms such as protests or demonstrations, that require time and money to set up. Costs may include money for making flyers for demonstrations, feeding the protestors and so on. Morgan and Cook (2014) noted that there are time commitments that public participation processes require from the beginning of the process, during and after the process. An example would be applying for permission to the council to do a march, campaign, or a protest. There are also time commitments relating to the length it can take to get approval due to bureaucracy in the municipality structures (Morgan & Cook, 2014)). From this viewpoint, it would seem some public participation processes are deliberately designed to slow down decision making processes to suppress the voices of the majority. This in turn affect citizens' ability to influence decision-making.

Decision making impacted by lack of solid relationships between civic organisations and the local government

Another factor associated with the lack of influence in decision making is the failure or lack of solid working relationships between civic organisations and the local government structures:

'We feel excluded by the local authorities when it comes to decision-making because there is no good relationship between us...' (P6)

'Our influence as a civic group is depended on the relationship that we have with our local authorities, as well as political parties in our community' (P10)

'We do not have a good relationship with our ward councilor, and it is difficult to influence decision making past him. He is the one with more power over the ward' (P7)

'There is limited influence at local level because there is no solid relationship amongst the so-called community elites and the rest of the community...they make decisions on our behalf' (P4)

The data show that participants perceive lack of influence in decision making as a product of lack of good or solid relationships with the local government and community stakeholders involved in policy making and development. As one participant highlighted, civic organisations seem to be excluded in the decision-making processes with 'community elites'— those in positions of power

(Rowe, 2016) normally making decisions on the community's behalf. This suggests that there is little or lack of consultation at local level in policy and development matters. This affect many people while going against the PPPF (2005) and provisions of public participation in the Municipal Systems Act (2000) which suggest that citizens must be consulted and included at all times in decision-making processes as part of the public participation process. Accordingly, this signifies major concerns on how decisions are made at local level, with the potential of bias based on relationships as well as overriding citizen participation by those in power (Leighninger, 2012).

4.4.5 Ways in which public participation can be improved at local level

Regarding ways to improve public participation at local level, the participants highlighted that there was *a need for transparency in local governance and improvement of public consultations:*

Need for transparency in local governance

The participants thought that there was need for transparency in local governance and *accessibility to public meetings.*

Accessibility to public meetings

More than half of the participants noted that to improve public participation at local level there must be transparency through accessibility to public meetings in the community:

'Sometimes I hear on the very day that there is a meeting at the council and then I am not able to attend because I just have no time to prepare for it...' (P5)

'We get notified of some meetings, and some we do not even hear about them. We see some sort of developments happening around without our knowledge ... for example our community only realised there was a new building to be built when we saw some contractors already in the area.' (P1)

'Public developments are for the public. Therefore, the public meetings must be made available to everyone!' (P3)

'Every public meeting should be accessible and transparent because we must be able to know what is happening in our community in terms of policy and development.' (P10)

The data shows that participants realise that there is a gap in the accessibility of public meetings in communities which needs to improve. Members of the public need to be part of public meetings that discuss matters of development in their community. They should comment and give their input. As noted in Subsection(s) (10) and (11) of the Municipal Act, the Municipal Council must give public notice of the time, date, and venue of every meeting in the Council. Municipal Council and committee meetings are subject to Subsection (2) and are open to the public, including the media. Thus, most public meetings ought to be easily accessible to community members and must be published to ensure transparency. The Municipal Act, in the same Section, states that provision is given to exclude the public where a by-law specifies the circumstances, or where it is reasonable to do so in relation to the nature of the business being discussed. Citizens are considered important stakeholders in policy making and development (Freeman, 2010). For instance, the UK government, as highlighted in Chapter 2 of this study, introduced some financing initiatives to civic organisations so they can disseminate information through publications and facilitation of online participation platforms to ensure that every citizen can participate irrespective of their ability to attend a townhall public meeting (Fung, 2006).

Public consultations must be improved in communities

Most participants emphasized that consultations at local level need to be improved in the communities. Consequently, there is need for *constant engagement on policy issues with local authorities*:

Constant engagement on policy issues with local authorities

Participants who highlighted the need for constant engagement and consultations to be improved said:

‘The local government need to consult and engage people more when it comes to policy making because our fate lies in the decisions that they make without consulting us in the first place’ (P2)

‘I feel like public participation is a waste of time sometimes because there is no constant engagement and consultation from the local authorities... anything for us, without us, is against us’ (P1)

'The consultation mechanisms need to be improved so that everyone can be able to give their input. They need to allow people to ask more questions where they do not understand what is happening' (P6)

The data have shown that the participants seem to understand that there is need to improve consultation processes by the local government in order to improve public participation. It would seem, from participants' viewpoint that there is no constant engagement amongst the local authorities and citizens or civic groups thus there is exclusion in the decision-making processes. As highlighted in the PPF, (2005), citizens have to be allowed to have continuous input into local policy and development issues for example when there is a new building or highway construction in the area which have potential of implicating residents' lives through gentrification. Under the Municipal Systems Act provisions for public participation, consultation is relevant through constant engagement between the local government and civic organisations.

4.4.6 Perceptions regarding public participation in the context of the covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic brought everything to a standstill as almost all activities including academic practices were either stopped or restricted to physical distancing. This study was therefore immediately carried out under the same restrictions and all the research interviews were done using online platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp calls or telephone calls. Participants' perceptions with regards to public participation in the context of the covid-19 pandemic were explored and they indicated that the *pandemic had done more harm than good in their communities:*

The pandemic did more harm than good in the communities

Most participants indicated that there had been persistent social problems in their communities and the covid-19 pandemic had increased these problems while also affecting their civic engagements of participating:

'Ever since the pandemic, there has been increase in homelessness and gender-based violence.' (P6)

'We already had problems in service delivery in some communities and this has just been increased by the pandemic' (P10)

'Our civic engagements have reduced because not everyone can afford to work or meet online because data is expensive man...' (P4)

The data show that most civic engagements were affected by the implementation of the hard lockdown restrictions which include physical distance working mode. It would also seem that the covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated some social problems such as homelessness and gender-based violence which were persistent in some communities (Pirtle, 2020). From that point of view, the manner in which the government responded to the pandemic with policies such as ‘stay at home’ and ‘social distancing’ was not inclusive of all groups in society. For example, ‘the homeless’ or poor in society, who cannot afford online engagements, were affected.

A report by Business Day in April 2020 suggested that in the US and the UK marginalised groups and people of color found it difficult to access healthcare and basic services following implementation of lockdown restrictions (Pirtle, 2020). Similarly, in South Africa the poor people were affected. For instance, at the time of this study there was an increase in homelessness in the Observatory area, and the civic organisations were working with the City of Cape Town and relevant stakeholders to solve the issue. However, when lockdown restrictions were put in place the situation worsened while efforts to solve it slowed down (Watson, 2020).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented demographic profiles of participants, who are civic organisation members, by presenting and discussing their age, level of education, residential area, and number of years they lived in that area. The chapter also discussed the research data in relation to specific objectives and the overall aim of the study. It did this by presenting themes, sub-themes, and categories. A comprehensive discussion of the data was carried out in relation to its significance to the overall aim of the study in relation to other relevant studies, policy and legislation dealt with in the literature review chapter. The study revealed that public participation in policy making is essential at local level, and that civic organisations play a very significant role in the public participation processes. The next chapter presents the perceptions of key informants in relation to the specific objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE DATA ON PERCEPTIONS OF KEY INFORMANTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discuss data from key informants drawn from an analysis in relation to the specific research objectives. Profiles of key informants, which include their demographic data, are presented in Table 3. The data analysis framework is presented in Table 4 in the form of themes, sub themes and categories that emerged from data collection and analysis. They are based on the overall aim and specific objectives of the study. Ten Key Informant Participants (KIP) from the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) cluster, municipality/council workers, business community and civic group chairpersons were interviewed in-depth to explore their perceptions on public participation in policy making amongst civic organisations. The study explored participants' perceptions regarding their understanding of public participation, forms of public participation, roles of civic organisations in policy making, influence of public participation in decision making, ways to improve public participation at the local level and their perceptions of public participation in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

5.2 Profiles of Key Informants

Table 3, below, presents the profile of key informants who were interviewed for this study. It shows the participants' age, gender, level of education and the organisation or cluster they belong to in relation to the selection criteria used for the key informants. This is followed by a brief discussion of key informants' profiles.

Table 3: Key Informants' profiles

Key Informant Participant (KIP)	Age	Gender	Level of education	Organisation/ Cluster
KIP1	55	M	University Degree	Founding member – Civic Action for Public Participation (CAPP)
KIP2	65	M	University degree	Founding member (CAPP)
KIP3	46	M	University degree	Chairperson — Observatory Civic Association (OCA) and CAPP
KIP4	50	F	College certificate	Chairperson — BoKaap Ratepayers Association
KIP5	72	M	University degree	Ward councilor (District 16)
KIP6	52	F	University degree	NGO community
KIP7	58	M	College certificate	Chairperson (Woodstock)
KIP8	36	F	Matric	Chairperson – Maitland Garden Village (MGV)
KIP9	34	M	University Degree	Municipal Representative
KIP10	52	F	University degree	Business community

Source: Interview data

5.3 Discussion of key informant's profiles

Age during the time of study

The researcher was interested to know the age of participants to analyse whether it influenced their interests and understanding of public participation in policy making. All participants were above the age of eighteen at the time of the study, in line with the research ethics guide for interviewing human subjects who give their own consent (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). Only one out of ten participants fell into the youth category (15-34), according to the National Youth Policy of South Africa (2015).

Gender

The relationship between gender and participants understanding and interest in public participation or policy issues was also investigated. There were six males and four females. The significance or influence of the lower number of females shall be discussed later in this chapter.

Level of education

The effect of participants' education level on perceptions on public participation in policy making was also explored. Seven out of ten participants held university degrees, with one being a professor. Two out of ten had college certificates, with one having a matric. The participants' level of education is explored further later in the chapter. **Organisation/cluster at the time of study**

The participants were all considered key stakeholders in relation to their community involvement in policy and development issues. The researcher also included chairpersons of civic organisations in the study to analyse their perceptions and evaluate any differences from perceptions of general civic members,' discussed in Chapter 4. The profiles show that there were four chairpersons representing each of the four civic organisations under study. The organisations were also members of the Civic Action for Public Participation (CAPP). There were two municipal representatives, with one being a ward councilor for District Six. District Six comprises most of the communities under study, i.e., Woodstock, Observatory and BoKaap. The researcher included these key stakeholders in the study because they are involved in policy formulation and development processes at local level in their communities.

5.4 Presentation and discussion of data from key informants

Table 4: Framework for analysis of key informants' data

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
5.4.1 Participants' understanding of public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A democratic process • Public participation as a fundamental human right 	
5.4.2 Participants' understanding regarding different forms of public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tick-box exercises • Petitions • Litigation 	
5.4.3 Roles of civic organisations in policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hold municipalities and local government accountable for their actions 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create platforms for meaningful public participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding open discussions with residents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing strategic networks in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link communities with stakeholders and service providers
5.4.4 The influence of public participation in decision making at local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making affected by micro-political dynamics within civic organisations and the local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political differences
5.4.5 Ways in which public participation can be improved at local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming collaborative partnerships between the local government and civic organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement meaningful engagements. • Building strategic partnerships with various stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding top-down approaches to development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards an Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
5.4.6 Public participation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on civic engagements in the communities 	

Source: Interview data

5.4.1 Participants' understanding of public participation.

The participants conceived public participation as a *democratic process and a fundamental human right*.

A democratic process

Most key informants noted that public participation was a democratic process aimed at implementing democratic decision-making processes in policy formulation:

'Public participation is a democratic process where people express an opinion on things that affect them... Where people can actually make decisions and can control what affects them in a meaningful way...' (KIP3)

'It is public involvement and consultation by decision makers in a democratic manner' (KIP2)

'Public participation is essentially following a democratic procedure in decision making processes mainly in policy making or development processes'(KIP1)

'It is an inclusive, democratic process where not only authorities, but also private companies and other organisations can participate in decision making.' (KIP5)

The data show that participants understand public participation as a democratic process in policy making. The participants regard public participation as an open and transparent process which ensure democracy for all. Here, citizens are able to give continuous input in decision-making processes that affect their daily lives (Public Participation Policy Framework (PPPF, 2005). This affirms what is in provisions in the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) (1998) where public participation should ensure maximum democratic accountability by policy makers. Public participation also ensure that citizens are empowered with capabilities that give them authority to hold their elected leaders accountable with regards to policy and development initiatives (Sen, 2000).

Public participation as a fundamental human right

A few participants emphasised that public participation is a fundamental human right:

'It is a fundamental human right which promotes citizen power. From the state's side, this is a very consultative process whereas for NGOs this is a participative decision-making process where there is collaboration, as opposed to being informed or being consulted...' (KIP6)

'Everyone is entitled to public participation. So, it is an alienable human right which promotes citizen involvement in decision making processes.' (KIP10)

The data suggest that some participants understood public participation as a fundamental human right which every citizen is entitled to. In this sense, every citizen can and should be able to participate in policy making processes that affect their everyday lives. As mentioned earlier, public participation allows citizens (as individuals or interest groups) to have continuous input into local politics. This makes public participation a part and process of everyday life which makes it a human right. Bingham (2005) argued that public participation has become a routine, and an expected feature of policy making in everyday politics. This makes it a fundamental human right for all.

5.4.2 Participants' understanding regarding different forms of public participation.

Most participants understood public participation forms as mere *tick-box exercises*, including legal practices such as *petitions and litigation*.

Tick-box exercises

More than half of the participants suggested that public participation practices were tick-box exercises:

'...mostly residents are asked to tick yes or no to surveys, opinion polls and so forth...and for me this shows that public participation processes are just tick-box exercises...' (KIP6)

'Well, public participation practices vary depending on the situation and context. There is a lot that people can do to participate ...but from the government's side, many of these practices are mere 'tick-box' exercises' (KIP3)

'Consultation by decision-making entities such as local authorities, private organisations or other stakeholders often result in ticking the box for whatever issue is at hand.' (KIP2)

'Public participation is usually a tick-box exercise for most people because that way, it does not consume much time for decision-making' (KIP7)

Participants view policy or decision making in public participation as a quick process which only end up ticking the box in order to reach a decision. It seems that participants understood policy makers as focusing only on reaching a quick decision and move to the next issue or matter under

discussion. This contradicts the earlier view that public participation is a democratic process and an inalienable human right. The DAG (2018) noted that ‘tick-box’ exercises are done to meet legislative requirements and do not engage people in a meaningful public discussion when reaching a decision on a particular matter. The South African Human Rights Commission [SAHRC] (2018), however, discourages such practices. It argued that:

‘Meaningful participation must, both through process and outcome, seek to legitimise process and ensure that needs are understood and addressed between all stakeholders, creating accessible open, representative and inclusive platforms through which consultation occurs for impact driven outcomes. Meaningful consultation should not be confined to a tick-box exercise’ (SAHRC, 2018).

In line with the above, one participant argued that ticking the box as a form of public participation was a violation of freedom of expression. The reason being that these are usually a ‘yes or no’ exercises, and people cannot fully express their opinions. The participant said:

‘Public participation must not be a simple matter of asking people to tick yes or no to come up with a decision. That is actually a violation of freedom to express what citizens actually want’ (KIP4)

It would seem that what happens on the ground, or in reality, is different from theory. Thus, public participation is confined to tick-box exercises as highlighted by the key informants in this study. However, the policies on public participation discourage that and advocates for meaningful engagements before reaching a decision (SAHRC, 2018). The point, nonetheless, is that most researchers and public consultants do not realise the need to involve public members in their processes. For Lucas (2004), history has shown that without comprehensive public participation from all citizens, especially the marginalised populations, the outcomes of such policies and projects are affected.

Petitions

A few key informants noted that petitions were used as a form of public participation at the local level:

‘Although we are not always successful, the petitions that we submit as a community normally result in some notable changes to the development or policy processes.’ (KIP3)

‘As civic organisations we normally use petitions as a form of public participation because that way many people can participate through signing that petition’ (KIP6)

The data suggest that the participants view the signing and submitting of petitions as a form of public participation because they can encourage everyone to take part in the decision-making processes. A petition is defined as a written, formal request to Parliament for intervention in a particular matter (PPPF, 2005). Submitting a petition is regarded as one way the public can exercise their right to participate. Section 56(d) and 69(d) of the Constitution of South Africa provides for the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) to receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested persons or institutions. One participant also noted the below:

‘... people use petitions as a form of public participation because everyone has the right to peacefully assemble, demonstrate and picket..., and sometimes this is the only way the state can get to react...’ (KIP5)

As shown in the narratives, public petitions are mostly used by citizens with similar interests to request a general relief or redress of a grievance, and this would apply to most civic associations. Some petitions are successful, and some are not, but as highlighted above by participants, after an objection to a policy or development initiative, the state may consider some notable changes in the policy and development outcomes. Civic organisations would have, in this case, act as ‘lobbying organisations’ whose work is to hold the government accountable for their actions (De Beivre, 2007). At the time of this study, Development Action Group, academics, and various civic organisations submitted a call for the release of under-utilised military land to combat Cape Town’s housing crisis (Cape Angus, 2020). This came at a time when the housing crisis had been exacerbated due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The civics called for the under-utilised land to be released in order to build affordable housing and reduce homelessness and overcrowding in the ‘mother city’. The people-centered approach to development supports this cause, as the people themselves are at the center of this initiative. The UNDP (2018) argued that people must be at the

center of development, both as beneficiaries and as drivers of developmental initiatives. Thus, petitions seem to be inclusive of citizens' voices in policy and development processes.

Litigation

In line with the notion of public participation as a legal process, a few participants argued that litigation was one of the best forms of public participation:

'The best form of public participation, especially where issues with the environment are concerned, would be litigation...It is the only way the city can react to public concerns' (KIP1)

'We have faced lawsuits when we objected to some developments in our area, and as a result, we resorted to using the same form to get attention' (KIP7)

'Sometimes it is difficult to use legal ways for public participation such as litigation because it is costly and time consuming. We also do not have much expertise on some of the laws, so we would need to seek advice from lawyers before we can litigate' (KIP3)

It is clear that participants view litigation as a form of public participation used to ensure that citizens have agency in decision-making. Litigation is based on legal authority judgement found in the constitutional documents, legislation, judgement law or in conventions based on unwritten constitutional doctrine (Stout, 2013). One example of litigation was when the Observatory Civic Association (OCA), in 2019, slammed the City of Cape Town over the Two Rivers Urban Park (TRUP) name change. According to a Cape Argus report (2019), the OCA said they received a short period to properly assess documents and contribute to the public consultatively. They also accused the city of failing to follow its own commitments regarding the Local Spatial Development Framework (LSDF). The then chairperson of the civic group noted that:

"The name change diminishes a decades-long public participatory process on this environmentally sensitive and ancestral historic site. When looking at the LSDF, particularly around the River Club, it would appear that the City of Cape Town has a predetermined package of plans that it intends to steamroll." (Former OCA Chairperson)

The data shows that citizens are not given priority and the right to intervene in cases of interest and concern to them. Consequently, the opportunity for citizens to provide valuable input to decision makers get lost. The above shows lack of transparency guarantees and accountability (Sen, 2000). The basic purpose of litigation is to vindicate public property or heritage sites that are threatened by private authorities or the City itself. Success by citizens and interest groups in legal actions of this type has provided leverage that forced administrators and politicians to make legislative or policy changes on matters affecting the quality of the natural and human environments (Lucas, 2004). With regards to costs and time, all parties involved are affected by the cost constraints in all types of legal actions. However, the burden for public interest groups is unbearable as most of them are poorly funded (King, 2011).

5.4.3 Roles of civic organisations in policy formulation

The participants argued that some of the roles of civic organisations should focus more on transparency and improving the experiences of public participation processes to ensure ‘meaningful participation’. The main roles which the participants mentioned were *holding the municipalities accountable for their actions, creating platforms for meaningful participation, and providing networks in the community*:

To hold municipalities and the local government accountable for their actions

Most participants suggested that one of the roles of civic organisations is to ensure accountability from local municipalities and the local government:

‘The most important role of civic organisations is to help citizens to hold the elected local representatives accountable for their actions on policy and development’ (KIP6)

‘As civic organisations we should be able to empower the community to know some of the roles their ward councilors and the municipality, so that they can hold them accountable for any matter of concern in the society...we are the servants of the community’ (KIP9)

‘It is extremely important that the platforms for public participation engage active citizenry by being able to pose questions to the local government or the municipality about issues that affect them. For instance, the budget review process should be clearly accounted for...’ (KIP7)

Thus, for participants the roles of civic organisations and stakeholders include providing accountability and holding those in power at local level to account. It seems the participants were advocating for transparency guarantees among citizens and their leaders (Sen, 2000). This in turn creates the absence of corruption and good governance as highlighted in the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) (1998). The WPLG states that “there must be guarantees of maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are to promote”. As one participant noted, the role of the civic organisations is to empower or educate citizens on how to hold their local leaders such as ward councilors accountable through asking questions that ensure transparency. For instance, citizens should be able to ask how the budget is reviewed and allocated across different programs in their communities, constituencies, or districts (Young, 2016).

Creating platforms for meaningful public participation

Most participants explained that civic organisations ensure or create platforms for meaningful participation through holding open discussions with residents:

Holding open discussions with residents

The participants stated that some of the civic organisations’ roles would be to hold open discussions with residents in order to create meaningful participation:

‘The civil society is in a way the administrator for democratic public participation processes... It has a role to play in ensuring meaningful participation within communities’ (P18)

‘Civic organisations are responsible for holding open discussions with the public, and should be able to organise the community activities to incorporate meaningful public participation’ (P12)

‘Civic organisations have a mandate of ensuring participative decision-making processes that are meaningful by listening and discussing issues of concern around policy and development with their community members’ (P14)

The above show that participants understand civic organisations as playing a very important role in creating an environment of meaningful public participation in their communities. Meaningful public participation is, according to the PPPF (2005), allowing citizens to have continuous input into local development. This entails making it a culture, as highlighted in the provisions for public participation in the Municipal Act section 7(1). It states that:

A municipal council must seek to develop a culture of public governance that is participatory, rather than representative, and should help promote a climate conducive to the participation of residents, communities and other stakeholders in local government through structures for participation and a code of conduct for councilors in terms of the Municipal Systems Act.

The above is reflective of public participation practices in the United Kingdom. In the Power Inquiry Report UK (2006), as noted in Chapter 2 of this study, it was stated that there was wide citizen contribution in the policy-making process within all levels of government through the Ministry of Justice's Democratic Branch, which supports all central government departments in engaging citizens. From this, 'meaningful participation' means putting citizens at the center of development as argued by the people centered approach to development (Polleta, 2012). Thus, citizens should be part of their own development initiatives.

Providing strategic networks in the community

The other role of civic organisations, which was highlighted by a few participants, was that of providing networks in the community through *linking it with stakeholders and service providers*:

Link communities with stakeholders and service providers

The few participants who mentioned networking and linking the community with various stakeholders and service providers said:

'The role of civic organisations is to be that link between the community and various stakeholders such as NGOs, businesspeople and even politicians involved with policy and development' (KIP6)

'...as civic organisations we can also help our communities through providing networks and linking service providers and development practitioners with the community' (KIP4)

The participants view civic organisations as providing important networks and links to the community, thus ensuring meaningful partnerships for the development processes. One participant

noted that some civic organisations can also provide services to the community. For example, they can provide food, sanitary, clothing and capacity building programmes in the communities. However, for this to happen there is need for the local or national government to support civic organisations in service provision. One of the participants noted:

‘Sometimes civic organisations can also provide the basic services. But they fail because of lack of financial resources and the willingness from the local government to support small development initiatives’ (KIP8)

The view above is supported by Fung (2006) who argued that the UK government developed support mechanisms in terms of financing small organisations and the civil society to provide basic services to their communities as part of providing network services. Similarly, in Italy the Municipality of Bologna implemented the ‘collaborative governance’ approach where the local government formed partnerships between public administrators and active citizens to develop and improve public participation practices at the local level (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016). Therefore, it is clear that the civic organisations provide networks of services through collaboration and working together with local authorities to improve policy and development initiatives (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016).

5.4.4 The influence of public participation in decision making at the local level

For most participants, decision making integrating public participation was mainly *impacted by micro-political dynamics at the local level*, within the civic groups and within the local government. This resulted in the lack of political will to influence policy and development initiatives:

Decision making affected by micro-political dynamics within the civic organisations and the local government

On this point, the view was that micro-politics affected decision making. This was attributed to differences in political parties within the civics and the local government.

Political differences

Most participants argued that there is limited influence on decision making because of conflict within civics and the local government due to different political affiliations:

‘It is difficult to come to an agreement on certain matters. Firstly, within the civic group itself and secondly, with the local government, because people may fail to agree based on their differences in political affiliation...’ (KIP4)

'The people who are at the center of development are mainly the politicians from different political parties, and they have varying understandings on certain issues. Thus, it is difficult to make an impact on decisions' (KIP9)

'Some members in the civic organisation will try to push for a certain development agenda because they have different views to that of the whole group due to their political affiliation' (KIP7)

'There is lack of political will at the local level where those in power have different agendas to that of the majority due to their political doctrines' (KIP10)

The participants perceive failure to influence decision making at local level as a product of political differences within organisations and the local government. While most civic organisations are apolitical, and work together for a common cause, in some instances they do not speak with one voice when it comes to policy formulation due to political and ideological differences (Polleta, 2012). Irvin and Stansbury (2012) argued that it was imperative in the historical context of local urban politics that citizen participation was politicised in response to the urban protest movements of the 1960s. For Gaventa (2006), however, there is a sense that often the civil society sector is often co-opted into participating in a process with a pre-determined outcome, and in other instances excluded from an 'inner circle' enjoying privileged access to decision makers.

5.4.5 Ways in which public participation can be improved at the local level.

Most key informants stated that the ways in which public participation could be improved at the local level included *forming collaborative partnerships between the local government and civic organisations and implementing a people-centered approach to development.*

Forming collaborative partnerships between the local government and civic organisations

The view was that that *implementing meaningful engagements between the local government and civics, and building strategic partnerships with various stakeholders,* could improve public participation at local level:

Implementing meaningful engagements

Most participants argued that implementing meaningful engagements in the communities, and between the local government and civic organisations, would improve public participation at local level:

‘Civic organisations and the local government should start implementing meaningful public participation with the residents through active engagement’ (KIP1)

‘There must be frequent engagement between the civics and the local government in order to make positive change, and also improve public engagement’ (KIP5)

‘We must develop a culture of collaborative engagement among the civics and communities so that we can all influence policy change through public participation’ (KIP4)

Building strategic partnerships with various stakeholders to improve development

A few participants highlighted that building strategic partnerships would essentially improve public participation in development processes:

‘Currently it seems like the local government and civic organisations are at loggerheads with each other on development issues every day. But if the two could work together, they can influence public participation practices in the communities better’ (KIP3)

‘A good practice of public participation can be developed and improved through building healthy relationships with those in charge of formulating policies, and these are the local authorities.’ (KIP7)

‘Forming meaningful partnerships with officials such as ward councilors, politicians or other stakeholders in the community can help with collaborative decision making at local level’ (KIP6)

For the participants public participation at the local level could be improved by implementing meaningful engagements and forming collaborative partnerships between the local government and civic organisations to promote effective decision making. Quick and Bryson (2016) argued that citizens are the most important stakeholders in development. Therefore, the local government

should be able to form meaningful partnerships with its citizens. This would help the local government in making informed decisions and not ‘by-pass’ citizens.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, normally decisions are made for and on behalf of citizens by those in power thereby creating tensions between the local government and civics. The Municipality of Bologna in Italy, for instance, is an example of how local governments could improve public participation through ‘collaborative governance’ (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016). This collaborative process involves a partnership between public administrations and ‘active citizens’ to develop, treat, and reuse goods for public interest with a view to improving the quality of life in cities. The main aim and objective of their study was to improve the collaboration of the civics through public participation, and to influence decision making (Bartoletti & Faccioli, 2016).

Avoiding top-down approaches to development

Regarding key suggestions on improving public participation at the local level, the participants emphasised the need to avoid the top-down approaches to development to *work towards an Integrated Development Plan (IDP)*:

Implementing an Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

Most participants stated that implementing a people-centered approach to development at local level could improve public participation:

‘For me, the key underlying condition is to start implementing an integrated development process where people are at the center of their own development. It is easy for the local government to just bend over and put themselves at the same level as citizens, unlike the opposite’ (KIP6)

‘Bureaucracy within the local government sometimes affect collaborative decision making. Therefore, they must start to implement some bottom-up approaches which are people-centered and integrated’ (KIP4)

‘We have to check whether there is implementation of decentralisation in our local governments. Do local authorities have full autonomy on local development issues, or it is a matter of national development as well’ (KIP7)

The participants believed that public participation in policy making could be improved at the local level through implementing an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and a people-centered approach to development. The City of Cape Town designed a five-year, strategic IDP (2017-2022), which highlights all mechanisms in place for inclusivity in service delivery and policy making. However, it is interesting to know whether these were being implemented. There were instances where citizens felt they were excluded and let down in some of the major decisions in the City of Cape Town due to lack of public participation. An example is how fast-track gentrification is happening in communities such as Woodstock and Observatory. This is creating a huge economic and infrastructural divide among citizens. A study by Lucas (2004) on the construction of motor highways in the UK and USA has shown that without people's voices and public participation, especially the marginalised populations, adverse impacts such as increased inequalities due to gentrification and destruction of heritage sites occur. Here, the highway system acted as a partition and/or barrier within neighborhoods, separating communities from each other where residents previously had cohesion. This resulted in a significant negative effect (Lucas, 2004). Therefore, a people-centered approach to development is important because it prioritizes people first and would consult them before and during the making of huge decisions that could affect their wellbeing.

5.4.6 Public participation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic

The key informants were asked what their perceptions were regarding public participation during the covid-19 pandemic. The main point stated was that there were negative *effects on civic engagement in their communities*:

Impact on civic engagements

Most key informants highlighted some effects on civic activities and engagements:

'We no longer do our weekly meetings since the lockdown, and this has affected the activities we had planned to do in our community' (KIP8)

'People no longer participate as much as they would do when we meet physically, and also some people are not able to connect for meetings on online platforms like zoom' (KIP10)

'The participation has definitely reduced since the pandemic, and everyone can feel the pressure because we do not know if the programs we had started will continue or not. For example, the soup kitchen we started last year shall have to stop for a while' (KIP4)

There was a shift in civic engagements from high to low levels of participation as highlighted in the previous chapter. While there are digital tools for engagement, most people were not fully prepared for the hard lockdown measures which required most activities to be done in a physical distance mode. The lower levels of engagement can thus be attributed to lack of knowledge to use some online platforms, or lack of enough data to engage in the online spaces such as Zoom, WhatsApp or Facebook. Yang and Zhang (2020) notes that it is important for civic engagements to continue taking place via online platforms. Therefore, the governments should put in place measures that allow for affordable online participation.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the demographic profile of key participants and discussed the data in relation to the specific objectives, and overall aim of the study. A critical discussion was done which followed a presentation of the data in themes, sub-themes, and categories. All data was analysed using relevant literature, policy, and the legislative framework as presented in Chapter 2 of this study. The next chapter will present the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The overall aim of the study was to foster a better understanding regarding the role that civic organisations could play in policy formulation through public participation. This chapter presents the key findings, recommendations, and the main conclusions, in relation to the specific objectives of the study. The study was conducted using two sample sets, one which consisted of civic organisation members, and the other which consisted of key informants who were stakeholders in the public participation processes. This study explored participants' understanding of public participation, different forms of public participation, roles of civic organisations in policy formulation, influence of public participation in decision-making at the local level, ways in which public participation can be improved and public participation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. First, this chapter discusses the key findings of the study as drawn from both sample sets. Thereafter, study recommendations are proposed in relation to each objective. Finally, an overall conclusion of the study is presented.

6.2 Participants' understanding of public participation

The findings of the study suggested that civic organisation members understood public participation as the ability to speak freely and involvement in policy and development issues that affect their daily lives. This is in line with Section(s) 59 and 72 of the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996) which states that the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) should facilitate public involvement in legislative and other processes. However, this seems to be the basic and common understanding of public participation as compared to that of the key informants. The latter's understanding seemed to be more advanced and insightful. The key informants maintained that public participation is a democratic process enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. Further, it is also deemed to be a fundamental human right for every citizen. It would seem, from the key informants' understanding, that public participation is indeed a legislative process which should be implemented by the NA, National Council and Provincial legislatures to deepen democracy in decision-making and policy formulation (RSA, 1996).

As such, individuals, private entities, or interest groups such as civic organisations must be part of the decision-making processes through public participation. Although both civic members and key informants presented varying understandings of public participation, they all defined public participation as the involvement of citizens in decision making processes that affect their daily lives. Therefore, it could be argued that many citizens seem to have little information and knowledge about what it really means to be involved in the decision-making processes, and that it is in fact a constitutional right. It seems this is caused by the lack of access to relevant information on public participation caused by various barriers such as language, access to technology, and lack of education and information sharing in communities about public participation. It is therefore recommended that:

- *Policy administrators, ward committees and other NGOs which work to promote public involvement in developmental issues such as Development Action Group's (DAG) public participation activists should work together with the local government officials such as ward councilors and Members of the Executive Council (MECs) to inform and educate citizens about the importance of their rights as enshrined in the Constitution in relation to public participation. This can be implemented through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, which lays out how development can be achieved through collaborative and educative processes.*
- *The municipal managers and directors in the information departments in the City of Cape Town and National Council should make provisions for access to information for the local residents, in languages that everyone understand as well as open access on policy and development issues in the community through the media and various internet platforms. This should be done to ensure active citizenry through making information easily accessible, as enshrined in the Constitution.*

6.3 Participants' understanding regarding different forms of public participation

The study found that the civic organisation members understood some forms of public participation as involving marches, attending public meetings and voting. The key informants, on

the other hand, understood forms of public participation mostly as ‘tick-box’ exercises, but also as involving legal practices such as signing of petitions and litigation. It would seem that the civic members’ understanding of the forms of public participation is derived from their personal experiences of getting involved, and what they have witnessed as participation in their communities. The key informants, however, seemed to have a much more critical understanding of public participation which they associated with ‘tick-box’ exercises. The key informants’ understanding seems to imply that some forms of public participation do not fully engage citizens in meaningful and mutual manner to promote respectful and active dialogue amongst policy makers and citizens in the decision-making processes. The Constitution, in Section(s) 59 and 118, requires that the National Assembly, National Council of Provinces and the Provincial Legislatures facilitate the active involvement of the public at all times in decision-making processes as a form of democracy (RSA, 1996).

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that:

- *In line with the Constitution’s provision for meaningful participation, the ward councilors and the municipal directors of various service delivery sectors such as the health, education, land, and housing should constantly consult, involve, and collaborate with residents on policy and development issues. This can be done by following a clear and strategic plan or model that depicts each stage of public participation at different levels, similar to that adopted from Arnstein’s (1969) Ladder of Participation in the Constitution (see Figure 1)*
- *Parliament, Legislatures and Committees should be taken to the people by the National and Provincial Parliaments, to fast-track consultation processes to align with the provisions of the Parliament of South Africa in relation to public participation. This process, as enshrined in the Constitution, facilitates constant interaction between the communities, stakeholders, and the elected representatives, thus allowing citizens to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes as opposed to tick-box exercises.*

6.4 Participants’ understanding regarding the roles of civic organisations in policy formulation

The study found that the civic organisation members understood the main roles of civic organisations in policy formulation as informing and educating the community on any policy and

development initiatives and public participation processes. On the other hand, the key informants perceived the main roles of civic organisations in policy formulation as challenging municipalities and the local government to be accountable for their actions, and transparent on service delivery or any development initiatives in the communities. These findings seem to suggest that the civic members perceived the roles of civic organisations as limited to only being information dissemination agencies.

The key informants, on their part, suggested that civic organisations have a much bigger role of bringing the local government to account for their actions to deliver better services. The key informants' understanding is in line with the Constitution's provisions for public participation in Sections 59, 72 and 118, which states that a democratic government must ensure accountability, responsiveness, and openness (RSA, 1996). It would also seem that the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) has, as one of its main functions, the responsibility of compliance, monitoring and support for local government. However, the key informants seem to understand that to bring accountability in the local government the civil society, together with citizens, also have the responsibility of holding their local government accountable for their actions.

Based on the above, it is recommended that:

- *The Mayor, council members and legislatures should ensure transparency in the implementation of laws, budgets and effective management and auditing of local government departments so that there is accountability between the citizens and the local government. This can be done by formulating by-laws which states the code of conduct for public participation and stipulates the use of resources in the communities.*
- *Executive members, or the selection committee of CoGTA should aim to place more civic organisation leaders and members in the ward committees in their selections. This would ensure that the civic organisations remain in close contact with the local authorities, thereby providing a vital link between the community, ward councilors and the municipality to ensure transparency and accountability in service delivery and decision-making processes.*

6.5 The influence of public participation in decision-making at local level

The study found that both civic members and key informants seem to understand that there is little or no influence of public participation in decision making at the local level. The civic members linked this to a lack of adequate information on policy and development issues in their communities. The civic members also noted that decision making was impacted by lack of solid relationships between the local government and civic groups and exclusion in the decision-making processes. The key informants, on the other hand, associated the lack of influence in decision making to micro-political dynamics within the civic organisations and the local government. It would also seem, from the key informants' point of view, that the political differences among major political parties make it difficult for civic organisations and local government officials to engage in meaningful and consultative public participation. On that account, the lack of influence or impact in the decision-making process by civic organisations and citizens is influenced by lack of functional relationships with the local government, and exclusion in the decision-making process. It is therefore recommended that:

- *There must be constant meaningful engagements between ward councilors, civic group chairpersons and stakeholders in communities such as businesspeople and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) directors to come up with effective decision making that addresses the everyone's needs despite their political affiliation. This can be achieved through constant involvement in the decision-making processes and collaboration between the local government and the civil society as stated in the Public Participation Model in the Constitution by the Ministry of Local Governance, and the Mayoral office.*
- *In line with the Public Participation Framework (2005), the managers or council members, Legislature of the National Assembly, National Council of Provinces, and the Provincial Legislatures, must at all times facilitate public involvement in their decision-making processes, and consultation should include the groups of people who may be affected by the decisions/actions under consideration.*

6.6 Ways in which public participation can be improved at the local level

The study found that both the civic organisations and key informants understood that there is a need for creating meaningful collaborations amongst civic groups, local government, and key stakeholders to improve public participation at the local level. It is also worth noting that there is

need for accessibility, transparency, and accountability on public participation practices to improve the public participation process. This was emphasized by both sample sets. However, the key informants noted that there seem to be challenges with public participation at the local level due to lack of adequate consultation processes, and that most decision-making processes are top-down approaches rather than bottom-up or people-centered.

Section(s) 52, 72 and 118 of the Constitution makes provision for constant involvement and consultation of people in decision-making processes as a constitutional right (RSA, 1996). Seemingly, the public participation processes do not fully engage people. Consequently, the decisions made at the local level only represent the interests of the elite minority in power. Therefore, there is a need for the implementation of a people-centered approach to development. As originally highlighted by the UNDP (2018), people should be at the center of their development and be able to contribute effectively to decisions that affect their wellbeing. Both civic members and key informants agreed that to improve public participation at the local level there is need for citizens to be trusted in the decision-making process. This means that they must be included in the policy-making processes. Having said that, it would also seem that there is need for transparency and accountability from the local authorities for their actions in order to be trusted by the citizens to make decisions which transform their living conditions for the better. Based on the above, it is recommended that:

- *The ward councilors and managers for different service delivery clusters in the local government should be transparent and accountable to the citizens on how they conduct development initiatives and service delivery programs in communities. This can be done through holding open forums and inviting constant involvement of the public to comment on any development or policy initiatives.*
- *An Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which focuses on people-centered development should be implemented at the local government level by the Mayor and his/her office, the National Assembly and Provincial Parliament members in local governance, policy and development Ministries in order to make citizens responsible for their own development, thus empowering.*

6.7 Public Participation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic

The study found that Covid-19 impacted most public participation practices within civic organisations because of the hard lockdown restrictions implemented by the state in early 2020. This seems to have had a profound impact on public participation and civic engagements in the communities. The civic members and key informants argued that the pandemic implicated their daily and weekly meetings as well as the progress they had made with regards to some community programs they were doing at the time the restrictions were enforced. The participants also noted that the pandemic has exacerbated some of the social problems that civic organisations dealt with such as informal settlements in Cape Town. As such, both the civic members and key informants highlighted some major constraints on the communities in the delivery of basic services by the local government. It is therefore recommended that:

- *Civic organisations' public participation processes should not be limited to only physical engagements, but the civic organisations chairpersons should also aim to initiate online public participation engagements with the help of the local government and stakeholders in their communities.*
- *The ward councilor should form some ad hoc committees to uphold the mandate of accountability and transparency on service delivery by making sure that citizens can keep on contributing to policies even during crises, via social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or WhatsApp.*

6.8 Overall conclusion

The study explored the important role that could be played by civic organisations in policy formulation through public participation. The study found that civic organisations played an indispensable role in policy formulation through facilitating meaningful public engagements in policy making, with local government structures including legislatures and other stakeholders in the communities. The civic organisations also play an important role of enhancing democracy through holding the local authorities and policy-makers accountable for their actions in development. The study found that public participation is understood as the inclusivity of citizens in decision-making processes, directly as interest groups or individuals, or indirectly through their elected representatives. The forms of public participation emphasised in the study included voting,

public meetings, and petitions. However, most public participation practices were dismissed as ‘tick-box’ exercises as they do not actively involve citizens in meaningful participation.

Public participation at the local level can be improved through the forming of meaningful partnerships between civic organisations, stakeholders, and the local government, thereby working towards an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Finally, the study found that the public participation processes had been disturbed by the emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic. This caused many civic organisations’ activities to stop, and it affected service delivery in other communities.

The major recommendations of the study included that more work need to be done with regards to public participation and how civic organisations can contribute to policy making at the local level. As argued in the study, civic organisations play a very pivotal role in facilitating public involvement in policy and decision making, thus the civic organisations need to be supported and included in local governance. This is mainly to work towards achieving inclusive policy and decision making through a collaborative process between the local government officials, such as ward councilors and civic organisations leaders, in various communities.

6.9 Recommendation for further research

The research was carried out amongst a few civic organisations in Cape Town, mainly around the area of the Central Business District (CBD). These areas are not considered as ‘marginalised’, according to the Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) (2018), because they have abundant natural assets and resources which make them economically and socially independent. It is therefore recommended that a similar study on public participation in policy formulation be conducted with larger samples drawn from civic organisations and citizens in the ‘marginalised’ areas of Cape Town. The researcher believes that analysing public participation in marginalised communities for policy making would be helpful in assessing how social and economic development has transformed the inequalities based on spatial development in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A

**Faculty of Humanities University of Cape Town**

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Request for permission to conduct research in your organisation

The Social Development Masters Degree focuses on addressing the social challenges facing people and communities anywhere in the world. Among others, this course provides theory and strategies that can be used to intervene practically and professionally in helping people to achieve the comprehensive wellbeing. Social Development is a growing and dynamic field which offers a wide variety of options in terms of making a difference in communities. An important component of this programme is the Practice Research Project, where students are required to conceptualise and conduct a research project that explores an aspect of the field of social development. We wish to request your permission for Dahlia Patsika, student number PTSDAH001, from our Social Development Stream to conduct research in your organisation.

We are pleased to inform you that all researchers conducting research for the University of Cape Town are bound by the UCT Code of Ethics Involving Human Subjects. This code strongly defines the limits of the research and delineates the conditions under which it may occur.

Sincerely Yours,

The Social Development Ethics Board

APPENDIX B

Informed Voluntary Consent to Participate in the research study

You are invited to participate in the below study:

Title: An exploration of public participation amongst Cape Town civic organisation

The overall aim of the study

This study seeks to foster a better understating regarding an important role that could be played by civic organisations in policy making through public participation, to address matters that affect their communities in Cape Town. Due to the Covid-19 regulations, the face-to-face interviews have been put on hold for now by the University, so I will be conducting online (zoom or skype and/or telephonic) interviews which shall be recorded with your permission. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary. All the questions are open-ended, and this research is only for academic purposes. Should you require any further information please feel free to contact my supervisor A / Professor Thulane Gxubane on his email address thulane.gxubane@uct.ac.za

Recording: We may record audio as part of the study. If you object to this, please indicate below.

Risks: The harmful risks to you, related to your participation in this study, may be exposure of personal information you might not want to disclose. To prevent this from happening, your consent to the use of the information you provided will be verified before any publication that includes such information.

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews will be conducted online via zoom, WhatsApp, or direct calls.

Feedback: You will receive feedback about the results of this research via e-mail. If the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic will allow it, conclusive meetings with the research participants will be held to share the analysis of data and the research outputs.

Disclaimer/Withdrawal: Your participation is completely voluntary; you may refuse to participate, and you may withdraw at any time without having to state a reason and without any prejudice or penalty against you. Should you choose to withdraw, the researcher commits not to use any of the information you have provided without your signed consent. Note that the researcher may also withdraw you from the study at any time in case your participation in the research activities exposes yourself or other participants to unnecessary risks or harm.

Confidentiality: all information collected in this study will be kept private in that you will not be identified by name or by affiliation to an institution. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained as pseudonyms will be used.

What signing this form means: By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in this research study. The aim, procedures to be used, as well as the potential risks and benefits of your participation have been explained using this form. Refusal to participate in or withdrawal from this study at any time will have no effect on you in any way. You are free to contact me, to ask questions or request further information, at any time during this research.

I agree to participate in this research (tick one box) Yes No _____ (Initials)

I agree to be audio-recorded Yes No _____ (Initials)

I agree to the use of materials (properly anonymized if requested above) in the following way: use of materials for analysis and elaboration of research results; generation of research outputs (academic articles and non-academic material).

Yes No _____
(Initials)

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Dahlia Patsika

DP_

Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CIVIC ORGANISATION MEMBERS AND KEY INFORMANTS:

An Exploration of public participation in policy making amongst Cape Town civic organisations.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Participant number
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Residential area (civic organisation members only)
5. Level of education
6. Current occupation
7. Name of civic organisation
8. Position in the civic organisation
9. How long have you been a member of the civic organisation?

Participants' understanding of public participation.

1. What is your understanding of public participation?

Probe: Have you ever heard about public participation in your community?

2. What are some of the examples/scenarios where you have participated in your community?

Probe: What was your understanding of public participation then?

Participants' understanding regarding different forms of public participation.

1. What are the various forms of public participation that you are aware of?

Probe: Have you ever been involved in any of the public participation practices that you have mentioned?

Probe: What was your experience?

2. What do you consider to be the best form(s) of public participation?

Probe: Why?

Participants' understanding regarding the roles of the civic organisations in policy formulation.

1. What do you think are some of the roles of civic organisations in policy formulation?
2. Have your civic organisation been involved in some of the above roles in policy formulation?

Probe: How?

3. What do you think are some of the challenges civic organisations face to carry out these roles?
4. What do you think can be done to help civic organisations carry out their roles in policy making?

Participants' perceptions regarding the influence of public participation in decision making, if any, at the local government level:

1. How do you think public participation influences decision making at the local government level?

Probe: What are some of the examples, if any, of public involvement that have contributed to effective decision making in your community?

Participants' opinions regarding ways in which public participation can be improved at the local level.

1. What do you think can be done to improve public participation in your community?

Probe: Who should implement those ways, and how?

Participants' views regarding public participation in the context of the covid-19 pandemic

1. What have been some of the challenges you have faced as a civic group during the pandemic?

Probe: What have you done as civic to ensure participation?

2. What do you think are some of the ways public participation can be promoted during the pandemic?

Probe: Who should implement that and how?

To end off the interview: Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding the important role that could be played by civic organisations in policy formulation that we did not discuss in this interview?

Thank you for participating in this study!