

## **CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE STUDY OF A TOWNSHIP IN THE CAPE METROPOLE**

**by**

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Public Administration in the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences at  
the Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

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## DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of public involvement or participation in enhancing service delivery within Langa Township in Cape Town. The exploration investigated the encounters affecting public contribution to community governance, precisely concentrating on the collaboration between communal representatives and municipal officials. A qualitative research methodology was used to conduct interviews with **56 participants**, involving community members, ward committee members, and local government officials. The study revealed a noteworthy disconnect between metropolitan officials and the community of Langa, as shown by insufficient consultation, inadequate public meetings, and an absence of precision when delivering services. Major problems such as blocked waste pipes, poor or lack of waste management, housing deficiencies, and insensitive councillors were noted to aggravate community discontent and fuel community riots. The study identified various obstacles to successful public input, involving poor communiqué channels, limited feedback from metropolitan authorities, and the exclusion of the community from policymaking procedures. The research stresses the function of councillors and ward committees regarding improving public involvement and their restrictions. Grounded on the standards of participatory democracy, the research underscores the necessity for having the input of the community members when it comes to voicing out their concerns and when municipalities make decisions pertaining to the governance of the community to allow them to have their input. Recommendations were proposed to improve public participation, involving enhanced consultation systems, capability-building for community officials, and enhanced communication approaches to link the differences between locals and metropolitan authorities. The findings provide valuable comprehension for community leaders, legislators and municipal officials pursuing advanced service delivery in Cape Metropole townships like Langa and other comparable townships.

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- .

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project research to God for making my dreams come true and for always protecting and loving me. I will always be grateful because, without Him, I am nothing. Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God.

To my loving parents, Nombeko Mgabile and Thembekile Mgabile, who adore me and never stop praying for me. My late sister Nomalungisa Mgabile, my two brothers Aphiwe Mgabile and Thulekile July.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Nyaranga, Hao and Hongo (2019:56) highlighted that public participation refers to the government's process of engaging citizens in decision-making and the execution of programmes. Public participation is a specific type of citizen involvement where the public exerts influence over decisions by engaging with established institutional frameworks and decision-making mechanisms (Zhou, Hou, Yang, Chong & Moon, 2019:79). Individuals, interest groups, and communities with a stake in the subject in question may be included in the public. It gives people the opportunity to say what they want to happen. However, stakeholders may have a variety of viewpoints or concerns; thus, they must be treated regardless of their socioeconomic or political orientation with regard to creation, decision-making and implementation. Agreement is obtained on the most critical difficulties that local communities face through public participation of civil society in decision-making (Özden, 2024:559). This would have an impact on the quality and effectiveness of a government policy, programmes, or strategy that is addressing issues.

The research undertook to investigate a selected Metropolitan Municipality procedure to encourage the participation of community members in public participation processes. Moreover, the study sought to identify the challenges that occur between the Municipality and the residents precisely in connection with the upgrading of public participation, consultation, and strategies. Furthermore, the study investigated the efficiency of municipal service delivery at a selected Metropolitan Municipality. The study shows the link between many protests observed in the Langa Township area and its level of service delivery. It is sufficient to note that the exclusivity of municipality's administration in dealing with service delivery issues raises greater concerns, leads to protests, and causes communities to reject some initiatives (Lentsoane & Onatu, 2024:179). The study examined the public participation programmes and legislative framework to resolve the challenges that are faced in the community.

#### 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Citizens in democracies are the most significant stakeholders in such a way that they can cooperate, whether directly or indirectly, with the elected representatives in the formation, adoption and implementation of the laws and policies that affect them. Public participation is an essential part of the public–government correlation in democracies (Bagchi & Raghuvanshi, 2024:45; Mensah, 2024:1; Walker & Sanz, 2024: 220). The framework of public participation in governance is more extensive than just having direct relations between the citizens and their

governments. However, as noted by Van Assche, Beunen and Gruezmacher (2024:17) and Whitley (2024:36), governance includes formal and informal processes through which decisions are made, and collective community concerns are managed.

Within the City of Cape Town's governance framework, sub-councils represent formal administrative divisions composed of three to six adjacent electoral wards (Mngeni, 2022:23). These decentralised units function as participatory mechanisms to channel neighbourhood-level concerns into municipal policy formulation and implementation. It has twenty-four (24) sub-councils which make up the Metropolitan municipal structure (Mkhize, 2024:74).

The sub-council for Langa is sub-council 15 consisting of five wards (Ward 51, 52, 53, 55, and 56) that extend from Mowbray to Pinelands, Epping, Langa and along to Milnerton together with Brooklyn, Ysterplaat and Rugby (Masa, 2020:19). The sub-council's primary road network comprises major national routes (N1 and N2) alongside key metropolitan corridors including the roads: Koeberg, Raapenberg, Voortrekker, Settlers Way, and Sable. Langa was structured in phases. The former structures are neglected with gravel roads and no electricity. In 1972, the township was established and opened to the public (Lemon et al., 2021). Langa is located on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape Provinces, 11 kilometres south-east of Cape Town (Maraka, 2024:43).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This study aligns the lack of public participation between the City of Cape Town and Langa Township. The lack of public participation in service delivery is a clear obstacle that is geared towards affecting the lives of communities within the municipality (Matloga, Mahole & Nekhavhambe, 2024:160). Municipalities are experiencing difficulties providing efficient and effective service to the residents (Khoza & Mukonza, 2024:41). However, lack of information and access related to service delivery within Langa Township is being addressed through various programmes. Consultation is a consistent struggle with the Langa community members, which surely creates a strong chance for acts of dissent (Cohen, Muthien & Zegeye, 2024:322).

Langa is one of the townships that has been quarrelling with the local government with respect to service delivery. Langa is grappling with challenges such as unemployment, crime, inadequate services relating to housing and sanitation, such as blocked drains, toilets, lack of garbage removal and broken streetlights (Dube, 2024:220). People live near sewage and stormwater drains which during heavy rains, fill their shacks with filthy water (Mmbadi, 2024:91). The citizens are unhappy with basic services, and they want Ward Councillor to be relieved of municipal duties (G'sell, 2024:314). Public engagement remains insufficient as the

councillor does not want to involve the community members with anything pertaining to service delivery that the community needs (Kobe, 2024:206). In addition, Sibanda (2022:8) mentioned that residents in Langa claim that uncollected rubbish and unlawful dumping has resulted in rat infestation. Several streets in the neighbourhood are filled with trash, and vacant lots are also covered with debris.

Regardless of the evident progress that was made since 1994, communities still have battles in voicing out their needs (Levy, Hirsch, Naidoo & Nxole, 2021:25). Public participation policies aim to enhance the quality of communities through improved service delivery. Still, it appears to be difficult in such areas as Langa more incredibly with regard to the effectiveness of ward committees (Msenge & Nzemi, 2021:10).

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges of Public Participation in Local government in Langa Township.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To assess the level of knowledge among community members in Langa Township regarding public participation in local governance.
- To assess community members' knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of public servants in facilitating public participation in Langa Township.
- To determine the concept of public participation as understood in the Langa Township, more importantly as tool to upgrade service delivery.
- To identify and analyse the challenges to public participation in Langa Township.
- To determine the effectiveness of community consultation process in Langa Township, by the Ward councillors and the City of Cape Town Officials.

#### **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What is the level of knowledge among community members in Langa Township regarding public participation in local governance?
- To what extent are community members in Langa Township aware of the roles and responsibilities of public servants in facilitating the public participation processes?
- What are the methods of public participation to enhance service delivery in Langa Township?
- What challenges hinder effective public participation in Langa Township?
- How effective is the consultation process in Langa Township?

## 1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.7.1 The concept of public participation

Public participation refers to the active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities (Webler & Tuler, 2021:503). It is rooted in democratic ideals, where individuals contribute knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to shape policies, projects, and governance outcomes (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020:133; He & Ma, 2021:471). Participation may take various forms, including consultations, dialogue forums, workshops, and direct engagement in planning or monitoring activities (Mziba, 2020; Nederhand & Edelenbos, 2023). It enhances transparency, builds trust between authorities and communities, and ensures that diverse interests are represented (Talpin, 2024). Ultimately, public participation empowers people to influence choices, promotes accountability, and fosters more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable development outcomes that reflect collective priorities and values (Talpin, 2024).

Public participation is a key form of citizen engagement, where the public influences decision-making through existing institutional processes (Zhou et al., 2019:79). Similarly, Factor (2019:77) defines it as citizen involvement in decisions related to service delivery and management. However, challenges arise when officials hesitate to integrate public input, particularly when participation is limited or unrepresentative (Migchelbrink & Van de Walle, 2022:644). Additionally, Eckerd and Heidelberg (2020:133) highlight the long-standing tension between public participation and administrative processes. While involving citizens aligns with democratic principles, government decision-making often requires technical expertise, creating a conflict between inclusivity and efficiency.

### 1.7.2 Constitutional framework for public participation

Public participation remains a central topic in discussions on democratisation and societal development, with its importance enshrined in constitutional and legal frameworks related to service delivery (Quick & Bryson, 2022:158). These provisions mandate inclusive decision-making, ensuring that historically marginalized groups also have a voice. Such involvement empowers citizens to contribute to national development. Additionally, the White Paper on Local Government (1998) highlights public participation as a formal mechanism to balance power dynamics in policy formulation, planning, and implementation at the local government level (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022:286).

### 1.7.3 Levels of public participation

Arnstein (2019:24) states that there are two levels of non-participation namely: therapy as well as manipulation; and three tokenism levels (consultation, placation and informing). Arnstein's ladder outlines eight rungs, which are explained below.

#### **1.7.3.1 Citizen power**

According to Arnstein (2019) citizen power entails that communities make organised decisions to ensure the councillor fulfils their responsibilities. For instance, if crime rates rise, residents report incidents to the police to maintain safety (Colborne, 2021:25). Similarly, if littering becomes an issue, community members may volunteer to clean the area or request the Council to hire workers for the task through the councillor.

#### **1.7.3.2 Delegated power**

Under the Municipal Structures Permit and Municipal Systems Act, councillors are granted decision-making authority regarding municipal operations (Richards, 2024:30). These laws also mandate that councillors must consult with and keep ward committees fully informed about all community-related issues and development projects.

#### **1.7.3.3 Partnership**

In municipal partnerships, councillors hold final approval authority for all projects and programmes, which must be formally endorsed during public meetings (Munzhedzi, 2020:89).

#### **1.7.3.4 Placation**

Councillors are obligated to address all community concerns, including issues, challenges, and constituent perspectives, in a timely and satisfactory manner. Members of the community must be allowed to participate by communicating their challenges on how they feel about better delivery of service and suggestion boxes available at the municipal offices (Panday & Chowdhury, 2020:132).

#### **1.7.3.5 Consultation**

Local councils must keep residents informed about area projects, whether building a community hall, playground, or parking facility. Community members not only deserve notification but also opportunities to ask questions and voice concerns about developments that affect their neighbourhood (Muhamad Khair, Lee & Mokhtar, 2020:9583).

#### **1.7.3.6 Informing**

Municipal Council must deliver the service by providing information to the residents through road show ‘Imbizo’ meetings (Mziba, 2020:15). Moreover, when residents experience problems like water disruptions and blocked drains, they should know where to report these issues and how to track progress, guaranteeing timely resolutions.

### **1.7.3.7 Therapy**

Councillors must inform communities about planned developments in their areas and must consult residents before making decisions that impact their daily lives (Pimentel Walker & Friendly, 2021:436). They must always inform the community.

### **1.7.3.8 Manipulation**

This practice exemplifies simulated participation, where the councils mimic consultation while retaining unilateral decision-making power (Beever & Taylor, 2022:19). Ramolobe's (2023:95) case study of fabricated consensus (for example, falsely claiming resident approval) reveals how such theatrics reproduce structural exclusion under the guise of inclusivity.

## **1.7.4 Public participation strategies**

Effective public participation hinges on both the commitment of sponsor agencies and the capacity of the public to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes (Molitorisová & Burke, 2023:881). For participation to succeed, agencies must thoughtfully design and implement inclusive processes, while the public must develop the necessary skills to contribute effectively (Mullin et al., 2021:311). To bridge this gap, agencies can take several steps, such as identifying facilitative leaders within their ranks to collaborate with community groups, fostering a sense of ownership by involving the public early in planning (Barry et al., 2025:637). Hiring skilled third-party facilitators to train both agency staff and stakeholders can enhance participatory practices, while deliberative forums can encourage more active engagement compared to controlled, less interactive formats (Ronoh, 2020:33). Providing clear guidance materials on public engagement objectives and best practices helps set expectations, and agencies should model the behaviours they wish to see throughout the process (Kandil, 2023:35). Training community leaders and stakeholders in participation and communication skills further strengthens engagement, with particular attention paid to vulnerable and underrepresented groups to ensure inclusivity (Barry et al., 2025:637). Additionally, offering technical support to help the public understand complex project details can boost their ability to contribute meaningfully (Davis, 2020:5). Ultimately, the credibility and longevity of public participation depend on the extent to which it yields substantive input, influences outcomes, and holds agencies accountable for integrating public feedback.

## **1.7.5 Public servant responsibilities**

Public administrators, as government-appointed officials, serve as agents responsible for implementing state duties while acting as intermediaries between citizens and elected leaders (Awang, 2020:35). In a democratic system, where a government derives authority from public mandate, administrators bear dual obligations: accountability to the political leadership that empowers them, and responsibility toward the electorate who legitimize that leadership

(Gnankob, Ansong & Issau, 2022:236; Harb, Hachem & Hamdan, 2020:319). This dual mandate necessitates clear ethical guidelines to ensure balanced fulfilment of these competing demands (Kruyen & Van Genugten, 2020:118).

The execution of these duties presents significant challenges. Administrators must align their work with the shifting priorities of transient political leadership, navigating ideological changes that accompany electoral cycles, which is a particular challenge in politically volatile contexts (Willems, 2020:807). Simultaneously, they must maintain service delivery standards to preserve public trust, as failure to do so risks electoral consequences for their political superiors (Lee & Park, 2021:1160). This tension is exacerbated when administrators face unpopular policies, especially in governments formed by narrow electoral margins or controversial appointments, forcing officials to choose between political loyalty and public welfare (Vuong, 2023:295).

Structural constraints further complicate this balancing act. While bound by legal frameworks (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk & Clerkin, 2022:135), administrators exercise discretionary judgment that must reconcile utilitarian public service principles with political realities (Heath, 2020:45). This often forces difficult choices between implementing technically sound but unpopular decisions versus politically expedient actions that may compromise administrative integrity. The fundamental dilemma lies in maintaining neutrality within politically polarised environments, where opposition ideologies systematically challenge governmental decisions, creating persistent tension between administrative ideals and political pragmatism.

#### **1.7.6 Benefits of public participation**

Improvements in public engagement in government have been shown to improve good governance across the world (Nel & Masilela, 2020:33). Public participation offers numerous governance benefits, beginning with enhanced transparency through improved community access to government information (Jones & Russo, 2024:2). This foundational advantage enables more accurate identification of community needs, allowing for more responsive policy-making (Jones & Russo, 2024:2). The process naturally leads to improved service delivery as better-informed governments can tailor services more effectively to local requirements (Nel & Masilela, 2020:33).

Beyond operational improvements, participation fosters significant social benefits. It empowers communities through delegated service management in areas ranging from noise control to tourism development (Reynolds, Kennedy & Symons, 2023:2) while influencing more equitable wealth distribution. The process strengthens social cohesion by building community solidarity and belonging among residents (Ragolane & Malatji, 2021:32). Importantly, it promotes greater

tolerance of diversity, particularly benefiting marginalised groups that often face systemic exclusion (Zhao & Butcher, 2022:210).

### **1.7.7 Legislative framework**

#### **1.7.7.1 The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998**

The Municipal Structures Act serves as the legislative framework governing municipal organisational structures, administrative systems, and operational processes, including provisions for appropriate governance mechanisms (Sibanda, Zindi & Maramura, 2020:8). The Act specifically establishes the electoral system for local and metropolitan councils through Schedule 1 and 2, which regulate ward-based elections. Furthermore, Chapter 4, Section 4 of the Act outlines provisions for the establishment, powers, and functional responsibilities of ward committees (Sebakamotse & Van Niekerk, 2020).

However, when it comes to the ward-based participatory system in local government, ward committees are allowed to be able to ease community participation affairs within the local government (de Vries & Ile, 2021). Ward committees enhance reporting and communication between communities as well as municipal councillor. They play a vital role in addressing residents' needs and enhancing community programmes.

#### **1.7.7.2 The White Paper on local government (1998)**

When the White Paper on local government was issued, it introduced significant advancements by providing an up-to-date vision (Welsh, 2024:395). This fosters a stronger working relationship between local communities and municipal authorities, enabling them to collaboratively identify solutions that meet community needs and enhance quality of life. Cameron (2021:113) observed that the White Paper contributes to municipal development by emphasizing three key approaches: working effectively with local communities and partners, implementing robust performance management systems, and adopting strategic budgeting and integrated development planning.

#### **1.7.7.3 The Municipal Systems Act, no. 32 of 2000**

The Municipal Systems Act defines the role of municipalities within local government by establishing a framework for collaboration between administrative structures and political leadership. This Act promotes progressive development and enhances local communities by ensuring equitable access to essential public services (Masuku & Jili, 2019:1935). Among its core principles are guaranteeing affordable access to basic services, fostering active community participation, and maintaining efficient service delivery to citizens.

#### **1.7.7.4 Integrated Development Plan**

Government planning must be development-oriented, aligning with national and provincial objectives as well as the goals of neighbouring municipalities (Mudau, 2023:26). Municipalities must ensure their long-term development vision is clearly articulated in their Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which should address key transformation priorities (Khunoethe et al., 2021:161). The IDP must incorporate all local development objectives, including the most pressing priorities identified by councillors (Nhlumayo, 2021). Additionally, it should be closely linked to the municipality's financial plan, with budget projections spanning at least three years (Mudau, 2023:26). As a strategic planning instrument, the IDP plays a critical role in guiding how municipalities exercise their executive authority.

### **1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

#### **Participation**

Harahap (2020:394) defines participation as a set of activities that involve local populations in issues that impact them. The degree to which decision-making power is shared varies. However, Bobbio (2019:41) argues that participation is a broad concept: active persons can be few or many, under or over-empowered, and their participation can take place on-site or online, for short or extended periods, on high- or low-stake topics, and so on. Citizens, as well as representatives of associations or organized groups, can participate in participatory processes. As a result, while many people do not perceive a stakeholder forum to be a participatory instrument, the line between associative and participatory democracy is becoming increasingly blurred.

#### **Public participation**

He and Ma (2021:471) define public participation as a platform that enhances policymaking quality and service delivery by providing governments with diverse sources of information, perspectives, and potential solutions. Similarly, Webler and Tuler (2021: 503) emphasise that public participation encompasses both direct and indirect stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes, particularly regarding policies and programmes that affect them.

#### **Local government**

Nel and Masilela (2020) characterise local government as the primary delivery mechanism of governance, positioned to directly understand and respond to citizens' needs. As the sphere of government closest to the people, it serves both to implement governance at the local level and to provide residents with a meaningful sense of participation in the political processes that shape their daily lives.

## **Citizen participation**

This refers to the involvement of organised groups of individuals in public decision-making processes (Ganuza & Font, 2020). The level of engagement may vary from passive observation to active influence, shaped by different institutional and contextual interpretations (Ganuza & Font, 2020).

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.9.1 Paradigm**

Kumatongo and Muzata (2021:16) regard research paradigms as a perspective to research that focuses on social science. According to Pilarska (2021:64), the constructivist philosophical paradigm is an approach that asserts that humans construct their understanding and knowledge of the universe by experiencing things and reflecting on them.

The qualitative research approach aligns with the constructivist philosophical paradigm, as constructivism seeks to understand phenomena through participants' lived experiences and subjective perspectives. This paradigm employs diverse data collection methods to capture these multifaceted interpretations. Therefore, the study used a qualitative paradigm approach to determine factors that contributed to the lack of public participation in Langa Township.

### **1.9.2 Research method**

The study used the qualitative method as a research methodology. Williams and Moser (2019:44) note that qualitative research allows researchers to track out the origins of a phenomenon, investigate possible causes, record what the phenomenon meant to those who experienced it, and see if the experience resulted in a theoretical framework or conceptual understanding of the phenomenon.

This methodological approach was well-suited to the study, as it enabled the researcher to engage directly with participants regarding challenges in public participation and service delivery within the City of Cape Town Municipality. To ensure comprehensive insights, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including a Councillor, a Subcouncil Manager, and a municipal official. Additionally, the researcher facilitated interactions with the Ward Committee, fostering greater public involvement in local governance matters.

### **1.9.3 Research design**

Research design refers to the systematic and structured approach used to investigate defined research questions. It serves as a logical framework guiding data collection, interpretation, analysis, and discussion (Alam, 2021:1). Qualitative methods are particularly valuable when researchers seek to understand how individuals experience specific situations or challenges.

As Johnson, Adkins, and Chauvin (2020:171) emphasise, such approaches enable researchers to capture and articulate the lived experiences of participants, including marginalised groups such as autistic individuals and relevant stakeholders.

Therefore, the study used a qualitative design, which was suitable for the researcher to get participants' views on the challenges that are faced by the Langa community. The researcher interviewed fifty (50) households in the area to find out the underlying cause of service delivery protests in the area. The interviews were conducted to determine the respondent's opinions on the causes of public protests.

In addition, this study used a qualitative research approach, with primary data collected in the form of open-ended questions to the relevant officials to understand public participation strategies, how they should be upgraded and applied in local government, and how public officials should carry out their duties and know the importance of public participation. Furthermore, the researcher engaged directly with the Ward Committee to facilitate and promote public participation in local governance processes.

To supplement primary data, secondary data were collected through an extensive review of documentary sources. This included analysis of legislative and policy documents, academic literature (such as peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference papers), government reports, and various published and unpublished materials. Online resources were also utilised where appropriate to ensure a comprehensive evidence base.

#### **1.9.4 Population**

The population refers to the complete set of units to which research findings can be generalised (Alam, 2021:1). For this study, the target population was selected from Langa Township within the City of Cape Town Municipality. Specifically, the research population comprised the following groups: the Sub-council manager; a Proportional Representation Councillor; Ward Councillor 52; an official from the City of Cape Town Public Participation Department; ward committee members; and lastly, fifty (50) community members. The Census of the City of Cape Town (2022:2) states that the total population of Langa Township is 52,401. The fifty-six (56) chosen participants were based on the quest to acquire a varied and in-depth insight into their views regarding public participation since all stakeholders involved in local governance had to be represented. The officials who participated were also chosen to give detailed information about the study as they are involved in decision-making for the community under study.

### **1.9.5 Sample method/Technique and sample size**

A sample is a portion of a population that completely reflects it. It means that the units chosen as a sample from the population must reflect all the features of various sorts of population units (Kant & Shukla, 2021:4). According to Klar and Leeper (2019:419), purposive sampling is a subset of convenience sampling in which respondents are picked based on their preferences.

Purposive sampling means that participants were chosen based on certain distinguishing qualities that made them the data bearers for the study. Furthermore, this study employed purposive sampling to select and interview the Sub-council manager, councillor, City of Cape Town public official, ward committee and fifty residents. The researcher saved time and money when gathering data by using this method, as it provided an adaptive mechanism when circumstances changed unexpectedly.

### **1.9.6 Data collection instrument**

Face-to-face and recording interviews, as well as secondary sources, were used to gather information from informants to meet the study's aims and answer the research questions.

#### **1.9.6.1 Interviews**

Primary data were collected from semi-structured interviews with key participants, including members of the Ward Committee, a Subcouncil Manager, and a City of Cape Town public official. The interviews utilised open-ended questions, which were verbally administered to allow for in-depth responses and nuanced insights.

#### **1.9.6.2 Secondary sources**

To complement primary sources, this study incorporated documentary analysis of multiple source types. Key materials examined comprised published articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, parliamentary acts and various reports. Digital archives were systematically consulted to strengthen the evidentiary foundation of the research.

#### **1.9.6.3 Data collection or fieldwork**

This study employed semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. According to Karatsareas (2022:99-113) qualitative approach, the researcher utilised a predetermined set of open-ended prompts designed to elicit detailed responses while allowing for natural discourse. Unlike close-ended questions, these intentionally phrased statements required participants to provide expansive answers, enabling the researcher to compare responses with existing knowledge frameworks. All participants engaged with this uniform interview structure to ensure methodological consistency. Moreover, this helped the

researcher to obtain additional information from the respondents. The researcher asked for permission from the interviewees to record interviews using a smartphone and notes.

#### **1.9.7 Data coding and analysis**

Muzari, Shava, and Shonhiwa (2022:14-20) emphasise that qualitative research employs coding as a systematic process for organising, categorising, and thematically structuring collected data. This methodological approach creates a coherent framework for meaning-making and interpretation. Furthermore, they highlight coding's pivotal role as an analytical tool that aligns data processing with the study's research objectives, ensuring methodological rigour throughout subsequent stages of analysis.

As mentioned above, primary data for this study was collected through in-depth interviews, which were then analysed utilising a thematic analysis method. The researcher combined the interview results with the research questions and objectives to ensure the motive of the research was attained in each interview. The study used females and males for questionnaires during the interview. Content and thematic analysis were used to make sense of the data to conclude feasible reasons for the lack of public participation in local government. The researcher obtained municipal documents utilising secondary data and analysed them using content analysis. Patterns that emerged in the texts were detected using content analysis. Furthermore, the researcher used ATLAS.ti to generate themes. ATLAS. ti enables researchers to gather and organize data and assess their importance through a range of tools for use with various data formats accepted by the software application. This feature supports the exploration of qualitative relationships across diverse materials, such as videos and images, along with survey responses and case study records (University Library, 2024).

#### **1.10 DEMARCATI0N/DELIMITATION OF STUDY**

Delimitations represent the intentional boundaries that define the scope of a study (Ray, 2023:121–154). This research focuses specifically on evaluating public participation strategies implemented by municipal officials to advance good governance, with Langa Township in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality serving as the sole geographic focus. By concentrating on this single township, the study prioritises depth over breadth, allowing for a nuanced examination of participatory governance within a defined context. The analysis is further delimited to the strategies employed by municipal officials, excluding broader civil society initiatives or comparative assessments with other regions. These deliberate constraints ensure methodological feasibility while aligning the inquiry with its core objective: to understand how formal participation mechanisms operate within this specific urban governance framework.

## **1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this research, the ethical issues were taken into consideration. The researcher ensured that there were no aggressive questions to the participants. The researcher asked for permission to record and take notes on answers that were provided by the participants. A smartphone recorder was used to capture all the information during the interview. Personal rights, as well as the privacy of participants, were protected. The researcher presented the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) letter to conduct the research to the participants.

## **1.12 LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH**

Limitations of the study were getting the appointments for personal interviews with a Councillor and Council Manager. Time-consuming was also a challenge with staff members within the office due to their busy time. Some of the community members were not willing to participate. The safety of the researcher was also a concern and only accessed the participants who were in safe areas, meaning that some places were not accessible due to security and safety reasons.

## **1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is significant as it enlightens the challenges and obstacles to successful local governance public participation, specifically in Langa Township. Through detecting key problems like shortage of consultation and ineffective communication, this study presents critical perceptions pertaining to the reasons leading to continuous problems surrounding service delivery in various townships. The findings of this research will contribute to the broader discussion on participatory democracy by outlining the significance of involving the community in the process of making decisions which affect them. Additionally, this research also offers suggestions for practical solutions to improve service delivery through improving public participation and enhancing governance structures within the townships, including the township under discussion. The findings of this research can also be used by community leaders, policymakers and municipal officials to create a public democratic, participatory governance system.

## **1.14 THESIS CLASSIFICATION**

### **Chapter One**

This Chapter encompassed essential elements including an introduction, study background, problem statement, research purpose and objectives, guiding research questions, preliminary literature review, key term definitions, methodological design, scope demarcation, ethical considerations, study limitations, and research significance.

## **Chapter Two**

The Chapter examines key dimensions of public participation through a comprehensive literature review, which includes, conceptual foundations of public participation, critical factors influencing participatory processes, relevant theoretical frameworks, the evolving role of public participation within the South African context, and the constitutional and legislative provisions governing participatory democracy.

## **Chapter Three**

This chapter outlines the methodological framework guiding the study. It presents the research design and methodology, detailing how the study's objectives will be answered. The Chapter specifies the target population, sample size, and sampling technique employed. The data collection process is described, including the methods utilised for gathering and analysing data. Finally, the section addresses ethical considerations and acknowledges the study's limitations.

## **Chapter Four**

In this Chapter, data are presented, critically analysed, and contextualised within relevant scholarly debates.

## **Chapter five**

It covers a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the research.

### **1.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced the study by outlining the importance of public participation in governance and the need to assess community members' understanding of public servants' roles in facilitating it. The problem statement highlighted gaps in public participation, emphasising the necessity for this research. Five objectives and corresponding research questions were presented to explore knowledge and perceptions related to public participation. Key terms were defined to ensure clarity. The significance of the study underscores the study's potential to improve governance and citizen involvement, while delimitations specify the boundaries and the scope of this study. A brief literature review was also provided, as well as an overview of the methodology section. The next section chapter presents a detailed literature review, further examining theoretical frameworks and empirical studies on public participation and governance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter conducts a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on public participation, with the dual objective of conceptualising key terms and examining relevant theoretical frameworks. Through systematic analysis of existing research, it establishes the theoretical foundation for understanding public involvement in governance processes. The aim is to expose the links of this study with previous studies as well as ensure that the study is understood in terms of its theoretical and conceptual context. The chapter will also critically explore similar research and how it forms the theoretical foundation of the study. The chapter adopts a historical analysis based on how the concept of public participation has developed over time and the concepts that have been associated with it. Public participation will be explored in terms of how it can be a tool to improve service delivery, as well as the theories of public participation. Factors influencing public participation will be considered based on the review of previous related scholarly investigations. This chapter is structured into four key sections. The first section explores the conceptualisation and theorisation of public participation, examining how scholars, organisations, and the South African context have defined and framed this concept. The second section analyses the constitutional framework underpinning public participation and evaluates its effectiveness in practice. The third section investigates existing methods and channels for public engagement within local government structures. Finally, the fourth section examines the legislative framework governing public participation processes.

#### 2.2 THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community or public participation is an emerging concept that makes a distinction between traditional public administration, which is based on public decisions that are made by government officials or some internal stakeholders (Petunia & Selepe, 2020:10; Rijal, 2023:84). It is described as necessary for promoting equity, effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of essential public services and goods within a government system. Rijal (2023:84) commented that community participation has become central to public decisions and functions in this digital age, which has also become complex and diverse. It has become necessary to engage and interact with relevant stakeholders. Community participation research has been associated with such themes as transparency, accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness, which are considered vital in modern day public administration. In defining the concept of community participation, Hofer and Kaufmann (2023:357) revealed that it is the involvement of people, groups of persons from the community as well as members of the civic

society in the development of policies, formulation of plans as well as the monitoring and evaluation of public matters. It is deemed a vital concept that ensures legitimacy, accountability, innovation and creativity, community empowerment and conflict resolution in communities.

Public participation represents a distinct form of citizen engagement in governance processes. As Schröder and Watson (2024:51) conceptualise it, this participation enables citizens to exert meaningful influence over decisions through established institutional channels. Factor (2019:77) similarly characterises such involvement as essential for democratic service delivery and management. However, significant tensions persist in practice. Nederhand and Edelenbos (2023:522) identify institutional resistance to incorporating citizen input, particularly when participation rates are low or unrepresentative. This reflects what Opitz, Pfeifer and Geis (2022:33) describe as a longstanding dichotomy: while participatory decision-making aligns with democratic ideals, the technical complexity of governance often creates barriers to meaningful public engagement. Community participation has been seen to encompass various engagement actions that may begin by educating the public on its relevance and usefulness in public service delivery. This stage involves such initiatives as conducting campaigns, workshops and wellness seminars to allow the public to appreciate contributing to community development. Consultation and dialogue then become key components in decision-making. It has also been argued that consultation and dialogue should also include minority and marginalised groups in the community (Ardanaz, Otálvaro-Ramírez & Scartascini, 2023:2). There is also a need to ensure the availability of mechanisms to facilitate interaction. This may include community forums, committees or other various community groups that facilitate interactions. In view of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), digital platforms, including online systems and social media, there is also a need to capacitate the communities for effective engagement (Kabwe, Zhou, Jardim & Surguladze, 2024:22).

Public participation carries political connotations and is consent with democratic principles. This argument is well pronounced in Sobikwa and Phooko (2022:309), who mentions that democratic societies are founded on conversations and conversations themselves are based on participation. While some scholars have attempted to define public participation, Sobikwa and Phooko (2022:309) commented that the concept has remained, unwell-defined, and lacks universally accepted definitions. In a study of existing definitions, Hügel and Davies (2020:645) took note that the term is composed of 'public' and 'participation', which generally have been taken to mean the involvement as well as the inclusion of the public in making key decisions affecting their lives. Governments are involved in making decisions that affect citizens, and public participation would mean the involvement of members of the public in governance decisions (Romberg & Escher, 2024:1). This assertion captures the essence of citizen

engagement in deliberative processes that form the foundation of democratic governance and institutional legitimacy. South Africa has been a democratic nation since its 1994 attainment of new governance detached from its dark apartheid years (Mtapuri & Tinarwo, 2021:104). In this way, citizen engagement and participation tend to be at the centre of all public governance systems and processes. These arguments show that public participation strengthens democracies and is a manifestation of democratic governance. Since its attainment of independence, South Africa has found itself obliged to accelerate public participation to maintain its commitment to democracy. South African history can be considered in order to establish the history of public participation.

The apartheid era was characterised by racial as well as spatial and economic segregation dominated governance systems (Enqvist & Zier vogel, 2019:1). Apartheid policies looked down upon coloureds and blacks, and their participation in governance or any matters was not recognised. This resulted in them being moved to the margins of towns where service delivery was poor when compared to other areas. This was also a sign that they were considered irrelevant to systems of governance at that time. In 1994, when South Africa became a democracy, many initiatives aimed at including everyone in the governance matters emerged (Fourie, 2024:823). Phaalha (2024:69) provides that post-apartheid South Africa focused on inclusion, equality and, the involvement of everyone and participation in matters of welfare. While these may not have been attained to the expected levels, there has been a degree of success that should be recognised (Schimmel, 2023:1020; Moshood, 2024:202).

### **2.3 FACTORS AFFECTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

While public participation is vital in improving the performance of government systems, its implementation is affected by various factors (Bruintjies & Njenga, 2024:2). Factors that include the empowerment and capacitation of the public, effective administration of public systems and the provision of engagement systems such as regular public consultative meetings are vital for effective public participation in governance systems (Sabet & Khaksar, 2024:1). Empowering public participation in governance processes constitutes a fundamental pillar of South Africa's democratic system (Public Service Commission, 2023). Public participation promotes democracy and allows citizens to be active within governance systems. The critical importance of meaningful public engagement in governance processes is well established to be central to meeting service delivery expectations within the complex public service systems of today (Camngca, Amoah & Ayesu-Koranteng, 2024:1). Strong multi-dimensional systems of government that promote public participation are, therefore, vital.

Public participation is influenced by various factors, which may be contextual and it is important to take all situations as unique and influenced by different factors (Adedeji Amusa & Fadiran,

2024:183). South Africa has its unique scenarios for consideration in the model of public participation that it can follow. In the contemporary environment characterised by the explosion of information and communication technology (ICT), various methods of interaction based on social media and other online systems are becoming important. The acceptance of technology as a vital tool for communication can increase public participation (Bruintjies & Njenga, 2024:2). In Tuan and Dung (2024:95), it is explained that public participation is such a vital process that is characterised by the inclusion of the members of the community, the business sector, non-governmental institutions, civic organisations as well as any other interested stakeholders. Public participation is significantly influenced by the frequency of meetings or dialogues which are targeted at advancing the operations and decision-making processes and governance systems to promote satisfaction with service delivery (Udekwe, Iwu & Obadire, 2024:1). In cases where public participation is successfully adopted and implemented; it can have desirable results.

Public participation is, in many cases, a key factor that determines the acceptability of public administration systems in many countries (Tuan & Dung, 2024:95). The empowerment of the public needs to result in rich information and intelligence. As provided by Udekwe et al. (2024:1), public participation results in positive perceptions of ownership of governance actions taken after public involvement. Research has established that there are various perspectives with respect to the advantages of the public participation concept. Cao and Kang (2024:905) commented that public participation is critical, ensuring that decisions that concern public matters are accepted and realised.

As noted by Jaffe and Loebach (2024:164), an appropriate framework of public participation would require an able environment and context as well as capacity enhancement for the attainment of desirable outcomes. An enabling context would be composed of supportive systems and mechanisms that can allow members of the public to effectively get involved in participation efforts (Michaelides & Laouris, 2024:30). These favourable situations involve peace, strong democratic structures, value for involvement in dialogue, desire for public participation, provision of necessary resources, time as well as appropriate engagement skills, an appropriate vision, mission, purpose and appropriate leadership (Broadhurst, 2024:259). The public also requires empowerment and capacity enhancement, as well as skills for public participation.

## **2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was informed by the theoretical framework of participatory democracy as adopted in Petunia and Selebe (2020:10). This theory advocates for community participation in shaping both the direction and operations of governance systems. It is a theory that is based on

collaboration and participatory ideology in governance. It is a valued theory in a democratic society and is preferable in various nations across the globe. Participatory democracy theory is said to have originated from the work of the progressivist philosopher Rousseau, who argued that the participation of each citizen in policy and political decision-making was central to societal advancement (Mintz, 2023:45).

Participatory democracy theories assert that the involvement of citizens positively to democracy. These theories are centred on inclusion of individual citizens in policy processes thereby leading to rational decisions based on public opinions and reasoning. Participatory democracy increases the legitimacy of local government processes. Participatory framework theory was discussed by various researchers (Geissel, 2009:402; Smith, 2009; Michels, 2011:277; Michels & De Graaf, 2017:877; Van Hulst et al., 2017) who have included additional democratic aspects/values, such as: transparency, efficiency, innovation and influence (Smith, 2009; van Hulst et al., 2017). Although the participatory democracy framework may differ in the way it is applied to different contexts, revisiting the approaches of assessing empirical examples of public participation against normative criteria for democracy presents important information (Michels & De Graaf, 2017:878). Assessing the relationship between democracy and citizen participation offers a means to deeply understand how citizen participation contributes to a stronger democracy to be obtained.

This study follows the basis of this framework as it explores the challenges of public participation in a local government in South Africa. This focus is particularly significant because many municipalities across the country continue to lag in implementing meaningful participatory mechanisms despite the constitutional and legal provisions mandating citizen involvement, which also technically follow the participatory democracy theory. Limited awareness, inadequate resources, and weak institutional structures often hinder effective engagement between local authorities and communities. By examining these challenges, the study highlights the gap between policy and practice, emphasising the need for inclusive, transparent, and well-structured participatory processes that can strengthen governance and promote sustainable local development.

## **2.5 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNANCE**

The role of public or community participation in public matters forms a vital component of democracy (Reindrawati, 2023:1). This view takes community participation as a manifestation of democracy and the role of the people by the people (Brown, Reed & Raymond, 2020:2). It forms a contrast to the apartheid-era exclusion of the black majority in South Africa. In this view, community participation is readily accepted as critical in a democracy. The public service is made up of institutions that are aimed at ensuring the availability of services, infrastructure

or goods and projects that are aimed at societal development. The efficient provision of these public services and goods constitutes a fundamental requirement for safeguarding societal welfare. The functions of public administration were traditionally bestowed to government officials who operated from a centralised approach as they made decisions for the people with no or minimum involvement of the public (Suherlan, 2023:10). Modern trends in the community participation concept suggest a shift to a more decentralised approach that is based on the involvement of the public within public sector decision making and functions.

## **2.6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

Nationally, the South African constitution is the first legal instrument of reference in important matters such as community participation in local government (Mlambo & Maserumule 2024:44). Yende (2023:13) articulated that at the local government level, the Local Government: *Municipal System Act* (32 of 2000), *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* (117 of 1998) as well as the *White Paper on Local Government* (1998) provides community participation in matters of local governance. Both legislations have a provision for participatory democracy in local governance. Their objective is to create platforms for local citizens to be engaged in budgeting, planning and service delivery, ensuring transparency, accountability and responsiveness in respective local governments. This empowers communities to influence decisions that affect their daily lives and to strengthen developmental local government (Masuku & Jili, 2019:1; Thusi et al., 2023:363; Matloga et al., 2024:2). However, critics argue that while the framework is progressive on paper, its implementation has been uneven. Protests around the country have often been attributed to municipalities not involving the public resulting in poor-biased decisions and failure to provide municipal services (Msenge & Nzewi, 2021:3; Matloga et al., 2024:3). Challenges such as limited capacity, bureaucratic inefficiencies, political interference, and tokenistic participation often undermine genuine community engagement, leaving many citizens feeling excluded.

Makumu and Mlambo (2024:44) noted that post-apartheid South Africa introduced IDP as the key policy document to inform community participation in local government policy formation as well as in decision-making. Public participation has long occupied a central position in discourses on democratization and societal development. This principle is constitutionally enshrined and legislatively codified, particularly in frameworks governing service delivery. It declares that all citizens must participate in decision-making, including those who have previously been disadvantaged. This approach guarantees meaningful public engagement in national development processes. As articulated in South Africa's *White Paper on Local Government* (1998), institutionalised public participation serves as both a democratic mechanism and a governance tool. It formally empowers citizens to contribute to the planning,

formulation, and implementation of local authority decisions, thereby creating a critical counterbalance to administrative power structures (Thusi, Mayisela & Matyana, 2023:363).

## **2.7 RESEARCH GAP**

Literature on public participation in South Africa reviewed in this chapter extensively critiques the gap between the legislative provisions such as the Municipal System Act (32 of 2000) and the White Paper on Local Government (1998). The issues identified in several studies have often led to service delivery protests. While these themes are well-documented in larger, more accessible towns and cities, a significant research gap exists concerning isolated locations like Langa Township in Cape Town.

The presumption that Langa Township experiences these nationally prevalent issues remains empirically unverified. Its geographical and political isolation suggests unique barriers to participation may exist, which are not adequately captured by studies of more central townships. This study addresses this gap by investigating whether Langa Township faces the same procedural failures or if its isolation creates a distinct participatory landscape, thereby providing a critical case study to understand the drivers of local dissent within a national protest context. This study therefore presents critical perceptions pertaining to the reasons leading to continuous problems surrounding service delivery in various townships that are similar to Langa Township. The findings contributes to the broader discussion on participatory democracy by outlining the significance of involving communities in the process of making decisions which affect them. Additionally, this research also offers suggestions for practical solutions to improve service delivery through improving public participation and enhancing governance structures within the townships, including the township under discussion.

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter explored community participation and its essence, as well as challenges in South Africa. It has been found that community engagement remains an important component of improved service delivery. The subsequent chapter presents the research methodology employed in this study, detailing how data were collected for the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in the study. It presents a comprehensive research design encompassing (i) study area selection, (ii) population and sampling strategies, (iii) data collection and processing techniques, (iv) methodological limitations, and (v) ethical considerations. Each component is critically discussed to demonstrate its alignment with the research objectives and its contribution to addressing the study's core questions.

Following Patankar's (2024:87) conceptualisation, the methodology constitutes a theoretically grounded approach to resolving research problems through the systematic application of disciplinary principles. The chapter progresses through four key sections: first, establishing the research philosophy underpinning the study; second, detailing the qualitative instrument and data collection procedures; third, explaining the analytical framework; and finally, addressing ethical protocols. A synthesising conclusion revisits how these methodological choices collectively ensure the study's rigour and validity.

The primary objectives of the study were to evaluate municipal public participation strategies through officials to advance good governance and prevent public protest in Langa Township in Cape Town Metropolitan municipality, as well as to investigate the root causes of public protest and the nature of public participation in local government. The research questions are essential in gathering primary data for the study. The primary cause of public protest and lack of public participation in service delivery was unknown. As a result, research questions assisted in identifying these causes and allowing the researcher to provide recommendations on how to overcome the obstacles.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach is a general procedure and plan for research or conducting a study (Agarwal, Chauhan & Ravikumar, 2024:80). In academic discourse, research methodology is often conceptualized primarily in terms of data collection and analysis techniques, particularly through the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches (Lim, 2024:14; Rawat et al., 2024:25). These two dominant methodological paradigms employ fundamentally different systems of analysis. The qualitative approach is epistemologically grounded in subjective interpretation, relying on textual, verbal, and visual data such as words, statements, and images. This methodology prioritizes understanding respondent perspectives through

interactive techniques, including questionnaires and interviews (Jha, 2023:13), emphasizing depth of insight over broad generalizability. In contrast, quantitative methodology adopts a positivist orientation based on measurement and enumeration, utilizing numerical data and statistical analysis to derive population-level inferences through mathematical modelling of sample data (Lim, 2024:14). While this dichotomous framework represents a simplification that increasingly gives way to mixed-methods approaches in practice, it remains pedagogically valuable for understanding fundamental methodological orientations in research. There is a third approach called mixed or triangulation method, which combines both qualitative and quantitative research (Rawat et al., 2024:25; Jha, 2023:13).

This study used the qualitative method as a research methodology. A qualitative method was suitable for this study as it allowed the interview of participants to focus on existing barriers to effective public engagement and municipal service provision in a case study of a Metropolitan Municipality. Qualitative research allows researchers to track out the origins of a phenomenon, investigate possible causes, record what the phenomenon meant to those who experienced it, and see if the experience resulted in a theoretical framework or conceptual understanding of the phenomenon (Williams & Moser, 2019:44). The fact that qualitative research is open-ended according to Nichols and Edlund (2023:36) means that they allow for the collection of information from an individual's emotional response when a researcher is adequately prepared, allowing them to see the obvious responses and logical conclusions. This is crucial to this type of research since a person's decisions or conduct are frequently influenced by their emotional response.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Salter (2023:19) conceptualises research design as a systematic framework for addressing research questions through empirical evidence. This involves making strategic decisions about study objectives and determining the appropriate use of primary or secondary data sources. Essentially, research design serves as a methodological blueprint for investigating research problems using observable data.

Qualitative research methodologies focus on understanding human experiences and social phenomena from participants' perspectives. Despite their diversity, qualitative approaches share fundamental characteristics: methodological flexibility and a commitment to preserving nuanced meaning during data analysis (Nguyen et al., 2023:2). Common qualitative designs include grounded theory, ethnography, action research, phenomenological inquiry, and narrative research - each offering distinct but complementary analytical perspectives.

Building on this, Hoover and Winner (2021:7) characterise phenomenology as a particularly expansive qualitative tradition. This approach centres on capturing individuals' lived experiences and subjective interpretations of phenomena, recognising the multiplicity of human realities rather than seeking singular objective truths. Through phenomenological analysis, researchers identify thematic patterns while maintaining fidelity to participants' original accounts.

For the present study, this methodological framework proved particularly valuable. The case study design enabled a comprehensive examination of public participation dynamics, facilitating a detailed interpretation of community engagement in service delivery within Langa Township, Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality. This approach supported the development of contextually rich insights into local governance processes while remaining grounded in participants' experiential knowledge.

### **3.4 DEMARCATON /DELIMITATION OF STUDY**

Delimitations represent the intentional boundaries that define the scope of a study (Ray, 2023:121–154). This research focuses specifically on evaluating public participation strategies implemented by municipal officials to advance good governance, with Langa Township in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality serving as the sole geographic focus (Figure 3.1). By concentrating on this single township, the study prioritises depth over breadth, allowing for a nuanced examination of participatory governance within a defined context. The analysis is further delimited to the strategies employed by municipal officials, excluding broader civil society initiatives or comparative assessments with other regions. These deliberate constraints ensure methodological feasibility while aligning the inquiry with its core objective: to understand how formal participation mechanisms operate within this specific urban governance framework.



**Figure 3.1: Map showing the location of Langa Township in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality. Source: (Open Street Map, 2024).**

### 3.5 TARGET POPULATION

The population is the set or group of all the units to whom the study findings will be applied (Degtiar & Rose, 2023:501). The study population was drawn from Langa Township, located in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality. The population of Cape Town in 2023 was expected to be 5 845 299 (Statistics South Africa, 2022). The target population comprises of Langa Township community members and local government officials from Langa Township. The sample size and composition are described in the next subsection.

### 3.6 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING

#### 3.6.1 Sample size and composition

A sample represents a carefully selected subset of a population that must accurately capture the diverse characteristics present in the broader population. For research validity, sampled units need to proportionally reflect the key attributes and variations of all population segments (Kant & Shukla, 2021:4). Qualitative research characteristically involves small samples to facilitate thorough case-oriented investigation (Hertog, 2023:12). For qualitative data, a sample size of 20 to 30 is commonly recommended, with 30 being standard for a thorough assessment (Shetty, 2023:1). Although samples should sufficiently represent the fact, large sizes risk data saturation, where supplementary participants supply redundant information (Shetty, 2023:1). In this research, the researcher targeted fifty (50) community members and local government officials from Langa Township, including a ward councillor ( $n = 1$ ), a proportional representation councillor ( $n = 1$ ), a sub-council manager ( $n = 1$ ), two ward committee members ( $n = 2$ ), and a professional officer ( $n = 1$ ), resulting in a total of fifty-six (56) participants.

In qualitative studies, limited sample sizes are deliberately selected to enable the intensive, contextually-grounded examination central to this research paradigm (Hertog, 2023:12). For interviews, a sample size of between 20-30 is mostly recommended, with a sample size of thirty (30) being ideal for the most comprehensive assessment (Shetty, 2023:1). A sample should sufficiently describe the phenomenon being investigated. However, very large sample sizes are a risk as they can lead to repetitive data - a phenomenon known as data saturation, where adding more participants to a study does not result in the collection of more information (Shetty, 2023:1). .

### **3.6.2 Sampling**

Sampling refers to the methodological process of selecting a representative subset of individuals or units from a defined population, enabling researchers to make statistical inferences about population characteristics or phenomena. This systematic selection allows for the estimation of unknown parameters, prediction of outcomes, or identification of patterns within the broader population while maintaining research feasibility (Schneider, 2024:20). To sample these participants, the two sampling methods, probability and non-probability sampling methods were used. Probability sampling defines the method where participants from the population are selected randomly, and each participant has an equal chance of being included in the selected sample (Siewert, 2024:217-231; Schneider, 2024:20). Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, represents sampling techniques enabling the researcher to systematically identify participants who meet specific study criteria from the target population (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023:18).

Probability sampling methods were used to select the community members, whilst non-probability sampling methods were used to select the local government officials. Simple random sampling was the probability sampling method used on community members whereby 30 participants were randomly interviewed. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, involves the deliberate selection of participants based on predefined characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Klar & Leeper, 2019:419). In this case, purposive sampling was conducted to purposely select the local government officials. In summary, the research selected random sampling for community members and purposive sampling for the Ward 52 Councillor, two ward committee members and a professional officer.

## **3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT**

Data collection represents a methodological process involving the gathering, measurement, and analysis of reliable information from multiple relevant sources to investigate research problems, answer key questions, evaluate outcomes, and predict trends and probabilities (Khoa, Hung & Hejsalem-Brahmi, 2023:187-209). Respondents are individuals who provide

the information that is gathered (Cheung & Tai, 2023:3; McBride, 2023:36). In this study, the data collection instrument was in the form of semi-structured interviews specific for the participants.

The study employed a semi-structured interview methodology, utilising a standardised set of open-ended questions to gather qualitative data. As Dehalwa and Sharmah (2023:15) explain, this approach involves administering a predetermined sequence of questions while allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their responses. All research participants will be engaged through this semi-structured interview format, ensuring consistent data collection while maintaining opportunities for in-depth exploration of perspectives.

According to Connor and Reimer (2019: 8), open-ended inquiries are worded in the form of a statement that necessitates a more detailed response. The response can be compared to information that the questioner already has. Moreover, this helps a researcher to obtain additional information from the participants. The researcher asked permission from the interviewees to record interviews using a smartphone and notes. The interview was recorded electronically and by hand in writing as participants responded to questions presented and with the permission of the participants or interviewees.

### **3.8 DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS**

The thematic analysis involves the systematic examination of meaningful patterns within qualitative data (Squires, 2023:463). This methodological approach focuses on identifying and interpreting key themes that emerge from the dataset, with particular attention to those most relevant to the research questions. As Squires (2023:463) emphasises, the objective is not to catalogue every possible theme but rather to concentrate on the most salient patterns that address the study's central inquiries.

For this study, thematic analysis was applied to transcribed interview data obtained from audio recordings. This analytical approach enabled the identification of significant patterns that reflect participants' conceptual understandings, contextual interpretations, and practical knowledge as expressed through their narratives. The method proved particularly valuable for revealing how participants construct meaning within the specific domain under investigation. The researcher needed to align and order the participant's responses. The researcher compared the answers given by the interviews to one question, for instance. The replies given by community people, ward committee members, and officials were brought together in meaningful ways.

Responses were recorded in MS excel. In qualitative research, coding is the process of organising and interpreting transcribed interview data to identify patterns, themes, and meanings (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; Brailas, 2023). After transcribing the audio responses into MS Excel, the researcher systematically reviewed the text, assigning the codes to segments of data that represented common concepts. These codes were inductively developed, emerging from the data. Once coded, similar codes were grouped into categories, which were further refined into overarching themes. This process allowed for structured analysis while retaining the depth and richness of participants' perspectives.

The inductive approach serves three primary objectives: first, to systematically reduce extensive textual data into concise, meaningful summaries; second, to explicitly connect these synthesised findings with the study's research objectives; and third, to construct a conceptual framework that captures the fundamental patterns of experiences or processes embedded within the qualitative data (Kuckart & Rädiker, 2023:18). In this study, an inductive research technique was used through the creation of a literature review, the execution of sampling, and the use of various data gathering methods connected to the study design.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical principles constitute a fundamental framework that guides the design and implementation of research studies. When conducting investigations involving human participants, researchers must adhere to established ethical protocols to ensure responsible practice. These considerations are particularly crucial in studies aimed at examining real-world phenomena, evaluating interventions, analysing behavioural patterns, or enhancing the quality of life (Olawale, Chinagozi & Joe, 2023:4).

In this research, the ethical issues were taken into consideration. The researcher also asked for permission to record and take notes on answers that were provided by the participants. A tape recorder in the form of a cell phone was used to capture all the information during the interview. Personal rights, as well as the privacy of participants, were protected. This study considered and adhered to the following ethical principles:

- The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC) from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).
- Ethical Consideration Questionnaire (RE5) from CPUT
- Ethics Informed Consent Form from CPUT
- The Public Participation Department signed a letter from the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality.

Before conducting the research, participants were informed about the research so that the researcher obtains consent. The consent form (Appendix C) informed each participant about the details of the research, the ethical protocols and the rights of the respondent. This study was for academic purposes only and the respondents were not coerced to participate. Upon agreeing to participate in this study, the respondents signed the consent form (Appendix C). Participants were not obliged to participate in the research, and had an option to stop engaging with the researcher at any given time. It was both verbally explained and stated in the consent form that participants at any point, had the right to withdraw their participation without any reparations.

Participants were given the right to share or withhold any information they may deem as private. The researcher protected any confidential information shared by respondents in confidence. The identification of names and addresses of the participants was not revealed, ensuring privacy and secrecy. The participants were only known by the researcher and their names or any form of their personal identification were not included in this study. Participants in this study were referred to as Participant A, B, C to ensure anonymity. This encouraged participants to provide honest and sincere responses. Lastly, the researcher informed the participants that any form of harm was not going to occur whether physically, emotionally, or psychologically. The researcher ensured that no physical contact occurred during the interview.

### **3.10 LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH**

Limitations of the study were getting appointments for personal interviews with a ward councillor, proportional representation councillor, sub-council manager, ward committee members, professional officer, and community members. Time-consuming also became a challenge with staff members within the office due to their busy time. .

### **3.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined the methodological approach employed to investigate the research problem in alignment with the study's objectives. The research was conducted in Langa Township. A qualitative research design was adopted to explore and interpret the meanings that participants ascribed to the phenomena under investigation. The study utilised both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select participants, with community members chosen through probability methods and local government officials selected via non-probability approaches. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with these participants to gather in-depth qualitative data. Throughout the research process, all ethical protocols were strictly adhered to, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the study.

Once data were collected, thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The subsequent chapter presents the findings from this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the research methods and methodologies of this study. Research collection data instruments were outlined. This current chapter presents, analyses and discusses the results of this study. The chapter commences with a description of the demographic information of the sampled groups and then the empirical findings based on the primary data collected. As provided in Chapter One, the broad aim of the study was to explore public participation as a tool to improve service delivery within a selected township in the Cape Metropole. To achieve this aim, five key objectives were formulated, each of which is addressed in this chapter through the presentation and analysis of empirical data.

#### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Demographical variables tend to be considered vital for a better appreciation of the responses and data collected from research participants. Demographical variables that are important may differ from study to study, but there are generally some common variables that are considered worthwhile for analysis in any study. In this study, gender, age, educational level, period of stay in the community and ethnicity were important demographical variables, and they are presented in the subsections that follow and illustrated in Figure 4.1.

##### 4.2.1 Gender distribution of community members

A gender imbalance was observed in the sample, with males representing 54% of participants while the other 46% were females (Figure 4.1a). While the males were slightly more than the females, the difference can be considered minor, and hence, the results of this study are gender balanced.

##### 4.2.2 Age distribution of respondents

The majority (54%) of the respondents were within the 35-49 age category, while other categories were as follows: 25-34 years (32%), 15-24 years (2%) and those at 50 years and more (12%) (Figure 4.1b). These statistics show that the respondents were mainly middle-aged individuals in the community, although almost all age group categories were represented.

##### 4.2.3 The highest educational level of respondents

The majority (72%) of the respondents had attained high school qualifications, while 14% had attained secondary school, 12% had tertiary level qualifications, and only 2% had a primary level qualification (Figure 4.1c). This shows that high school qualification was dominant among

the respondents. This can be taken to be explained by the favourable educational policies of the South African government to ensure a basic qualification for all South Africans.

#### **4.2.4 Employment status**

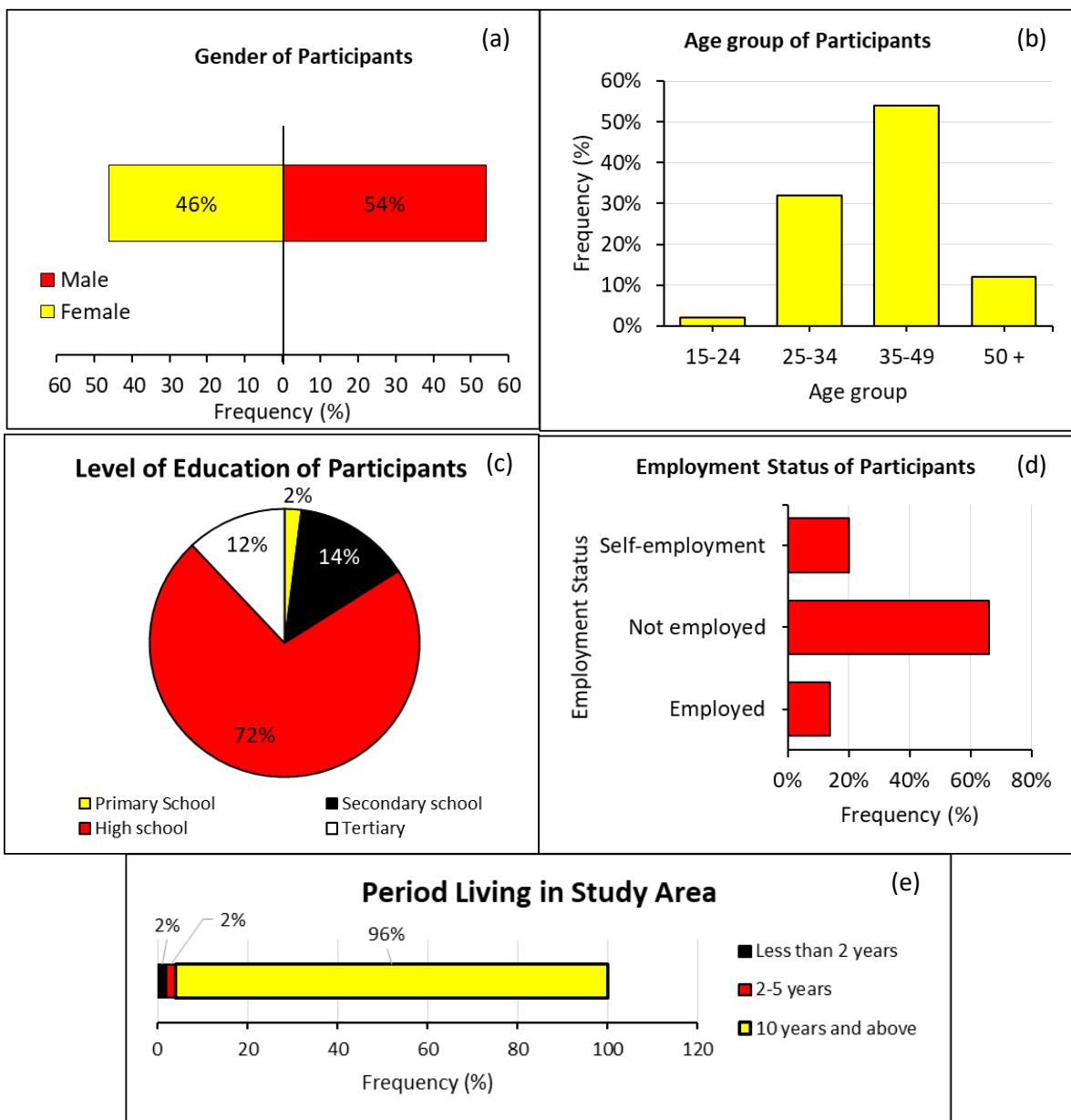
The majority (66%) of the respondents were not employed, while 20% were self-employed, and 14% indicated that they were employed (Figure 4.1d). Having most unemployed individuals support presents challenges in South Africa, where the level of unemployment is presently high.

#### **4.2.5 Length of stay in the township as a community member**

The majority (96%) of the participants were community members who had stayed in the township for 10 or more years, making them capable of providing valuable information for this study (Figure 4.1e). Only 2% had resided in the community for fewer than 2 years and an equal percentage (2%) had also stayed in the township for 2-5 years.

#### **4.2.6 Ethnicity of respondents**

All the respondents (100%) in this study were blacks. The study was undertaken in a township where mainly black people reside.



**Figure 4.1: Demographic information of the community members. Source: Own construction from findings.**

#### 4.3 DEMOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES OF WARD COMMITTEES

The demographical details of the two ward committee members who participated in this research are provided in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Biographical details of ward committee members.**

<b>Ward Committee member</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Period as a ward Committee member</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
1	Female	35-49 years	High School	Employed	> 10 years	Black
2	Male	> 50 years	High School	Self-employed	> 10 years	Black

**Source:** Own construction from findings

There was gender balance, and the respondents represented diverse age cohorts, ranging from 35 to over 50 years. Both ward committee members were black and have been ward committee members for more than 10 years.

#### **4.4 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

Interviews were also conducted with four government officials, and Table 4.2 provides the demographical characteristics of the four government officials.

**Table 4.2: Demographical characteristics of local government officials.**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Work experience</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
1	Male	35-49 years	Tertiary School	Employed	2-5 years	Black
2	Male	> 50 years	Tertiary School	Employed	≥ 10 years	White
3	Female	> 50 years	Tertiary School	Employed	≥ 10 years	White
4	Male	> 50 years	Tertiary School	Employed	≥ 10 years	Coloured

**Source:** Own construction from findings

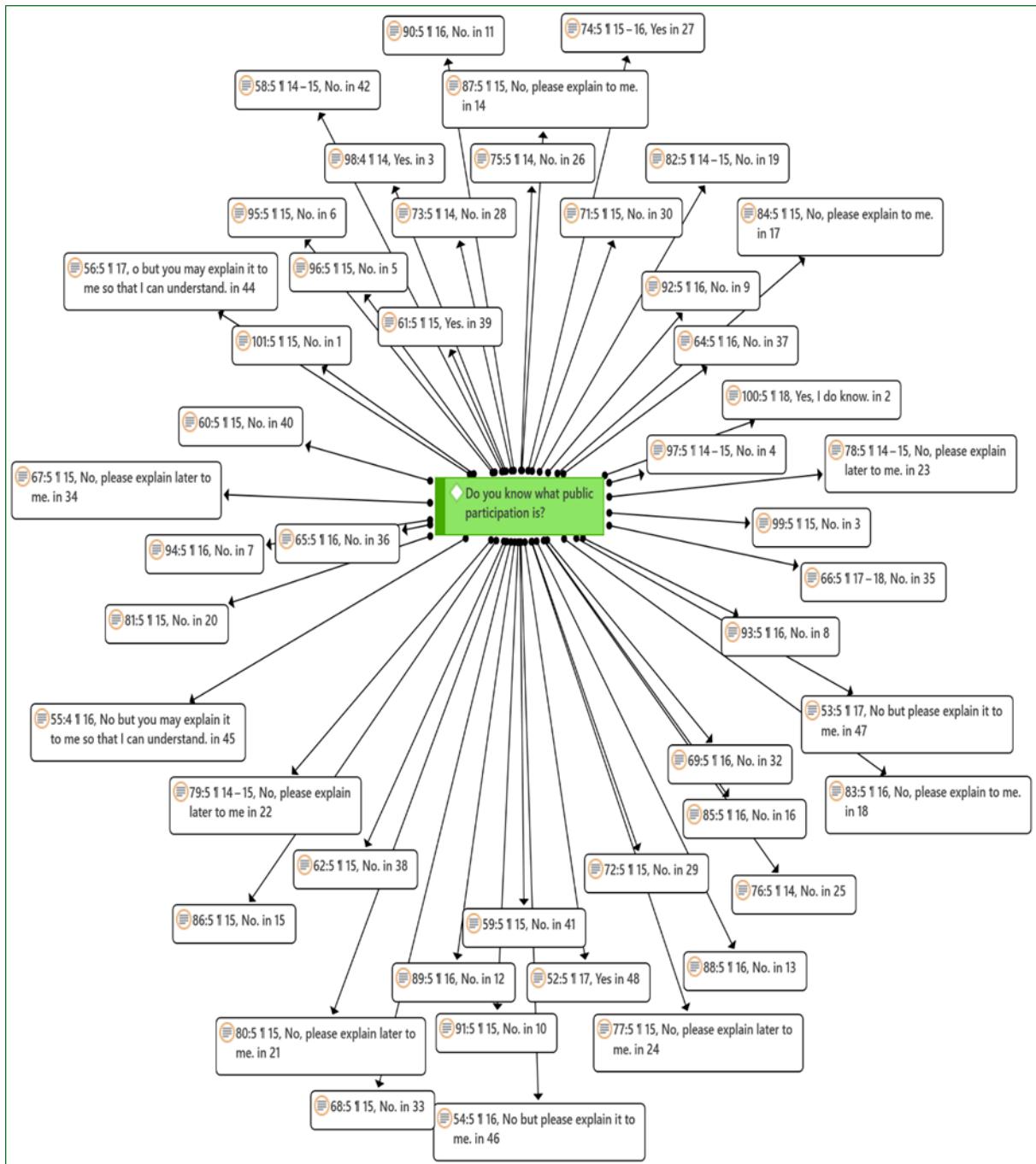
Most of them (3 out of 4) were males, while there was only one female. All the local government officials had attained tertiary education and were all employed. Three of them had 10 years of work experience, while one had 2-5 years of work experience. There was one black official and two whites as well as one coloured.

#### **4.5 ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES FOR THE STUDY**

Qualitative data analysis was conducted based on the need to extract key data patterns that inform the variables of interest in the study. The study considered that qualitative data analysis is a data reduction process that seeks to inform key data features of interest that allow meaningful conclusions on the study objectives. The analysis performed in the next sections was, therefore, objective-based.

#### **4.5.1 Knowledge of public participation among community members**

The first objective assessed the level of knowledge among community members regarding public participation in local governance. The respondents were asked if they knew what public participation meant, and their responses are shown in Figure 4.2. The findings suggest that the respondents lacked knowledge of what public participation is, and they wanted it to be explained and clarified to them. When asked about their understanding, many participants expressed uncertainty and indicated that the “public participation” concept was unfamiliar to them. Several respondents requested that the concept be explained or clarified, highlighting a general lack of awareness regarding their roles, rights, and responsibilities in participatory governance. This indicates a significant knowledge gap within the community concerning how they can engage in public decision-making processes, contribute to local development planning, or influence policy implementation. The results emphasise the need for increased education, awareness campaigns, and community engagement initiatives to ensure that citizens are fully informed and empowered to take part in meaningful public participation.



**Figure 4.2: Respondents' knowledge of public participation. Source: Own construction from findings.**

While the majority of community members reported having no knowledge or clear understanding of what public participation entails, it became evident that some might already be engaging in participatory activities without recognising them as such. In particular, many individuals could be attending local government meetings, which are essential platforms for public involvement in governance. However, due to limited awareness, they do not associate their presence or contributions in these forums with the broader concept of public participation. To explore this further, the researcher probed into the frequency and nature of community members' attendance at such meetings. This was used as a proxy indicator for actual

participation, providing insight into the extent of their involvement despite their perceived lack of formal knowledge on the subject. Table 4.3 presents exemplar responses from the dataset.

**Table 4.3: Have you ever attended any local government meetings? Please explain your answer.**

Theme	Selected excerpts
Frequently attends	<p>"Yes, and I was the ward committee member. I just resigned. I attend these meetings for anything related to service in terms of having a better development in our community as we have so many challenges in our community."</p> <p>"Yes."</p> <p>"Yes, I do attend meetings and discuss projects in our community, like let's fixing of roads."</p> <p>Yes, I attend meetings, but still, there are no actions.</p> <p>Yes, I attend the meetings, even though I feel that when we attend these meetings, the councillor come to us already with their decisions that they have made.</p> <p>"Yes, I attend meetings to discuss community issues such as crime that is happening in our community."</p> <p>Yes, I do attend meetings.</p>
Sometimes attend	<p>"I do attend the meetings when we have discuss about anything related to service delivery in our community."</p>
Does not attend	<p>"No, there's no point for me to attend them."</p> <p>"No, I do not attend because there are no actions."</p> <p>"No, I don't attend meetings because the councillor keeps on giving us empty promises."</p> <p>"No, I don't because we are not getting what we want."</p> <p>"No, I don't because there are no results in terms of the issues that we have."</p>
	<p>"No, because they do not inform us."</p> <p>"I don't go to meetings because I know they will make empty promises, and we've been telling him about the same things over and over again, but nothing has changed. Therefore, I don't see the need to go to meetings."</p>

**Source:** Own construction from findings.

The responses show a balance of responses on those who indicated that they attended and those who did not attend, while some of them attended the meetings at times. It was provided that those who attended did so when they felt that there was something important for discussion. Respondents who did not attend the public participation meetings suggested that they see attendance as a waste of time as their views are often ignored and they see no reason for attending the meetings.

Those that attend public meetings, they were asked if they get involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in the township. Table 4.4 categorises the responses to the question "*Do you get involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area*," into themes and provides descriptions and explanations.

**Table 4.4: Themes and categories for the question - "Do you get involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area?"**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example Responses</b>
<b>Lack of Involvement</b>	Respondents reported exclusion from decision-making processes, frequently expressing surprise at councillor-initiated determinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, we just get surprised when we see something that is happening in our area, meaning that we are not aware at all."</li> <li>- "Not involved in any decisions, we get surprised when we see some of the things in our community."</li> <li>- "No, nothing at all."</li> </ul>
<b>Councillor's Independent Decisions</b>	Respondents believe that the councillor makes decisions independently without consulting the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "He does not seem to care about how we feel about our community; he makes his own decisions."</li> <li>- "No, he makes his own decisions and does not care about us."</li> <li>- "No, he is making his own decisions without involving us."</li> </ul>
<b>Ward Committees as Intermediaries</b>	The councillor communicates through ward committees, but these committees do not effectively engage the broader community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "I suppose he informs the ward committees, but the problem is that the ward committees do not come to us and notify us."</li> <li>- "Councillor only communicates with the ward committees. They decide on their own without coming to us and discussing."</li> <li>- "No, his using ward committees, of which we do not get anything from them."</li> </ul>
<b>Inconsistent Engagement</b>	Respondents note that engagement with the councillor is inconsistent, with some instances of communication but generally lacking in participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "He does engage sometimes with us but not all the time."</li> <li>- "Not all the time, sometimes I feel like he does not give us a platform to have discussions with him."</li> <li>- "If maybe, if you attend meetings, but honestly, not all the time."</li> </ul>
<b>Perception of Pre-Determined Decisions</b>	Respondents feel that decisions are pre-determined and community input is not genuinely sought or considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Yes, but what's the point? I believe they all come to us when they already know and have made up their minds."</li> <li>- "No, they don't even allow us to have a conversation; they just come with their projects finished."</li> <li>- "No, because even if we ask during meetings, he just mentions that he has already completed it without our opinions."</li> </ul>
<b>Exclusion from Decision-Making</b>	Respondents feel excluded from the decision-making process and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, he does not involve us, and I'm not happy about that;</li> </ul>

	that their opinions are not valued or considered.	there is no communication." - "No, he forgets about us and does not consider our opinion." - "No, I don't remember him asking us how we feel about issues or hearing our opinions."
<b>Lack of Change or Action</b>	Respondents highlight a lack of tangible change or action from the councillor, leading to frustration and disillusionment.	- "I would say no, because I haven't seen any changes or actions taken, meaning that he makes his own decisions without informing us." - "No, because even if we ask during meetings, he just mentions that he has already completed it without our opinions." - "No, the fact that he seems not interested means that he does not give us that access to participate in any decisions."

**Source:** Own construction from findings

The findings indicate that respondents perceive themselves as marginalised from participatory governance processes, particularly in decisions regarding local service delivery. There were indications that the local authorities were independent thinkers who made pre-determined independent decisions, as provided in Table 4.4.

#### 4.5.2 Community awareness of officials' duties in participation processes

The study's second objective examined community members' awareness and perceptions regarding public officials' roles in enabling and implementing participatory processes. As presented in Table 4.5, the findings reveal the extent to which residents understood their councillor's and ward committee's mandated functions and responsibilities.

**Table 4.5: Do you understand the responsibilities of your councillor and ward committees?**

Quotation Content	Number of responses for the quotation
No.	27
No, I don't know much about the ward committees.	1
No, I can't say if I know them in full detail.	1
No, I don't understand fully.	1
No, not really. I don't think he's on the ground.	1
No, as we need to be educated more about that.	1
No, because they do not come and tell us.	1
No, they are not visible in our community.	1
Yes.	3
Yes, I do understand everything.	4
Yes, I do because community members selected the councillor to be the councillor.	1

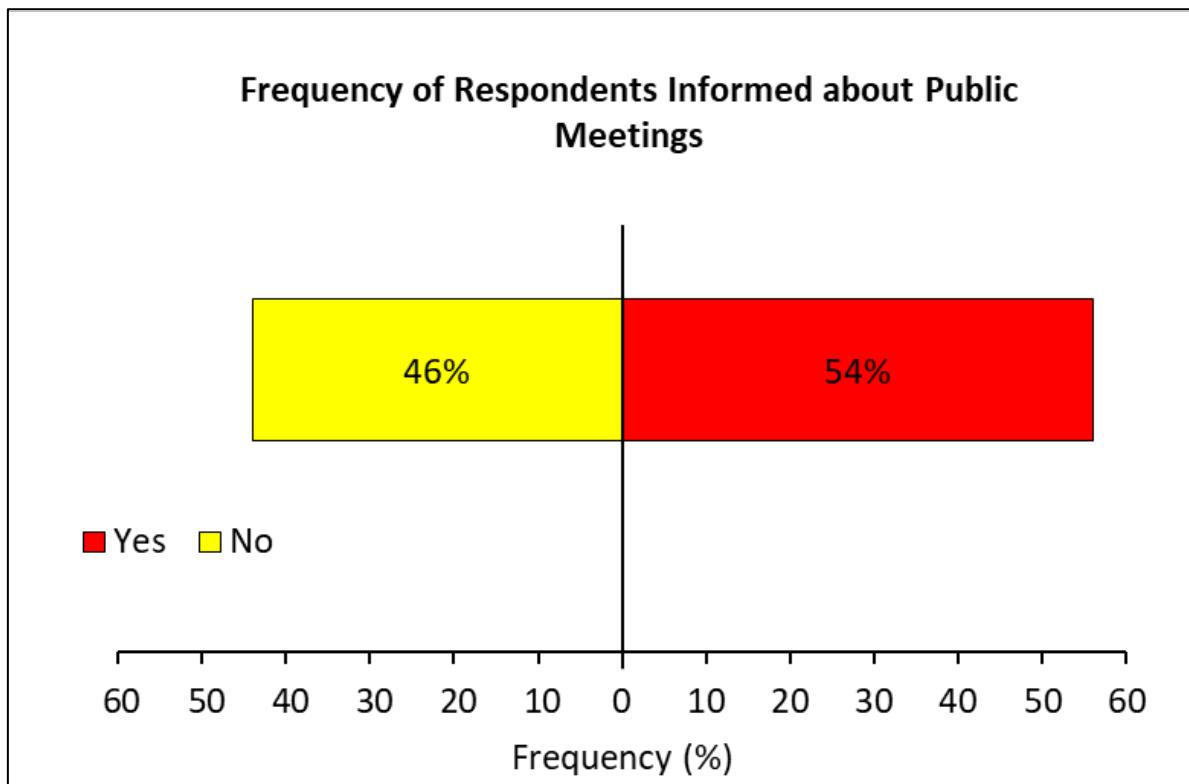
Quotation Content	Number of responses for the quotation
Yes, I do understand everything.	1
Yes, I do, as I was working at the City of Cape Town, so I do know some of the things.	1
Not really, because I feel like we are not part of his plans, meaning that he only focuses on his people or his political party.	1
I have no idea who the ward councillor is, and I don't even recall his approaching us to identify himself so we would know.	1

**Source:** Own construction from findings.

Table 4.5 shows that many respondents were not fully aware of the duties of the councillor and ward committees. Where there were some indications of familiarity with the roles and duties of the councillor and ward committees, there were many indications that their responsibilities were not well known by the respondents, as provided in Table 4.5. The following subsections present the responses obtained through different assessments, measuring how public servants facilitate public participation.

#### 4.5.2.1 Community awareness of public meetings

The study assessed whether communities were informed about public meetings. Figure 4.3 summarises the responses, showing the proportion of participants who, overall, answered 'Yes' or 'No'. The findings presented in Figure 4.3 reveal mixed responses regarding public servants' role in facilitating public participation in terms of informing their communities. While some respondents (54%) confirmed that they were adequately informed about meetings, others (46%) reported a lack of sufficient communication about meetings. This divergence suggests inconsistencies in how public servants disseminate information and encourage citizen involvement.



**Figure 4.3: Proportion of community members indicating whether they were informed about public participation opportunities. Source: Own construction from findings.**

#### 4.5.2.2 Community perceptions on councillor information sharing

Responses on whether respondents had enough information about decisions that were made by the councillor relating to service delivery were provided in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Do you believe the councillor provides you with enough information about the decisions they make in terms of service delivery?**

Quotation	Theme	Sub-theme
“He is transparent to us as we have WhatsApp group unless some people are not on WhatsApp group.”	Transparency	Social media
“No, not really. There are moments when we understand, but there are other times when we don’t, a practical example is the dirtiness in our township, it does not make sense because it has been like this for a long time now, yet we have complained.”	No communication	Lack responsiveness
“It is difficult for me to say yes, because there are times when I don’t fully grasp something.”	Unsatisfactory communication	No full understanding
“No, the information is not enough because we go to their offices, then they tell us to wait all the time, and we do not get what we want.”	Information inadequacy	Communication delay
“No, we do not get full information.”	Information inadequacy	Communication delay
“Not really, we do not get full information sometimes we get lost.”	Unsatisfactory communication	No full understanding
“There are meetings that the councillor will say he will come back with better information, but still there is no feedback, so they are not successful; instead, we just have to wait.”	No feedback	Meetings

Quotation	Theme	Sub-theme
“No, there is not enough information provided to us because if he was giving us, then the service delivery would be great.”	Information inadequacy	Communication delay
“Not really, as it goes back to, we do not get enough information.”	No communication	Lack responsiveness
“There is no engagement at all, so we do not get any information, and he must be on the ground with the community members.”	No communication	No engagement
“No, he does not give us enough information regarding the houses.”	No communication	Lack responsiveness
“No, they do not come back with feedback, what he has done for the community.”	No feedback	Meetings
“As much as I attend these meetings most of the time, we are informed most of the time, and when we attend them, we don't get full explanation or information.”	Unsatisfactory communication	No full understanding
“No, the information is not enough.”	Unsatisfactory communication	No full understanding
“He does not provide us with proper information as I have mentioned that there are no actions that have been made in our community.”	Unsatisfactory communication	No full understanding
“No, because I do go to his office, but he takes his time to deliver the service for the community, so we end up not getting full information of when the service will be delivered.”	Information inadequacy	Communication delay
“He provides a poor communication, he does not have a platform where he can communicate with everyone. I feel like he does not focus on us as the community, like there are things that he can do like informing us digitally.”	Poor communication	Not committed to community problems

Source: Own construction from findings

The responses provided by the participants showed that the respondents provided that communication between the councillor and the residents was generally poor. Most of the responses showed that the communication was unsatisfactory, lacked feedback, was inadequate, poor and not transparent.

#### 4.5.2.3 Structures for the facilitation of public participation in the selected township

This subsection examines the formal mechanisms employed by municipal representatives to facilitate community engagement in local decision-making processes, as presented in Table 4.7.

In Table 4.7, the majority (80%) provided that loudspeakers or simply speakers were used to communicate with residents by the local government officials. Other channels indicated were WhatsApp (2%), Facebook and loudspeakers (2%), Facebook (2%) and posters (2%). The data demonstrated knowledge gaps within the sample population, with 6% expressing complete unawareness, complemented by 2% who reported receiving no information and 4%

who affirmed absolute lack of knowledge. Therefore, loudspeakers or hailers were the most used communication channels by the local government.

**Table 4.7: What are the channels and platforms used by the local government to communicate with residents?**

Channel of Communication		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	WhatsApp and hailers (speakers)	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Loudhailers (speakers)	40	80.0	80.0	82.0
	Facebook and loudhailers	1	2.0	2.0	84.0
	I do not know	3	6.0	6.0	90.0
	We are not informed	1	2.0	2.0	92.0
	Nothing at all	2	4.0	4.0	96.0
	Facebook	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
	Posters	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own construction from findings.

#### **4.5.3 Public participation for enhanced service delivery within the selected township**

The third objective sought to establish whether public participation can be a tool for improving service delivery. To attain this objective, respondents were required to answer whether they were happy with service delivery in the community. To organise and categorise the responses to the question: *"Are you happy with the service delivery in your community?"*, key themes based on the sentiments expressed and the specific issues mentioned were considered. Table 4.8 presents the themes and specific concerns people have regarding service delivery in their community.

**Table 4.8: Themes and categories of community responses regarding satisfaction with local service delivery.**

Theme	Response
<b>Mixed Satisfaction (Happy but with Concerns)</b>	<p><b>General satisfaction with some concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Yes, I am happy but not completely happy, as we do have issues in the community."</li> <li>- "Yes, I am but not fully happy because of the service delivery that is lacking in some areas."</li> <li>- "Yes, but not fully happy as we have some challenges in our area, like the lack of basic services."</li> <li>- "Yes, but I feel like they can improve."</li> <li>- "There are certain things that make me happy, but others cause me to be dissatisfied."</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific concerns (e.g., environment, business opportunities, etc.):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "There's a lot of dust, the environment is not clean, so I'm not happy."</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Sometimes I'm not happy as the area does not have streetlights, and there are blockages in the drains."</li> <li>- "Service delivery depends on government, and that we cannot run away from."</li> <li>- "I am happy, but in terms of business ventures, it's difficult to get opportunities."</li> <li>- "I am happy, but I do have some issues like load shedding, I am not happy about that."</li> </ul>
<b>Dissatisfaction</b>	<p><b>General dissatisfaction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Not at all."</li> <li>- "No, I'm dissatisfied with the quality of service provided."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy about the delivery of service that we get here."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not pleased."</li> <li>- "No, I'm completely not happy at all."</li> <li>- "No, I am so dissatisfied."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Specific issues causing dissatisfaction:</b></p> <p><b>Housing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because we do not have houses as community members."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because we have no houses, we stay in back dwellings."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy the councillor has been promising to build houses for us, but nothing has been done."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because the councillor takes long to respond."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Cleanliness and Environmental Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because our area is not clean, bins are not collected."</li> <li>- "No, the fact that our community is dirty as a result of our garbage not being collected."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because we are living in a dirty environment."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because our area is not clean, they don't fumigate."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because we do not have houses, and the area is not clean."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Infrastructure (Drains, streetlights, etc.):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because of the blockage of drains and the crime is too high."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because our drains and toilets are blocked."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy the service delivery is very poor."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Unemployment and Economic Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, I am not happy because the unemployment rate is too high most of us are not working."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because a lot of us are not working. There is no job creation."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Councillor Responsiveness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, I am not happy at all because I do visit the councillor's office, and nothing gets done."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because we have been promised that the councillor will build houses."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>General Service Delivery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because the service delivery is poor."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because there's no improvements in our community, the service delivery is poor."</li> <li>- "No, I'm not happy because the service delivery is poor. We are not getting help."</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Sentiment</b>	<p><b>General satisfaction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Currently, I'm happy with the service delivery."</li> </ul>

**Source: Own construction from findings**

The study revealed mixed levels of satisfaction regarding service delivery in the community. While some respondents expressed partial contentment, many cited unresolved concerns. Those with "*mixed satisfaction*" acknowledged progress but highlighted persistent issues such as inadequate basic services, poor infrastructure (for example, lack of streetlights and blocked drains), and environmental problems like uncollected garbage and dust. Others noted economic challenges, including limited business opportunities and unemployment.

A significant portion of respondents reported dissatisfaction, with grievances ranging from poor housing conditions and unfulfilled promises by local government officials to inefficient waste management and slow responsiveness to complaints. Infrastructure deficiencies and unemployment were recurring themes. Criticisms often targeted the councillor's unresponsiveness and unmet commitments, with some residents stating that nothing gets done despite repeated appeals. Overall, the findings indicate a community grappling with systemic service delivery failures, where even those who are "*happy*" qualify for their satisfaction with pressing concerns. Table 4.9 extracts the most significant words under each theme expressing dissatisfaction with service delivery.

**Table 4.9: Extract of keywords associated with dissatisfaction themes.**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Significant Words</b>
Housing	-Houses -Promised -Councillor -Back dwellings
Cleanliness and Environmental Issues	-Dirty -Clean -Garbage -Bins -Fumigate
Infrastructure (Drains, Streetlights, etc.)	-Blockage -Drains -Streetlights -Toilets
Unemployment and Economic Issues	-Unemployment -Job creation - Not working
Councillor Responsiveness	-Councillor -Respond -Promising -Office
General Service Delivery	-Poor -Service delivery -No improvements -Not getting help

**Source: Own construction from findings**

Table 4.9 highlights the key terms under each theme that reflect dissatisfaction with service delivery, providing a focused view of the most significant issues raised by respondents. As shown in Table 4.9, dissatisfaction with housing was based on the availability of adequate housing as promised. Cleanliness of the environment was associated with uncollected garbage and general dirtiness. Issues of infrastructure related to blocked drains, unemployment, streetlights and toilets, as well as the councillor's responsiveness.

Perceptions on the usefulness of public participation meetings were as provided in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Do you believe public participation meetings are fruitful in the community?**

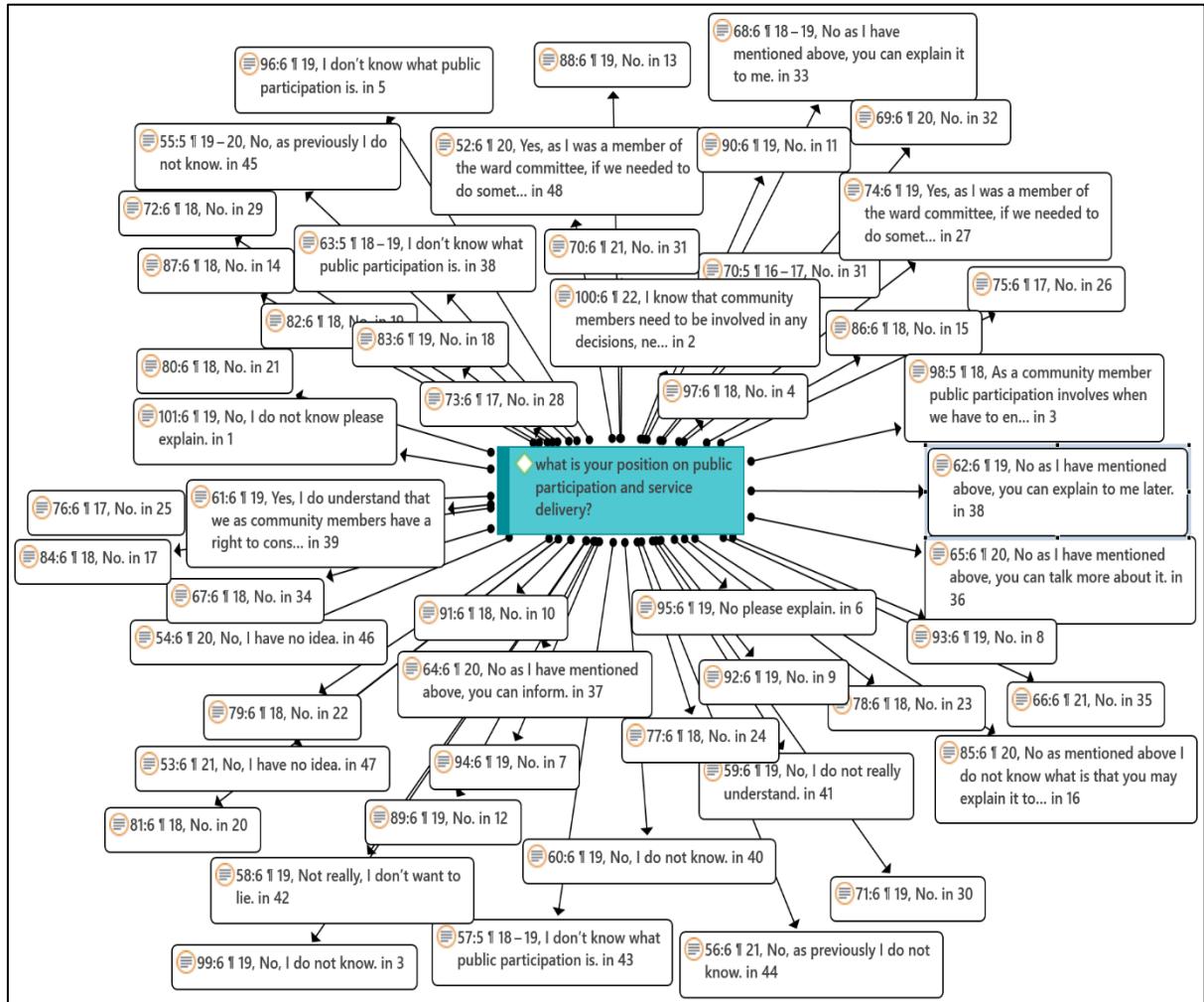
Response	Quotation Content
Not sure	<p>-“<i>Their process is very slow, they take time to deliver, we do not have complete information on projects</i>” and <i>it takes a long time to begin.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>I never attend meetings.</i>”</p>
Sometimes	<p>-“<i>Not every meeting is successful.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>Sometimes there are no answers, or as a community, we don't come up with the same goals that need to be accomplished in our community.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>Sometimes they are not successful as we do not get the complete outcome.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>Not all the time, as issues such as unemployment, housing and drain blockages are not often resolved during meetings.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>Not all the time, as there are issues that you will find that they were not successfully resolved like unemployment, housing and blockage of drains have always taken time to be resolved.</i>”</p>
No	<p>-“<i>He only listens to his favourite people, not the whole community.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>No, I think public participation it's only just a procedure because obviously, the councillor comes to us with the completed mission or plans without involving us, so we don't see any success in meetings.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>No, because our issues are solved or improved, meaning no actions taken by him.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>No, challenges have not been resolved.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>There are no updates or feedback.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>There are no results to see.</i>”</p> <p>-“<i>It's a waste of time.</i>”</p>

Source: Own construction from findings

Most respondents disagreed that public participation has been successful. The results provided above show that the respondents held negative views on public participation and did not believe that these could be fruitful for improved public service. They believe the councillor is not ready to listen to them, to communicate issues properly and to give them feedback on important matters. Challenges have been slow to be resolved, and they believe the councillor has pre-meditated outcomes or consults a few people.

As this study examined the relationship between public participation and service delivery, Figure 4.4 provides responses to the opinions of respondents on public participation and service delivery. Figure 4.4 shows a lack of knowledge and appreciation of public participation,

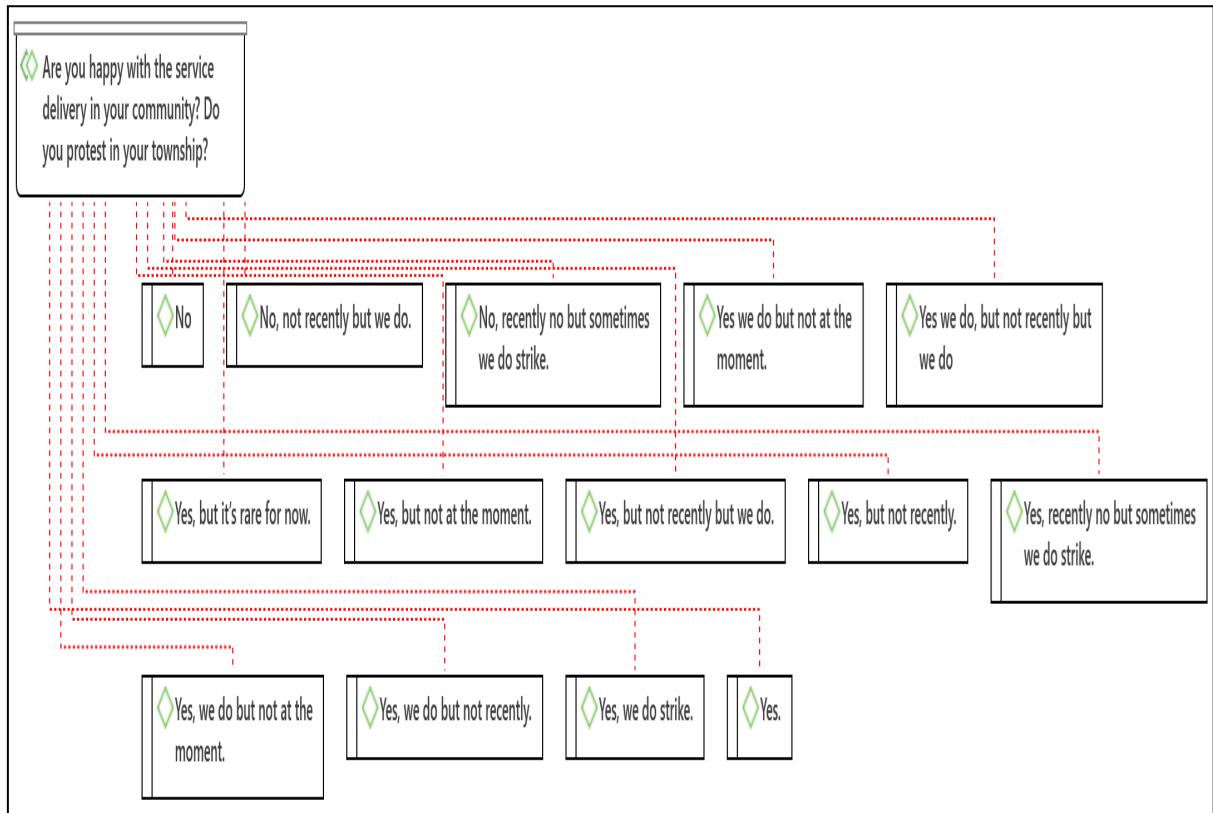
making it impossible for respondents to provide a proper opinion on the nexus of community involvement and local government service performance. This was also highlighted in Section 4.5.1.



**Figure 4.4: What is your position on public participation and service delivery? Source: Own construction from findings.**

#### 4.5.3.1 Community behaviour in response to service delivery deficiencies

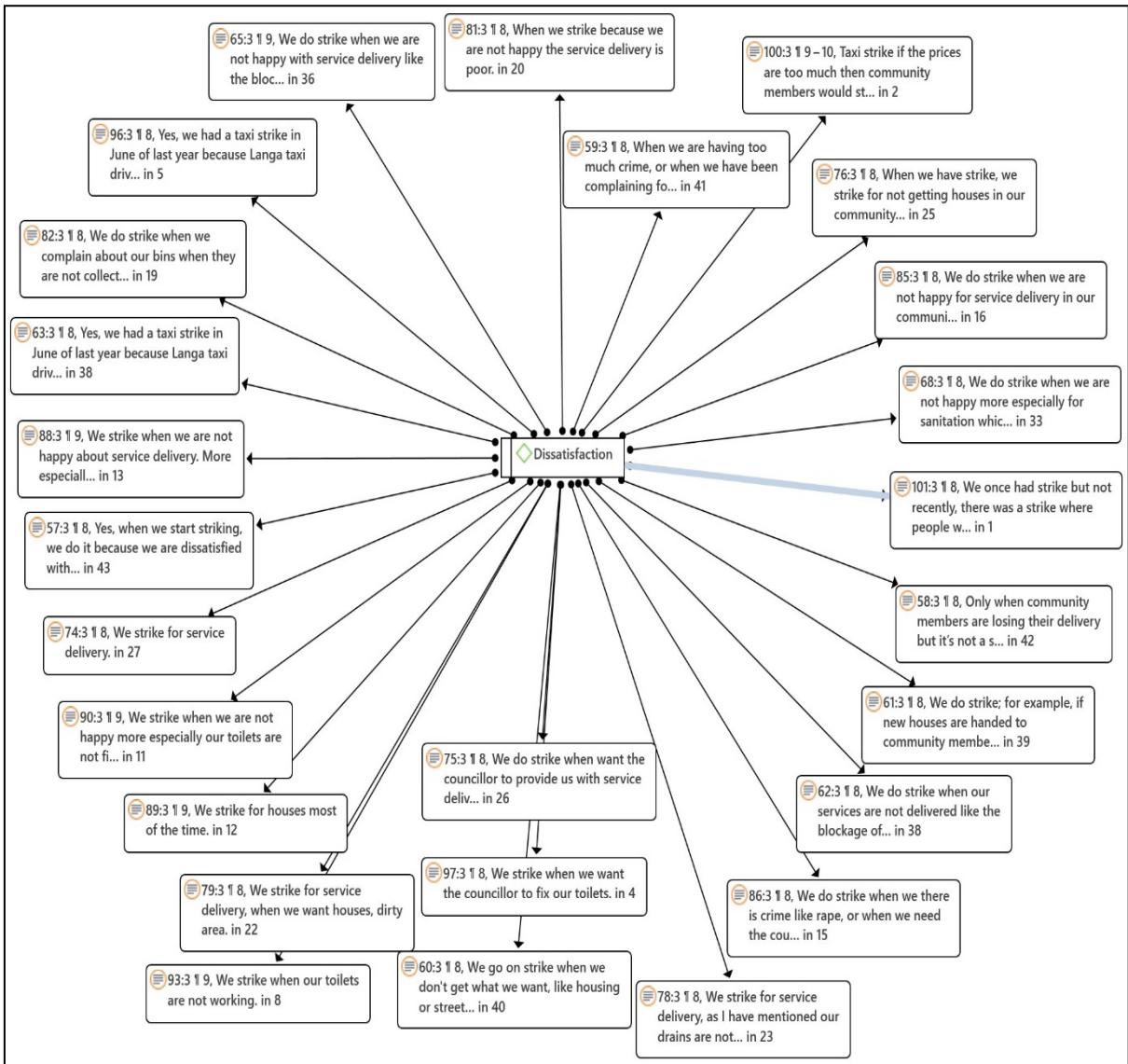
Respondents who had indicated a lack of satisfaction with service delivery were required to provide details on how they expressed their concerns. Most of the respondents confirmed that they resort to protest due to dissatisfaction with service delivery. The responses shown in Figure 4.5 can be summarised into those who totally disagreed, those who sometimes get satisfied, those who rarely get satisfied and those who were satisfied.



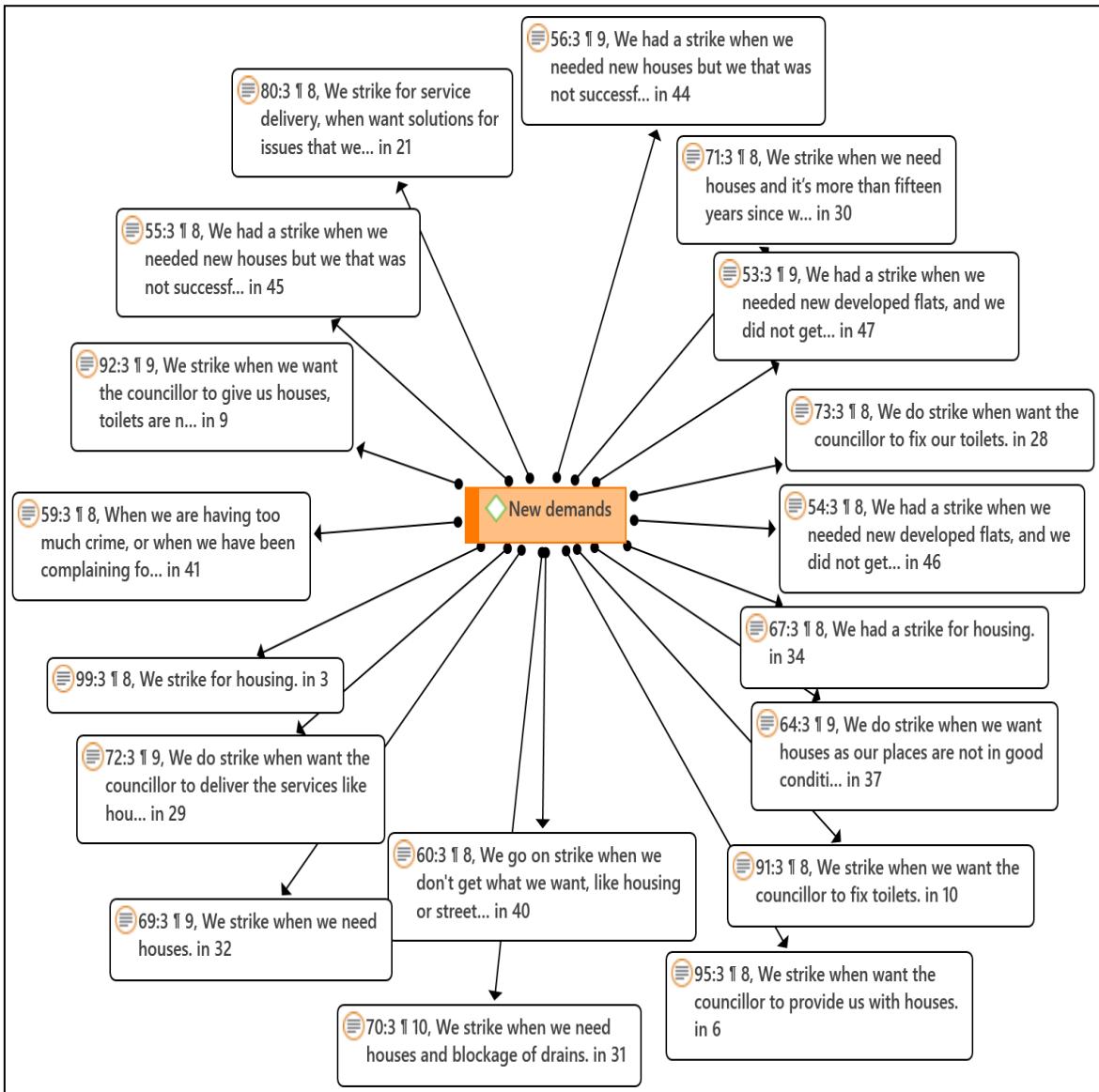
**Figure 4.5: Responses to the question – If you are not happy with service delivery, do you protest? Source: Own construction from findings.**

#### 4.5.3.2 Drivers of protest

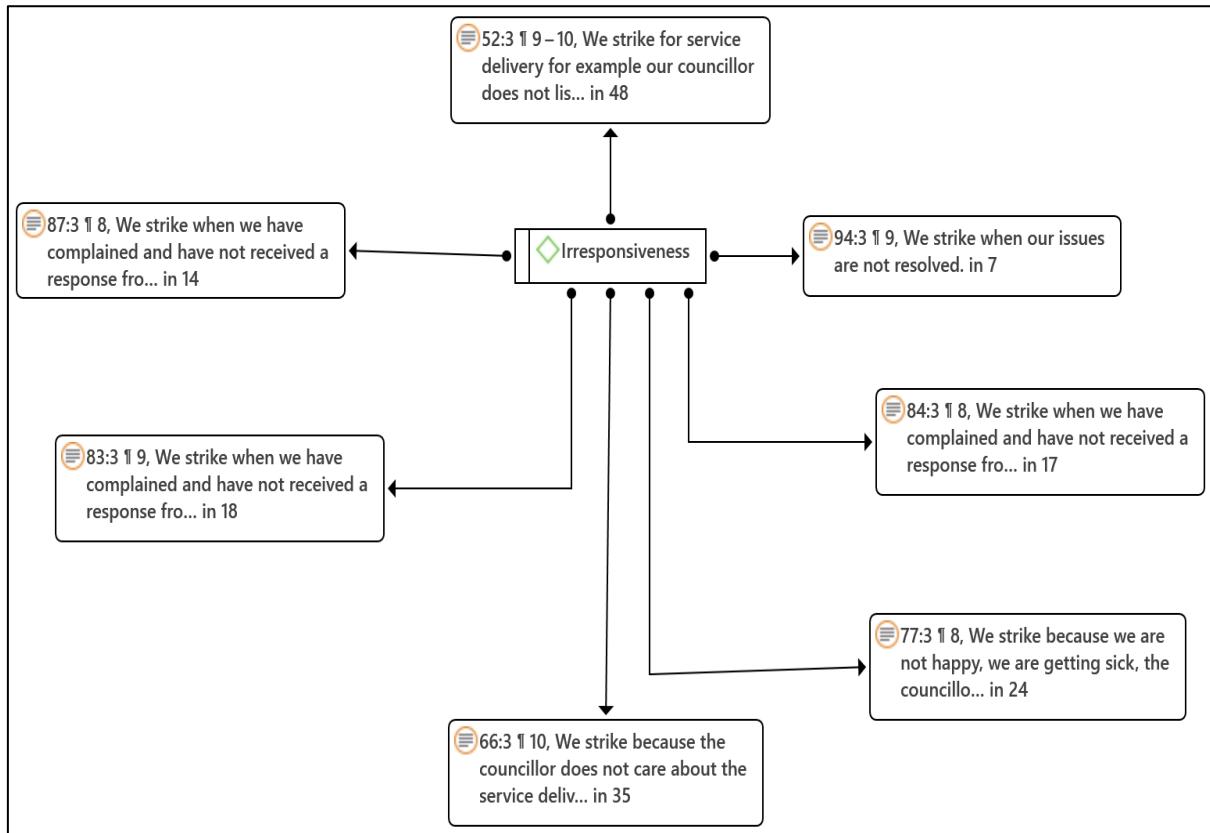
Respondents were required to provide what drives them to protest, and three main drivers of public protest were established. It was established that respondents protested when they were dissatisfied with service delivery (Figure 4.6). Protest, in this case, becomes a way of demanding action for improvement from the authorities. New demands were also found to be a cause of public protest, as shown by the sentiments in Figure 4.7. The third reason why community members protest, as indicated by the respondents was irresponsiveness (4.8). The failure of the local government officials to respond to complaints and grievances drives protests, mainly in the form of strikes. Protest, in this way, becomes a way of asking the authorities to respond to their request.



**Figure 4.6: Dissatisfaction as a driver of protest. Source: Own construction from findings.**



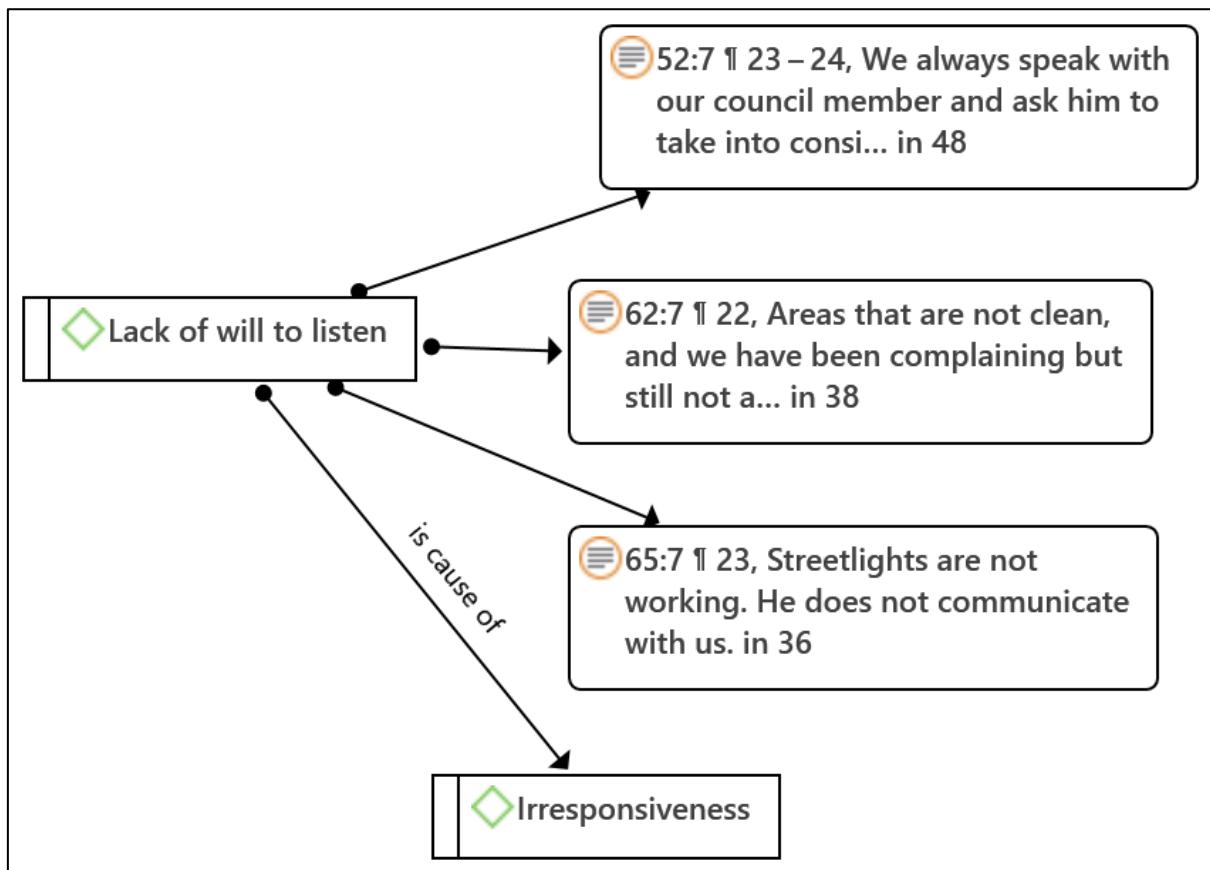
**Figure 4.7: New demands as a driver of protest. Source: Own construction from findings.**



**Figure 4.8: Irresponsiveness as a driver of protest. Source: Own construction from findings.**

#### 4.5.4 Challenges to public participation

The fourth objective was to determine the challenges to public participation. Given the weak knowledge of respondents on what public participation involved, few respondents provided meaningful responses related to this question, as illustrated in Figure 4.9.



**Figure 4.9: Challenges of effective public engagement in municipal service delivery. Source: Own construction from findings.**

Note: The most significant part of the sentiments are shown in Figure 4.9; part of the statements that are repeated or were not necessary were left out as three dots in the quotes in Figure 4.9. As provided in Figure 4.9, lack of responsiveness and unwillingness to listen to community members were provided as the challenges affecting successful public participation. These challenges also build up to issues that have been highlighted in this chapter, that include lack of information on meetings, attitudes of the community members, and lack of community awareness of officials' duties in participation processes.

#### 4.5.5 Effectiveness of the consultation process in the community

The effectiveness of community consultation in the township was inquired upon and the responses are provided in the subsection that follows.

##### 4.5.5.1 Consultation by the councillor

The results on whether the councillor made community consultations are presented in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Does the Councillor consult you before performing any services in your area?**

		<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
Valid	Yes, consultation is done	2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	12	24.0	24.0	28.0	
	No	36	72.0	72.0	100.0	
	Total	50	100.0	100.0		

**Source:** Own construction from findings

The majority (72%) provided that the councillor does not consult, while 24% provided that sometimes there is consultation and only 4% provided that the councillor consults.

#### **4.5.5.2 Provision of feedback on service delivery from the councillor**

The results on whether the councillor of the community provided feedback are shown in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Responses to the question - Do you receive feedback on service delivery by Councillor?**

		<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
Valid	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
	No	45	90.0	90.0	90.0	96.0
	I do not remember	2	4.0	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Own construction from findings

The results show that the majority (90%) answered that they do not get feedback, while 6% provided that they sometimes get it, and 4% did not remember getting feedback from the councillor.

#### **4.5.5.3 Opportunity to evaluate public participation meetings and service delivery**

Table 4.13 provides responses on whether the respondents had an opportunity to evaluate public participation and service delivery.

**Table 4.13: Do you get the opportunity to evaluate the public participation meetings and service delivery in the community?**

		Response	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	No	45	90.0	90.0	90.0	
	Yes	3	6.0	6.0	96.0	
	I have never heard that	1	2.0	2.0	98.0	
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	100.0	
	Total	50	100.0	100.0		

**Source:** Own construction from findings

The results show that the respondents (90%) were not provided with opportunities to evaluate service delivery or evaluate the effectiveness of their participation. Six percent indicated that they got the opportunity, two percent provided that they have never had of this evaluation, and 2% provided that they sometimes got the opportunity.

#### **4.5.6 Responses provided by local government officials on the interview questions**

The study also sought the responses of local government officials on various matters related to public participation, and the corresponding participant responses are presented in Table 4.14.

##### ***Are you happy with the service delivery provision in your community?***

Official 1

*“Satisfied that it’s good. Residents described in terms of their tendency to disregard public services.”*

Official 2

*“Not satisfied.”*

Official 3

*“No, not at all, I’m not happy.”*

Official 4

*“From my side, yes, I am.”*

***Do residents protest in your township?***

Official 1

“No.”

Official 2

“Very rarely.”

Official 3

“No.”

Official 4

“It depends. I think the people are very uneducated.”

***Do residents attend any local government meetings? Please explain your answer.***

Official 1

“Yes, but in many cases, there is failure to reach the quorum.”

Official 2

“Yes, they do, as there a public participation and IDP meetings. However, not everyone attends those meetings.”

Official 3

“Yes, they do.”

Official 4

“Yes, they do, but not every time there's those that are protesting or never part of the meeting.”

***Do you know what public participation is?***

During this study, all the municipal officials surveyed confirmed they were familiar with public participation. However, this raises a deeper question: *Does know about public participation translate to practicing it effectively?* Evidence suggests that many municipalities reduce public engagement to box-ticking exercises rather than fostering genuine collaboration with their communities (Perera et al., 2023; Hofer et al., 2024; Agyemang, 2025). True participation requires proactive measures; without these, municipal officials risk perpetuating a disconnect where communities view engagement as performative rather than empowering.

***If yes, to what extent does local government policy formally institutionalise public participation in service delivery processes?***

Official 1

*“Local government is required to engage communities and make them involved in public service decisions.”*

Official 2

*“So, the city has a range of public participation mechanisms. First and foremost, as your ward committee, the councillor has a ward committee.”*

Official 3

*“It creates a communication channel between the city and the rest of the community.”*

***What key barriers inhibit effective community engagement in municipal service delivery consultations within your jurisdiction?***

Official 1

*“Poor coordination and will to ensure public participation”.*

Official 2

*“There is better delivery service in the community”.*

*“Low attendance at these meetings.”*

***To what extent are the service delivery roles and responsibilities of local government officials communicated to and understood by community members?***

Official 1

*“Yes, they are defined by statutes.”*

Official 2

*“No. No, I do not think that the residents often understand what the role of local government, provincial government, national government is.”*

Official 4

*“I don't think so at times.”*

***What are the channels available for improving public participation?***

Official 1

*“Public participation unit. Social media.”*

Official 2

*“Facebook, Twitter and other social media apps, the email, notices in the community, notices through messenger apps like WhatsApp.”*

Official 3

*“We are on socials these days and also with loud hailing as well. Yeah. No, no, no. We do have ward committees that also relay the message to the participants.”*

Official 4

*“Certain requests will come through the media. We will put an advertisement in the newspaper. We'll do pamphlet drops in the areas as well.”*

***Are you satisfied with current community engagement opportunities in local service delivery decision-making processes? Please explain.***

Official 1

*“Yes. There is a public participation unit.”*

Official 2

*“No, there is a need for improvement.”*

Official 3

*“Not really.”*

Official 4

*“Yes, I am, satisfied with that.”*

***Are the public participation meetings fruitful in Ward 52? Please explain.***

Official 1

*“Yes, they are fruitful.”*

Official 2

*“Public should attend meetings.”*

***Are community residents involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area? Please explain.***

Official 1

*“Yes.”*

Official 2

*“Yes, mostly.*

Official 3

*“It is. Okay. They are involved. The fact that we have the ward committees, they are involved.”*

***Do you provide feedback on service delivery to the community in Ward 52?***

Official 1

*“Yes, we do so through the public participation units.”*

Official 2

*“Yes, we provide feedback.”*

Official 4

*“Yes.”*

***Do you allow residents to evaluate the public participation meetings and service delivery in Ward 52?***

Official 1

*“Yes.”*

Official 2

*“Yes, they are given such opportunities.”*

Official 4

*“Yes, we do through minutes.”*

The responses of the local government officials were mixed. What other officials were satisfied with may be found to be unsatisfactory to others. The conclusion that can be reached in this case is that public participation within the community is poorly managed, with some taking the view that it is properly managed while others find it completely poor. It was clear from the responses that there was a need to improve the state of public participation within the township. There was a general impression that the local government officials were doing their best, but the residents were not co-operative, uneducated or poorly informed enough to make meaningful participation.

#### **4.5.7 Ward Committee Members' Interview Responses**

The study incorporated perspectives from two ward committee members regarding public participation processes, with their detailed responses systematically presented under each question in this section.

##### ***Are you happy with the service delivery provision in your community?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, I am happy with the service delivery in my community, although there are some outstanding issues. But for the ones that we have managed to get, I am happy.”*

##### ***Do residents protest in your township?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes, but sometimes we don’t.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, but sometimes we do protest when we are not happy.”*

##### ***If Yes, what drives you to protest?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“We protest when the waste collector does not want to come and collect our bins.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“For instance, there is a lot of garbage near King Langalibalele Drive (Washington Street) in Langa. Community members would protest to city authorities (the waste operator and recycler) when their bins were not emptied since it is unhealthy for them to have rubbish close to where they live.”*

##### ***Have you ever attended any local government meetings? Please explain your answer.***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“We protest when the waste collector does not want to come and collect our bins.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, we do attend meetings, such as the one we went to not so long ago, which is the budget meeting when we are informed how much we are going to spend for a certain activity in our area for the year 2024/2025.”*

***Do you know what public participation is? If yes, what formal position has the municipal authority adopted regarding the integration of public participation mechanisms in service delivery processes?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes, I know what public participation is. As a ward committee member, my role includes facilitating the resolution of community-identified issues within our jurisdiction.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, I know what public participation is. I am a street committee member for my area, a ward committee member, and I also serve in a CPF (Community Policy Forum) structure as a PRO position.”*

***What barriers inhibit meaningful community engagement in municipal service delivery consultations within this jurisdiction?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“We have drained blockages and a lot of garbage that isn’t removed, which leads to health problems.”*

***Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of your councillor and ward committees?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“No, in my observation, residents frequently lack a clear understanding of the distinct roles and responsibilities between local, provincial, and national government tiers.”*

***What are the channels available for improving public participation?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Public participation unit. Social media.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Facebook, Twitter, and other social media apps, email notices in the community, notices through messenger apps like WhatsApp.”*

***Are you informed about meetings?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes.”*

***Do you believe the councillor provides you with enough information about the decisions they make in terms of service delivery?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes, the councillor does inform us about anything related to service delivery for our community, but sometimes we do not get everything, especially with the issues that we currently have, like the blockage of drains.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, I do, and it helps so much as a ward committee member because I know what the councillor needs to do and can inform the community.”*

***What are the channels and platforms used by the local government to communicate with residents from Langa Township?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“We use WhatsApp, calls, Facebook and loud hailers.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“The communication in the department from the City of Cape Town is not good. For example, we had a problem with the City of Cape Town's line department since we were too busy with an event that served food to elderly people.”*

***Do you get involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area?***

***Please explain.***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes, the councillor involves us, as we recently attended the budget meeting and we were informed of the actions that must be completed for the year 2025. However, not always, because sometimes we ask City of Cape Town officials to assist us with anything, and we do not receive the assistance from them.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, mostly.”*

***How do you believe public participation can be improved?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“We do have some difficulties sometimes when community members inform city officials about their challenges in the community, particularly with housing.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Public meetings are successful sometimes because we need to tell people what is going on in our community as ward committees, but at some point, community members just become confused.”*

***Does the Councillor consult you before performing any services in your area? Please explain.***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes, we do have some discussions with the ward councillor.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, the councillor consults and informs us about service delivery issues. In our area, we always have an issue with electricity so that we would go to the councillor officer, and he would help us to fix the box of electricity.”*

***Do you receive feedback on service delivery by your Ward 52 Councillor?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Yes, we receive feedback from both the councillor and the officials from the City of Cape Town.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Yes, we are in continuous dialogue with multiple municipal stakeholders, including ward councillor and City of Cape Town department officials, who provide ongoing input.”*

***To what extent are you involved in evaluating participatory governance initiatives and municipal service performance within Ward 52?***

Ward Committee Member 1

*“Sometimes we would come up with something that we need for our community; for example, we had a plan to cater food for elderly people, but that was not successful due to the officials refusing to help with some of the things, then we ended up not continuing with our project.”*

Ward Committee Member 2

*“Not all of us are satisfied with the service delivery.”*

This section also demonstrated mixed impressions of participation in service delivery among ward committee members. However, a clear impression that the ward committee members were reportedly involved in some form of participation as a key community group. Nevertheless, it also appeared that the ward community members are not well informed of the

public participation concept, and there is a need for educational programmes to inform them about public participation, its nature and how to make it effective.

There were clear differences in the perspectives of council officials and community residents. Whereas ward committee members and local government officials were more aligned to support that the practice of public participation was successfully being undertaken, community members demonstrated little support for this. Community members were more dissatisfied with service delivery matters such as housing, streetlights and sewer pipes. Their dissatisfaction result in criticisms of local government functions and perceptions of poor government engagement.

#### **4.6 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This study has generally found weak satisfaction with public engagement and participation and poor involvement in council decision making among the respondents. The results support earlier studies such as that of Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2022: 644), who argued that public officials often demonstrate reluctance to integrate citizen feedback into decision-making structures, particularly when public meeting attendance is limited or unrepresentative of broader community demographics. This tension between participatory ideals and administrative practice is further examined by Eckerd and Heidelberg (2020:133), who identify a persistent dichotomy in municipal governance. While citizen engagement aligns with democratic principles, the technical complexity of many government functions creates inherent barriers to substantive public influence.

The results of the study also do not support the theory of participative democracy, which centralises community involvement and public participation. The role of public or community participation in public matters forms a vital component of democracy (Talpin, 2024:221). The poor public participation, as established in this study, is not ideal for South Africa as a democracy. Burdett (2024:308) highlighted that public participation is central to a democratic society. This view takes community participation as a manifestation of democracy and the role of the people by the people (Makumu & Mlambo, 2024:44). South Africa is a democracy, and there is more need to recognise public participation. Public participation forms a contrast to the apartheid era exclusion of the black majority in South Africa. In this view, community participation is readily accepted as critical in a democracy. These arguments were not practically supported in this study conducted in 2024, as weak public participation was evident. The public service is made up of institutions such as wards and councils that are aimed at ensuring the availability of services, infrastructure or goods and projects that are aimed at societal development, and public participation should be considered important. The efficient provision of these public services constitutes a fundamental component of local governance

as it ensures the general welfare of society and public participation, allowing for service delivery that meets public expectations. The functions of public administration were traditionally bestowed to government officials who operated from a centralised approach as they made decisions for the people with no or minimum involvement of the public (Talpin, 2024:221). Contemporary public management theories advocate for citizen-centric administrative systems grounded in participatory governance principles. Consequently, modern trends in the community participation concept suggest a shift to a more decentralised approach that is based on the involvement of the public within public sector decision making and functions.

#### **4.7 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This chapter's analysis reveals significant deficiencies in current public participation mechanisms for service delivery within the studied community. The findings demonstrate an urgent need to develop and implement a structured participatory framework to enhance both civic engagement and municipal service outcomes. The study findings can be considered as below.

##### **4.7.1 Service delivery and public participation, protest**

- A lot of people were interested in knowing more about public participation explanations, meaning that they were not knowledgeable of what they needed to do as community members.
- The concept had to be explained to them and seemingly, some did not know that they were very right to consult in anything related to service delivery in their area.
- Councillor do not even visit the communities or the area.
- Community members were complaining more about poor communication with their councillor.
- There is dissatisfaction with the delivery service, and this was considered a key cause of protest. Other reasons for protesting included the responsiveness of the local government officials and the need for certain vital services in the community.

##### **4.7.2 Consultation, feedback, informed for meetings, providing information**

- Favouritism, the councillor does not listen to everyone he's got his favourite.
- Some have never seen the councillor in their street and engaging with them.
- The councillor does not listen to them.
- Community residents demonstrate limited familiarity with their elected council representative, and they are not involved most of the time.
- The council members and city officials present their conclusions to the community members without consulting them first.

- They do not receive or evaluate feedback from the councillor.
- Community members do not want to attend meetings as they feel like there is no need because the councillor make empty promises.
- Not everyone is part of a WhatsApp group, about 90 % of community members are not aware that there is a WhatsApp group where the councillor informs them. I believe maybe people do not have phones.
- Most of the meetings are not successful since they do not receive what they want, there are no outcomes or results of the project connected to service delivery, and the councillor merely gives them false promises.

#### **4.7.2.1 Ward committees and councillor roles and responsibilities**

- People do not know the ward committees' responsibilities.
- A lot of people were scared to talk, but you can see that they were not happy, but eventually, they did talk.
- Most of the community members did not know about the ward committee, I believe they are not visible at all.
- Some community members stated that the councillor may provide information to the ward committee, but the ward committee does not provide information to community members.
- However, the majority were saying they did not get enough information from the councillor and ward committees.

#### **4.7.3 Challenges that they have in the selected township**

- Main public service delivery issues were found to be blockage of drains, not having houses, streetlights that are not working, areas that are not clean, unemployment, and crime.
- Learners who did not pass matric.
- There are no toilets in some places.
- Bins are not collected, and taps are not working.

### **4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented and critically analysed empirical data about public participation mechanisms within the study context. Through rigorous examination of the data sources used, key findings have emerged that there were significant gaps between participatory policies and their practical implementation. The chapter also revealed the challenges to meaningful community engagement. Building upon these evidence-based insights, the subsequent chapter synthesises the study's major conclusions and proposes actionable policy recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the challenges to effective public participation in governance processes within Langa Township. The research employed a qualitative methodological approach, comprising in-depth interviews with three key stakeholder groups: (i) township residents, (ii) local government officials operating within the community, and (iii) elected ward committee members. This triangulated data collection strategy enabled a comprehensive analysis of participatory challenges from multiple perspectives. This chapter presents the conclusions summarises the study, outlines its study limitations and contributions, suggests directions for future studies, and offer recommendations to address the problem of unsatisfactory public participation – ultimately aiming to improve public service delivery. Essentially, the challenges involved in community participation were considered from the responses provided by the community members, ward committee members and local government officials. The present chapter has a summary of the findings, the conclusions as well as the recommendations. The study's recommendations derive directly from empirical findings and address identified barriers to meaningful public participation. These evidence-based proposals hold significant relevance not only for Langa Township, where the research was conducted but also for comparable communities facing similar governance challenges. This study was conducted in view of the dynamic environment and the need to ensure that community participation is effectively done in a manner that addresses national and local needs as well as to foster satisfactory service delivery in South African communities.

#### 5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

**Table 5.1: Major findings of this study.**

Research objective	Major findings
To assess the level of knowledge among community members regarding public participation in local governance	Findings suggest that the respondents lacked knowledge of what public participation is and they wanted it to be explained and clarified to them. This finding highlights a significant gap in respondents' understanding of public participation, indicating a need for clearer communication and education on the concept. This lack of awareness may hinder effective civic engagement, as people cannot participate meaningfully in processes they do not fully comprehend. By enhancing public knowledge, stakeholders can foster more inclusive and effective participation, ensuring that community members are equipped to realise their right to participatory governance in matters determining their quality of life and access to essential services.

<p>To assess community members' knowledge and perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of public servants in facilitating and implementing public participation</p>	<p>Research findings revealed a significant knowledge gap among respondents regarding their elected councillor's mandated responsibilities as well as ward committees with regard to facilitating public participation. The results reveal a concerning lack of public awareness regarding the roles and responsibilities of councillors and ward committees. While some respondents demonstrated partial familiarity, many remained unclear about their functions, suggesting ineffective communication. The unavailability of information on public meetings weakens community engagement in local governance.</p>
<p>To determine the concept of public participation as a tool to upgrade service delivery within the City of Cape Town Municipality.</p>	<p>Evidence from this study suggests that many residents did not know community participation and were interested in knowing more about public participation, which meant that they were not knowledgeable of what they needed to do as community members. The residents requested for the concept to be explained to them and seemingly, some did not know. Respondents were not aware of their right to consult on anything related to service delivery in their area. It was found that community participation was very weak, and the Councillor does not even visit the communities or the area. The Community members complained about poor communication with their councillor. There was general dissatisfaction with service delivery, and this was mentioned to be a key cause for protest. Other reasons for protesting included the irresponsiveness of the local government officials and the need for certain vital services in the community.</p>
<p>To determine the challenges to public participation in the community</p>	<p>The effectiveness of public participation is critically undermined by a combination of institutional and communal challenges. As highlighted in this study, a fundamental barrier is the lack of responsiveness and an unwillingness to listen from municipal officials, which fosters distrust and apathy. This institutional failure is compounded by practical shortcomings, such as the lack of information about meetings and a unclear understanding of official duties, which effectively exclude community members from the process. Concurrently, pre-existing negative attitudes within the community itself can further hinder engagement. These challenges are deeply interconnected; official unresponsiveness breeds community disillusionment, creating a vicious cycle that stifles genuine collaboration. Ultimately, overcoming these obstacles requires a dual approach: officials must demonstrate a genuine commitment to listening and acting on feedback, while simultaneously working to rebuild trust and proactively inform and educate the citizenry..</p>
<p>To determine the effectiveness of the consultation process</p>	<p>Both ward committee members and municipal officials indicated that, although community participation was allowed, residents complained on issues such as favouritism, the failure to listen to their needs and the councillor's infrequent visits to the communities. Some residents have never seen the councillor in their street or engaging with them.</p>

	<p>It appears that the councillor is largely unknown to the community, and member involvement is minimal. Residents indicated that council members and city officials presented their decisions and conclusions, without first checking and consulting the community at large. Residents also highlighted that they did not receive or evaluate feedback from the councillor. Community members they did not want to attend meetings as they felt like there was no need because councillor gave empty promises. It was also indicated that not everyone is part of the WhatsApp group of the ward, and about 90% of community members were not aware that there was a WhatsApp group where the councillor communicated with them. Most of the meetings were not successful since there was no commitment to effective service delivery.</p>
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**Source:** Own construction from findings

### 5.3 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study found that the views of local government officials and residents on community participation were different. Whereas the local government officials felt that they were doing their best, residents noted that nothing in this regard was being implemented successfully. It has also been established that the challenges, benefits, successes and possible implementation of community participation remain poorly understood. As was established in this study, community participation can positively affect community development if properly implemented, but the lack of an appropriate implementation model meant that community participation remains poor. Community participation can lead to increased engagement, improve chances of successful service delivery, create opportunities to explore unresolved service delivery matters, reduce conflict, enable creativity and result in competent local governance in a way that addresses community social needs. These benefits are not being realised because there are no effective community participation models, as evidenced by poor knowledge of it, failure to realise how it is being done and the inability to effectively know about it. This study supported the literature that the challenge of poor service delivery in South African municipalities remains a significant challenge that is leading to public protest and unrest. In other words, while there is an acceptance that community participation is important and is a necessary introduction to the local governance system, its successful implementation has not been fully realized owing to various challenges. Despite some perceived benefits of the implementation of community participation, challenges are still notable, and all stakeholders still have to cooperate in order for it to be successfully implemented. Strategies for its implementation include stakeholder engagement, capacitation, training and re-skilling of local government officials for implementation and the provision of adequate government support.

## **5.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study focused on one ward within the City of Cape Town metropolitan municipalities. Future researchers may consider inquiries about community participation in other wards and establish its nature across larger geographical areas. This study adopted semi-structured interviews, and further studies may adopt other research methodologies like the mixed method design to increase understanding of this matter. This study also recommends that there is a need to explore a model for community participation to improve service delivery within local government.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has presented an insight into the nature of community participation and the challenges that affect its adoption. Drawing upon the study's empirical findings, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed:

- The community members need to be educated about all levels of government (local, provincial, and national). It is recommended that council members and other city officials hold events where they hand out flyers, be more visible, and set up gazebos to raise awareness of community participation. This would help the public become more knowledgeable.
- The study also recommends that community members should regularly attend meetings and discuss their problems. These meetings should improve the engagement and participation of residents in local government matters.
- Council members should provide the community provide the opportunity to provide their views on key matters of their community. Feedback should also be provided to community members on service delivery requests.
- Digital systems of community engagement should be widely adopted. These may include social media platforms and other web-based or online systems.
- Ward committees need to engage more often with community members.
- Councillor should be ready to interact with residents both at their localities and at the local government offices.
- Sessions should be organised to educate community people on the roles of ward committees and councillors, emphasising their right to learn more about service delivery in their region.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH CITY



CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA  
STAD KAAPSTAD

#### URBAN MANAGEMENT

**Andre Louw**

Professional Officer Urban Management

T: 021400 9809

C: 079 145 8834

E: AndreA.Louw@capetown.gov.za

**To whom it may Concern**

**Re: Confirmation letter of permission for Ms. Nomaxhanti Mgabile**

Dear Sir/Madam

Please accept this letter as confirmation that permission has been given to Ms. Nomaxhanti Mgabile to research her Master Thesis on Public Participation.

I will avail myself to provide necessary information as well be part of the research questions that will form part of her research. I look forward to being of assistance to her and that of her thesis.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please give me a call on the above number as she reports to me on a daily basis.

Kind Regards

**Andre Louw**

*AA Louw*

Public Participation Unit  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Podium Block Civic Centre  
12 Hertzog Boulevard  
Cape Town  
8000

**Tel:** 021 400 9809 | **Email:** [AndreA.Louw@capetown.gov.za](mailto:AndreA.Louw@capetown.gov.za)

**Web:** [www.capetown.gov.za](http://www.capetown.gov.za)



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**Making progress possible. Together.**

## APPENDIX B: APPROVAL REQUEST LETTER

Date: 19 February 2024  
To: Director: Policy & Strategy  
Reference: PSRR-1092

### Research Approval Request

In terms of the City of Cape Town System of Delegations (Research

In terms of the City of Cape Town System of Delegations (June 2023) - Part 35, No 2 Subsection 2, 3 and 4

“Research:

- (2) To consider any request for the commissioning of an organizational wide (excluding directorate specific) research report in the City and to approve or refuse such a request.
- (3) To grant authority to external parties that wish to conduct research within the City of Cape Town and/or publish the results thereof.
- (4) In consultation with the relevant Executive Director: grant permission to employees of the City of Cape Town to conduct research, surveys etc. related to their studies, within the relevant directorate.).

### **The Director: Policy & Strategy is hereby requested to consider, in terms of Sub-Section Academics, the request received from:**

Names: Nomaxhanti Mgabile  
Designation: Masters Candidate  
Affiliation: Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Research Title: Challenges of public participation in local government: A case study of a township in the Cape Metropole.

Taking into account the recommendations below:

### Recommendations

The CCT via the Director: Policy & Strategy grants permission to Nomaxhanti Mgabile from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, to conduct research subject to the following conditions:

#### General conditions

- Engagement is limited to the scope and scale of the study, and restricted to the participants' professional input;
- Additional CCT respondents or data to be identified and line approval sought via an addendum to initial (approved) request;
- Clear acknowledgement in the research report that the analysis generated from City data does not constitute official CCT policy;
- Clear acknowledgement in the research report that views of the CCT officials are not interpreted as official CCT policy where interviews are granted;
- Interviews and/or participation from CCT staff are not to interfere with staff assigned work and tasks;

#### POPIA compliance

- The researcher to familiarise him/herself with and ensure POPIA compliance, which is to be strictly and fully adhered to;

#### Limitations

- Approval is subject to staff capacity (time and resource availability) and the willingness of City officials to participate in the research, on a voluntary basis;
- The use of direct quotations in the report to be agreed in advance and in writing by the respondent concerned, and any text for direct quotation/s must be verified and signed off ahead of any publication of the report;
- City officials and their inputs, including any quotations, are to be anonymised, and referenced by the functional role, and not by name or designation in the City;
- The City logo and brand, not be used in the research publication unless with the City's consent;

#### Future obligations

- The City, will have no current and/or future obligation to either fund, avail resources, or to partner with the researcher or another party/entity partaking in the research as a whole or partially. This also includes any findings or recommendation for implementation;

#### CCT Engagements

- For the Citizen Interface Department, the identification of officials for interviews is to be advised by Ntombizandile Mahlasela via Zandile.Mahlasela@capetown.gov.za;
- Researcher has approval to interview the following CCT officials in the relevant line department(s) as stipulated;
- All applicants to be available to share a presentation on request by the CCT line department, on a shared platform;

#### Sharing of research products

- The final draft of the academic publication and any other related future publications to be submitted to the Citizen Interface Department and the Research Branch, for information;
- Submission of the completed research report to Director: Policy and Strategy Department, the Manager: Research, Policy and Strategy, within 3 months of completion of the research report;

#### Validity of Approval

- This approval is effective from date of signature/acceptance of the recommendations by the researcher, and is valid for three years, only if:
  - i. The scope and scale has not been amended;
  - ii. The primary researcher(s) has not changed;

#### **Delegated Authority:**

Status: Approved

Comments:

**Director: Policy & Strategy: Hugh Cole**

**Date: 19 February 2024**

Date: 19 February 2024

To: Director: Policy & Strategy

Reference: PSRR-1092

#### **Research Approval Request**

In terms of the City of Cape Town System of Delegations (Research

In terms of the City of Cape Town System of Delegations (June 2023) - Part 35, No 2 Subsection 2, 3 and 4 "Research:

- (2) To consider any request for the commissioning of an organizational wide (excluding directorate specific) research report in the City and to approve or refuse such a request.
- (3) To grant authority to external parties that wish to conduct research within the City of Cape Town and/or publish the results thereof.
- (4) In consultation with the relevant Executive Director: grant permission to employees of the City of Cape Town to conduct research, surveys etc. related to their studies, within the relevant directorate. )

**The Director: Policy & Strategy is hereby requested to consider, in terms of Sub-Section Academics, the request received from**

Names: Nomaxhanti Mgabile  
Designation: Masters Candidate  
Affiliation: Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Research Title: Challenges of public participation in local government: A case study of a township in the Cape Metropole.

Taking into account the recommendations below:

**Recommendations**

The CCT via the Director: Policy & Strategy grants permission to Nomaxhanti Mgabile from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, to conduct research subject to the following conditions:

**General conditions**

- Engagement is limited to the scope and scale of the study, and restricted to the participants' professional input;
- Additional CCT respondents or data to be identified and line approval sought via an addendum to initial (approved) request;
- Clear acknowledgement in the research report that the analysis generated from City data does not constitute official CCT policy;
- Clear acknowledgement in the research report that views of the CCT officials are not interpreted as official CCT policy where interviews are granted;
- Interviews and/or participation from CCT staff are not to interfere with staff assigned work and tasks;

**POPIA compliance**

- The researcher to familiarise him/herself with and ensure POPIA compliance, which is to be strictly and fully adhered to;

**Limitations**

- Approval is subject to staff capacity (time and resource availability) and the willingness of City officials to participate in the research, on a voluntary basis;
- The use of direct quotations in the report to be agreed in advance and in writing by the respondent concerned, and any text for direct quotation/s must be verified and signed off ahead of any publication of the report;
- City officials and their inputs, including any quotations, are to be anonymised, and referenced by the functional role, and not by name or designation in the City;

- The City logo and brand, not be used in the research publication unless with the City's consent;



N.M

## APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER



Dear Respondent

My name is Nomaxhanti Mgabile, I am a Master of Public Administration student at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. I am currently conducting a study for the abovementioned degree entitled Challenges of public participation in local government: a case study of a township in Cape Metropole, under the supervision of Mrs Althea Whitaker. I am kindly seeking your permission and assistance in completing this interview based on your knowledge, experience, and involvement in public participation in the local government. This interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time. The response or data collected will generate the information needed for the study.

The objective of the study is to determine the effectiveness of public participation as a method for improving service delivery within the City of Cape Town Municipality. The information obtained in this study will be used to draw some conclusion and it will be treated with confidence without any reference to specific participants. I would also like to advise that participation to the study is voluntary, this also means at any time when you want to withdraw from the study will be granted an opportunity to do so. At any stage you, should you need further clarification, do not hesitate to contact me on the following contact details:

Cell no. (+2778 549 0210); Email address (nomaxhantimgabile@gmail.com)

Your participation in this study will be appreciated. You are kindly requested to complete the table below and provide your Name and signature to show your consent. Your names and your responses will however be kept anonymous as the data will all be aggregated.

Names	Signature	Date

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nomaxhanti Mgabile', is written over a blue horizontal line.

**Nomaxhanti Mgabile**

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

### Instructions

- Please tick the appropriate response
- Please fill in the given spaces
- The interview is divided into sub-sections as per the research objectives

### Section A: Demographic details

#### 1. Please indicate your Gender

Female	Male	Other

#### 2. Please indicate your age

15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-49 yrs	50 yrs +

#### 3. Please indicate highest educational level?

Primary School	Secondary School	High School	Tertiary

#### 4. Employment

No	Yes	Self employed

#### 5. How long have you worked for the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality?

Less than 2 yrs	2-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10 yrs or over

#### 6. Please indicate your ethnicity?

Black	Coloured	White	Indian	Other

### Section B: Public participation as a tool to improve service delivery within the City of Cape Town Municipality

#### 7. Are you happy with service delivery provision in your community?

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#### 8. Do residents protest in your township? Yes/No

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**9. If yes, what drives them to protest?**

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**10. Do residents attend any local government meetings? Please explain your answer.**

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**11. Do you know what public participation is? Yes/No.**

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**12. If yes, what is the position of the local government on public participation and service delivery?**

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**13. What are the challenges to public participation in local government service delivery meetings in your area?**

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#### **Section C: The role of the local government authorities in public participation**

**14. Are the roles and responsibilities of local government officials clearly defined for the residents to understand the role you play in service delivery?**

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**15. Do you inform residents about meetings? Yes/No.**

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- 16. Are you satisfied with the level of public participation on service delivery issues? Please explain?**

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**Section D: Structures for the facilitation of public participation in the City of Cape Town Municipality**

- 17. What are the channels and platforms used by the local government to communicate with residents from Langa Township?**

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- 18. What public participation programmes does the local government have for community engagements on service delivery? Please explain.**

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- 19. How can public participation be improved?**

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**Section E: Effectiveness of the consultation process in Ward 52**

- 20. Are the public participation meetings fruitful in Ward 52? Please explain.**

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- 21. Are community residents involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area? Please explain.**

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**22. Do you provide feedback on service delivery to the community in Ward 52?**

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**23. Do you give residents the opportunity to evaluate the public participation meetings and service delivery in Ward 52?**

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WARD COMMITTEES

### Instructions

- Please tick the appropriate response
- Please fill in the given spaces
- The interview is divided into sub-sections as per the research objectives

### Section A: Demographic details

#### 1. Please indicate your Gender

Female	Male	Other

#### 2. Please indicate your age

15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-49 yrs	50 yrs +

#### 3. Please indicate highest educational level?

Primary School	Secondary School	High School	Tertiary
		X	

#### 4. Employment

No	Yes	Self employed

#### 5. How long have you lived in this township as a community member?

Less than 2 yrs	2-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10 yrs or over

#### 6. Please indicate your ethnicity?

Black	Coloured	White	Indian	Other

### Section B: Public participation as a tool to improve service delivery within the City of Cape Town Municipality

#### 7. Are you happy with the service delivery in your community?

#### 8. Do you protest in your township? Yes/No

#### 9. If yes, what drives you to protest?

#### 10. Have you ever attended any local government meetings? Please explain your answer.

#### 11. Do you know what public participation is? Yes/No.

#### 12. If yes, what is your position on public participation and service delivery?

#### 13. What are the challenges to public participation in local government service delivery meetings in your area?

**Section C: The role of the local government authorities in public participation**

- 14. Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of your councillor and ward committees? Yes/No.**
- 15. Are you informed about meetings? Yes/No.**
- 16. Do you believe the councillor provides you with enough information about the decisions they make in terms service delivery? Please explain your answer.**

**Section D: Structures for the facilitation of public participation in the City of Cape Town Municipality**

- 17. What are the channels and platforms used by the local government to communicate with residents from Langa Township?**
- 18. Do you get involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area? Please explain.**
- 19. How do you believe public participation can be improved?**

**Section E: Effectiveness of the consultation process in Ward 52**

- 20. Do you believe public participation meetings are fruitful in Ward 52? Please explain.**
- 21. Does the Councilor consult you before performing any services in your area? Please explain.**
- 22. Do you receive feedback on service delivery by your Ward 52 Councilor?**
- 23. Do you get the opportunity to evaluate the public participation meetings and service delivery in Ward 52?**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

### Instructions

- Please tick the appropriate response
- Please fill in the given spaces
- The interview is divided into sub-sections as per the research objectives

### Section A: Demographic details

#### 24. Please indicate your Gender

Female	Male	Other

#### 25. Please indicate your age

15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-49 yrs	50 yrs +

#### 26. Please indicate highest educational level?

Primary School	Secondary School	High School	Tertiary

#### 27. Employment

No	Yes	Self employed

#### 28. How long have you lived in this township as a community member?

Less than 2 yrs	2-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10 yrs or over

#### 29. Please indicate your ethnicity?

Black	Coloured	White	Indian	Other

### Section B: Public participation as a tool to improve service delivery within the City of Cape Town Municipality

#### 30. Are you happy with the service delivery in your community?

#### 31. Do you protest in your township? Yes/No

#### 32. If yes, what drives you to protest?

#### 33. Have you ever attended any local government meetings? Please explain your answer.

#### 34. Do you know what public participation is? Yes/No.

#### 35. If yes, what is your position on public participation and service delivery?

**36. What are the challenges of public participation in local government service delivery meetings in your area?**

**Section C: The role of the local government authorities in public participation**

**37. Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of your councillor and ward committees? Yes/No.**

**38. Are you informed about meetings? Yes/No.**

**39. Do you believe the councillor provides you with enough information about the decisions they make in terms service delivery? Please explain your answer.**

**Section D: Structures for the facilitation of public participation in the City of Cape Town Municipality**

**40. What are the channels and platforms used by the local government to communicate with residents from Langa Township?**

**41. Do you get involved in key local government decisions for service delivery in your area? Please explain.**

**42. How do you believe public participation can be improved?**

**Section E: Effectiveness of the consultation process in Ward 52**

**43. Do you believe public participation meetings are fruitful in Ward 52? Please explain.**

**44. Does the Councilor consult you before performing any services in your area? Please explain.**

**45. Do you receive feedback on service delivery by your Ward 52 Councilor?**

**46. Do you get the opportunity to evaluate the public participation meetings and service delivery in Ward 52?**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## APPENDIX G: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

### DECLARATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled:

**CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE STUDY  
OF A TOWNSHIP IN THE CAPE METROPOLIS**

authored by **Nomaxhanti Mgabile**

has been proofread and edited for grammar, punctuation and clarity (excluding the appendices).

**Date of Editing Completion:** 12 June 2025

**Editor: Sibonginkosi Saruchera**

Doctor in Human Resource Management, Master of Science in Human resource Management, Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relation, Diploma in Education, Certification in Proofreading and Editing -Masterclass. Academic Editor

[sibongimpofu@gmail.com](mailto:sibongimpofu@gmail.com)

**Signature:**



#### Disclaimer

The editor(s) make (s) no claim as to the accuracy of the manuscript contents nor the objectives of the author. While all possible efforts have been made to ensure text was edited is readable and grammatically correct, the author(s) have the option to accept or reject suggestions and trackable changes made to the document before submission.

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