

An evaluation of a communication process between the Gauteng Provincial Government and Development Forums in the mid-1990s

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Gauteng RDP Core Group booklets

- Booklet 1 Vista 2, Ready for Delivery with the People, Pre-Conference Information Pack, 8 April 1995, Gauteng
Listed in Bibliography as Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a
- Booklet 2 Vista 2, Conference Briefing, 1 July 1995, Gauteng
Listed in Bibliography as Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995b
- Booklet 3 Vista 2, Conference Papers, 29 July 1995, Gauteng
Listed in Bibliography as Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995c
- Booklet 4 Vista 2, Conference Report, Witwatersrand Technikon, Johannesburg, Gauteng, 29 July 1995
Listed in Bibliography as Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d

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All social research sets out with specific *purposes* from a particular *position*, and aims to *persuade* readers of the significance of its claims; these claims are always broadly *political* (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002:4).

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the dissertation in the field of Development Communication (DC) and introduces the research topic and the research questions. It explains the value of the study, from a basic and an applied research point of view. The researcher's position on ethical issues is also made clear. Then the structure of the dissertation is presented. The chapter concludes by defining frequently used names and concepts, listing abbreviations and explaining the use of appendices.

1.2 The field of Development Communication

Development Communication draws on insights from a number of social sciences such as Development Studies and Communication. These fields of study developed over the past half century from subjects such as History and Anthropology, in the case of Development Studies (Long, 1985:198-199), and from Psychology, Sociology, and Public Administration in the case of Communication (McQuail, 1984:1-59 & 199-237; Miller, 1985:132-133; and Littlejohn & Foss, 2005:1-59).

In this study the communication dimension of a participatory development process is analysed. The literature review in Chapter 2, presented as a set of questions, provides a chronological overview of Development Communication since its inception in the mid-twentieth century.

1.3 Overview of the research topic

The research topic is about a development communication process, generally referred to as the Vista process, which took place in the Gauteng province of South Africa in the mid-1990s.

The Vista process lasted from early June 1994 to the end of July 1995. Its start and end dates were punctuated by two well-attended provincial conferences arranged for Gauteng citizens, at the outset particularly for members of the ANC. As the first of these conferences was held on the Soweto campus of Vista University, it became known as Vista 1. The second conference, held on the campus of the Witwatersrand Technikon, Johannesburg, was called Vista 2.

The Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) planned the process in terms of the then newly launched Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the ANC-led government which came to power in May 1994. One of the 'six basic principles of the RDP' was that it was a 'people driven process' which called for the 'active involvement and growing empowerment' of the citizenry. This approach built on 'the many forums, peace structures and negotiations that our people are involved in throughout the land' (ANC, 1994:4, 5).

The communication process between the GPG and Gauteng citizens was thus planned as a government–civil society participatory venture based on three elements from the above mentioned RDP principle, i.e. the active involvement of citizens through forums which would ensure a people-driven process.

The topic for the first conference was ‘planning the renewal of the townships’ (Turok, 2003:267). It was held on 4 June 1994 and was initiated by Gauteng RDP Commissioner, Ben Turok. RDP work was given high priority and the Commissioner was attached to the Office of the Premier of the Province. In his address to the conference, Premier Tokyo Sexwale encouraged the participants to organise themselves for participation in development work with government.

As a follow-up meeting to Vista 1, a consultative workshop was arranged by the GPG in August 1994. The GPG requested a small group of people to assist it in the process of civil society consultation and organisation and to report back at a subsequent provincial conference. On completion of its work the group would cease to function.

The body formed by this group became known as the Gauteng RDP Core Group — Core Group for short. It consisted of a number of staff members of the RDP Office in the GPG, members of NGOs and a few business people. Somewhat later a few senior officials from the GPG joined the Core Group but they were withdrawn from participation by their political and administrative principals by April 1995.

Towards the end of the Vista process, citizens who served in six Networking Committees established in the six geographic sub-regions of the Province through the work of the Core Group, also became members of the Core Group. The function of these committees was to coordinate and extend communication and organisation in each sub-region and to represent sub-regions in communication with the Core Group and the GPG.

The Core Group started its work in September 1994 and in terms of its information dissemination and organisation brief, it communicated with Gauteng communities in various ways. Activities it undertook, included participation in workshops in the six sub-regional areas of the province and facilitation in establishing Local Development Forums (LDFs) and Community Development Forums (CDFs) in many Gauteng towns and townships.

In this organisational process the Core Group served as a link between the GPG and the communities. It also helped shape the structure and activities of Development Forums and prepared them for interaction with the GPG at Vista 2. This conference was held on 29 July 1995. It was attended by 450 people from all the sub-regions of the province as well as GPG political leaders and staff members. The Core Group organised the conference while the programme for the day was mainly determined by the GPG.

At Vista 2, three senior members of the GPG reviewed the process of the previous fourteen months and outlined their ideas on participatory development planning, particularly at local government level.

The Networking Committees of the sub-regions also reported at this conference on the work they had done since Vista 1. They sought clarity from government on their composition, accreditation and resourcing. The Core Group also presented a report on its work since its inception in August 1994.

The Vista 2 Conference included group sessions which focused on discussions about setting Land Development Objectives (LDOs) in terms of the provisions of the Development Facilitation Act (DFA). This act was chosen by the GPG as the framework for future interaction at municipal level between civil society and local authorities.

This summary sets the research scene. How the Vista process was conceptualised as a research problem and the main concepts with which the research is operationalised, are introduced in Section 1.5 and elaborated in Chapter 3. First, Section 1.4 discusses the need for this study and the practical and theoretical context within which it was done.

1.4 Basic and applied research needs

As the Vista process was one of the first RDP-based government-civil society participatory processes after the ANC-led government came to power in 1994, it is an important project to record. Atkinson (1996:298-310) published short accounts of five government-civil society interaction processes which took place at about the same time as the Vista process. This author concluded that in each case the state had a different approach to interaction with civil society. The five cases were:

- ‘The “directionless state”, which characterised the Department of Transport’s response to the taxi industry.
- The “hostile state”, as exemplified by the Department of Health during 1994.
- The “corporatist state”, which evolved between the Department of Labour, the business sector and labour organisations.
- The state aligned with the “grassroots”, as was the case of the Department of Water Affairs.
- The “pluralist state”, which was typified by the Department of Housing’ (Atkinson, 1996:298).

Atkinson (1996:313) argued that there was ‘a great need for sustained research and monitoring of the relationship between government and civil society in South Africa’. The results of such studies would ‘enable us to learn from the successes and failures of various departments’. This would also assist in evolving ‘the most

effective form of policy-making, by finding mechanisms in which civil society can exercise influence without losing its autonomy in the process’.

The present study feeds into the discourse on the relationship between government and civil society in South Africa. Besides providing another case study about government-civil society interaction, possibly to aid policy and implementation, this study will form part of the knowledge base on participatory development communication.

This inquiry will also add to the interest scholars in Development Studies have shown in development forums. This interest emerged, for example, in an overview of the RDP from 1994 to 1996 in which Stewart (1997:4), in referring to the immediate 1994 post-election period, mentioned that ‘the tradition of community mobilization in the black community¹ has led to goodwill towards the RDP outside programmes and projects using RDP funds. In places there has been a groundswell of community support for activities in the spirit of the RDP—for example, the setting up of some Local Development Forums in Gauteng and Northern Cape provinces’.

Insights from the fields of Communication, Development Communication and Development Support Communication (DSC) provide the basis in this study, for designing a theoretically derived ideal-type instrument to evaluate the communication patterns in the Vista process. Relevant aspects of these theories are drawn on in designing this instrument. See Chapter 2.

The Vista process also affords a testing ground for theories in the above mentioned fields, a matter which is taken up again in Chapter 5.

1.5 From research interest to research problem

This section deals with four matters. First the researcher’s interest in the Vista process is explained. Then his interest in the Vista process is formulated as a topic which is then converted into a problem statement. Finally a number of tightly focused research questions are spelt out.

1.5.1 The researcher’s interest in the Vista process

One of the sources of communication research problems is personal interest (Du Plooy, 2001:57) which according to Mouton (1996:65) begins with a thought, a question or a hypothesis which prompts the researcher to ask a question that requires an answer.

Since enrolling for a degree in Development Communication the researcher has been interested in researching the Vista process. This process, in which he participated as a member of a communication facilitation body, started off with

¹ Civil society participation in the Vista process was not limited to black people. Although blacks formed the majority, forums were also established in communities inhabited by coloureds, Indians and whites. A number of LDFs which corresponded in geographical spread to the boundaries of local authorities, consisted of representatives from different population groups, for example, the Benoni LDF which had representatives from three population groups. This was in line with one of the aims of Vista 1, i.e. to bridge the divide between white towns and black townships.

considerable enthusiasm on both government and civil society side, but ended rather abruptly somewhat more than a year later².

Termination of the Vista process was a disappointment to many people who participated in it, particularly the civil society groupings. After hundreds of community members from all over Gauteng and many members of NGOs, business people and government officials had put much time and effort into this process, it seemed a pity that it came to an inconclusive end, or at least an unsatisfactory one, particularly from a communication and leadership point of view.

The researcher was also disappointed at the outcome of the Vista process. This study offers the opportunity for detached analysis and reflection in an attempt to reach a fuller understanding of the process.

The remainder of this section deals with formulations to convert the interest in the Vista process into a number of analytic research statements. These formulations lead from the research topic to a statement of the research problem and finally to a number of research questions.

1.5.2 The research topic

The research topic reads as follows:

An evaluation of a communication process between the Gauteng Provincial Government and Development Forums in the mid-1990s

The focus of the study is on the communication patterns in the Vista process. After describing and analysing these patterns, they are evaluated by means of a theoretically derived ideal-type instrument. The term ‘ideal-type instrument’ is adapted from De Vaus’ concept ‘ideal-type analysis’ (2001:251). An alternative term would be ‘best practice analysis’ or a ‘best practice evaluation instrument’. The researcher prefers ‘ideal-type’ in this context because some of the theoretical precepts on which the evaluation instrument is based, rely more on the *formulation* of ideals than on their tried and trusted *application* in projects. In this regard see the discussion on the views of Melkote in Section 2.5.3 and Agunga in Section 2.6.

² At the end of the first phase of the Vista process, the GPG announced continued government-civil society interaction. This would commence after the required national legislation had been passed. Government-civil society interaction would happen in a different way than anticipated in the Vista process, and at local government level. See discussion on the DFA in Phase 2 of the Vista process and the speeches by GPG leaders at the Vista 2 Conference, Sections 4.6 to 4.8.

1.5.3 The problem statement

The research topic is translated into the following problem statement. The problem statement is phrased as a broad question covering the research topic as a whole.

How do communication patterns in the Vista communication process compare with ideal types described in Communication theory, Development Communication theory and Development Support Communication theory?

Communication patterns in the Vista process are derived in the first place from the interaction between the benefactor, the GPG, and the beneficiaries, the communities of Gauteng — representatives from which Development Forums were established in the course of the Vista process. In addition there was one other important role player in the communication process, i.e. the Core Group. As the Core Group was appointed to assist in the interaction between the benefactor and the beneficiaries, its communication with these two role players forms a significant dimension of the communication patterns in the Vista process.

With a view to the Core Group's communication role and the similarity between its role and a Development Support Communication Unit (DSC Unit) described in DSC literature, one of the research questions, number 4 in Section 1.5.4, is dedicated to studying this communication support dimension. In fact the Core Group played such an important role in the Vista process that it has been decided to study its role as a sub-theme, or an embedded unit of analysis, alongside the communication patterns. This focus is reflected in questions 6, 9 and 10 in Section 1.5.4.

1.5.4 Research questions

Breaking the problem statement down into smaller and focused segments lead to the following formulation of the research questions:

Question 1

Which model of communication captures the essence and characteristics of communication?

Question 2

Considered from the perspective of Development Communication, which approach best suits a participatory development process?

Question 3

Which benefits does the perspective of Development Support Communication bring to a participatory development process?

Question 4

What are the characteristics of a Development Support Communication Unit and what contribution should such a unit make to support communication in a participatory development process?

Question 5

Considered from the perspective of civil society participation in a development process, which is the best mode of participation?

Question 6

What are the criteria that may be derived from the answers to the foregoing five questions in order to design an instrument to evaluate the communication patterns and the functioning of a 'DSC unit' in the Vista process?

These six research questions are theoretically-oriented and explicate a number of criteria for use in an evaluation instrument to measure and make sense of the *communication patterns and the role of the Core Group* in the Vista process.

Four additional questions — two methodological and two empirical — arise from the problem statement. The methodological questions inquire into the methods used to establish the communication patterns and the role of the Core Group in the Vista process. The empirical questions address the content of the communication patterns and the way in which the Core Group executed its brief. The questions read as follows:

Question 7

What methods were used to establish communication patterns in the Vista process?

Question 8

What was the nature and content of communication patterns in the Vista process?

Question 9

What methods were used to establish the role of the Core Group in the Vista process?

Question 10

How did the Core Group play a role in the Vista process and how did it execute its brief?

The answers to the first six questions are dealt with in Chapter 2 which reviews the literature on DC and DSC. Questions 7 and 9 are answered in Chapter 3 which deals with research design and process. The answers to Questions 8 and 10 are presented as part of the research findings in Chapter 4.

1.6 Ethics

Research participants should be protected in respect of their human and civil rights. This includes the principle of ‘do no harm’ in terms of which participants should not be caused physical discomfort, emotional stress, humiliation or embarrassment. Informed consent should also be obtained from research participants and their legal and cognitive competency, and their confidentiality and anonymity ensured (Du Plooy, 2001:90).

In this study the confidentiality of participants in the Vista process is preserved by quoting only the names of persons mentioned in published sources. Published sources include, e.g. two press reports and an autobiography by the RDP Commissioner at the time of the Vista process. The four booklets compiled by the Gauteng RDP Core Group, although listed in the Bibliography as unpublished sources, are regarded as published sources from a confidentiality point of view as they were widely disseminated in Gauteng after compilation. The booklets were not issued with an ISBN by the State Library — now called the National Library — and were therefore not subject to legal deposit in that library.

1.7 The structure of the dissertation

To achieve its descriptive and evaluative aims, the study is divided into two main parts. The first three chapters, *Introduction* (Chapter 1), *Literature review* (Chapter 2) and *Research design and process* (Chapter 3) form a unit. The type of information in these three chapters and their significance in structuring the research report is set out in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 THE TYPE OF INFORMATION PRESENTED IN CHAPTERS 1-3
 (adapted from Hart, 1998:14)

Section	Aim
Introduction	To show the aims, objectives, scope, rationale and design features of the research. The rationale is usually supported by reference to other works which have already identified the broad nature of the problem.
Literature review	To demonstrate skills in library searching; to show command of the subject area and understanding of the problem; to justify the research topic, design and methodology.
Methodology	To show the appropriateness of the techniques used to gather data and the methodological approaches employed. Relevant references from the literature are often used to show an understanding of data-collection techniques and methodological implications, and to justify their use over alternative techniques.

In writing Chapters 2 and 3 the ideas expressed in this table served as guidelines.

After setting the *research scene* and discussing its *theoretical* and *methodological* dimensions in the first three chapters, the *research findings* are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 reviews the content of the first four chapters and assesses how the initial research questions have been answered. It also makes a number of recommendations for further research in this field and for the possible application of insights from DSC to development projects and service delivery problems in South Africa.

It is hoped that by placing the Vista process within the framework of qualitative research and the theory and methodology of Development Communication and related subject areas, it will interest readers and researchers in these fields of inquiry.

1.8 Definitions

The following list includes definitions mainly related to the empirical data. Definitions of concepts accessed from theoretical literature are discussed in the sections dealing with these concepts.

Alliance, also ANC-Alliance

The Alliance refers to the political and labour movements which formed the new government in 1994. Of these the ANC was the most important. Its alliance partners were the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO).

Civil society

Civil society as used here includes that part of a society which is not the domain of the state. This includes the economy and non-economic organisations such as clubs, associations, non-profit organisations, non-governmental organisations and community organisations.

Communication pattern

A pattern in social contexts is described as ‘regular form or order (*behaviour pattern; pattern of one’s daily life*)’ (Sykes, 1976:809-810).

During the Vista process the way in which the participating groups (and individuals from the various groups) communicated with each other led to particular patterns. The thrust of this inquiry is to establish these communication patterns. In establishing patterns, one would, for example look at the following aspects of the communication process:

- whether it is one-directional or interactional? (McQuail, 1984:32)
- is it open or closed? (McQuail, 1984:32)
- are meanings fixed or transacted? (McQuail, 1984:33)
- is it to be seen from the perspective of the sender or the receiver? (McQuail, 1984:33)
- is it top-down, bottom-up or lateral?.

Communication process, see Vista process

Community Development Forum (CDF)

This term refers to the Development Forums that were established in all the major townships, and a number of towns, in Gauteng during the Vista process. They were forums which functioned at grass roots level in local communities and in some towns they were part of larger forums, Local Development Forums (LDFs) which geographically coincided approximately with the boundaries of local governments which were called transitional local councils in the mid-1990s. See also **Development Forum**.

Core Group

This body was formed by the GPG after the Vista 1 Conference to assist it in communicating with Gauteng communities and to facilitate the establishment of Community Development Forums and Local Development Forums.

Development Facilitation Act (DFA)

This Act, promulgated by the National Assembly in August 1994, aims at expediting development, particularly in relation to land use. It provides for community input in determining Land Development Objectives at local government level.

Development Forum

See Community Development Forum and Local Development Forum. The term Development Forum — with capitalised ‘D’ and ‘F’ is used as a shorthand term for ‘Community Development Forum and Local Development Forum’ or ‘CDF and LDF’, the two types of forums discussed in the dissertation. References to forum or forums — with a lower case ‘f’ denote the generic type of this social entity.

Evaluation Instrument

A theoretically-derived ideal type instrument or template developed in the dissertation to evaluate communication patterns in the Vista process.

Gauteng RDP Core Group

See Core Group.

Government

Government in this study usually refers to the Gauteng Provincial Government, in particular its RDP Office and later its Department of Development Planning, Environment and Works — shortened in this study to the Department of Development Planning.

Land Development Objective

The setting of land development objectives (LDOs) is prescribed by the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) to plan land use and to expedite development at local government level. The DFA provides for community input in establishing LDOs.

Local Development Forum

See Community Development Forum.

Networking Committee

Sub-regional structures, of which there were six in Gauteng in 1995, established by the Core Group to coordinate the work of Local Development and Community Development Forums in each geographical sub-region of the Province.

RDP Commission of the GPG

The RDP Commission of the GPG determined policy in relation to the RDP and monitored RDP projects.

RDP Office of the GPG

The RDP Office coordinated the implementation of RDP projects in Gauteng. Acting on a brief from the RDP Commission, the RDP Office initiated the Vista process.

Vista process

This includes all aspects of communication which occurred between the first and second Vista conferences and covers a period of fourteen months from June 1994 to July 1995. The name 'Vista' derives from the fact that the conference which initiated this process was held at the Soweto campus of the Vista University. This conference was known as Vista 1 and a subsequent similar conference as Vista 2.

Although the Vista process consisted of two main dimensions, communication and mobilisation, this study focuses on its communication dimension. The mobilisation work in relation to the establishment of Development Forums was part of the social interaction during the Vista process. But as the focus of this study is on communication, mobilisation is only dealt with in as far as it relates to a better understanding of the communication process.

Vista study

This is an easy reference term for the topic of the dissertation: An evaluation of a communication process between the Gauteng Provincial Government and Development Forums in the mid-1990s.

1.9 Abbreviations

This section provides a list of the frequently used abbreviations in the dissertation.

ANC	African National Congress
CDF	Community Development Forum
Core Group	Gauteng RDP Core Group
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DC	Development Communication
DDPE & W	Department of Development Planning, Environment and Works — in short Department of Development Planning
DFA	Development Facilitation Act

DSC	Development Support Communication
DSC Unit	Development Support Communication Unit
GPG	Gauteng Provincial Government
LDF	Local Development Forum
LDO	Land Development Objective
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACS	South African Communication Service
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TMC	Transitional Metropolitan Council

1.10 The use of appendices

The appendices consist of four booklets compiled by the Core Group. These booklets provide the documented communication messages exchanged between the role players. They were not published but disseminated among the participants. In this sense they form part of grey publications (Hart, 2001:94-106) as they are difficult to access. By making them available for the reader, the findings in the dissertation based on these documents may be verified, thus enhancing the reliability of the study. The titles of the booklets are listed in the table of content on p. v.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has introduced the research questions which the dissertation sets out to answer. The communication process to be analysed and evaluated has been introduced as well as the theoretical framework within which this will be done. By referring to the work of authors who have conducted research on similar topics, the research theme is placed in the field of DC and DSC. Ethical issues regarding the inquiry have also been discussed.

Lists of definitions and abbreviations used in the study have been provided and the reason for including appendices has been explained. The next four chapters have been outlined, and the thematic link between these chapters and matters introduced in this chapter has been sketched.

Note that such a literature review is therefore a means to an end and not — as many people have been taught to think — an end in itself. Novices may think that the purpose of a literature review is to determine the *answers* about what is known on a topic; in contrast experienced investigators review previous research to develop sharper and more insightful questions about the topic (Yin, 2003a:9).

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Having set the research scene in Chapter 1, this chapter deals with the first six research questions listed in Section 1.5.4. As these questions address theoretical issues, they are directly linked to the literature reviewed in this chapter. To broaden the perspective about the function of a literature review, the ideas of a scholar in this field, Hart, are first discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the six research questions.

2.2 The purpose of the literature review

Hart (1998:27) states that the research student should understand the history of the subject he is studying and that this is done through a review of the literature. The review also helps the student in organising the research project and its basic argument. Hart (1998:27) adds that a literature review forms an integral part of the plan of a research project and also acquaints the student with what already exists in a particular research area before he starts with a research project in this area. The ideas accessed from earlier research provide the researcher with a framework for his own work. This includes such areas as methodological perspectives, methods of data collection and analysis, basic concepts and the structure of the research project.

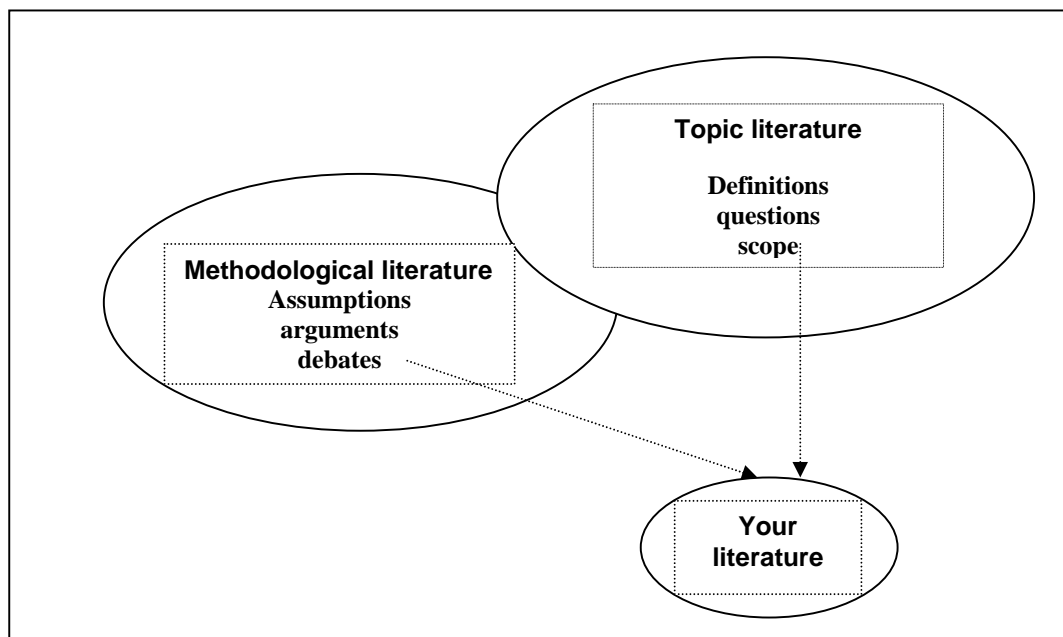
Hart summarises the purposes of a literature review as follows:

- to distinguish what has been done from what needs to be done;
- to discover important variables about the topic;
- to synthesise and gain new ideas;
- to identify relationships between ideas and practice;
- to rationalise the significance of the problem;
- to become more conversant with the vocabulary of the subject;
- to understand the structure of the subject;
- to relate theory to practice;
- to identify the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used in the chosen field of study; and
- to place the research in a historical context and to show that the student is familiar with the latest developments in the chosen study area (Hart, 1998:27).

These bullets are useful indicators about the potential benefits of a literature review for a research project and most of them have been applied in structuring the chapters in the dissertation.

Hart's list may be divided into subject or topic area and methodological literature. He presents these two aspects and their contribution to the student's understanding of his research topic in Figure 2 (Hart, 2001:3).

FIGURE 2 MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDENT'S LITERATURE REVIEW (Hart, 2001:3)



Topic literature (Hart, 2001:3) is discussed in this chapter while methodological literature accessed to guide research design and process is dealt with in Chapter 3.

2.2.1 Literature covered in the review

The literature reviewed in this chapter deals with research conducted by scholars in Communication, DC and DSC. Besides providing an historical background to these fields, the literature is used in crafting a research design for the Vista process. The concepts which emerge from this review are used as a base for defining the concepts which follow from the research problem.

2.2.2 The technique used to present the literature review

Mouton (2001:91) mentions six possible ways of structuring the results of one's reading of subject area literature. These are:

- chronologically by date of study
- by school of thought, theory, definition
- by theme or construct

- by hypothesis
- by case study
- by method

After having read the literature on Development Communication and Development Support Communication, the researcher decided to present the acquired knowledge as answers to the first six research questions listed in Section 1.5. So the presentation is thematic but it also has a chronological dimension in that the questions on DC and DSC range from early to later developments.

By linking the literature review to the research questions, theory and empirical data are functionally linked. This technique also brings one directly to the main purpose of the review, i.e. to provide answers to the researcher about questions on the history and theory of the subject. In this study these answers are required for extracting criteria to use in shaping a theory-based ideal-type instrument for evaluating the communication patterns and a ‘DSC unit’ in the Vista process.

2.2.3 A theoretically-based evaluation instrument

The first five questions below serve as building blocks to construct the required evaluation instrument.

1. Which model of communication captures the essence and characteristics of communication?
2. Considered from the perspective of Development Communication, which approach best suits a participatory development process?
3. Which benefits does the perspective of Development Support Communication bring to a participatory development process?
4. What are the characteristics of a Development Support Communication Unit and what contribution should such a unit make to support communication in a participatory development process?
5. Considered from the perspective of civil society participation in a development process, which is the best mode of participation?
6. What are the criteria that may be derived from the answers to the foregoing five questions in order to design an instrument to evaluate the communication patterns and the functioning of a ‘DSC unit’ in the Vista process?

2.3 Communication models

This section deals with the question as to which communication model captures the essence and characteristics of communication.

As this study is about an aspect of communication and as one wants to build, from the various elements of Communication and Development Communication, a set of guidelines with which to evaluate the Vista findings, it is important to identify a generally accepted contemporary model of communication.

Before discussing a current model, viz. the transactional mode, a brief overview is given of two earlier models, the linear and the circular. This is done as knowledge of earlier models enhances understanding of current ones. It is also done to compare communication in the Vista process with different models. In some instances communication may approximate a particular model, in others another.

This applies particularly to the second and the third model, the circular and the transactional. The first model, the linear, was developed mainly to describe a technical rather than a human process.

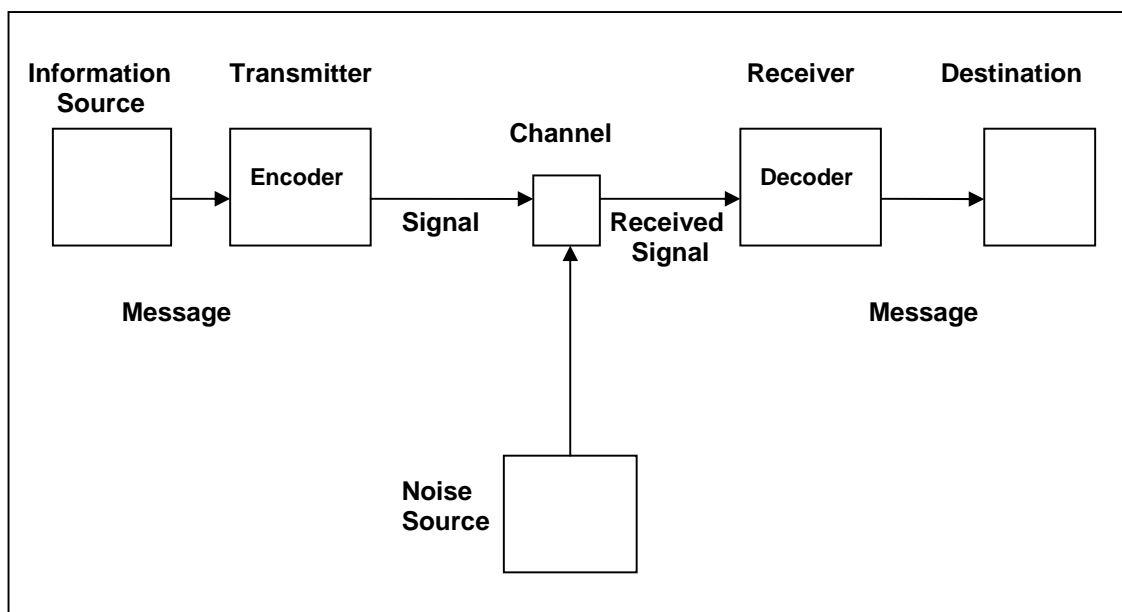
2.3.1 A linear model of communication

According to Steinberg (1994:17-18) a linear or technical model of communication (see Figure 3 below) was developed by two engineers, Shannon and Weaver in the 1940s.

This technical model of communication concentrates on which type of communication channel carries the largest number of signals or sounds. It also looks at how the signal is affected by noise before it reaches its destination.

Although this model laid the basis for the development of other models, it has a number of deficiencies. These are first, the fact that it depicts communication as a one-way process between communicator and recipient, while no provision is made for feedback from the recipient. It also indicates that distortion in the communication message arises only from physical noise in the communication channel. Finally it looks only at the clarity of messages and not at their meaning (Steinberg, 1994:17).

FIGURE 3 A LINEAR MODEL OF COMMUNICATION (Steinberg, 1994, 17)

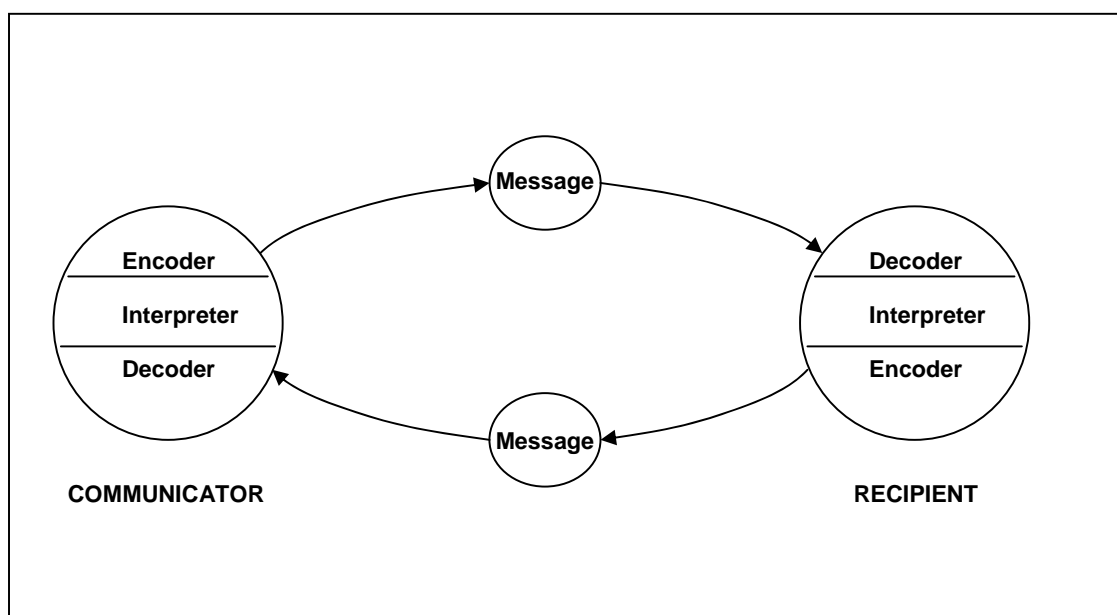


2.3.2 A circular model of communication

Some of the limitations of the linear model were overcome by Osgood and Shramm in developing a circular or process model of communication. See Figure 4 below.

According to Steinberg (1994:18) this communication model describes communication as the interaction between two active participants exchanging meaning. The importance of feedback in this model emphasises that communication is a two-way cyclical rather than a one-way linear process. A limitation of this model is that it suggests that communicator and recipient take turns in expressing and interpreting messages.

FIGURE 4 A CIRCULAR MODEL OF COMMUNICATION (Steinberg, 1994:18)



2.3.3 A transactional model of communication

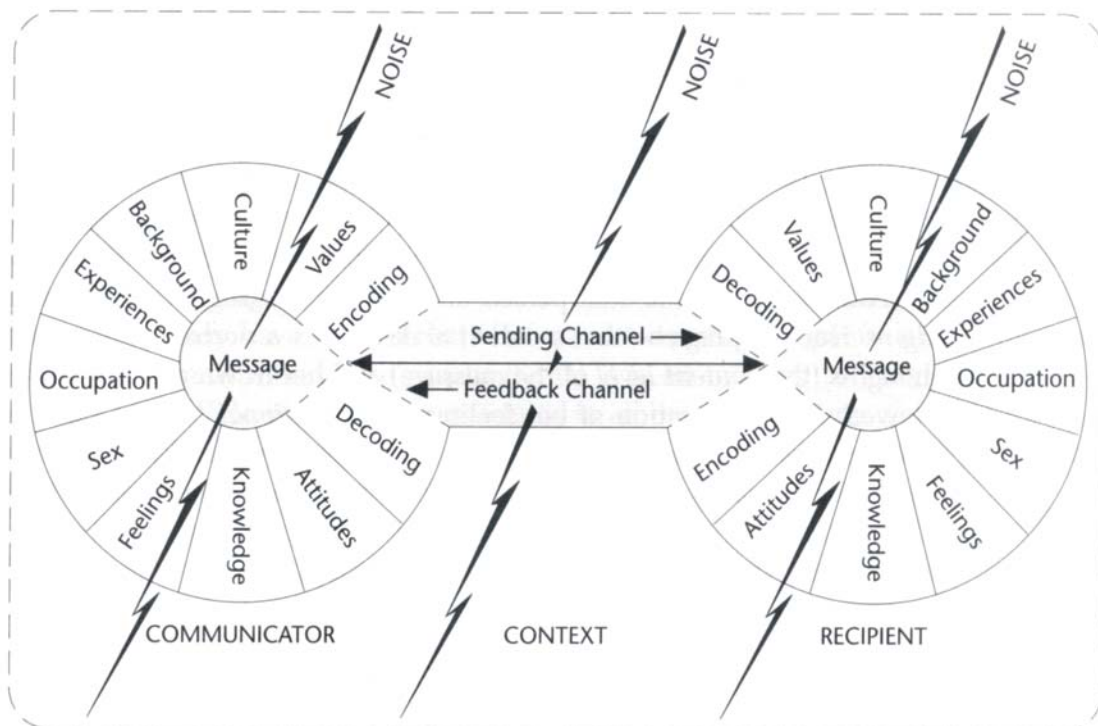
The transactional model of communication which Steinberg presents (1994:18-20) as an adapted version of Verderber's 1990 model depicts communication as 'a dynamic process in which both participants are actively engaged in encoding, transmitting, receiving and decoding messages' (Steinberg, 1994:19). See Figure 5 below. In a transactional process communicators are mutually responsible for the outcome of the process as they transmit information, create meaning and elicit responses. A satisfying relationship between communicators develops as the negotiation of meaning unfolds. Communication is affected by external and internal semantic noise made up of the participants' social structure and culture, and includes such elements as gender, family background, and knowledge (Steinberg, 1994:19).

Transmission and feedback are presented as a single process. The three ragged lines which pass through the circles of the communicator, the recipient and the communication medium, represent internal, external and semantic noise (Steinberg, 1994:19).

This one-to-one transactional model may also be applied to group situations. The outcome of the situation may be different for each participant.

Human and social elements in the transactional definition are acknowledged in this communication as can be seen by reference to concepts such as transaction, responsibility and relationship.

FIGURE 5 A TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION (Steinberg, 1994:19)



2.3.4 Conclusions

After reviewing the three models of communication, it is clear that the transactional model most comprehensively spells out the full potential of human communication. It deals with all the elements that go into the formulation of a message, provides for feedback and identifies all the areas of noise which may affect communication. It also shows that sending messages and providing feedback are interrelated actions and that feedback does not wait for a message to come through before it happens. Communication is an active input-feedback process characterised by the constantly alternating role of communicator and sender. It also underlines the responsibility of both communicators to establish fully what the other means.

The next question deals with the particular branch of communication on which this research project is built, i.e. DC.

2.4 Development Communication

This section deals with the question which reads as follows: “Considered from the perspective of Development Communication, which approach best suits a participatory development process?”

In order to answer this question it is necessary to examine the different phases of DC since its inception in the mid 1900s. Three phases can be identified during this period of somewhat more than half a century. They are the modernisation phase, the alternative phase and the DSC phase.³ After discussing these three phases one will be in a position to indicate where the Vista process should be placed.

2.4.1 The modernisation phase

During the first phase a number of connected approaches, current from about 1940 to 1960 became known as the modernisation phase. This period, referred to as the period of the dominant paradigm by Melkote (1991), was characterised by three consecutive communication approaches. They are referred to as the communication effects approach, the diffusion of innovations approach, and the mass media approach (Melkote, 1991:90). These approaches are discussed in turn below.

2.4.1.1 The communication effects approach

During the 1940s social scientists in the US were interested in discovering the effect of mass media on political decision-making. It was found that people as a whole were relatively little influenced by the mass media. However, there was one segment which was more exposed to the media than another. The more exposed segment consisted of opinion leaders who in turn influenced people in their community. The effects of the mass media were thus seen to be indirect. This research led to the formulation of the *two-step flow theory*. The first step was the influence of the mass media on the leaders and the second from the leaders to individuals in communities. Research also established that people selected their exposure to the mass media. People tended to expose themselves to those communication messages which reflected their personal beliefs and values and therefore to the leaders they believe in (Melkote, 1991:69-71).

2.4.1.2 Diffusion of innovations

Studies of diffusion of innovations were based on the work of anthropologists in the US, France and Germany. In reacting to the unilinear evolutionistic approach of the latter part of the 19th century, these scholars contended that many customs of peoples in different parts of the World had spread from one area to another. Diffusion concepts were used in the modernisation phase of development to accelerate change

³ Some authors (e.g. Melkote, 1991:262-263) do not regard DSC as a phase of DC but rather as a new field of study in development work.

in non-Western societies. Diffusion in the context of communication was defined as ‘the process of spread of a given new idea or practice, over time, via specifiable channels, through a social structure such as a neighbourhood, a factory or a tribe’ (Katz in Melkote, 1991:77). Many studies were done by sociologists during the 1960s on the role of diffusion of innovations in non-Western communities and this research established the importance of communication in the modernisation process (Melkote, 1991:81; Agunga, 1997:145).

2.4.1.3 The mass media and modernisation

During the 1950s and 1960s authors like Lerner, Rao and Schramm strongly promoted the role of the mass media in changing Third World societies. The mass media were regarded as a powerful, direct, one-way, top-down influence on individuals (Melkote, 1991:87; Agunga, 1997:145).

The connection between the availability of mass media and national development was emphasised. ‘The quality of information available and its wide dissemination was a key factor in the speed and smoothness of development. Adequate mass media outlets and information would act as a spur to education, commerce, and a chain of other related development activities’ (Melkote, 1991:90).

2.4.1.4 Conclusions

From these reviews of the three approaches to modernisation, it is clear that during this phase of DC, communication was viewed primarily as a one-way persuasion process. Although the two-step communication approach brought leaders who had been influenced by the mass media, closer to members of their communities, it remained a one-way information transfer process.

2.4.2 The alternative phase

The alternative approach (Melkote, 1991:177-271) also called the ‘multiplicity’ or ‘another development’ approach (Servaes, 1995:42) has emerged during the past three decades. Its major premise is participation.

2.4.2.1 The participatory approach

The pre-1970 phase in development theory was characterised by a technologically deterministic and economically-centred approach, and a communication process which was top-down and one-way (Melkote, 1991:193). Modernisation was in many ways regarded as synonymous with Westernisation. A breakdown, after 1970, in the demarcation of the World into three development worlds, namely First, Second and Third World, and the emergence of the cross-over centre-periphery phenomenon in every region, called for a new concept of development which emphasised ‘cultural identity and multidimensionality’ (Servaes, 1995:42). The previously held *dependency* point of view which emerged mainly in the writings of Latin American scholars had also become more difficult to support as nations become increasingly

interdependent. The main approach in this new phase stressed participation between benefactors and beneficiaries in development work.

Servaes and Malikhao (2002:20) emphasise that the participatory model stresses the importance of local communities and of democratisation and participation at the international, national, local and individual level. The participatory approach emerged mainly from the traditional receivers or beneficiaries. An author who emphasised this approach was the South American activist Paulo Freire. Freire (1970:76) referred to participation as the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word.

The new definitions of development which emphasised pluralism, and meaningful and real development called for equity in the distribution of information and other benefits of development; active participation of people at grassroots level, independence of local communities or nations to design development projects in terms of their own objectives, and the integration of old and new, traditional and modern ideas (Melkote, 1991:194).

Whereas the earlier phase had been a unidirectional, top-down process, the key word in the new phase became participation, together with an awareness of the diversity and complexity of the cultures of the world.

In the following paragraphs a brief overview is provided of the ideas of the Freire.

For Freire participation means dialogue which is based on people sharing their perceptions of a problem, expressing their opinions, and having the opportunity to make decisions or recommendations (Hope and Timmel, 1984:3). Freire expressed his ideas in clear and beautiful language echoing spiritual undertones:

Dialogue also requires an intense faith in human beings; their power to make and remake, to create and recreate; faith that the vocation to be fully human is the birthright of all people, not the privilege of the elite. Founded on love, humility and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of mutual trust. Trust is established by dialogue; it cannot exist unless the words of both parties coincide with their actions. Nor can dialogue exist without hope. Hope is rooted in our human incompleteness, from which we move out in constant search, a search which can be carried out only in communion with other people. As long as I fight, then I am moved by hope, and if I fight with hope, then I can wait. Finally true dialogue cannot exist unless it involves critical thinking, thinking which sees reality as a process, in transformation, thinking which does not separate itself from action but constantly involves itself in the real struggle without fear of the risks involved (Freire in Hope and Timmel, 1984:5).

Freire's ideas are very unpopular with elites, including elites in the Third World, but his ideas on dialogic communication are widely accepted as a normative theory of participatory communication (Servaes, 1995: 46).

Emerging from the latter approach is the *Development Support Communication* approach which is also discussed.

2.4.2.2 Conclusions

From the foregoing sections it is apparent that the modernisation phase in DC was characterised by a top-down, unidirectional, often mass media-driven and persuasive communication approach. Since the 1970s this approach has made way, or at least been challenged by a participatory communication approach in which the beneficiaries and their needs are considered in planning and implementing development projects.

As the Vista process was conceptualised as a participatory process, the participatory approach may be considered as a possible suitable model.

2.5 Development Support Communication

This section deals with the question: “which benefits does the perspective of Development Communication bring to a participatory development process?”

The roots of DSC go back to the 1960s and were particularly evident in the work of Childers and Vajrathan (Colle, 2002:1-72) who worked as development officers for the United Nations in Asia.

2.5.1 Early stages in Development Support Communication

In a paper titled ‘Threads of Development Communication’, Colle (2002:1-72) describes ‘The UNDP Thread and Erskine Childers’ as the first of six threads in contemporary development communication.

Childers was known best for his pioneering work in promoting communication as an integral component of development projects (Colle, 2002:5).

The 1968 paper by Childers and Vajrathan—‘Development Support Communications for Project Support’—which Colle presents verbatim in his paper (Colle, 2002:9-31) is a practical guide to communication based on first hand experience and project needs the authors grappled with in the field at that time. One of the opening statements in this paper captures the essence of much of what they discuss in their paper: ‘no innovation, however, brilliantly designed and set down in a project Plan of Operations becomes development until it has been communicated. No input or construction of material resources for development can be successful unless and until the innovations – the new techniques and surrounding changed attitudes which people will need to use those resources – have been communicated to them’ (Colle, 2002:9).

These authors emphasise that it is one thing to introduce an innovation into a community but another to communicate the innovation in that community. Communication enables the beneficiaries to make sense of what is happening and facilitates the innovation’s acceptance, adaptation and use in a community.

Based on their understanding of the importance of communication for ensuring the successful implementation of projects, Childers and Vajrathan argue that every operational plan of a development project should include a communication component. In addition to planning communication requirements, the authors emphasise that the particular communication material that is used, should be tailored to the needs of the project audience.

These authors list six main areas of communication which should be given attention in each project:

- **Broad public motivation** by which they mean that the general public in a country should be motivated by means of communication support to think about development in general and specifically about the sector in which the planned project will be implemented (Colle, 2002:15).
- **Motivation-orientation of project implementers** emphasises the importance of informing all relevant civil servants about a new project to ensure their cooperation in its implementation (Colle, 2002:15).
- **Specific elite and government-level information.** The target audience for this communication is government departments, which in the implementation of the project, may have an important bearing on the success of the project (Colle, 2002:16-17).
- **Project cadre-training communication needs** by which is meant the communication materials development fieldworkers need in order to inform beneficiaries about the projects they are implementing (Colle, 2002:17). As part of this point the authors also feel strongly about the importance of improving the status of information and communication officers in the field (Colle, 2002:18).
- **Applied research dissemination.** This refers to the importance of communicating, to development teams, the availability of applied research undertaken by United Nations institutes. This element should also be written into the operation plan of each project. If this communication does not happen, useful results of research work undertaken on the implementation of development projects will not be absorbed and used in new projects (Colle, 2002:19).
- **Close project-support communications.** This point refers to carefully prepared lists of information-communication aids to prepare the project-community for the introduction of a project and to explain the objectives of the project to them (Colle, 2002:20).

In concluding his discussion of the DSC thread in his paper, Colle (2002: 31-32) says that many of the ideas in the papers of Childers and Vajrathan have relevance today. He underlines three points:

- Childers and Vajrathan's emphasis on coordination of communication support to civil servants, change agents, and to rural communities;
- the importance of research, especially for matching communication materials to the socio-economic needs of communities;
- the importance of setting up structures to train communication personnel.

2.5.2 Conclusions

The ideas of Childers and Vajrathan are important for this study for a number of reasons. In the first instance they provide a good background about the emergence and the need for DSC in implementing development projects. This background information helps to understand the views of later authors in this field, for example those of Melkote and Agunga who based their work on the views of pioneers in this field like Childers and Vajrathan.

The ideas of Childers are also useful for this study as they contribute to the information that is needed to compile a set of guidelines with which to evaluate the Vista process.

Based on the work of Childers and others in the 1960s and the extension of participatory communication as an important approach in development work since the 1970s, DSC emerged as an academic discipline in the United States in the 1980s. Not only was communication stressed as an important component of a development project's planning and implementation, it also became a field of academic study. Based on academic training, qualified DSC professionals started to take up positions in project teams or in some cases to work as separate units taking on the role of facilitators between benefactors and beneficiaries. Two scholars with a Third World background, Melkote (1991) and Agunga (1997) wrote books in this field and some of their ideas are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.5.3 Melkote's approach to Development Support Communication

In his *Communication for Development in the Third World: theory and practice* (1991), Melkote advances two factors which lead to a reorientation in the study and operationalisation of the role of communication in development work. This reorientation from the concept of DC as a top-down, big media centred government-to-people communication process to development support communication which focuses on co-equal, little-media-centred government-with-people communication (Ascroft and Masilela in Melkote, 1991:262). DSC emerged in response to the need for greater participation by beneficiaries in the development process and in message development (Melkote, 1991:262).

Figure 6 presents Melkote's (1991:263) summary of the characteristics of DC and the emerging field of DSC.

FIGURE 6 CHARACTERISTICS OF DC AND DSC (Melkote, 1991:263)

Development Communication	Development Support Communication
<p>Source: University-based</p> <p>Structure: Top-down; authoritarian</p> <p>Paradigm: Dominant paradigm of externally directed social change</p> <p>Level: International and national</p> <p>Media: Big media: TV, radio and newspapers</p> <p>Effects: To create a climate of acceptance by beneficiaries for exogenous ideas and innovations</p>	<p>Development agency-based</p> <p>Horizontal knowledge-sharing between benefactors and beneficiaries</p> <p>Participatory paradigm of an endogenously directed quest to maintain control over basic needs</p> <p>Grassroots</p> <p>Small media: video, film strips, traditional media, group and interpersonal communication</p> <p>Create a climate of mutual understanding between benefactors and beneficiaries</p>

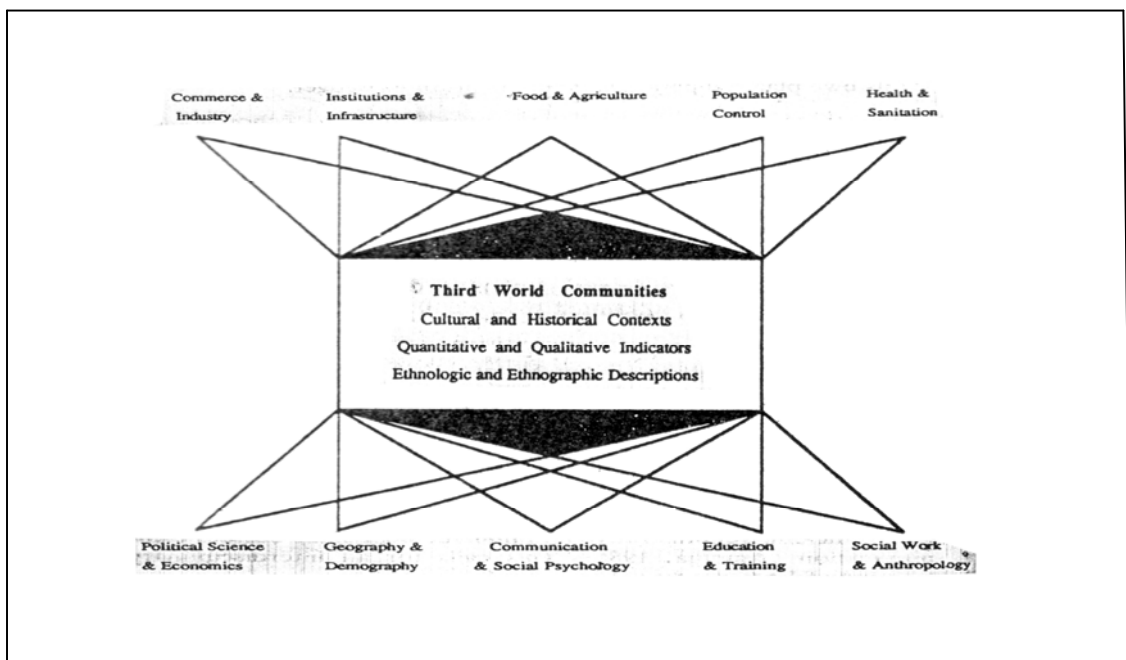
On the importance of constructing effective development messages Melkote (1991:265) points out that the compilation of messages and their transmission from sources to receivers or vice versa is a micro-level objective of DSC, while at the macro level, DSC is concerned with the organisation of development programmes.

Melkote (1991:265-266) adds a dimension of social system analysis to DSC by pointing out that it is important to take note of all the development support organisations that are expected to have an impact on a project and to study their communication needs, problems, and interests before planning intervention strategies. The author (Melkote, 1991: 266) therefore promotes a comprehensive, coordinating and project management role for DSC which focuses on information management. The DSC professional also studies the goals and design of projects to ensure their success.

Thus DSC has a dual objective. In relation to beneficiaries, it is used to mobilise, organise, and empower them to ensure their successful participation with the experts and benefactors. In relation to the benefactors, DSC can be used to plan and implement better management strategies, hire and train development support communicators, coordinate the various user-agencies, and ensure that the development project is implemented without problems.

Melkote (1991:266) adds that besides communication skills, DSC also encompasses administrative and management skills. This requires that DSC staff receive interdisciplinary training. Such an interdisciplinary approach in DSC was instituted at the University of Iowa. Figure 7 presents a triadic model of interactive development support.

FIGURE 7 TRIADIC MODEL OF INTERACTIVE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (Melkote, 1991:268)



The three broad domains of knowledge relevant to development are first, areas of technical assistance, second, contextual knowledge of Third World communities, and third, a number of social science disciplines which contribute to development work (Melkote, 1991: 267). Melkote explains the various areas of the figure from top to bottom.

The triangles at the top of the figure represent the sum of techniques and technologies used in development work. These are:

- commerce and industry,
- food and agriculture,
- health and sanitation,
- infrastructure and institution-building, and
- population and planning.

These triangles overlap and thus indicate their common base. This base connects to a rectangle below it which describes the beneficiary community's

development context. The shaded area on top represents common knowledge and information of existing techniques and technologies that may be transferred to beneficiary communities. The rectangle in the centre describes the knowledge required about the beneficiary society. This comprises:

- the history and culture of the community,
- ethnologic and ethnographic descriptions, and
- qualitative and quantitative indicators of development.

The triangles at the bottom of the figure list the range of social science disciplines that contribute to development projects (Melkote, 1991:267-268).

It is apparent from his figure that communication is regarded as a broad term, namely for ‘a summary term for all the behavioral social sciences’ often referred to as the *communication social sciences*’ (Ascroft in Melkote, 1991:268).

The triangles at the bottom of the figure list the social science disciplines participating interdependently with each other, each with its own independent as well as its overlapping contributions to development support problem-solving. Combined these triangles represent the total knowledge and skills necessary for *development support* (Melkote, 1991:269).

Melkote concludes that DSC deals with the training of communication specialists who assist in the planning, design and implementation of messages and communication strategies of a development project. Communication may be from project administrators to recipients or vice versa, or between project administrators themselves. The DSC person may be the agent of the project administrators or of the users, or of both these parties (Melkote, 1991:269-270).

Melkote argues that communication in the participatory approach is more complex and varied than in the modernisation-diffusion approach. The exact role of communication in *Another Development* depends on the normative goals and standards set by the host communities. Communication in the new approaches may also help in the development of a community’s self-expression, or may be used as a tool in the analysis of a community’s problems (Melkote, 1991:270).

2.5.4 Conclusions

The objectives of DSC in relation to the beneficiaries and the benefactors are important.

In relation to beneficiaries DSC serves to

- mobilise,
- organise, and
- empower participants, to ensure successful participation with the experts and benefactors.

In relation to benefactors DSC can be used to

- plan, and
- implement better management strategies;
- employ and
- train development support communicators;
- coordinate user-agencies and
- ensure proper implementation of the project.

In his standard text, quoted above, Melkote unfortunately, does not provide examples of the application of DSC in projects.

2.6 A Development Support Communication Unit

This section deals with the question: “what are the characteristics of a Development Support Communication Unit and what contribution should such a unit make to support communication in a participatory development process?”

Agunga (1997) takes DSC a step further by outlining the role of a DSC Unit. This author first provides a number of useful check lists which summarise the role of the DSC professional. He also discusses the relationship between a DSC unit and the benefactors and beneficiaries in a development project.

Agunga lists the following roles which a properly trained development support communication professional should be able to take on:

- advise government and donor agencies on development communication;
- promote participation and mobilisation of beneficiaries;
- provide communication training for extension officers;
- promote the production and use of multimedia and audiovisual material on a cost-recovery basis;
- promote networking among development professionals;
- plan and conduct communication campaigns;
- promote coordination and linkages among development agencies;
- promote communication research, information generation, storage and sharing;
- facilitate learning among programme staff (Agunga, 1997:257).

Agunga (1997:263) adds that the DSC professional should have the following qualities:

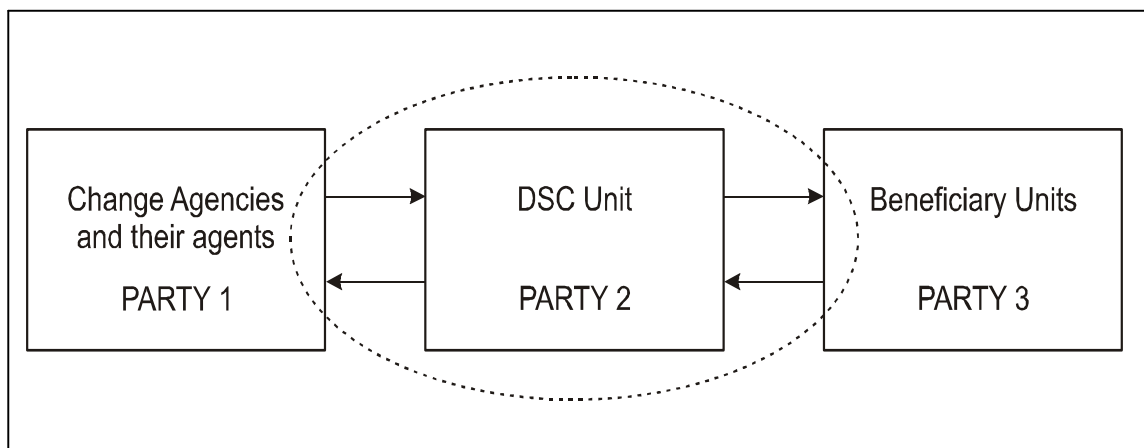
- act as a coordinator, not as a doer;
- enter beneficiary communities not as an expert but as a learner;
- concentrate on making recommendations;
- be knowledgeable about development (which includes an understanding of the beneficiary community’s socio-cultural and political structure) and possess a high degree of creativity;

- be skilled in developing networks and linkages with development experts and agencies in all parts of the World;
- establish trust among the various groups and in development projects; and
- support and coordinate decision-making, so that participants are assisted to arrive at their own decisions (Agunga, 1997:263).

Agunga (1997:242) argues that the role of a communicator is not an easy one. The skills it demands are more demanding than those currently held by traditional change agents such as agricultural extensionists and health educators. These change agents have skills in the technical sciences while the skills required by professional communicators are drawn from the social sciences with specialisation in communication. The communication professional must have the ability to create a situational and psychological pattern in which benefactors and beneficiaries can participate as equals in making development decisions.

Figure 8 represents Agunga’s (1997:242-243) DSC model for participatory communication.

FIGURE 8 A DSC MODEL FOR PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING (Agunga: 1997:243)



Agunga adds that the DSC agent must have a good knowledge of the change agencies and of the beneficiaries in order to facilitate interaction between them. The DSC model represents the three parties in the development communication process. These are the aid givers and their change agents, the beneficiaries and the DSC unit. Before Agunga suggested separating the DSC unit from the change agent, change agents were mainly mouthpieces without a proper facilitating role between the other two parties. Agunga argues that ‘there is a growing recognition for the “triadic model” as evidenced in the rise of new multi-disciplinary social science/applied science programs, such as “agricultural communication,” “environmental communication,” “environmental education,” and “health communication” alongside

“development support communication.” Of these sub-disciplines, DSC is mainly focused on developing countries. These sub-disciplines have been developed from a growing need for professional communicators in the field to work alongside their technical counterparts (Agunga, 1997:243).

According to Agunga the main responsibility of the DSC professional is to help in dealing with the complexity of development programmes. This has particular bearing on facilitating information flows among participating agencies. Without this essential communication dimension an entire development programme may lose direction and lead to failure. Successful integration requires coordination (Agunga, 1997:244).

2.6.1 Conclusions

Agunga argues for a more prominent role of the DSC specialist than envisaged by Childers and Vajrathan but he is more cautious in his recommendations than Melkote. He particularly emphasises the advisory, coordinating and supportive role of the DSC specialist and his ability to network well with change agencies. Agunga adds that an important quality in the work of the DSC specialist is his or her ability to build trust among the various groups and in development projects and to ensure proper information flow between the participating groups.

Agunga refers to his own work in utilising a DSC unit in development projects, but he does not provide examples of the utilisation of DSC units in other projects.

2.7 Modes of participation by civil society

This section deals with the following question: “considered from the perspective of civil society participation in a development process, which is the best mode of participation?”

Yoon (1997:1) notes that the participatory communication approach was conceived more than two decades ago and since then has enjoyed increasing support in the work of development communicators. Currently these principles are employed by many communicators in NGO development projects and also in some governmental development projects.

Yoon (1997:2) identifies four ways of participation. These can be observed in most development projects claiming to be participatory. They are the following:

- Participation in implementation which encourages people to actively participate in projects.
- Participation in evaluation. This means that on completion of a project people are invited to point out its strong and weak points.
- Participation in benefit which means that people make use of the results of a project.
- Participation in decision-making. This means that people take the initiative to plan, discuss and take action in bringing about a change in their community.

Participation in decision-making is regarded as the most important type of participation because it gives people control of their lives and environment. People also learn new skills like problem-solving and they gain ownership of projects (Yoon, 1997:3).

2.8 Evaluation criteria

Having discussed the five research questions in the previous sections, this section develops an evaluation instrument for assessing the Vista process.

The currently accepted model amongst experts in Communication is the transactional model. In evaluating a communication process the question is whether it provides for sufficient feedback to ensure that the participants develop a full understanding of the content of the messages being conveyed. If understanding between the participants on each other's views is not achieved, they cannot take full responsibility for the actions that follow from the communication. The measurement criteria are thus:

1. Does the communication process allow for sufficient feedback to ensure *mutual understanding* between communicator and recipient?
2. Is the quality of the relationship developed between the communicators sufficiently strong and resilient enough to ensure that the communicators take responsibility, in subsequent action, for the information and understanding developed between them?

Based on the transactional model of communication, it follows that the communication process should be participatory and horizontal. A top-down, persuasive approach which characterised the **modernisation phase** would hardly be seen as participatory. Participation as defined in the **alternative phase** would be closer to the ideal situation. This leads to the following question:

3. Was the relationship between benefactors and beneficiaries sufficiently participatory to allow beneficiaries to benefit from the outcome of the process?

If the process was participatory, the next question to ask is what mode of participation was used. Participation in decision-making is regarded as most beneficial as it gives beneficiaries control of their lives and environment. They also learn new skills like problem-solving and gain ownership of projects. The following question addresses this issue:

4. What mode of participation (decision-making, implementation, benefit, or evaluation) was instituted by the benefactors?

From the discussion of DSC, the following questions may be raised:

5. Have beneficiaries benefited through mobilisation, organisation, empowerment and gained successful participation with experts and benefactors?
6. Have benefactors used DSC to plan and implement better management strategies; employ and train development support communicators; coordinated user-agencies and ensured proper implementation of the project?
7. Has a horizontal knowledge sharing approach been followed between benefactors and beneficiaries?
8. Has the process functioned at grass roots level?
9. Has small media, and group and interpersonal communication been an important mode of communication in the process?

The discussion on the characteristics of a DSC Unit and its function in a participatory development process added the following questions to the evaluation instrument:

10. Did the DSC specialists play a trust-building, advisory, coordinating and supportive role in the development project?
11. Did the DSC specialists network well with change agencies?
12. Did the DSC specialists ensure proper information flow between the participating groups?

In the following section, the questions selected above will be placed in a composite framework to form the required ideal-type evaluation instrument or template.

2.9 An evaluation instrument

The following evaluation criteria are derived from the questions discussed in the previous section. They are phrased as questions and divided into three main groups. The first group (criteria 1-9) deals mainly with the benefactors: their approach to participation, communication, knowledge sharing, empowerment of beneficiaries and the use of communication media. These will be used to evaluate the role of the GPG in the Vista process.

The second group (criteria 10-11) evaluates the possible benefits derived from the Vista process by the beneficiaries, i.e. the members of the Development Forums in Gauteng.

Criteria 12-15 constitute Group 3 and is used to evaluate the Core Group.

Group 1: evaluation of the role of the benefactors

Criterion 1

Did the communication process allow for *sufficient feedback* to ensure mutual understanding between communicator and recipient?

Criterion 2

Did the quality of the relationship between communicator and recipient ensure *joint responsibility for the outcome of the communication process*?

Criterion 3

Was the *broad public motivated* about development and about this project?

Criterion 4

Was *participation* the main point of departure by the benefactors in relation to the beneficiaries?

Criterion 5

If so, which *mode of participation* was employed in relation to the beneficiaries (participation in decision-making, implementation, benefit, or evaluation or a combination of these)?

Criterion 6

Did the benefactors *use DSC* in order to

- plan and implement better management strategies;
- ensure proper implementation of the project?

Criterion 7

Did benefactors use *a horizontal knowledge sharing communication approach* in relation to beneficiaries?

Criterion 8

Did the process function at *grass roots level*?

Criterion 9

Did the benefactors use *small media*, and *group and interpersonal communication* in the process?

Group 2: evaluation of the benefits which accrued to the beneficiaries

Criterion 10

Did *beneficiaries benefit* through *mobilisation, organisation and empowerment*?

Criterion 11

Did *beneficiaries achieve successful participation with experts and benefactors*?

Group 3: evaluation of the role of the Core Group

Criterion 12

Did a DSC unit create *a climate of mutual understanding* between benefactors and beneficiaries?

Criterion 13

Did the DSC specialists play a *trust-building, advisory, coordinating and supportive communication* role in the development project?

Criterion 14

Did the DSC specialists *network well with change agencies*?

Criterion 15

Did the DSC specialists *ensure proper information flow between the participating groups*?

2.10 Summary

This chapter provides the theoretical backdrop to the study. The history and conceptual framework of DC, DSC and a DSC Unit has been reviewed in terms of six questions aimed at evaluating the Vista process. The answers to these questions provide an Evaluation Instrument, comprising fifteen criteria, to assess the communication patterns between, and roles played by, the benefactors, the beneficiaries and the Core Group.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, deals with the method questions, Question 7 and Question 9 — see Section 1.5.4. To answer these questions an appropriate research design and process to establish the communication patterns and roles of the main participants, must be fashioned. After completion of this crafting process, the research data are described and analysed in terms of the logical framework provided by the design and process dimensions, and presented as Findings in Chapter 4. Conclusions about the findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

For research is by definition a search for *form* quite as much and at the same time as it has any *content* to report; methods should be seen as being *constructed* (for particular purposes) rather than *selected* (for any general usefulness) (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002:17).

The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible (De Vaus, 2001:9).

Chapter 3

Research design and process

3.1 Introduction

After discussing the six theoretically-oriented research questions in Chapter 2, this chapter addresses the research design and the research process of the inquiry. This means that questions 7 and 9 formulated in Chapter 1 will be answered in this chapter. These questions read as follows:

Question 7

What methods were used to establish communication patterns in the Vista process?

Question 9

What methods were used to establish the role of the Core Group in the Vista process?

In order to answer questions about method, it is first necessary to look at the final product or design envisaged by the research inquiry. Thus far an evaluative aspect of design has been highlighted. The overall design which encompasses the research questions, an evaluative dimension and an appropriate research process, is the first goal of this chapter. Thereafter follows a detailed discussion of the research process which includes research methods. These in turn focus on methods of data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research design and research process

As the research design and process used in this study are based on a qualitative approach, it is useful first to outline the characteristics of qualitative research. This is done in Section 3.2.1.

3.2.1 The qualitative research process

Denzin and Lincoln (1994a:11) define the qualitative research process by three interconnected generic activities, *theory*, *method* and *analysis*. Alternatively these activities are referred to as *ontology*, *epistemology* and *methodology*.

These authors discuss these activities under five headings or phases:

- 1) the researcher and the researched as multicultural subjects,
- 2) major paradigms and interpretive perspectives,
- 3) research strategies,

- 4) methods of collecting and analysing materials, and
- 5) the art of interpretation.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003:9-10) conclude that qualitative research as an interpretive endeavour does not have a single methodological approach. Its methods range from semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, to statistics, tables, graphs and numbers.

On the difference between **qualitative research** and **quantitative research** Denzin and Lincoln (2003:13) argue that qualitative research emphasises the qualities of entities and focuses on processes and meanings that are not experimentally measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers also ‘stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry’. These researchers also recognise the value-laden nature of inquiry and they try to find out how social experience is created and given meaning. ‘In contrast, **quantitative studies** emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. Proponents of such studies claim that their work is done from within a value-free framework.’

Struwig and Stead (2001:12-13) mention four characteristics of the qualitative research approach.

The participants’ and researcher’s perspectives

Qualitative researchers look at the phenomenon they are studying from the perspective of the research participants, i.e. they put themselves in the shoes of the participants. This means that the researcher provides comment and in-depth analysis of participants’ views. This analysis and interpretation should ideally be done in association with the participants (Struwig and Stead, 2001:12).

Contextualisation

As human behaviour does not happen in a vacuum, it is necessary to provide a description and analysis of the environment or social context of research participants. Both the macro and micro context of people and their dynamic interaction should be considered. The history of individuals can also be an important contextual factor (Struwig and Stead, 2001:12).

Process

Process research looks at the interrelatedness of events along a temporal or developmental continuum (Struwig and Stead, 2001:12). This means that it is important to consider how earlier events influence current thought or behaviour.

Flexibility and the use of theories

Struwig and Stead (2001:13) point out that qualitative researchers often approach a study in an open and unstructured way and do not choose a fixed theoretical perspective at the outset. This enables them to be sensitive to unexpected events and to adapt their approach as the study proceeds.

Janesick (1994:213) adds a useful checklist of characteristics of a qualitative research design. She says that a qualitative design

- is holistic and tries to understand the larger picture;
- looks at relationships within a system or culture;
- refers to the personal, face-to-face, and immediate;
- is focused on understanding a given social setting, not necessarily on making predictions about that setting;
- demands that the researcher stays in the setting over time;
- demands that the researcher develops a model of what occurred in the social setting;
- incorporates informed consent decisions and is responsive to ethical concerns;
- incorporates room for description of the role of the researcher as well as the researcher's own biases and ideological preference;
- requires ongoing analysis of the data; and
- requires the researcher to become the research instrument. This means the researcher must have the ability to observe behaviour and must sharpen the skills necessary for observation and face-to-face interviews.

These characteristics of qualitative research helped to shape this research project and the research report.

Having familiarized oneself with the general characteristics of qualitative research, the next step is to look at the difference between research design and research process.

3.2.2 The difference between research design and research process

Mouton (2001:56) provides a brief overview of the difference between research design and research process in Figure 9.

FIGURE 9 THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY⁴
(Mouton, 2001:56)

Research design	Research methodology
Focuses on the end product: what kind of study is being planned and what kind of result is aimed at?	Focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used.
Point of departure = Research problem or question.	Point of departure = Specific tasks (data collection or sampling) at hand.
Focuses on the logic of research: What kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately?	Focuses on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most 'objective' (unbiased) procedures to be employed.

Having made the distinction between research design and research process in a major part of his book which he calls 'Section 2: Planning your research', Mouton (2001: 56) continues his discussion in this section by focusing on research design. He takes up the discussion of research process in a subsequent major section which he calls 'Section 3: The Research process' (Mouton, 2001:86-110).

3.3 Research design

This section provides an overview of the literature on this topic.

3.3.1 Literature review

Research design has different meanings for authors writing on this topic. There is a broad and a narrow definition. For example, a broad or encompassing definition by Denzin and Lincoln (1994b:200) deals with four issues:

1. how the design connects to the paradigm which is being used for a particular study, i.e. how the empirical data is informed by and interacts with this paradigm;
2. the topic of the study;
3. the strategies of inquiry; and
4. the methods of data collection and analysis.

⁴ In a figure immediately prior to this one 'A metaphor for research design' Mouton (2001:56) equates 'research process' with 'research methodology' in a box with the following information: 'Research process or Research Methodology'.

Authors such as (Yin (2003a:xiv) and De Vaus (2001:8) equate *research design* with *strategies of inquiry*, i.e. they focus on the third point in the list compiled by Denzin and Lincoln. As a point of departure for design they, however, start with the research questions and also show how data collection and analysis link to design.

Mouton (2001:56) uses an approach in line with that of Yin and De Vaus. He states that the point of departure for a research design is

- the kind of study that is being planning
- the research questions which have to be addressed the study,
- the type of evidence that has to be gathered, and
- what the logical connection between design and process is (Mouton, 2001:56).

Research design, in the sense used by Mouton (2001:55-56) and De Vaus (2001:18) is compared with the plan an architect designs when a client wishes to have a building constructed.

To enable the architect to design a building he needs to know what sort of building is required. Is it a school, a factory or a house? Once he knows what is required, he can sketch plans for his client to consider. After accepting the plan and the type of materials to be used, the client contracts a builder to construct the building. First the quantities of materials required for the job are determined. Then the planning of the building process, i.e. the construction methods and techniques to be used, is done. Finally the plan enters the construction phase and the building is erected on the chosen site.

Similarly in research, the project needs a design, a plan for the ultimate outcome of the research, and an implementation plan (data collection and analysis) to achieve the objectives of the research design. In research the cue for the type of design are the research questions which have to be addressed.

Research questions, research design, research methods and methods of data analysis should constitute a logical sequence. Yin (2003a:21) emphasises this point by saying that design deals with a logical, not a logistical problem. He adds that a design is much more than a work plan and its main purpose is to prevent that the evidence collected does not address the initial research questions.

Authors supply shorter and longer, and less and more analytical lists on strategies of inquiry or research design types in qualitative research. For example, Denzin and Lincoln (1994b:202-208) discuss the following types:

- Case study
- Ethnography and Participant Observation
- Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, and Interpretive Practice
- Grounded Theory
- The Biographical Method
- The Historical Method
- Applied and Action Research

- Clinical Models

The five design types listed by De Vos *et al.* (2005:269) are all included in Denzin and Lincoln's list. They are:

- Case study
- Ethnography
- Phenomenology
- Grounded theory
- Biography

Janesick (1994:212) provides a more detailed list. It includes all the types included in the above two lists — except for Grounded Theory — but she adds that her list is not exhaustive.

Action research	Case study
Descriptive study	Ecological descriptive study
Ethnography	Ethnomethodology
Field research or field study	Historiography
Interpretive research	Life history
Literary criticism	Microethnography
Narrative research	Naturalistic study
Oral history	Participant observation
Phenomenological study	Symbolic interactionist study

Struwig and Stead (2001:13-16) state that at least 26 different approaches to qualitative research may be identified. They provide three main groups of strategies. The first group deals with the characteristics of language as communication or as cognitive representation. It includes:

- Content analysis,
- Discourse analysis and the ethnography of communication, and
- Ethnoscience and structural ethnography,

The second group deals with the discovery of regularities in which

(a) connections among identified and categorised elements are identified, such as in

- Grounded theory
- Ethnographic content analysis
- Event structure analysis; and

(b) in which regularities in the form of patterns is sought, such as in

- Phenomenography
- Naturalist inquiry, holistic ethnography and educational ethnography, and
- Action research.

The third group seeks understanding of the meaning of text or action. This includes

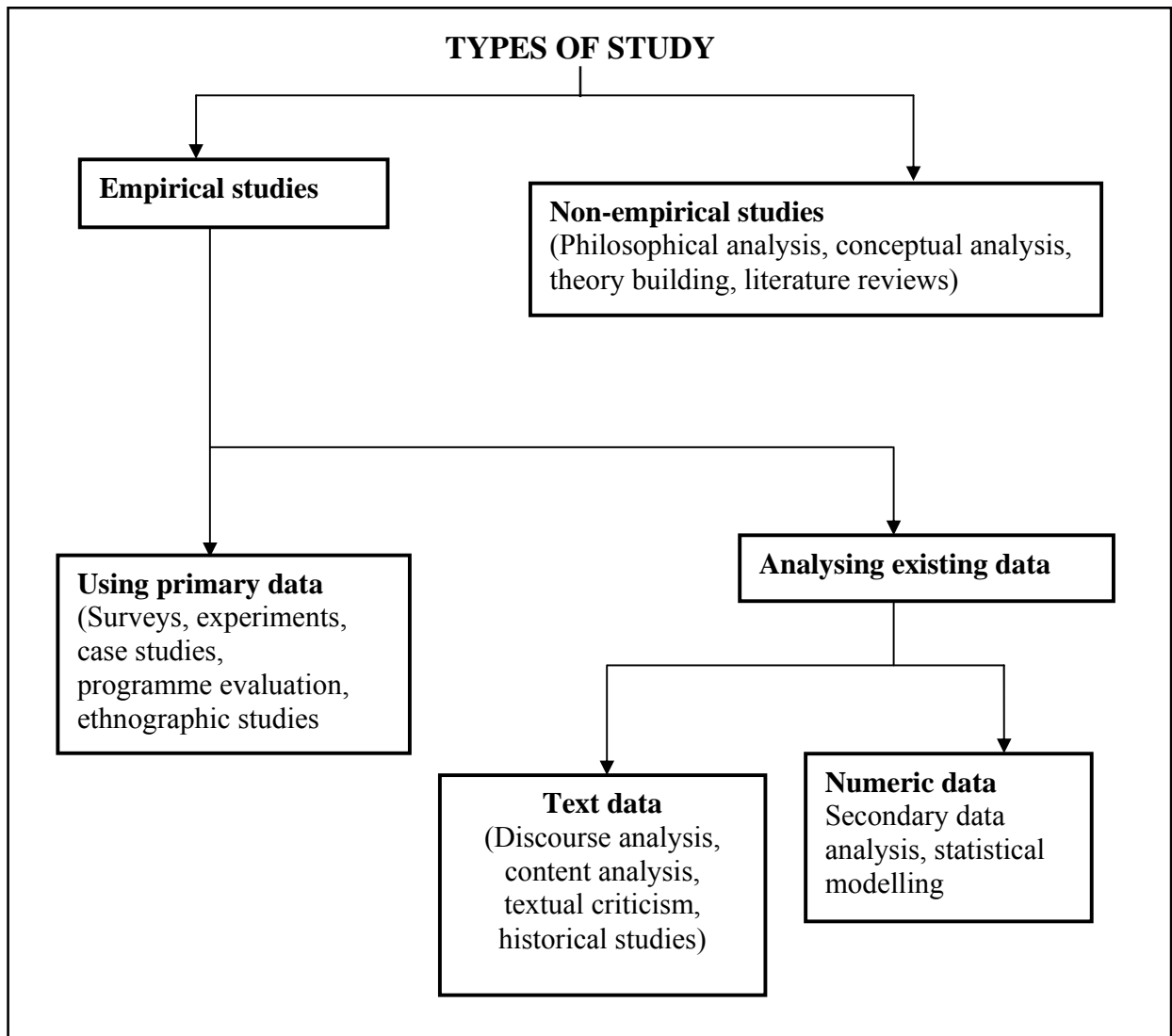
- Phenomenology and
- Hermeneutics, case studies and life histories.

The above mentioned approaches serve as parameters for the research design of the Vista process.

Research designs are tailored to address different kinds of questions (Mouton, 2001:56; Yin, 2003a:1; Clough and Nutbrown, 2002:17; De Vaus, 2001:9). Choosing and shaping a design to address the requirements of the Vista study proceeds by recalling its research topic, problem statement and research questions. The research design requirements derive from the research questions. These have been dealt with in the Section 1.4.

Mouton (2001:57) provides a useful typology of research design types. See Figure 10.

FIGURE 10 A TYPOLOGY OF RESEARCH DESIGN TYPES (Mouton 2001:57)



3.3.2 Conclusions

Applying the types of study outlined in Figure 10, the present inquiry has the following elements:

- it is an empirical study;
- it uses primary data gathered by means of participant observation and interviewing; and
- it analyses existing data in text form (public domain documents on the Vista process) by means of content analysis.

3.4 A research design for the Vista study

The design requirements for this inquiry are dealt with in Section 3.5.1 and the chosen design in Section 3.5.2.

3.4.1 Design requirements of this inquiry

The Vista study's research design should provide a framework for dealing with the description, analysis and evaluation of the following elements:

1. the use of *theory* to analyse and evaluate empirical data;
2. the use of *documentary, participant observation and interview* data;
3. a clearly defined unit of analysis in terms of start and end dates allowing for focus on a *single, clearly defined communication process*;
4. a clearly defined embedded unit of analysis within the main unit of analysis; and
5. *in-depth focus on the particularities* of the chosen unit of analysis rather than on its relation to and comparison with similar studies. (Comparison of the results of this case study with similar studies, e.g. those mentioned in Section 1.4, would require a separate inquiry.)

3.4.2 The Vista study's research design

In preparing to craft a design for the Vista inquiry, the literature study focused on reading in the following fields:

- the case study design (Yin, 2003a; Yin, 2003b; De Vaus, 2001);
- programme evaluation studies (Rossi and Freeman, 1999);
- ethnography and particularly participant observation (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994);
- interviews (Spradley, 1979, 87-91; Struwig & Stead, 2001:89-960); Du Plooy, 2001:175-178; Fontana & Frey, 2003:61-106); and
- methods of data collection and analysis (De Vos *et al*, 2005; Berg, 2001; Yin, 2003a and De Vaus, 2001).

Having considered these design options and read Yin, 2003a, Yin, 2003b and sections from De Vaus (2001) on case studies, including all the steps in a research project from question formulation to reporting, the researcher decided that the case study design was an appropriate design for the Vista study. The reasons for this choice are set out below:

1. The case study design is comprehensive and flexible and it provides for guiding a study through all its phases — problem definition, methods of data

collection and data analysis, and composition and reporting of the findings (Yin, 2003a:xiv).

2. A specific case which presents itself as the study topic is analysed. The case may be an individual, an event, an organisation, a time period, a process or a programme (Yin, 2003a:24; De Vaus, 2001:220). The Vista study can be accommodated within this design as it studies a process with exact start and end dates.
3. The case study is an appropriate design for studying a phenomenon and the context within which it functions, especially if the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear (Yin, 2003a:13; De Vaus, 2001:220). In the case of the Vista process the context — historical, social and political — is important and in some instances it is not possible to distinguish clearly between the process and its context. For example, from the evidence at hand, it is not always clear whether a decision by a participating body was taken in response to events in the process or to outside factors.
4. Case studies accommodate explanatory or descriptive work (Yin, 2003a:1) and deal with ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. The Vista study is mainly descriptive, and description of the fourteen month-long process as well as content analysis of documentary evidence, provides the basis for evaluation. An explanatory framework was not required because none of the research questions require explanation in terms of formal cause-effect analysis. Contextual factors serve to explain certain events in the Vista process — see the previous point in this list.
5. The case study design provides for the study of a single case or multiple cases (Yin, 2003a:9; de Vaus, 2001:226-227). The Vista study is a single case.
6. Case studies provide for holistic or embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2003a:9; de Vaus, 2001:226-227). The Vista process has an embedded unit of analysis — the Core Group which is evaluated against the ideal-type derived from the literature on a DSC Unit. De Vaus (2001:17) defines a unit of analysis as ‘the “thing” about which we collect information and from which we draw conclusions’. He adds that the unit may be a person, an organisation, a family, an event, periods, or places (communities, countries). In a study with an embedded unit of analysis, one analyses the main unit, in this case the Vista process, and the embedded unit, the Core Group in this case.
7. The focus of a case study may be on a current real-life situation or a historical situation. A historical study is referred to as a retrospective study (Yin,

2003a:13; de Vaus, 2001:227). The Vista study draws on recent historical data but also has a real-life feel to it because the researcher was a participant observer in the process he describes and analyses.

8. According to Yin (2003a:5) the case study design is used in situations where the researcher has no control over the events being studied. In experimental designs, for example, the researcher has considerable control over the events being studied. In regard to the Vista process the researcher had no control over events as they occurred 12 years prior to the study.
9. The case study relies on a variety of data sources, methods of data collection and methods of data analysis. This variety may contribute to triangulation⁵ in one, two or in all three of these research areas (Yin, 2003a:14). The Vista process has three main data sources and uses two methods of analysis. The grounded theory analysis technique is applied to the documentary sources and the process is described by means of documentary, interview and participant observation material. It thus has a potential for triangulation.
10. Case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation studies (Yin, 2003a:15). The overall objective of the Vista study is evaluation. Rossi and Freeman (1999:22-50) explain that evaluation studies are usually commissioned by bodies that have an interest in determining the progress or outcome of an intervention programme. Formative evaluations report on the progress of an intervention while summative evaluations reflect the outcome of an intervention (Hart, 1998:46). Evaluation studies — which are generally conducted by means of social science methods — cover a wide field and include intervention programmes in, for example, health and education. Evaluations may also be made of organisations' service delivery and of development projects. Not all evaluation studies are commissioned by bodies that implement intervention programmes. They may also be undertaken by researchers to generate knowledge or to contribute to policy development. The purpose of the Vista evaluation study is knowledge generation as the study was not commissioned. The process also happened a long time ago so that its results will have a minimal effect on the development practice of the body that planned the intervention, i.e. the GPG. According the Rossi and Freeman (1999:22) programme evaluation may be done in one or more of five areas:
 - the need for the programme,
 - the design of the programme,

⁵ Triangulation enhances the validity of the study.

- the programme implementation and service delivery,
- the programme impact or outcome, and
- programme efficiency (cost-effectiveness).

In the course of undertaking the Vista study the researcher collected some information or made observations on each of these five areas. However, as the thrust of the study is to determine the communication process, it clearly belongs to the programme implementation and outcome areas in Rossi and Freeman's classification.

11. A case study may benefit if a theoretically derived ideal-type framework is used to guide collection and analysis of data (Yin, 2003a:14; 22-30; De Vaus, 2001:250-251). In the Vista study the communication process, including the documented communication messages, are evaluated by means of a theoretically derived evaluation instrument.
12. The ideal type is used as a template to guide the analysis of the data and to determine how closely the case fits the template (De Vaus, 2001:251).
13. Using a template also provides structure and purpose to the analysis and avoids mere description of whatever the researcher finds interesting or catches his or her attention (De Vaus, 2001:251). Analysis of the Vista communication process has benefited in focus by using an ideal-type template.
14. The case study relies on techniques similar to those used by the historian but adds the possibility of using interviewing and observation (Yin, 2003a:8). These techniques are used in the Vista study.

3.5 From design to process

Based on the above theoretical grounding, the research questions raised in Chapter 1 and the data at the researcher's disposal, a case study design which includes an evaluative dimension, links to the following research process elements:

- data collection methods providing for
 - document selection and analysis;
 - participant observation; and
 - interviewing.
- data analysis methods providing for
 - content analysis of documents containing public speeches in order to identify communication themes; and

- analysis of interpersonal, inter-group, and formal public communication, traced by means of a chronological presentation of the Vista process.

3.6 Guidelines on research process

As the review of subject area and design literature is part of the research process (Mouton, 2001:86-97; Hart, 1998:14 and Hart, 2001:3), a substantial part of the research process has already been covered.

This section deals with two further aspects of this process:

- a review of the literature related to the data collection and data analysis methods adopted in this inquiry; and
- application to the Vista study of the insights gained through the review of literature on data collection and analysis.

3.6.1 Literature review

Three main points are discussed in this section. These are:

- the dimensions of methodology;
- methods of data collection; and
- methods of data analysis.

3.6.1.1 The dimensions of methodology

Mouton (1996:35-36) defines the methodological dimension of research as ‘the ‘knowledge of how’ or ‘know-how’ to do things or the total of ‘means’ that scientists employ in reaching their goal of valid knowledge.’ In addition, Mouton distinguishes three levels of the methodological dimension, based on their degree of complexity and abstractness:

- research techniques,
- research methods and
- methodological paradigms.

For the purpose of this discussion the emphasis is on the first two of these dimensions.

Research techniques are defined by Mouton (1996:36) as the specific and concrete means that the researcher uses to perform particular actions. These actions or tasks are related to specific stages in the research process, for example, sampling, measurement, data collection and data analysis. Thus simple random sampling is a technique used in sampling subjects and telephone interviewing is a technique used in survey research.

Research methods refer to the means to implement a particular stage in the research process. Mouton (1996:36) identifies the following stages in the research process:

- Methods of definition: theoretical and operational definitions.
- Sampling methods: probability and non-probability methods.

- Measurement methods: scales, questionnaires and observation schedules.
- Data-collection methods: participant observation, interviewing, unobtrusive measurement and systematic observation.
- Data-analysis methods: statistical methods, mathematical methods and qualitative methods.

In summarising the characteristics of methodology in the sense of research methods and techniques (Mouton (2001:56) mentions the following three points:

- Its point of departure is specific tasks, e.g. data collection or sampling that have to be performed.
- It focuses on the research process and the kinds of tools and procedures to be used.
- It focuses on the individual steps in the research process and the most objective procedures.
- In addition, the first chapter (Chapter 6) in Mouton's 'Section 3: The Research Process' (Mouton, 2001: 86-97) deals with the literature review. This tallies with the view expressed by Clough and Nutbrown, 2002: 31) that in terms of 'the methodological structures and operations of a study' the entire research inquiry is methodology.

Whereas Mouton describes methodology as a set of more or less conventionalised methods and techniques, other authors use this concept to indicate a researcher's use of methods in a particular study. Clough and Nutbrown (2002:17-18), for example, use methodology as a concept to indicate the researcher's constant justification of his or her research decisions during an inquiry.

Related to this idea, Clough and Nutbrown argue that research methods should be constructed for particular purposes rather than selected for their general usefulness. They grant that there are methodological 'blueprints' which suggest ways of proceeding but that techniques should not be seen as things that can be lifted from other accounts and used uncritically in a new study. This cannot be done because each inquiry has different situations and subjects. The function of methodology in a study is to explain the particularity of the methods made for that study. A methodology does not show how a particular method appeared to be the best available method for a given purpose but 'how and why *this way of doing it was unavoidable — was required by — the context and purpose of this particular enquiry*' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002:17). In line with the title of their book *A Student's Guide to Methodology: Justifying Enquiry*, these authors conclude that methodology requires researchers to justify their particular research methods throughout the course of a research project. They add that the better a researcher is able to justify his or her use of particular methods, the more persuasive the study becomes.

3.6.1.2 Methods of data collection

Three methods of data collection are used in this study: participant observation, interviewing, and selecting and analysing texts (Mouton, 2001:105).

Participant observation

This method has a long history and in a sense forms the basis of qualitative research (De Vos *et al*, 2005:274). Atkinson and Hammersley (1994:249) add that ‘in a sense *all* social research is a form of participant observation, because we cannot study the social world without being part of it. From this point of view participant observation is not a particular research technique but a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers’.

Participant observation can range from total participation to total observation. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994:248-249) specify the range of roles from observer to participant in a fourfold typology:

- complete observer,
- observer as participant,
- participant as observer, and
- complete participant.

This typology is extended by a number of variations which run together with it, such as the following:

- ‘whether the researcher is known to be a researcher by all those being studied, or only by some, or by none
- how much, and what, is known about the research by whom
- what sorts of activities are and are not engaged in by the researcher in the field, and how this locates her or him in relation to the various conceptions of category and group membership used by participants
- what the orientation of the researcher is; how completely he or she consciously adopts the orientation of insider or outsider’ (Atkinson and Hammersley (1994:249).

De Vos *et al*, (2005:275-277) list the following characteristics of participant observation.

- The real world of the participants of a research project can only be understood if the words and expressions they use in specific situations are revealed.
- The research tries to gain an in-depth view of the lives of research participants.
- The research emphasises the everyday and natural experience of research participants.

- The researcher should study the culture and social structure of research participants.
- The researcher becomes both collector of data and interpreter thereof.
- It is often more important to emphasise participation than observation in order to allow the researcher to experience the life-situation of research participants. In this way the research becomes an insider but at the same time he must remain an outsider.
- As a participant in the situation the researcher studies he even contributes to that situation.
- In the research situation the participant observer should listen, look, inquire, observe and make notes on everything significant.
- Reliability in relation to participant observation is difficult to achieve as it is difficult to replicate the research situation.
- In using participant observation the structure of research design should be flexible so that the situation remains as natural as possible.
- As the researcher may be involved in a research situation over a considerable period of time attainment of objectivity may become a special problem.
- Non-verbal information is a focus of data collection through the use of this technique.

Document selection and analysis

All documents are broadly divided into *official* and *personal* documents. Other terms used in this field are archival research, life histories, historical research, documents of life and the distinction between ‘document study and secondary analysis (De Vos *et al*, 2005:314). Furthermore documents may be classified as *primary* and *secondary* sources. Primary sources are the original written material of an author’s own experiences and observations, while secondary sources make use the material produced by someone else as the original source. For example an autobiography is a primary document while a biography is a secondary one. Primary sources are generally regarded to be more reliable than secondary ones since the latter are based on the interpretation of someone else’s ideas. Secondary sources should therefore be closely scrutinized for accuracy (De Vos *et al*, 2005:315).

If document selection and analysis is combined with other methods of data collection such as observation and interviewing the researcher can validate and cross-check findings. In this way the weaknesses of data sources are compensated for by other sources and through triangulation the strengths of one procedure can compensate for the weaknesses of another (De Vos *et al*, 2005:314).

3.6.1.3 Methods of data analysis

Linked to the two main types of data collected, documentary and observational, two methods of data analysis were planned. These were content analysis to deal with the documentary evidence and a chronologically-based analysis of the communication phases of the Vista process and the role of the Core Group to present the observational evidence.

Analysis of participant observation evidence

The chronologically-based analysis of observational evidence would deal mainly with the verbal communication between the role players. The findings from this description will establish one set of communication patterns.

These patterns would be integrated with the patterns established from content analysis of the communication messages presented at Vista 2.

The second dimension would trace the role of the Core Group in the Vista process.

Interviewing

‘Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings’ (Fontana & Frey, 2003:61-62). Yet, these authors (Fontana & Frey, 2003:61) add, to ask questions and to get answers is harder than it appears at first. This is because the spoken or written word always carries with it a residue of ambiguity, despite careful wording, coding or reporting.

Yet interviews form an important part of everyday life and they are employed in many fields, for example, to gauge political opinion, in medical matters, housing applications, talk shows, and new TV and radio programmes (Fontana & Frey, 2003:63). The interview is also widely used in social research as a data gathering tool.

Interviews used in social research as usually classified into a number of categories. They may be structured, partly structured or unstructured (Du Plooy, 2001: 176-177). In structured interviewing respondents are all asked the same questions. Responses are recorded according to a coding scheme. Little flexibility is allowed in the way the interviewer asks the questions or the way they are answered by the respondents (Fontana & Frey, 2003:68).

In partially structured interviews the interview schedule contains standardised questions or topic lists but the interviewer is free to deviate and to ask follow-up or probing questions based on the respondent’s replies (Du Plooy, 2001: 176-177).

Unstructured interviews provide a greater depth of data than structured interviews. These types of interviews are open-ended. The distinction between open-ended or in-depth interviews and participant observation is not great as many of the data gathered in participant observation comes from informal interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 2003:74).

Document analysis

Content analysis was chosen as the method to analyse the documentary evidence. This evidence deals mainly with the communication messages exchanged between the role players — particularly at Vista 2.

Berg states that ‘content analysis may be used as an analysis tool rather than as a complete research strategy’ (Berg, 2001:258). This is what is done in this study, i.e. the content analysis tool is similar to that used in grounded theory design but the aim is not to take the analysis to the level at which theory is grounded. As has been discussed above (Section 3.5.2) the case study design is the research strategy used in

this study. The aim of applying content analysis here is to identify the main themes in the communication messages formulated by the role players during the process.

Foci in communication analysis

Berg (2001:243) points out that communication has three components: sender, message and audience. In relation to message analysis three essential foci are:

- explicit themes,
- relative emphasis on various topics, and
- amount of space or time devoted to certain topics

Types of constructs in communication

In the analysis of communication messages the difference between *in vivo* and sociological constructs should be kept in mind. *In vivo* codes are the literal terms used by individuals in communication. These codes ‘tend to be the behaviors or processes which will explain to the analyst how the basic problem of the actors is resolved’ (Strauss, 1987:33). Sociological constructs, on the other hand, are formulated by the analyst. These include terms and categories such as *professional attitude, family oriented, obsessive, workaholic, and educationally minded* (Berg, 2001:244). These terms are derived from the field under study.

Elements used in content analysis

Berg (2001:246) states that in the content analysis of written messages a choice from seven elements can be made. These are words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts and semantics.

Analysis through interaction of content elements with concept classes

Content analysis according to Berg (2001:248) involves the interaction between the content element(s) being studied and the application of explicit rules for identifying and recording these characteristics. The categories into which content items are coded vary according to the type of research and the characteristics of the data e.g. responses to open-ended questions, newspaper columns, letters, television or transcripts. As with other research methods, conceptualization and operationalisation involves interaction between theory and empirical data.

Three types of procedures are used to develop classes and categories in content analysis (Berg, 2001:250). These are common classes, special classes and theoretical classes. Common classes are derived from the common classes in a culture such as *age, gender, mother, father and teacher*. These common classes are important to determine whether certain demographic characteristics are related to patterns which arise during content analysis. Special classes refer to the subject area terminology used by professionals, but not by lay people. Theoretical classes are those that arise from analysis of the data. These theoretical classes usually provide the overall pattern which emerges in the course of content analysis. Terminology used in theoretical classes is usually borrowed from special classes. These theoretical classes are grounded in the data. Theoretical classes only arise from intensive work on the document being investigated, and it is therefore important to retain the use of special classes throughout the investigation.

Open or unrestricted coding of the data

Open coding is a procedure which uses unrestricted coding of the data. With open coding one carefully and minutely reads the document line by line and word by word to identify the concepts and categories that fit the data. These concepts are provisional. As the work continues and one thinks about the data, questions and preliminary answers emerge. The questions and answers lead to further questioning about conditions, strategies, interactions and consequences (Berg, 2001:255).

Berg (2001, 251-252) discusses four guidelines for conducting open coding:

1. Ask the data a specific set of questions. These questions relate to the original objective of the research study.
2. Analyse the data in detail. Coding is much like using a funnel. One begins with a wide opening, a broad statement which is narrowed down to a refined tightly stated conclusion.
3. Frequently interrupt coding to write theoretical notes. This procedure directs researchers closer to grounded theory. Writing notes in the course of coding triggers ideas.
4. Do not assume the analytic relevance of variables drawn from the common class such as *age, sex, social class* until the data show these variables to be significant.

Coding frames and axial coding

Content analysis is done by means of coding frames. Coding frames are used to organize the data and identify findings after completion of opening coding (Berg, 2001:253). First coding frames may be multileveled and require successive sortings of all cases being investigated. All cases are sorted into a specified special class. Berg (2001:253) comments that this first frame is similar to what Strauss calls axial coding (Strauss, 1987:32) which he defines as intensive coding around one category.

Berg (2001:255) adds that that coding may be combined with analysis of the data which means that analysis of data is grounded to establish theory but at the same time also develops existing theory. In this way inductive and deductive processes are combined.

3.6.1.4 Conclusions

Planning a research study goes through many phases in a non-linear way. The reflection, planning, reading and note-taking that went into this study is discussed in Section 3.7.

Section 3.6 outlined the procedures suggested in the literature for data collection and analysis. Section 3.7 will discuss how these procedures were applied in the Vista study.

3.7 The Vista research process

This section describes the Vista research process in terms of the guidelines suggested in the literature reviewed in Section 3.7.

3.7.1 Data collection methods

As indicated in Section 3.7.1.2, three methods of data collection were used — selection and analysis of documents, participant observation and interviewing.

3.7.1.1 Document selection and analysis

The documents selected in the Vista study were *official* and *personal*.

Official documents consisted of

- Media reports
- Official ANC and government publications
- Documents compiled by the Core Group.

Personal documents consisted of

- An autobiography written by the initiator of the Vista process.

Data collection commenced by sifting through all the documents the researcher collected while participating in the Vista process. Reading the documents happened in repetitive phases and after each successive reading, greater clarity was attained about which documents were essential for the study. The focus increasingly became the documents produced during the Vista process. These were the four booklets produced by the Core Group. They were typed on computer, copied, usually 5 000 per booklet, and disseminated to the role players. As the booklets are not accessible in libraries they are appended—for reference, verification and reliability testing.

The researcher's personal notes, although limited in extent, formed the skeleton for recollecting the process and writing the chronological narrative. See Sections 4.2 to 4.7.

3.7.1.2 Participant observation evidence

Participant observation evidence is based on the researcher's participation in the Vista process during the last nine months of its fourteen month duration. The researcher participated mainly as the coordinator of the Facilitation Task Team and as the liaison officer between this task team and the Core Group. As this task team focused on establishing CDFs in the townships, the researcher also regularly acted as facilitator at these meetings. As a member of the Core Group the researcher also attended the weekly or fortnightly meetings of this body. The researcher also attended a number of meetings between the Core Group and the GPG and the ANC-Alliance. Involvement in so many aspects of the Vista process enabled the researcher to develop in-depth knowledge about most of its activities.

3.7.1.3 Interview evidence

Interview evidence was collected in three ways during the inquiry.

First, snowball interviews were conducted with a number of people who participated in the Vista process. As the researcher was not a participant at Vista 1, he tried to access any written evidence produced during this Conference. Neither the programme nor any report could be accessed from official government sources or from people who had attended the Conference.

The researcher therefore called a few SACS colleagues who had participated in the Conference and accessed information about the format of the Conference, attendees and communication messages.

After completing these interviews aimed at finding out about Vista 1, the researcher discovered two press reports on the Conference (Collinge, 1994a and 1994b) and still later the autobiography of the initiator of the Vista process (Turok, 2003).

Apart from the snowball interviews the researcher also occasionally called two of the colleagues referred to above in the course of the inquiry to verify his understanding of sequences, events and activities. Opinions about the course of the Vista process as the researcher and his former colleagues had experienced it were also discussed during these telephonic interviews.

A third way of gathering evidence through interviews was in participant observation. As pointed out in Section 3.6.1.2, the distinction between open-ended interviewing and participant observation is often slight as data gained in participant observation may have been gathered by means of informal interviews. Although the researcher was not formally a researcher when he participated in the Vista process, he was keen to be well informed about all activities and regularly asked questions to the participants.

3.7.2 Methods of data analysis

The two most important techniques in analysis used are:

1. analysis of the participant observation and interview data, and presented as a chronological reconstruction of the interpersonal and inter-group communication between the role players, and
2. application of a content analysis technique to identify themes in the documented communication messages between the role players. The way this technique was used is set out below.

3.7.2.1 Analysis of participant observation evidence

The participant observation and interview evidence enabled the analyst to establish three processes and outcomes:

1. A chronological reconstruction of the communication process between the role players as they interacted over a period of fourteen months. This enabled the researcher to identify two distinct phases in the process.
2. Verbal communication patterns between the role players.
3. The nature of the relationship between the role players, especially between the GPG and the Core Group.

3.7.2.2 Analysis of interviews

The interview material discussed in Section 3.8.1.3 was mainly integrated in writing the chronological narrative of the two phases of the Vista process. See Section 4.3 to 4.7 below.

3.7.2.3 Content analysis of selected documents

As has been pointed out in the discussion of the method of content analysis in Section 3.3.3, the analyst focuses on explicit themes, the relative emphasis on various topics and the amount of space or time devoted to certain topics.

In *open coding* the analyst directs a consistent set of questions at the data, analyses the data in detail, makes frequent theoretical notes and refrains from assuming the relevance of common class variables, such as age and sex, until these are shown to be relevant from the data.

Of the possible seven content elements used in message analysis, the *paragraph* was chosen for analysing the Vista documents. The paragraph as element interacts with the special class of concepts drawn from the field of Development Communication and the Vista process. Examples of concepts included here are the following:

- communication between the main role players,
- DC,
- DSC,
- participation,
- communication modes (top-down, horizontal, transactional),
- grass roots communication,
- the role of the benefactor,
- the role of the beneficiary,
- the role of the Core Group,
- trust-building and intermediary communication by the Core Group
- empowerment of beneficiaries,
- CDFs and LDFs,
- participatory development planning,
- LDOs,
- accreditation and resourcing of CDFs and LDFs,
- inclusivity of Development Forums,
- Development Forums as structure-driven organisations, and
- Development Forums as objective-driven organisations

The content of the messages delivered by each of the three role players was analysed in order to identify their salient themes.

The findings on the content of communication messages were then integrated with the communication patterns established through the study of evidence gathered by means of participant observation and interviewing.

Apart from identifying themes, time and space allocations were also measured in the documents.

Application of this method of data analysis is reflected in the findings in Chapter 4.

3.8 The researcher's role in the Vista process

Current thinking in qualitative research notes that the researcher approaches the research act as a gendered, multiculturally situated person with a set of ideas, 'a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis). That is, the researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:29-30).

The present researcher approaches this project as a white, middle-aged, middle class, multilingual, South African male with a teaching and public service background. He has a predisposition for interpretive research and an interest in the development of South Africa's citizens. He hopes that this study will contribute to the discourse in the field of DC on government-civil society interaction and communication in such a way that community needs (basic, educational, social and cultural) feed into service delivery policy and practice.

As a substantial part of the evidence presented in this report is based on the notes the researcher made as participant observer, the nature of the researcher's role in this regard is discussed in the remainder of this section.

As has been noted in Section 3.7.1.2 Atkinson and Hammersley (1994:248) suggest a fourfold typology of participant observation, namely:

- complete observer,
- observer as participant,
- participant as observer, and
- complete participant.

These authors also noted a number of variations on this typology, viz.:

- 'whether the researcher is known to be a researcher by all those being studied, or only by some, or by none
- how much, and what, is known about the research by whom
- what sorts of activities are and are not engaged in by the researcher in the field, and how this locates her or him in relation to the various conceptions of category and group membership used by participants
- what the orientation of the researcher is; how completely he or she consciously adopts the orientation of insider or outsider' (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994:249).

In respect of the Vista process the researcher was a complete participant for the time he participated in the Vista process — nine of its fourteen months duration. (For information on the first five months of the Vista process the researcher relied on documentary and interview evidence).

A number of aspects serve to understand the role of the researcher in the Vista process. These relate to the real-life experience of the researcher in a contemporary historical process and his role as a participant observer.

The notes the researcher made during the Vista process are part of the historical record but differ from conventional historical data in as much as the researcher experienced the events as a real-life situation. As a participant he became part of the historical record.

These notes have been augmented by the researcher's reconstruction of the process — based on the documents at hand and through reflection and recollection of the Vista events. The snowball interviewing conducted by the researcher with a number of participants in the Vista process, particularly about its early stages — in which the researcher was not involved as a participant — also form part of the historical record.

When the researcher participated in the Vista process he was not known to be a researcher of this process by anyone, even to himself — at that stage. He was known as someone who had conducted research earlier but at that stage he acted only as a participant.

Regarding the researcher's location in the field situation, he was part of the Core Group and the Facilitation Task Team. In the first place, however, he was a member of the communication team of SACS. Thus although his primary identification in the process was as a government official, this role was overlaid by Core Group identification through his close connection with this body. In his role as coordinator of the Facilitation Task Team and his frequent visits to communities in Gauteng to facilitate the establishment of forums, he also developed close links with a number of community leaders and communities. His communication with the GPG was limited, particularly during the second phase of the process.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has provided the research design and the research process for the study. The ideas for crafting these research dimensions were developed from a review of recently published literature on research methods.

Design specifications were guided by the research questions discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Based on the case study design an appropriate design was tailored to address these questions.

The discussion of the research process focused on methods of data collection and analysis. Based on relevant methodology literature, the chosen methods were fashioned. Thereafter the way in which these methods were used in collecting and analysing data on the Vista process was discussed.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the research findings on the communication patterns and the closely related roles which the main participants played in the Vista process.

Because case studies generally cover events over time, one type of approach is to present the case study evidence in chronological order. Here, the sequence of chapter or sections might follow the early, middle, and late phases of a case history (Yin, 2003:153).

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to establish the nature and content of the communication patterns and the role of the Core Group in the Vista communication process. As communication is part of role play in any social context, the roles of the GPG and the Development Forums will of necessity also be brought into the picture, but perhaps less explicitly or theoretically focused than that of the Core Group. It will be remembered that research questions 9 and 10 explicitly seek to understand the role of the Core Group in the Vista process.

These findings are presented by means of a reconstructed chronological chain of events, and analysis thereof, through the data collected by participant observation and interviews. This evidence, presented in Sections 4.4 to 4.7, focuses on the communication process in which the three main role players participated. The process had two distinct phases which are referred to as Phase 1 and Phase 2.

The technique of content analysis is applied to the documentary evidence contained in the fourth Core Group booklet (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d).

4.2 Chronology of communication steps in the Vista process

The chronology of the communication steps in the Vista process draws mainly on analysis of the participant observer and interview data. These steps include the two Vista conferences, the background, aims and actions of the role players, and the communication between them. Without this chain of communication and its social and conceptual background, the process would be difficult to unravel.

The third source of evidence, documents, and particularly the fourth booklet compiled by the Core Group,⁶ is important from the point of view of understanding the messages the role players conveyed at Vista 2, but the social interaction and communication between them, off-stage, so to speak, and the time when particular events took place provides the links and progressions in the process and makes it intelligible.

Content analysis is applied to the documented messages exchanged between the role players at Vista 2. These are contained in the fourth booklet compiled by the Core Group (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d). Reference is made to the contents of three earlier Core Group booklets in the chronological presentation. It was not thought important to apply content analysis to these three documents as they present only the point of view of the Core Group. By contrast, at Vista 2 the views of the

⁶ Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d.

three main role players were presented at a single event. This makes for a good comparison between their views at a given point of time in the process.

4.3 Two phases in the Vista communication process

The Vista process had two distinct phases which differed considerably from each other. The second phase had a new set of role players on the side of the GPG and the communication patterns in the two phases differed markedly.

The two phases are presented and analysed chronologically in Section 4.4 to 4.6 below. This analysis emphasises the face to face and inter-group communication between the role players. It also traces the role of the Core Group in the communication process.

The chronological reconstruction and analysis provides one dimension of the communication patterns. A second dimension is established through content analysis of the written messages exchanged at Vista 2.

4.4 Phase 1 — August 1994-March 1995

As indicated in the overview of the Vista process in Section 1.3, the process commenced with a conference on 4 June 1994 at the Soweto campus of Vista University.

4.4.1 The Vista 1 Conference

Shortly after taking office Gauteng RDP Commissioner Turok (2003:267) became concerned about the fact that the RDP was being interpreted in a narrow sense as, for example, in the mere building of new physical infrastructure in the cities. He felt that such an emphasis would maintain the marginalisation of the townships, and that the benefits of the RDP would not reach the townships.

Turok's ideas were discussed in the RDP Commission and it was decided to call a meeting named *Plan the Renewal of the Townships* at Vista University in Soweto. Invitations were sent to all ANC branches, and the organisers hoped that at least 150 people would attend, but on the day, '900 turned up and we had a wonderfully enthusiastic meeting which could have turned the whole RDP programme around if we had been allowed to maintain the momentum' (Turok, 2003:268). This meeting subsequently became known as Vista 1.

In an interview, journalist Collinge (1994a) conducted with Turok immediately before the Conference, he said that it had two aims. 'First, the Government is sending a signal that we care about the conditions in which people live. And second, the people themselves must enter into the spirit of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, so that the idea of a tripartite partnership — involving government, the private sector and the community — is made a reality'.

The keynote address at Vista 1 was delivered by the then premier of Gauteng, Mr Tokyo Sexwale. The premier first spoke about the need to join cities and

townships together to become non-racial cities with a common tax base. He added that ‘we want economic links and residential links between the townships and the cities, to break the gaps made by apartheid’ (Collinge, 1994b). The Premier then ‘pledged a new style of communicative government. And the crowd, crammed into the too-small lecture theatre, responded with an unhesitating chorus of “Oh yes!” when Sexwale declared: “You are now in charge. You are now the government”’.

Collinge (1994b) concluded that ‘if people-centred development was the main theme of his address, the think-big message was not far behind’. In the think-big part of the premier’s message he outlined delivery promises on housing and the training of people to develop small businesses. He emphasised that development was not only about delivery but also about economic growth.

In the months after Vista 1, the process of information dissemination and mobilisation of the communities in Gauteng commenced. This was done with the assistance of the Core Group. The communication activities of this unit are discussed below. In the next section the three main role players are introduced.

4.4.2 Role players

There were three main role players in the Vista process. First, there was the RDP Office which arranged Vista 1 and initiated the stakeholder consultations after the Conference. This took place through a number of workshops. The second group of participants in the process was the Core Group which facilitated the dissemination of the information aims throughout the province and mobilised communities to take the process forward. The third set of role players consisted of people from the towns and particularly the townships in Gauteng. As the process evolved, members from each community were encouraged to form development forums.

4.4.2.1 The RDP Commission and the RDP Office

This section first deals with the background to the RDP Commission and the RDP Office. Thereafter the composition, aims, values, and activities and communication approach of the RDP Office are discussed.

Background

The difference between the RDP Commission and RDP Office needs to be explained at the outset. The RDP Commission was the governing body of RDP work in the Province and consisted mainly of members of the Executive Committee of the GPG. The RDP Office was the administrative arm of the Commission. In his time in the GPG, Turok was both member of the RDP Commission and Commissioner of the RDP Office.

To contextualise RDP work in Gauteng an overview of RDP at national level is provided.

On taking over the Government of South Africa in May 1994 the ANC started to put its RDP into practice. Prior to coming to power the Alliance partners had

compiled a policy document on the RDP and this was followed by the publication of an official white paper before the end of 1994. A minister ‘without portfolio’ in the Office of the President, aided by a staff of officials, was to drive the RDP at national level while in the provinces RDP commissions headed by commissioners would drive implementation at provincial level. The programme had a strong social and upliftment dimension and was aimed at addressing the inequalities of the past and in speeding up development through transformation of all South African institutions (governmental and private sector), job creation and poverty eradication. Operationally it functioned across the boundaries of line function departments by initiating, for example, a series of Presidential Lead projects, such as the renewal of the Katorus townships on the East Rand. These townships had been ravaged by political unrest in the 1980s. To do this, contributions were required from a range of government departments.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the RDP was based on a set of six principles, one of which applied directly to the Vista process. This was that development was to be a ‘people driven process’ which called for the ‘active involvement and growing empowerment’ of the citizenry. This approach built on ‘the many forums, peace structures and negotiations that our people are involved in throughout the land’ (ANC, 1994:4-5).

Soon after his appointment as RDP Commissioner in Gauteng, Turok started addressing meetings about the new government’s policies. After a successful meeting in which he had addressed officials of the previous provincial administration and received their support for the new policy, he said that ‘I had numerous similar experiences and often addressed three or four meetings a day. By this time I had a good set of offices, a few excellent staff led by Salim Aziz, an official car, driver and bodyguard, and a growing reputation as the saviour of Gauteng’ (Turok, 2003:267).

Composition

As indicated above, the RDP Commission consisted of members of the political leadership in the Gauteng Provincial Government. The RDP Office had a staff of about five. The most senior staff member was Turok and his right-hand man was Salim Aziz. At the start of the Vista process the Office was expanding but it was closed down in April 1995.

Aim

The aim of the RDP Commission was to manage RDP projects in Gauteng while the RDP Office was responsible for the coordination of projects.

Values

The values of the RDP and the Office were in line with the national RDP values as discussed above. In terms of the Vista process the RDP office stood for a participatory approach to civil society in development work.

Communication approach and activities

The activities of the RDP Commission have been covered above. Apart from involvement in coordinating a number of RDP projects which were being implemented at the time, the RDP Office was mainly concerned with the Vista process from August 1994 until its closure in April 1995.

In tackling his new task Turok expressed the need for organised civil society participation in implementing the RDP. Turok added that ‘consultation is essential – without it, we’ll get nowhere. Previously, most government institutions were unable to deliver successfully due to a lack of legitimacy. People did not believe or trust officials, nor did they appreciate what was being delivered to them, because it was regarded as someone else’s’ (Maartens, 1995:10).

On the future role of local government Turok said that it would play a major role in gaining the support of communities and ensuring legitimacy for RDP projects. Turok also expressed concern about local government structures at that time. He said that too many concessions had been made. This left too much power in the hands of white minority groupings. He added that this situation was, however, coming to an end. At that time a number of transitional local councils were already in place and where they did not exist yet, a process was underway to create them. Members to these councils would be appointed by the Premier (Maartens, 1995:10). Turok added that alternative mechanisms were being created to compensate for weaknesses in local government structures. He said that ‘we are setting up a series of local development forums which include representatives from the community, labour, business, civics, churches — every part of civil society’ (Maartens, 1995:10).

These forums would increasingly develop capacity within communities and would interact with local governments, ensuring that the RDP had an alternative framework which could stimulate delivery. He added that forums would ‘be watching local government very carefully. In situations where local governments don’t deliver, we will have a mechanism through which civil society can exercise pressure’ (Maartens, 1995:10).

In discussing the relationship between government and civil society, Turok’s colleague, Salim Aziz, said that ‘civil society will have a role to play in monitoring government’s implementation programme in the following areas:

1. the quality of projects and programmes;
2. the relevance and appropriateness of these projects;
3. the efficiency and impact of the projects;
4. whether or not projects fall in line with RDP principles and programmes;
5. the pace and efficiency of delivery; and
6. evidence of nepotism and corruption’ (Aziz, 1995:11)

The communication aims of the Vista process as initiated by the GPG, were conveyed through information dissemination meetings, first at Vista 1, and then

through stakeholder consultations at ‘community’ ‘sectoral’ and ‘sub-regional’ workshops, and through the Core Group in its community mobilisation and capacity building activities. All this work aimed at facilitating future government-civil society interaction in development work. In all these meetings there was sufficient opportunity for dialogue between government and civil society.

After Vista 1, one of the first tasks the RDP Office undertook was to consult with civil society on its planned involvement of the people of the province in jointly undertaking the implementation of the RDP. To do this it contracted the services of the town planning firm *Settlement Planning Services* to arrange and facilitate two community workshops, three sectoral workshops and five sub-regional workshops. These workshops were held from July to November 1994. The community and sectoral workshops were held in Johannesburg. The sub-regional workshops were held in a town in each of the five geographical regions into which the province was then divided. These were the Vaal, the East Rand, Central Witwatersrand, West Rand and Pretoria. Later during the process a sixth sub-region, North East Rand, covering the Midrand-Kempton Park area, was demarcated.

The first of the two community workshops, held on 23 July 1994 was arranged for members of the ANC and its alliance partners and provincial government departments. ‘Delegates at this workshop requested a further workshop in order to investigate in more detail mechanisms for local participation in the RDP and answer some of the questions raised in the workshop. The second community workshop on local participation in the RDP for the PWV was held on 21 August 1994 and delegates were drawn from SANCO, the ANC, SACP, COSATU, Provincial Government Departments, RDP commissions from the other eight provinces and key individuals, community leaders and members of the Provincial Legislature. All organisations were requested that their delegations adequately represented women and youth’ (*Settlement Planning Services*, 1994:1-2).

Based on civil society negotiations with government in the period 1990 to 1994, mainly through forums, the forum structure was regarded as suitable also for the Vista process and for government-civil society participatory development work.

In the course of time participants expressed a variety of opinions on the composition and functions of the forums and how these could relate to local government.

The RDP Office’s point of view was that the composition and functions of development forums were to be based on the structure of the National Economic Development and Labour Chamber (NEDLAC), a national advisory body functioning within the ambit of the national Department of Labour. Moving to provincial level one would then have a provincial equivalent or PEDLAC and on the local authority level there would be LDFs with representation from community-based organisations, sectors (business, women, etc.) and possibly also labour. The geographical area of the LDF would coincide with that of a transitional local council (the name for local authorities at the time — prior to the 1995-1996 elections) and

include townships and suburbs. Within the geographic area of LDFs a number of CDFs would function. These would be the closest structure to the people and comprise mainly members of community-based organisations.

The implementation of the RDP through the RDP Office was, however, not without problems. From its inception, both at national and provincial level, implementation of the RDP as mentioned above, was done cross-laterally. This meant that implementation cut across the line functions of the various departments. The RDP office for example dealt with matters of education as well as agriculture, thus doing work in the line function of the Department of Education and of the Department of Agriculture. This arrangement caused friction among the members of the executive committee and officials in the departments.

Turok also experienced this problem in Gauteng and said that his ‘ANC colleagues in the provincial cabinet were becoming very anxious about my activities and questioned them in the ANC cabinet caucus. They wanted to know why I was dealing with education and health issues when there were MECs for these portfolios. Why did I deal with finance and the economy when this was not my immediate brief? I explained, patiently at first and then with some exasperation, that the RDP was a holistic development programme that was cross-cutting and comprehensive. But my explanations were not accepted and I found myself increasingly on the fringes of decision making. My RDP counterparts in other provincial departments were experiencing the same treatment. There was clearly something wrong with the institutionalization of the RDP even though it was then, and remains even now, the programme of government’ (Turok, 2003: 268).

It is against this background that Turok was relegated to the backbenches of the Gauteng Legislature early in 1995.⁷ His departure also meant the gradual phasing-out of the RDP Office in the GPG although the RDP Commission as an oversight body for RDP implementation remained in tact. The *RDP Vision* (see Maartens, 1995 and Aziz, 1995) published by the Communications Directorate in the Office of the Gauteng Premier was discontinued after only one issue.

As Turok had been the initiator of Vista 1, his departure left a gap in the leadership and management of the Vista process. After the closure of the RDP Office in the GPG, responsibility for dealing with the Vista process passed to a line function department. Before this happened the Gauteng RDP Core Group had been working for eight months and it had taken the original vision and communication aims of civil society participation in development work with government to many communities in Gauteng. This communication work is discussed in Section 4.4.2.2.

⁷ The national RDP office was closed down in 1996 and RDP work thereafter was integrated into the line function of departments at national, provincial and local government level.

4.4.2.2 The Core Group

The Core Group is discussed in terms of its background, composition, aims, values, and activities and communication approach.

Background

During one of the consultative workshops arranged by the RDP Office in August 1994, a group of people was chosen to take the consultative process forward. The decision to establish this group was thus based on a joint decision by government and civil society. Officially it was called the Gauteng RDP Core Group but was generally referred to as the Core Group.

The Core Group was not intended to be a permanent structure and it would cease functioning after reporting on its work at Vista 2. It was conceived as a body to assist the GPG in taking the communication aims and community mobilisation process forward. As an intermediary body between the benefactors and the beneficiaries it took on some of the characteristics of a DSC Unit as described in the literature review. Its assignment was to complete the communication and mobilisation process as soon as possible and then to report back to the GPG at another provincial conference, Vista 2.

Several NGO members of the Core Group were well versed in development theory and practice, particularly on the relationship between government agencies and civil society structures.

Composition

The group comprised mainly of members of NGOs, the ANC Alliance, business and donors.

It had a secretariat of two persons: Peter Benjamin, seconded to the Core Group by SANCO and Thami Mogomane. The secretariat was provided accommodation in the Regional Office of SACS in Smal Street, Johannesburg, from January 1995 to the end of the process.

Aims

The aims of the Core Group were twofold. Its first aim was to inform all communities in Gauteng about the Vista process, and then to assist in establishing development forums throughout the Province. It was seen as a temporary communication and organising unit to assist the RDP Office in implementing the aims it had expressed at Vista 1. After completing its task and reporting on it at Vista 2, it would cease to exist.

Values

The Core Group identified itself with the aims expressed by the GPG at Vista 1. This meant that it supported the future role of development forums in relation to ensuring

proper delivery of RDP projects and local government service delivery. Development Forums would primarily have a monitoring function.

Organisational activities and structures

The Core Group initiated the formation of a number of task teams to assist it in reaching the communities of Gauteng and to ensure that the process was well organised. These were the following:

Facilitation Task Team

The organisations which participated in the Facilitation Task Team were the Johannesburg Provincial Office of SACS, the Directorate of Development Activation in the Department of Welfare of the former Transvaal Provincial Administration and the Wits-Vaal peace structures. These three organisations had been working on different aspects of communication and development support in Gauteng communities and possessed first-hand knowledge about the communities and their development needs.

The biggest component in the Facilitation Task Team was a group of about 20 SACS communication officials.

Capacity Building Task Team

The Core Group recognised that the effectiveness of development forums was directly linked to the ability of individuals in communities to be conversant with development issues and the implementation of development projects. A capacity building task team was therefore formed to determine the training needs of development forums and to put together a capacity building plan. The Capacity Building Task Team consisted of representatives of SANCO, a number of other NGOs, SACS, business and a number of representatives from Development Forums. The ideas from this task team were taken to Vista 2 for discussion.

Conflict Management Task Team

It was realised that in prioritising the needs of a community, disputes and conflicts could arise. In order for Development Forums to deal effectively with these situations, an appropriate conflict management system was instituted. The task team consisted of members of the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa and the peace structures.

Policy Task Team

The Core Group recognised that there was a lack of clarity on the role and function of Development Forums. A policy task team was therefore formed to develop options on the role and function of these forums. The options would deal with the relationship of Development Forums with government. This task team consisted of

people from the NGO PlanAct, SANCO, the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa, the Development Resources Centre and SACS.

Communication approach and activities

The Core Group met weekly or fortnightly to discuss the work of its task teams and to plan for Vista 2. Meetings were initially held in the offices of the RDP Commission of the GPG but later moved to the offices of SACS.

In its short existence, the Core Group produced a considerable volume of writing on its work. The first booklet produced for use by members of the Development Forums, discusses the RDP, local government and the way in which local communities could interact with local councils. It said that the ‘the challenge for communities is not to do the work of local government but to make sure that local government is democratised and that it involves communities in identifying and prioritising development needs, responds to the real needs of communities, redirects local resources to meet community needs, sets up accountable and transparent management systems, and supports communities so that they are able to participate in local development (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a:5).

The Core Group next looked at the best way of ensuring development communication and service delivery at local government level. It suggested that ‘communities need to become organised and find ways to participate in their own development. They need to develop their own capacity and become involved in structures that facilitate their participation in local development. One way of organising is to set up a Community Development Forum’ (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a:5).

A CDF was defined as ‘a community based RDP structure inclusive of all organisations, sectors and geographical committees in the community; a facilitating forum representing community interests; a voluntary structure which is defined by the needs and conditions of the community; transparent and accountable to the community as a whole; and a place where ideas can be discussed and information shared. A community development forum is not an elected representative body; an implementing structure, a statutory body, and it does not manage project funds’ (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a:5).

The Core Group also provided guidelines on the need for CDFs, their functions and how they should be set up. Whereas the Core Group focused its attention mainly on CDFs it also provided some guidance to communities on the structure and function of LDFs.

Core Groups guidelines to the communities were not intended to be prescriptive but to stimulate debate in the communities and at Vista 2. The guidelines were also in line with the ideas expressed at Vista 1 that civil society should take a firm position *vis-à-vis* local government to ensure development and delivery of services.

As has already been mentioned, the Core Group was productive in documenting its work and from March to July 1995 it produced three pre-Vista 2 conference packs which totalled 50 pages (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a, 1995b & 1995c). It also produced a comprehensive 50-page report on Vista 2 in August 1995 (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d). These documents are important sources on the Vista process and this study would have been difficult to do without these documents.

4.4.2.3 The Development Forums

Participation by Development Forums in the Vista process is described in terms of their background, composition, aim, values, activities and communication approach.

Background

RDP Commissioner Turok envisaged the idea of forums as useful community structures at local government level to monitor RDP delivery.

Composition

Gauteng communities were represented in the Vista process at three levels. First there were the Networking Committees in the six geographical sub-regions of the province. They formed linkages between themselves in the Core Group and were intended at the end of the process to replace the Core Group as a body representing civil society in the province. Next there were LDFs whose boundaries in the main coincided with the geographical boundaries of local government authorities and finally grassroots-type CDFs which functioned mainly at local government ward level in many of the townships and towns of Gauteng.

Aim

The aim of Development Forums in the Vista process was to participate with the GPG to enhance RDP projects and to ensure service delivery, particularly at local government level.

Values

The values propounded by the communities were similar to those set out in the RDP policy documents, i.e. participation of people at grass roots level in development processes.

Activities

After Development Forums had been established in communities in the Province, they would interact with government on development projects. Some community members established contact with businesses in their area to initiate independent development projects. The Core Group's capacity building activities enabled

members of some Development Forums to be trained in community development and project management by an NGO, the Gauteng Peace and Development Foundation.

A major activity of Development Forums in the months leading up to Vista 2 was to prepare them for this Conference. Preparations included work on the structure of Development Forums and the manner in which they would interact with government institutions on development issues.

Communication approaches and activities

The development structures established in the communities—Development Forums and Networking communities—communicated mainly verbally in their communities. They informed community members through feedback at Development Forum and mass meetings about the Vista process and assisted in setting up Development Forums in communities in which they had not yet been established. .

By 15 March 1995 there were 46 CDFs and 14 LDFs in Gauteng (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a:15). Four months later these numbers had risen to 78 CDFs and 14 LDFs (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995c:3).

4.5 Communication patterns in Phase 1

During this period the RDP Office functioned actively and communicated on a regular basis with civil society.

After Vista 1, the RDP Office participated with civil society in meetings such as the community, sectoral, and sub-regional workshops discussed in Section 1.3. The RDP Office was also open to the public and it readily provided information, for example, by making available the ANC's document on the RDP, and documents compiled by the national RDP Head Office on projects and funding.

After civil society's enthusiastic response at Vista 1 to government's ideas on participatory development communication, there was an air of excitement and optimism among participants. Members of the public and a growing number of people who became involved in the Vista process were keen to learn how they could actively participate in the RDP.

The promise of people-centred development was taken seriously by the RDP Office and was underlined in the first issue of *RDP Vision*, published in January 1995 by the Communications Directorate of the Gauteng Provincial Government (See Maartens, 1995 and Aziz, 1995). In this issue the ideas of Turok and Aziz on civil society participation in the RDP were fully covered.

This period was characterised by cordial and informal communication between the RDP Office and civil society. Based on Government's intention to give civil society a distinct role in ensuring delivery at local government level, there was considerable joint exploration of ideas on the detail of the eventual participatory framework. Government's willingness to listen to the people was evidenced by the extensive programme of consultation, from August to November 1994, with all stakeholders in civil society. The consultations included two community workshops

(mainly for government officials), three sectoral workshops (women, business and labour, and non-government organisations) and five workshops for communities in the five geographical sub-regions of the province. This programme of workshops was started immediately after Vista 1 which ensured that the momentum built up at the conference was kept going. The agenda of these meetings promoted free and frank discussion by participants.

The communication process during this phase may thus be described as a learning one in which the principle of 'we together' rather than of 'us and they' characterised the interaction between government officials and members of the emerging Development Forums in the townships and towns in the province.

A similar cordial type of communication pattern was evident between the RDP Office and the Core Group after its establishment in August 1994. The best period of communication between these two bodies was probably from November 1994 to March 1995 when the RDP Office was represented on the Core Group by Salim Aziz of the RDP Office. Aziz regularly attended the weekly or fortnightly meetings of the Core Group and sometimes chaired them. He also facilitated the formation of the Facilitation Task Team of the Core Group. Previously Aziz had worked as a trade unionist and he knew a number of communication officers of SACS on the East Rand. This fact assisted in building trust between the Facilitation Task Team and the RDP Office.

Although the Core Group undertook to extend the consultative and mobilisation process to the communities, it did not form a communication barrier between the RDP Office and the communities. Community members were free to interact with members of the Core Group and its task teams, or directly with the RDP Office. Members of the RDP Office were often requested by the Core Group or one of its task teams to address meetings in the communities. Aziz was particularly active and addressed most of the sub-regional information dissemination workshops from August to November 1994.

Based on the communication aims of Vista 1 and the subsequent consultative workshops, the Core Group and its constituent task teams went to work in communicating with and mobilising the communities of Gauteng. It regarded the job it had to do as urgent and wanted to report back to the GPG and the communities as soon as possible. During a one day planning workshop on 15 February 1995 the Core Group set the end of March 1995 as a target date for the Vista 2 conference.

At a meeting between the Core Group and the RDP Office on 6 March 1995 serious planning was started with a view to holding Vista 2 on 8 April 1995 (Author's participant observation notes; Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a). Aziz assured the meeting that Government was fully behind the process.

The Core Group decided to write a pre-conference document for distribution to all invitees. This 17 page document (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a) indicated that by the end of March 1995 there were 46 CDFs and 14 LDFs in Gauteng. Not all Development Forums had been established through the work of the Core Group's

Facilitation Task Team. A number, particularly local development forums, had been established through other development initiatives in the province.

The Core Group booklet (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a) had the challenging cover title of *Ready for Delivery with the People* — a variation on *Reconstruction and Development Programme*. Copies were sent to invitees by the end of March and reached them during the first days of April.

The fact that this document with all it contained had been written by what turned out to be a body — the Core Group — that was not as well known in the GPG as had been anticipated, caused a stir in Government and affected the momentum and direction of the government-civil society communication process.

The Core Group was summoned to an evening meeting with the Gauteng Executive Committee on 4 April 1995. The meeting was chaired by the Member of the Executive Committee for Finance and chairperson of the RDP Commission. Also present at the meeting were four other members of the Executive Committee, a few RDP members of the ANC Alliance and officials of the GPG. Seven members of the Core Group attended the meeting including the researcher who took nine pages of hand-written notes. Salim Aziz also attended.

A range of problems were expressed by the GPG about the Core Group and its work. First, several Government speakers mentioned that invitations to the conference had been posted much too late and that they should have been sent a month earlier. Another speaker mentioned that the civil society process was not inclusive of all stakeholders in the province. A few speakers added that they had not heard of the Vista process before receiving the Vista 2 invitation. Other speakers said that Government was not ready to speak to civil society on delivery and that if the conference was held on the suggested date civil society would vent its anger at the fact that delivery was slow.

Government thus made it clear that Vista 2 could not be held on 8 April 1995. The Core Group proposed that Vista 2 should not be postponed for more than a month but Government proposed a three month postponement. This meant that Vista 2 would not be held before the end of June 1995.

At the meeting it also became clear that the RDP Office would in future no longer be the agency in the Gauteng Government with which civil society would communicate on participatory development.

One participant in the meeting mentioned that the Member of the Executive Committee for Housing was responsible for community liaison but the chair mentioned that communication with civil society would henceforth be through the Department of Development Planning, Environment and Works — in short, the Department of Development Planning — in terms of a still to be promulgated national Development Facilitation Act (DFA). He added that this Department needed time to prepare a position on civil society participation in terms of this Act.

Aziz's assurance to the Core Group less than a month earlier that Government was fully behind the participatory process clearly did not correspond with the

reception the Core Group received at this meeting. It was also clear that Aziz was being side-lined and that he no longer had the ear of the decision-makers in the GPG.⁸

Core Group members who attended the meeting went away somewhat shattered. The fact that from the side of Government the Vista process would in future be guided by a line function department which had not participated in the process thus far left Core Group members with a feeling of uncertainty about the outcome of the process. Until then the process had built up considerable momentum. Developing relations with officials in the new department would take time and effort. The Core Group also knew very little about the envisaged DFA and how much scope it would have for participatory development. The work they had done with the RDP Office may have had to be redirected in future.

On the other hand the secretariat of the Core Group realised that it had erred in giving invitees insufficient time to prepare for attending an important conference. Members of Development Forums in the communities of Gauteng would certainly also have needed more time to digest and discuss the content of the pre-conference information booklet.

The Core Group also admitted that the process had not been as inclusive as it might have been – something that could have been expected from such a provincial-wide process which had been undertaken under considerable pressure and time constraints. The work it had thus far done was regarded as consultative and preparatory to the participatory interaction between government and civil society. The pre-conference document had much material to debate at Vista 2. Decisions on the exact nature, composition and resourcing of community forums were matters which had to be taken in the type of joint sitting between government and civil society which Vista 2 would provide.

The Core Group, however, took heart from the fact that the chair at the meeting with Government had underlined the importance of civil society participation in development work and that he had congratulated the Core Group on the work it had produced thus far.

Instead of staging Vista 2 on 8 April 1995 and presenting and debating the future of government-civil society participatory action, the process which had attracted much interest in civil society since June 1994, thus took a slow-down turn just four days before the proposed conference. A new era was about to begin, the outcome of which would determine the Vista process.

The change regarding the department of the GPG which would in future communicate with civil society on the Vista process was conveyed to the Core Group in an almost incidental way at the 4 April 1995 meeting. No official public statement

⁸ By that time RDP Commissioner Turok had been relegated to the back benches of the Gauteng Legislature and the closure of the RDP office was on the cards (Turok, 2003:269). Not long thereafter the RDP Office was closed and Aziz joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and was subsequently posted in New York.

was issued by the GPG that communication between civil society on the Vista process would henceforth no longer be through the RDP Office but through the Department of Development Planning.

Phase 1 of the Vista process was characterised by a great deal of communication and organisational activity, much of which was managed by the Core Group. There was great enthusiasm for the process in Gauteng communities, as witnessed by the rapidly growing number of Development Forums of which there were already 62 by 15 March 1995 (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a:15). The Development Forums were preparing themselves to play an important role in the RDP, not only on an advisory and monitoring level but also in implementing projects. Communities had been informed by the Premier of the Province that ‘you are now the government’. Added to this pronouncement was the ‘people driven’ development principle in the ANC’s policy document.

The communication patterns that developed during this phase approximated the ideals spelt out in the transactional model of communication, in DSC and participation at a number of levels with government in projects. The Core Group also provided much support to communities in terms of advice, communication and organisational capacity.

The description of the Vista chronology thus far, not only provides a picture of its face to face communication pattern but also of the process before it entered its second phase. The chronological presentation continues into the second phase and provides the essential background for making sense of the messages delivered by the three participating groups at the Vista 2 conference.

4.6 Phase 2 — April to July 1995

As communication between civil society and the Core Group on the one hand and Government on the other through the RDP Office had now come to an end, the Vista process was about to enter a new era. This new era, Phase 2 of the Vista process is described in the following sections.

4.6.1 Role players

As indicated in Section 4.3.3 the new benefactor in the GPG in Phase 2 was the Department of Development Planning. The next section introduces this Department and adds some information on the other two role playing groups in this period.

4.6.1.1 The Department of Development Planning

This Department is discussed in terms of its background, composition, aim, values, activities, and communication approach and activities.

Background

This Department provided guidelines on the new approach to the Vista process after it became the benefactor representative of the GPG when the RDP office was closed down.

Composition

The Department consisted of a number of newly appointed senior officials and the responsible MEC was Mr Sicelo Shiceka.

Aim

The aim of the Department in the Vista process was to inform the Development Forums about the new focus of the GPG in terms of the DFA and the setting of LDOs at local government level.

Values

The Department's values in respect of the Vista process were to exert its authority as a government department and to act as facilitator and enabler of local government to implement the DFA.

Activities

The activities of the Department during the Vista process were to provide written and verbal information on the DFA to the Core Group and Development Forums in Gauteng.

Communication approach and activities

The Department mainly communicated with the Core Group during the four months — April to July 1995 — of the second phase of the Vista process. Its main communication activity during this phase was to present a formal communication message at Vista 2.

4.6.1.2 The Development Forums

The particulars about the background, composition, aims, values and communication activities of the forums did not differ much from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

Communication activities

The Development Forums continued preparing themselves for Vista 2. Some new Development Forums were established and most of them were represented in the Core Group by one of six sub-regional Networking Committees.

4.6.1.3 Core Group

The particulars about the background, composition, aims, values and communication activities of the Core Group were the same during Phase 2 as during Phase 1. In its second and third pre-Conference information packs the Core Group informed the Development Forums about the change in approach on the side of the GPG (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a & 1995b). This included information on the fact that interaction between government and local communities would in future be done in terms of the DFA.

Communication activities

A few days after 4 April 1995 the secretary of the Core Group established contact with the Department of Development Planning (Researcher's notes). He learned that a recently appointed senior official in that department had been assigned the task of liaising with the Core Group on the Vista process. A meeting between this official and five members of the Core Group took place on 11 April. The Core Group provided a history of the Vista process. The official inquired how Development Forums were accredited. The Core Group replied that its Policy Task Team was working on a process to accredit them. Up to that time Development Forums had used the guidelines of the Core Group on their composition and functioning. The Core Group's Facilitation Task Team also endeavoured to establish the Development Forums on Core Group guidelines. The Core Group argued that the GPG had a responsibility to recognise and resource Development Forums. If this could not be done, the Core Group felt that Government's views on the problems needed to be discussed with it.

Another matter which formed part of the discussions with this official was the date for Vista 2. The Core Group suggested either 24 June or 1 July. Sometime later it was decided to have the conference on 1 July (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995b). With the heading *New Focus for Vista 2* (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995b) the Core Group in this booklet announced that 'following extensive discussions with provincial government and the Alliance and within the networking committees, it has been decided that the focus of the conference should shift towards understanding the implications of the DFA on our work of community interaction with government' (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995b:1). As the Development Facilitation Bill still had to be enacted 'there will be no final clarity on the nature of community interaction with government. So Vista 2 will not take final decisions on our forums that may have to be restructured when the DFA takes effect. Instead Vista 2 will serve to inform participants of the DFA, and discuss how it will affect the work we have been doing' (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995:1).

Arrangements to have Vista 2 on 1 July went ahead but shortly before that date it was postponed for a second time, to 29 July, by the GPG. The reason given

was that Government representatives wished to attend the funeral of ANC stalwart Harry Gwala in KwaZulu-Natal on 1 July.

Communication between the Department of Development Planning and the Core Group during this period was mainly initiated by the Core Group. The secretary had regular one-on-one discussions with a number of officials in the Department of Development Planning. These discussions enabled the Core Group to access copies of the Development Facilitation Bill (Researcher's notes). The Department also compiled a briefing document on this bill. One provision of this bill was the setting of LDOs. It was foreseen that civil society would participate with local government in the establishment of LDOs.

In this time the Department of Development Planning made a number of its officials available to brief forums on the Development Facilitation Bill. Two such briefing sessions were held.

At a meeting between the Core Group and the ANC Alliance on 21 June 1995 the Alliance announced that in future communication between Government and civil society would only be done in terms of the DFA (Researcher's notes). The Gauteng Government also expressed unease about the Vista process and particularly about the existence of a mobilised civil society movement in the form of local and community development forums. Alliance speakers said that the intention of forums to pressurise local government on delivery had made local governments in the province uneasy. Government was also uncomfortable about the leadership role of the Core Group regarding the organisation of civil society in the province.

Some time before Vista 2 the Core Group compiled its third booklet in preparation for this conference — one booklet was prepared before every planned date to have the conference: 8 April⁹, 1 July and 29 July. The third booklet, in total 30 pages, contained reports compiled by the six sub-regional Networking Committees and the Core Group on their work since Vista 1 (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995c). Copies of the booklet were sent to all invitees to Vista 2 including the GPG. Government indicated before the conference that three of its spokespersons would address the conference. The GPG did not make its papers available beforehand to enable participants to prepare to respond to them at the conference.

During this time the Core Group and its task teams continued their work of establishing Development Forums and of building their capacity. Member of Development Forums were prepared for the new type of interaction with government and they looked forward to Vista 2 at which the position of government on interaction with civil society, and particularly on its relations with the Development Forums would be discussed.

⁹ Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a, 1995b & 1995c.

4.7 Communication patterns in Phase 1 and Phase 2

In Sections 4.4 to 4.6 the communication process between the main participants during the period from Vista 1 to Vista 2 has been described. The process was divided into two phases because of the difference in focus by the GPG, and the different communication patterns between the participants in each phase.

The first phase was characterised by much, almost hectic activity and intense communication between the participants. It was an egalitarian process in which status and background were not determining factors in communication. Communication between participants on a one-to-one and group basis facilitated learning and support for each other.

The structure and goals of the process were not entirely clear to all participants. This was partly due to the fact that during the second phase there was hardly any communication by the GPG. This only occurred at the end of this phase at Vista 2. The East Rand Networking Committee probably had the clearest idea of what the Vista process entailed. See, for example, this Committee's report at Vista 2. Even this Committee thought that Government guidance of the process was vague.

The second phase was much more formal, tension-laden and structured than the first. It was really the beginning of the end of the process because the agendas of the two departments — the RDP Office and the Department of Development Planning — in the GPG which communicated with civil society differed very much. Whereas the RDP Commission had made room for the initiative and creativity of civil society in the process, the Department of Development Planning had a structured and legal framework in terms of which civil society would be consulted on development plans.

From the presentation of the Vista process thus far, the following may be concluded:

- The process was divided into two distinct phases which differed appreciably.
- The change in RDP implementation strategy which emerged in 1995 at national level clearly affected implementation at provincial level. This in turn affected the unfolding of the Vista process, for example, by scrapping the post of RDP Commissioner and closing the RDP Office.
- The Core Group played an active part in the process and particularly in the period between the first and second communication phases.
- The fact that the Development Forums had been established by a GPG initiative morally obligated it to accredit and support them financially. How it managed this obligation is dealt with in the next section.

4.8 The Vista 2 Conference

This long awaited conference took place as a one day event at the Auckland Park campus of the Witwatersrand Technikon on a cold winter's day, Saturday 29 July 1995 (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d). It was attended by about 450 people who came mainly from the communities of Gauteng.

From the above discussion it is clear that there was a struggle for influence over the Vista process between the Department of Planning, on the one hand, and the Core Group and the Development Forums on the other. Evidence of this tussle comes, first, from the allocation of space provided to the inputs of the role players in the documents compiled by the Core Group. Second, the speeches delivered at Vista 2, the GPG completes the process of taking a firm grip on the Vista process. These two matters are discussed in 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 below.

4.8.1 Space allocation in Core Group documents

The difference between text space allocated to the Core Group and the GPG in the first and the last booklet compiled by the Core Group — see Figures 11 and 12 below, is significant.

FIGURE 11 SPACE ALLOCATED TO DIFFERENT TOPICS IN THE CORE GROUP'S FIRST BOOKLET (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a)

Topic	Number of pages	Percentage coverage
Introduction	2	11,00
Activities of the CG	2	11,00
CG guidelines for the forums	8	44,40
CG proposals on conflict task team	1	5,50
CG survey of CDFs and LDFs in Gauteng	3	16,50
CG acknowledgements and membership	1	5,50
CG agenda for Vista 2	1	5,50
Totals	18	100,00

FIGURE 12 SPACE ALLOCATED TO DIFFERENT TOPICS IN THE CORE GROUP'S FOURTH BOOKLET (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d)

Topic	Number of pages	Percentage coverage
Introduction	1	2
Key note and two additional addresses by GPG	18	36
Reports by Forums	11	22
Report by Core Group	3	6
Questions from the floor	1	2
Questions for commissions: GPG	8	16
Evaluation of conference by participants	7	14
Conference recommendations: GPG	1	2
Totals	50	100

Analysis of the topics in the first booklet, tabulated in Figure 11, indicate that the Core Group's activities comprised virtually 100% of the 17 page document. Only the agenda mentions as one of its items 'key speaker,' a reference to the anticipated input by the GPG. By comparison, Figure 12 on the report of Vista 2 carries three speeches by GPG speakers, and questions for commissions and conference recommendations compiled by the GPG. In total these three items comprise 27 of the 50 pages or 54% of the total space used in the booklet. On the other hand the contribution of the Core Group —'Core Group report' and 'Evaluation of conference by participants' comprises but 10 pages or 20% of the document. Space allocation to the beneficiaries, the six Networking Committees which reported on behalf of the Development Forums was also disproportionately small (11 pages or 22% of the total) in comparison with the GPG's 54% use of space.

These figures in themselves possibly do not mean very much, but as pointed out in the theoretical guidelines on content analysis (Berg, 2001:243), measurement of space and time allocation together with message content constitutes a significant communication indicator.

This measurement, read together with the content of the speeches,¹⁰ gives a picture of a benefactor who was taking control of a difficult situation. The Development Forums, which were the making of the GPG's RDP Office, were not part of the GPG's Department of Development's plans. The meant that whereas the

¹⁰ Public speeches are usually viewed in communication theories as rhetorical, as, for example, in Littlejohn and Foss' (2005:50-52) treatment of this topic. In terms of their persuasive intent, speeches, therefore, make scant provision for debate and feedback from the audience. The 'audience' at the Vista 2 conference comprised mainly the Development Forums and the Core Group. Whereas the Core Group had planned for debate at Vista 2 on the nature, resourcing, and future role of the Development Forums, the GPG's strategy did not provide for debate on these matters.

GPG had a moral obligation to honour earlier commitments, e.g. by accrediting and resourcing the Development Forums, the latter did not form part, or the only part, of the GPG's 'participative development planning'. (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:30-31). In terms of the DFA it had to shift interaction between the Development Forums and government to local government level (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:31-32).

Also in respect of the Core Group, the GPG felt uncomfortable. As a non-governmental body it wielded considerable influence in Gauteng, although assisted somewhat ironically, mainly by government officials from a national public service department — SACS. The Core Group had provided assistance in establishing the Development Forums and had guided their composition, aims and activities. It had also set up a number of specialised task teams, e.g. in conflict resolution, policy, and capacity building, and it communicated regularly with the Development Forums through the sub-regional Networking Committees.

4.8.2 Content analysis of the Vista 2 speeches

In this section the technique of open coding, an aspect of content analysis, is applied to the messages delivered at Vista 2.

The first guideline for open coding requires that the analyst asks the data a consistent set of questions. Six questions were addressed at the messages delivered by the three groups of role players at Vista 2. The basis for these questions was established in terms of the themes listed in Section 3.8.2.3. The themes in turn had been drawn from the five research questions formulated in Section 1.5.4.

The themes from Section 3.8.2.3 are the following:

- communication between the main participants,
- DC,
- DSC,
- participation,
- communication modes (top-down, horizontal, transactional),
- grass roots communication,
- the role of the benefactor,
- the role of the beneficiary,
- the role of the Core Group,
- trust-building and intermediary communication by the Core Group
- empowerment of beneficiaries,
- CDFs and LDFs,
- participatory development planning,
- LDOs,
- accreditation and resourcing of CDFs and LDFs,
- inclusivity of Development Forums,
- Development Forums as structure-driven organisations, and
- Development Forums as objective-driven organisations

These themes guided the formulation of the following six questions:

1. How did the group interpret its role in the Vista process?
2. How did the group structure communication with the other two participating groups in the Vista process?
3. Did the group experience communication with the other two groups as transactional and trust-building or unidirectional?
4. According to the group what were the communication and development results it achieved during the Vista process?
5. What communication and other problems did the group encounter during the Vista process?
6. How did the group intend solving these problems in the near future?

Answers to these questions in relation to each of the three groups are based mainly on the speeches delivered at Vista 2 but also draw on data collected by participant observation and interviews discussed in Sections 4.4 to 4.6 above.

4.8.2.1 The Gauteng Provincial Government

1. *How did the GPG interpret its role in the Vista process?*
 - It was proud of its achievements on RDP projects (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:2-5).
 - It had needed time to settle in as government during its first year in office (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:3,22).
 - It stressed the importance of its mandate to govern and to take its own decisions on policy and implementation. If it did not exert its authority it could lose it (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:6).
 - It saw its role in relation to development as facilitator and creator of an enabling environment, not as an actor participating with communities in development projects (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:6,30).
 - It stressed the importance of applying national policy at provincial level (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:25).
 - It stressed that RDP projects had to be properly planned and budgeted (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:7).
2. *How did the GPG structure communication with the other two participating groups in the Vista process?*
 - Vista 2 was the major communication event by the GPG to communicate with the other two groups in Phase 2 of the Vista process. It was done by

means of three formal speeches and by prescribing the subjects to be discussed in the commissions (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:2-10;22-33;35-43).

- The speeches reviewed the GPG's achievements on the RDP, discussed development forums and critiqued Development Forums. The third speech outlined the GPG's approach to 'participative development planning' and provided details about the DFA and its implementation through the establishment of LDOs in local government areas. (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d: 2-10; 22-33; 35-43).
 - In the run up to Vista 2 the GPG had a number of meetings with representatives of the Core Group and Networking Committees. The meetings were mainly focused on the GPG's intention to implement the DFA.
3. *Did the GPG experience communication with the other two groups as transactional and trust-building or unidirectional?*
- The Core Group's initiative in publishing the first Vista process booklet — with guidelines on forums' constitution and functioning, and on the number of forums established by mid March 1995 as well as announcing the date for Vista 2, caused unease in the GPG as became evident, for example at the 4 April 1995 meeting (See Section 4.5). From then on the relationship between the GPG and the other two participating groups was mainly formal with little transactional or trust-building communication.
4. *According to the GPG what were the communication and development results it achieved during the Vista process?*
- It communicated its position as a provincial government and the way it saw itself as creator of an enabling environment to guide local governments to implement the DFA (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:2-10; 22-33).
 - The GPG called the anticipated interaction between local government and communities in formulating LDOs 'participative development planning'. Government institutions at local level would involve all stakeholders (business and all civil society organisations), not only Development Forums, in participative developing planning (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:23-24).

5. *What communication and other problems did the GPG encounter during the Vista process?*

- Development Forums that had been established from Vista 1 to Vista 2 were structure rather than objective driven (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:25).
- Some forums intended to implement development projects. This was a local government function and had led to friction between Development Forums and local government in some instances (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:24).

6. *How did the GPG intend solving these problems in the near future?*

- Although it praised the work of the Core Group and the Development Forums, the GPG did not intend discussing their accreditation or resourcing (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:26,33). It saw implementation of the DFA as the solution to problems it experienced in relation to the Development Forums and the Core Group (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:32-33).

4.8.2.2 The Development Forums

1. *How did the Development Forums interpret their role in the Vista process?*

- As a mechanism to ensure that communities would have a say in the identification, prioritising and implementation of RDP projects (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:15).
- Help build development capacity in communities (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:16).
- Implement projects through LDFs as Trusts or Section 21 Companies (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:15).

2. *How did the Development Forums structure communication with the other two participating groups in the Vista process?*

- They formed 92 Development Forums and were ready for interaction with local government on RDP projects (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:9).
- Much communication work was done in the communities and people had been informed about the RDP and what government intended to do about participatory development (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:16).

3. *Did the Development Forums experience communication with the other two groups as transactional and trust-building or unidirectional?*

- Development Forums experienced transactional and trust-building communication with the Core Group (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:17,20) and with the GPG during Phase 1 of the Vista process. During Phase 2 communication with the GPG was formal and mainly unidirectional (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d: 2-10; 22-33).

4. *According to the Development Forums what were the communication and development results it achieved during the Vista process?*

- In terms of communication they established networks with many organisations and individuals interested in community development. These included members of Networking Committees, the Core Group, members of Development Forums, and businesses interesting in supporting RDP initiatives.
- The development results were limited as the Development Forums did not achieve accreditation or received resources during the process (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:2-10; 22-33).

5. *What communication and other problems did the Development Forums encounter during the Vista process?*

- As the GPG (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d: 2-10; 22-33) during Phase 2 had an agenda which contradicted the aims of Vista 1, the vision of the RDP Office for the Development Forums was not achieved. Whereas communication with the RDP Office had been transactional, the Development Forums experienced it as unidirectional from the side of the Department of Development Planning.
- Local governments did not in all cases cooperate with Development Forums and some viewed them as alternative government structures (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:16).
- Government did not supply precise guidelines on the structure and function of Development Forums (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:15).
- Lack of physical and monetary resources (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:16).

6. *How did the Development Forums intend solving these problems in the near future?*

- No solutions to the problems outlined in Question 5 above were in sight at Vista 2. Delegates had come to debate the future of the Development Forums but this did not happen. Without a recognised public role and sufficient resources to function effectively, the future of the forums seemed bleak.

4.8.2.3 The Core Group

1. *How did the Core Group interpret its role in the Vista process?*

- It identified itself with the ‘bottom-up’ approach to development (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:8).
- From this vantage point it propagated an approach by Development Forums which would challenge government to perform on development issues (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:9).
- In some respects it acted like an independent rather than a mediatory or bridge-building agent. This resulted, for example, in the fact that it did not sufficiently clear important decisions about communication and logistics with the GPG before acting. For example, booklet 1 of the Core Group was published without wide consultation with the GPG (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a:1-17). It did have clearance from the RDP Office but subsequently it became clear that not much was known about the Vista process by Cabinet (Meeting between Core Group and GPG Cabinet, 4 April 1995 — see Section 4.5).

2. *How did the Core Group structure communication with the other two participating groups in the Vista process?*

- The Core Group had open, informal and formal communication ties with the Development Forums and formal communication with the GPG. At Vista 2 communication between the parties was mainly formal through delivery of public speeches (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:1-51).

3. *Did the Core Group experience communication with the other two groups as transactional and trust-building or unidirectional?*

- Communication with the Development Forums was transactional and trust-building, and mainly unidirectional with the GPG (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:1-50).

4. *According to the Core Group what were the communication and development results it achieved during the Vista process?*

- It helped to establish almost 100 Development Forums in Gauteng.
- It was the chief driver of the Vista process after the demise of the RDP Office. At Vista 2 the GPG took control of the process.
- It organised Vista 2 and prepared the Development Forums for participation in the Vista Conference.
- It liaised with government as a role player and informed the Development Forums about the role government intended community organisations to play in terms of the DFA.

5. *What communication and other problems did the Core Group encounter during the Vista process?*

- It argued that government at provincial and local level was not moving fast enough in terms of the Vista process (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:9).
- It was challenged by the GPG as being too partial to the position of the Development Forums. The GPG felt challenged, if not undermined, by the Core Group's work (Meeting between the Alliance and the Core Group, June 1995 — see Section 4.6.1.3).

6. *How did the Core Group intend solving these problems in the near future?*

- It hoped that the Development Forums would continue developing once government accredited and resourced them.
- It intended to work with government on the implementation of the DFA.

4.9 Salient communication features of Phase 2

The communication patterns in Phase 2 of the Vista process have been analysed in Sections 4.6 and 4.8. Two main themes emerge from this phase.

On the one hand the GPG was adamant in its stance to discontinue the Vista process as originally conceived. It intended to substitute it with a new model of government-civil society communication which would function at the level of local government. This change in GPG policy was communicated fully and formally at Vista 2.

On the other hand the Development Forums hoped that the work they had put into the process would culminate in accreditation and resourcing. This would enable them to continue creatively with the process of inputting to development planning and monitoring in their communities.

Although communication between government and civil society would be implemented in terms of the DFA, the only debate involving the Development

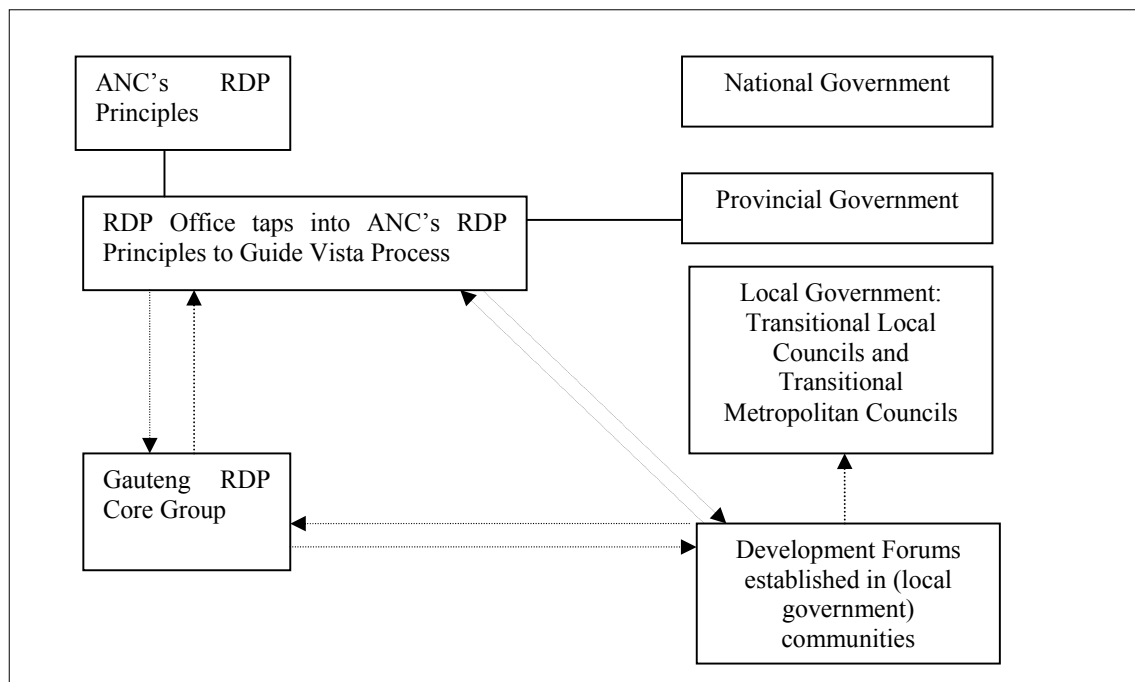
Forums that the GPG allowed, was a discussion on the DFA and LDOs in the commissions at Vista 2 (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:35-43). The GPG did not, for example, indicate that it would communicate with local governments in Gauteng to facilitate participation by the Development Forums in implementation or benefits in terms of the DFA.

In the next section the communication flows in the two phases of the Vista process are compared and the process is evaluated in terms of the evaluation instrument designed in Section 2.9.

4.10 Analysis of the communication flow patterns

Diagrammatically communication flows in the Vista process are presented in Figures 13 and 14.

FIGURE 13 COMMUNICATION FLOW PATTERNS IN PHASE 1



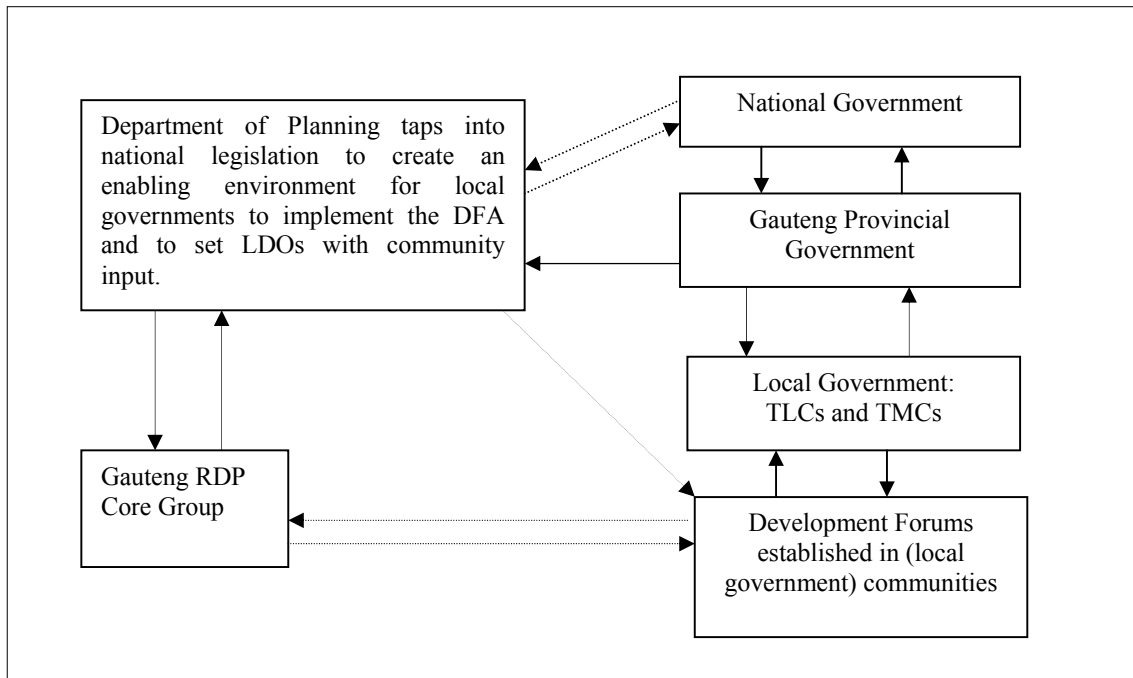
Analysis of the communication flow patterns in Phase 1

1. In this phase the RDP Office in the GPG drew on RDP principles which had not yet been ratified by Parliament — this was done only in August 1995 by means of a white paper. At that stage there was no legislative or policy framework to guide implementation of a development project.
2. The RDP Office activated Gauteng communities to take on a monitoring role in relation to RDP projects and service delivery at local government level.
3. In this process there was little communication between the RDP Office and local government in the Province. Local government was thus not prepared by the RDP Office for taking on the role of benefactor in relation to the

communities which would relate to it via Development Forums. Had communication been channelled between local governments and the Development Forums, the process would probably have had a better chance to succeed. As it was the opportunity to build trust between the Development Forums and local government was forfeited. Had a firm link been forged between Development Forums and local governments, the RDP Office could still have been involved, but more in an enabling capacity than as an active role player.

4. The Core Group was formed by the RDP Office to communicate with Gauteng communities and to organise them into Development Forums. It took on a partisan role in relation to the communities. This impeded the possibility of it attaining an unambiguous image as trust-builder and communication supporter in the interaction between the GPG and the Development Forums.
5. The arrows indicating communication flow show three reciprocal relationships:
 - between the RDP Office and communities at grass roots level;
 - between the Core Group and Gauteng communities and Development Forums;
 - between the RDP Office and the Core Group.
6. The other communication flow is a unidirectional one intended to originate from Development Forums to local government to keep them on track. Once the communication from Development Forums to local government had started it would become reciprocal but communication planning by the RDP Office did not clearly spell this relationship out. This led to mistrust about the role of Development Forums on the side of Transitional Local Councils (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:16).
7. Communication messages about the role of Development Forums reaching local governments were met with indignation by some of these authorities (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:21).

FIGURE 14 COMMUNICATION FLOW PATTERNS IN PHASE 2



Analysis of the communication flow patterns in Phase 2

1. In this phase the Department of Planning of the GPG tapped into the national Development Facilitation Bill to formulate policy guidelines for dealing with the interaction between local government and communities on development issues.
2. In this way the Department of Planning wanted to create an enabling environment for interaction between local government and communities. Rather than interacting with communities directly it only informed them about policy on development planning between themselves and local government.
3. The arrows indicating communication flow show three pairs of reciprocal relationships:
 - between the provincial and local levels of government;
 - between the Core Group and the Department of Planning; and
 - between the Core Group and the Development Forums.

There is one unidirectional arrow which indicates the flow of policy information from the GPG to communities at Vista 2 with minimal other interaction between these two role players.

4. Whereas the Core Group acted as a facilitating body in Phase 1, albeit one-sided in terms of the role it was given by the RDP Office, it was not given a meaningful role in Phase 2. It became an implementing, rather than a coordinating or mediating body. For example, it was expected by the GPG to inform Development Forums about the change in approach to development interaction in terms of the DFA. On an administrative level it was responsible for arranging Vista 2, although the programme for the day was very much

determined by the GPG. The Core Group secretariat also continued its documentation work and compiled a 50 page booklet on the Vista 2 proceedings.

5. This model was conceptually an improvement on the model used by the RDP Office. It worked through the different levels of government and placed responsibility for interaction with communities on grass roots development issues in the hands of local government.
6. One may conclude that the Phase 2 communication flow pattern technically was an improvement on the one in Phase 1. This statement should, however, be read with the chronological narrative on Phase 2 which indicates that communication on an interpersonal and inter-groups basis was unidirectional and non-transactional (See Section 4.6 and 4.8).
7. It is difficult to substantiate without comprehensive interview data, but from the observations made by the researcher, his colleagues and members of Development Forums who were closely involved in the Vista process, one may safely say that communication between the GPG and the other two role players was often very tense. This was a pity as a more positive outcome to the process could have been developed if communication had been more open, trusting and transactional. This could even have happened if implementation of the DFA was taken as a point of departure. It seems as if there was just not enough self-confidence and lateral thinking on the part of the GPG to act creatively rather than in a top-down communicative mode.

4.11 Evaluation of the Vista process

In Figure 15 the Evaluation Instrument with its 15 measurement criteria — developed in Section 2.9 — is applied to the two phases of the Vista process.

4.11.1 Introduction

Application of the criteria in tabular form as presented in Figure 15 and with a mere ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer, oversimplifies the real picture. There are areas of overlap and intermediate positions between a positive and negative assessment. The analysis in Section 5.3.2 clarifies and expands the simplified assessments presented in Figure 15.

FIGURE 15 APPLICATION OF THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT TO THE VISTA PROCESS

Criteria	Phase 1	Phase 2
1. Did the communication process allow for <i>sufficient feedback to ensure mutual understanding between communicator and recipient</i> ?	Yes	No
2. Did the <i>quality of the relationship</i> between communicator and recipient <i>ensure joint responsibility for the outcome of the communication process</i> ?	Yes	No
3. Was the <i>broad public motivated</i> about development and about this project?	Yes	No
4. Was <i>participation the main point of departure</i> by the benefactors in relation to the beneficiaries?	Yes	No
5. If so, which <i>mode of participation</i> was employed in relation to the beneficiaries (participation in decision-making, implementation, benefit, or evaluation or a combination of these)?	Decision-making & evaluation, and possibly limited implementation	Decision-making
6. Did the benefactors <i>use DSC</i> in order to a. plan and implement better management strategies; b. ensure proper implementation of the project?	No	No

7. Did benefactors use <i>a horizontal knowledge sharing</i> approach in relation to beneficiaries?	Yes	No
8. Did the process function at <i>grass roots level</i> ?	Yes	No
9. Did the benefactors use <i>small media, and group and interpersonal communication</i> in the process?	Yes	No
10. Did <i>beneficiaries benefit</i> through <i>mobilisation, organisation and empowerment</i>	Yes	Yes
11. Did <i>beneficiaries achieve successful participation with experts and benefactors</i> ?	Yes	Yes
12. Did a DSC unit create <i>a climate of mutual understanding</i> between benefactors and beneficiaries?	No	No
13. Did the DSC specialists play a <i>trust-building, advisory, coordinating and supportive</i> role in the development project?	No	No
14. Did the DSC specialists <i>network well with change agencies</i> ?	Yes	Yes
15. Did the DSC specialists <i>ensure proper information flow between the participating groups</i> ?	Yes	Yes

4.11.2 Analysis of the evaluation

Phase 1

Criteria 1-9

In terms of the criteria for evaluating the role of the **benefactor** (1-9), the RDP Office scored eight positive or ‘yes’ marks. In terms of Criterion 6 the benefactor did not use the skills of the DSC unit to benefit the process as a whole. The Core Group somewhat went its own way, but this may have been due to the demise of the RDP Office which left a benefactor-vacuum in the process.

Criteria 10 and 11

Although **beneficiaries** did not benefit through a positive outcome to the process as envisaged at Vista 1, many individuals did benefit through mobilisation, organisation and empowerment in the course of the process and they did achieve successful participation with experts and some benefactors.

Criteria 12 and 13

Although the **Core Group** achieved much in terms of communicating with the communities in Gauteng and in facilitating the establishment of Development Forums, it did not succeed in creating a climate of mutual understanding between benefactor and beneficiaries and in playing a trust-building, advisory, coordinating and supportive role in the project as a whole. It viewed its role rather one-sided in advancing the interests of communities in the first place, and not necessarily the process as a whole.

Criteria 14 and 15

The **Core Group** played an active and positive role in these two areas.

Phase 2

Criteria 1-9

The **Department of Development Planning** scored a negative response to all these criteria. Although it has been explained that the GPG envisaged a different type of interaction between government and communities than foreseen at Vista 1, its communication approach did not provide for sharing of ideas either at a personal, face-to-face level between the participating parties or at group level at Vista 2.

Criterion 10

As there was very little interaction between the benefactors and the **beneficiaries** in Phase 2, the latter could not learn much or benefit in any other way.

Criteria 11 and 12

The same comment applies as in the case of Criterion 10.

Criteria 13 to 15

The **Core Group** played a positive role in these areas, although the space they were given by the benefactors, especially in regard to Criterion 13 was limited.

4.11.3 Conclusions

Having applied the evaluation instrument to the Vista process, the conclusion is that the criteria in relation to the benefactor were only partially met in the first phase of the process, and hardly in the second. The Core Group was an important role player in the Vista process but in terms of a mediating role between benefactor and beneficiaries it did not meet the requirements set by the criteria. The beneficiaries benefited by their participation in the Vista process in terms of the skills they

developed and the networks they built but they did not benefit in terms of the objectives set at Vista 1. Thus also in this regard the results indicate that the criteria were but partially met.

Quantitatively the results are expressed in Figure 16 below.

FIGURE 16 QUANTITATIVE REPRESENTATION OF EVALUATION INSTRUMENT SCORES

Measurement	Phase 1 of the Vista process	Phase 2 of the Vista process
Number of responses measured ¹¹	14	14
Positive responses (numbers)	11	4
Positive responses (percentages)	80%	29%

These data indicate a ‘success rate’ of 80% in Phase 1 and 29% in Phase 2. They provide a numeric approximation of the difference in communication patterns by the benefactor, benefits for the beneficiaries and ways in which the ‘DSC unit’ functioned in the two phases of the Vista process¹².

4.12 The aftermath of Vista 2

The Vista 2 Conference recommended the following:

1. ‘that Provincial Government takes the responsibility for the establishment of a team at Provincial level which will include Provincial and Local Government and civil society including RDP core group/CDFs and LDFs and other civil society stakeholders.

The limited work of this team will be to run a process leading up to end September 1995 which will:

- a. Brief community organisations and Local Government, in detail, on DFA and LDOs in particular.
- b. Discuss in more detail the interaction between Government, Local and Provincial and civil society on the process of preparing LDOs.
- c. Determine with the same participants what is required to enable effective participation in preparation of LDOs

¹¹ One of the responses to the 15 criteria, Response 5, which was answered in qualitative terms, rather than by a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response, has been excluded.

¹² If this quantitative evaluation had been done in terms of a three or five point scale, ranging, for example, from ‘excellent’ to ‘poor’, the results would have been more refined.

2. The team established under Resolution 1 will present Vista 3 a detailed document regarding land development objectives and the involvement of development forums, which provides clarity about their structure, composition and accreditation of these forums' (Gauteng RDP Core Group, Vista 2 Conference Papers, 29 July 1995d:50).

As these were mere recommendations, the GPG chose not to act on them and nothing came of them — neither the formation of a task team nor the organisation of a Vista 3 Conference.

The real disappointment about the Vista process was that the mobilisation of people interested in developing their communities, and the skills and networks built through the Development Forums over a period of fourteen months, was so poorly managed at the end of the process. Despite a statement by an MEC at Vista 2 that 'CDFs and LDFs exist and any suggestion that they can be closed down makes no sense' (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d:32), no creative initiatives were taken by the GPG to preserve and channel this valuable human resource in the cause of development.

No doubt, further work regarding the structure and role of the Development Forums was required. This would have included insuring that Development Forums were fully representative of their communities, and that policy in relation to their constitution and administration, and duties and responsibilities in development communication, were developed. But this challenge was simply not taken up.

A senior official in SACS' Johannesburg Office at the time of the Vista process when interviewed by the researcher on 4 October 2002, expressed the opinion that development in Gauteng could by that time have been five years further if the Vista process had been allowed to continue.

After the Vista 2 Conference the Development Forums were left to do what they found fit. Many did not survive. A number which were well established continued to pursue local development objectives.

4.13 Summary

This chapter has presented the research findings. These are based on three data sets, participant observation, interviews and documents, and two methods of presentation and analysis. Participant observation and interview evidence is presented and analysed through a descriptive chronology of the entire fourteen months of the Vista process and of the verbal, face-to face and written communication between the role players. The written communication during this time refers mainly to the three first booklets produced by the Core Group¹³. Documentary evidence on the communication messages exchanged between the role players at Vista 2¹⁴ is analysed by means of content analysis techniques.

The data sets complement each other and data from one set is corroborated or extended by the other. Likewise the two methods of analysis bring complementary

¹³ Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a, 1995b & 1995c.

¹⁴ Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995d.

perspectives to the fore. In this way some measure of triangulation has been achieved.

The analysis indicates that two distinct communication approaches were adopted by the benefactor, the GPG, in the course of the process. These have been presented in a variety of ways as Phase 1 and Phase 2 — see Sections 4.3 to 4.11. The communication flow patterns, Section 4.10, and the application of the Evaluation Instrument, Section 11, present and analyse the findings both textually and visually, and in the case of the Evaluation Instrument also quantitatively. Quantitative analysis has also been used in the content analysis of the speeches delivered at Vista 2 — see Section 4.8.

*I had six honest-serving men,
They taught me all I knew.
Their names were What and How and Why
and When and Where and Who.*

Kipling, R. **Just so Stories**. New York: Scribner, 1903:86. Quoted by Couger, 1996:35.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

As the title of the chapter indicates that this chapter has two main dimensions.

Conclusions focus on a review of the research process. This is done in two ways. First the structure of the enquiry is discussed and then the soundness of the report is assessed in terms of the concepts of validity and reliability. Sources of error and limitations of the study are also discussed.

In the second part of the chapter a number of *recommendations* for further research and for application of the research findings to practical situations are made.

5.2 A review of the structure of the research inquiry

As research questions ideally determine the course of an inquiry, one should be able to determine their effect throughout the study. The review process thus starts with the research questions posed in Chapter 1, and then traces their effect in the subsequent theoretical, methodological and empirical parts of the study, i.e. in Chapters 2 to 4.

5.2.1 The first set of research questions

As the topic of the dissertation indicated that the study intended to evaluate the Vista process, the point of departure of the study was not merely to describe and analyse a participatory development communication process, but explicitly to evaluate it. Evaluation thus became an important dimension of the study.

In order to evaluate, one needs a yardstick and the researcher argued that the best place to find criteria for an evaluation instrument would be in the publications of scholars in the fields of DC and DSC. Thus, combining the usual study of literature to familiarise oneself with the history, theory, methods and terminology of a field of study, the researcher addressed six questions the literature which would serve to guide the inquiry in discovering evaluation criteria. These six questions, listed in Section 1.5.4, covered a discussion of communication models, the phases of DC, the stages of DSC, a DSC Unit and modes of participation in development by beneficiaries. The questions were:

- Question 1: ‘which model of communication captures the essence and characteristics of communication?’
- Question 2: ‘considered from the perspective of Development Communication, which approach best suits a participatory development process?’
- Question 3: ‘which benefits does the perspective of Development Support Communication bring to a participatory development process?’

- Question 4: ‘what are the characteristics of a Development Support Communication Unit and what contribution should such a unit make to support communication in a participatory development process?’
- Question 5: ‘considered from the perspective of civil society participation in a development process, which is the best mode of participation?’
- Question 6: ‘what are the criteria that may be derived from the answers to the foregoing five questions in order to design an instrument to evaluate the communication patterns and the functioning of a ‘DSC unit’ in the Vista process?’

These questions aimed first, at determining best practice in the five mentioned areas of study, and then to use the answers to elicit ideal-type criteria to design an evaluation instrument.

These questions thus guided and focused the literature review to the needs of this study. On the basis of the answers to these questions and knowledge of the main threads of the Vista process, 15 evaluation criteria were identified and phrased as questions. In combination these criteria formed the evaluation instrument as set out in Section 2.9. Its use came much later in Chapter 4 when it was applied to the findings on the Vista process. See 4.11.

5.2.2 The second set of research questions

Whereas the first set of questions addressed the theoretical and the evaluative needs of the study, the second set focused on methodological and empirical concerns. The methodological questions are first discussed.

These questions focused on how to gather information on the two main empirical areas of the inquiry, i.e. on the communication patterns in the Vista process and the role of the Core Group. These questions read as follows:

- Question 7: ‘what methods were used to establish communication patterns in the Vista process?’ and
- Question 9: ‘what methods were used to establish the role of the Core Group in the Vista process?’

To answer these questions some background information needs to be given about the structure of Chapter 3. This chapter started off by crafting a research design. After studying a number of research designs, the researcher chose the case study design as the most appropriate one for addressing the topic and the theoretical questions of the study. The crafting of a research design for the Vista process is set out in Sections 3.3 and 3.4. Research design leads to research process in which attention focused on methods of data collection and analysis. These matters were dealt with in Sections 3.6 and 3.7. Having used questions 7 and 9 and the earlier questions 1-6 as guidelines, as well as the data available on the Vista process, appropriate data collection and analysis methods could be designed and used.

The empirical questions asked in this set, read as follows:

- Question 8: ‘what was the nature and content of communication patterns in the Vista process?’ and

- Question 10: ‘how did the Core Group play a role in the Vista process and how did it execute its brief?’

Having established, in Chapter 3, the methods to be used in accessing data and then using them in relation to the Vista process, the findings on the basis of data collection and analysis were presented in Chapter 4. Data had been collected through participant observation, interviews and document selection, and the analysis proceeded by means of presenting a chain of communication events on the entire Vista process and by applying content analysis techniques to the selected documents. The findings were also presented from two other perspectives. Communication patterns in the two phases of the Vista process were sketched by means of flow charts and discussed. The final and conclusive way of presenting the findings was done by the applying the Evaluation Instrument to the communication patterns and the role of the Core Group. Thus the answers to the set of six research questions formulated at the start of the study, contributed to the final phase of the study.

5.2.3 Conclusions

Without the use of the ten research questions formulated in Chapter 1, it would have been difficult to focus and direct the research inquiry. The research questions formed linkages between the main dimensions of the inquiry: between theory and evaluation; between theory and design; between design and process; and between collection and analysis on the one hand and presentation of the findings on the other. This method of inquiry ensured that there were no loose ends at the end of the study. The research questions provided a logical progression from Chapters 1 to Chapter 4 thus ensuring focus and coherency.

5.3 Validity and reliability

First guidelines on validity and reliability are discussed and then applied to the Vista study.

5.3.1 Validity and reliability guidelines

As research design and process are supposed to represent a logical framework, the quality of these research elements can be judged by logical tests. Four tests, *construct validity*, *internal validity*, *external validity* and *reliability* are commonly used to establish the quality of empirical social research (Yin, 2003a:33). These tests deal with specific phases of the research process. For example two of the aspects of construct validity deals with data collection and a third with the writing of the report. Figure 17 sets out this pattern.

FIGURE 17 RESEARCH TACTICS FOR FOUR DESIGN AND PROCESS TESTS
 (ADAPTED FROM YIN, 2003a:34)

Test	Research Tactic	Phase of research in which tactic occurs
Construct validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use multiple sources of evidence • Establish chain of evidence • Have key informants review draft case study report 	data collection data collection composition
Internal validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do pattern-matching • Do explanation-building • Address rival explanations • Use logic models 	data analysis data analysis data analysis data analysis
External validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use theory in single-case studies • Use replication logic in multiple-case studies 	research design research design
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use case study protocol • Develop case study database 	data collection data collection

Construct validity

Construct validity requires that correct operational measures are established for the concepts being studied. This means that after establishing the nominal definitions of concepts, the specific dimensions of that concept which are going to be measured in a study should be specified. (Yin, 2003a:35).

Internal validity

This test only applies to explanatory studies Yin, 2003a:35), not to descriptive and evaluative studies.

External validity

This test deals with the problem of knowing whether a research project's findings are generalizable beyond the study. For example, if a study of neighbourhoods focuses on one neighbourhood, the question is whether the results are applicable to another neighbourhood (Yin, 2003a:35).

Reliability

The aim of the reliability test is to be sure that if a later investigator follows the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator he or she should reach the same findings (Yin, 2003a:37).

Conclusions

It should be pointed out that the concepts of validity and reliability have their roots in a positivist paradigmatic approach. As the researcher's paradigmatic position favours an interpretive approach, matters of validity and reliability could also be dealt with in terms of concepts such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:35). As the researcher has adhered quite closely to Yin's (2003a) treatment of case studies and the research process sections that follow his discussion of research design, he has decided to retain the concepts of validity and reliability.

5.3.2 Validity and reliability in the Vista study

Section 5.4.1 drew a number of guidelines on validity and reliability from the literature on research methodology. This Section applies those guidelines to the Vista inquiry.

Validity

The three validity tests are discussed next.

Construct validity

The Vista study benefited from the fact that three sources of data, participation observation, interviews and documents, were used. A chain of evidence was established to trace and reconstruct the chronology of the Vista process through its two main phases. Key informants or research participants did not read the draft, but comments by the study supervisor on drafts of the report contributed to its content and structure.

Internal validity

This test only applies to explanatory studies and as the Vista study is mainly descriptive and evaluative, it does not apply to it.

External validity

The theoretically-based evaluation instrument developed in the Vista study may be used in similar studies. Certain of the findings about the use of transactional communication and DSC used in Phase 1 may be generalised to similar studies.

Reliability

The aim of the reliability test is to be sure that if a later investigator follows the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator he or she should reach the same findings (Yin, 2003a:37).

By making the documentary evidence available as appendices to this study, a subsequent researcher may test the reliability of the findings based on these documents.

5.4 Sources of error

First guidelines on sources of error are discussed and then applied to the Vista study.

5.4.1 Guidelines on sources of error

The sources of error Du Plooy (2001:189) discusses refer mainly to experimental observation situations but some may apply also to *participant observation*. These are the following:

- The halo effect is when a pleasant (or unpleasant) characteristic or action of a research participant influences the observer's general impression of the participant.
- An error of leniency is when an observer rates a research participant too high or always too favourable.
- An error of central tendency happens by not considering extreme positions, positive or negative.
- When an observer consistently rates a participant too low or unfavourably an error of severity occurs.
- When an observer evaluates a research participant as opposite to him- or herself on a particular characteristics or point of view.

Mouton (2001:106) mentions two *data collection* errors which may apply to this study. The first one is called 'research selectivity effect' or biased observer. It relates to the fact that 'many methods involve choices on the part of the researcher about which data to observe or select and which to ignore'. The second error is researcher distortion which refers to errors which occur 'because of intentional and deliberate distortion of the facts by the researcher'. This may be due to the researcher's preconceptions or prejudices.

In respect of *data analysis* Mouton (2001:110) mentions that inferences may be drawn from data which are not supported by the data or data may be interpreted in a biased way through selectivity.

Errors can be minimised by sharpening one's observational skills and by the application of techniques such as reflexivity and triangulation. The latter technique involves 'checking observations with other sources of data, such as interview data or data collected at different times, settings or from different subjects' (Du Plooy, 2001:189-190).

5.4.2 Sources of error in the Vista study

By using multiple sources of evidence and analysis methods, as well as being aware of the possible effects of sources of error as outlined by Du Plooy (2001:189) and Mouton (2001:106 and 110), the effect of errors has been limited.

5.5 Limitations of the study

This study relies mainly on two methods of data collection: participant observation and document selection and analysis. A limitation of the study might be that too limited use was made of interviews.

As the Vista process happened 12 years ago interview material collected at the present time would depend on the recollections of research participants. In discussing interviewing, Fontana and Frey (2003:69) mention respondent error due to faulty memory as a common source of error. In addition answers to questions on the Vista process at the present time would probably include some reinterpretation — based on the respondents post-Vista experience and insight. The logistics involved in locating respondents could also have presented a problem.

Another source of limitation could be the subjectivity of the researcher's observations. To counter this limitation the chronology of the two phases of Vista is presented as factually as possible.

Limitations in relation to the documentary evidence (Gauteng RDP Core Group, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c & 1995d) might be detected in the way in which the content analysis technique was used in the inquiry, but not in respect of the content of these sources. All the documentary sources used for content analysis purposes were those compiled by the Core Group during the Vista process. As these documents are appended to this report, their content may be verified and re-analysed. Formulation of the questions used in content analysis and the answers the analyst deduced from the documents, may nevertheless have been influenced by his knowledge of the process as depicted in the chronological narrative — See Section 4.2.

The researcher feels fairly confident that in broad terms another researcher would come to similar conclusions about the Vista process as those presented here. There may be differences in emphasis and interpretation of particular events, also about the communication activities and style of participating groups, but conclusions about the outcome of the process would probably not differ much.

5.6 Recommendations

This section makes three recommendations, two theoretical, one practical.

5.6.1 Development Support Communication theory

The researcher has a question in relation to the theory of DSC which may merit more research. Three approaches to DSC were discussed in Section 2.5. The early work by Childers and Vajrathan in the Far East stresses the importance of communication support in development projects. Melkote took this lead further and spelt out the academic and subject content requirements for DSC specialists. Agunga added a number of personal and professional qualifications to which the DSC specialist should conform. In listing these requirements Agunga moved beyond communication and introduced project management skills. Both Melkote and Agunga advocated a separate discipline called DSC. Neither Melkote nor Agunga provided examples of the application of DSC or the functioning of a DSC Unit in development projects.

Knowledge about communication should remain the focal point of communication support as was the case in the work by Childers and Vajrathan. These authors emphasised the need for communication support to successfully implement development projects. What development projects require are knowledgeable and skilled communication specialists who provide a supportive and linking contribution in the deployment of projects. From the evidence on the role of the Core Group in the Vista process, it seems inadvisable to allocate a third position, next to the benefactors and beneficiaries, to a DSC unit as proposed by Agunga. Focused communication support rather than general project support seems to be the contribution that should come from communication specialists.

In reviewing the ideas of Childers, Melkote and Agunga, the fact was emphasised that Childers spoke about the need for DSC from extensive first hand knowledge in the application of development projects; see Section 2.5.1. Melkote, (Section 3.5.3 to 3.5.4) presented a comprehensive picture of the disciplines involved in DSC and Agunga (Section 2.6 to 2.6.1) contributed by providing guidelines on the role of the DSC specialist.

By analysing a type of DSC Unit in this study, the potential contribution of such a unit in development projects has been underlined. At this stage of research it would seem that the role of such a unit should focus on communication support rather than on management and project deployment — as was the case in the Vista process. Further research on DSC Units in development projects could contribute to refining the scope for this type of intervention. It is suggested that the ideas of Childers merit close consideration in outlining areas in which communication support is essential in development projects.

5.6.2 Comparative studies

The present study and the five case studies discussed by Atkinson (1996:298-310; see Section 1.4) were all conducted in the mid-1990s. There is room for a number of follow-up studies on this topic to assess the current situation in South Africa.

In addition, the present study, the five discussed by Atkinson and possibly additional ones that have been conducted since the mid-1990s, could be compared and their salient trends identified.

5.6.3 Training

Insights from the studies mentioned in Section 5.4.2 may be linked to the practical needs of a government department like the Department of Local Government in the Gauteng Provincial Government. In the financial year 2004/05 this Department planned to ‘interact with communities and listen to their problems’ and in its 2005/06 budget it provided for recruiting ‘150 community development workers to liaise between communities and the government’ (Malefane, 2005:6).

A training module on Development Support Communication as part of a curriculum in community development work could contribute to the knowledge and skill base of prospective officials in this field. A course in Development Support

Communication to train community development workers as they prepare for interaction to assess problems in communities could also be useful.

5.7 Summary

This concludes this chapter and the study as a whole.

The study proceeded, in Chapter 1, from an initial research interest to a research inquiry. This inquiry was guided by the theory of Communication Development and related fields. Theory was also used to fashion a number of research questions in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 theory was again used to design an evaluation instrument. This instrument would later be used to evaluate the Vista process.

Before presenting and analysing the empirical data on the Vista communication process in Chapter 4, an appropriate research design and process had been developed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 also presented the communication flow patterns in the Vista process. These patterns corroborated and extended the patterns established by the chronological narrative of the two phases of the Vista process.

The evaluative dimension, a major objective of the inquiry, was also presented in Chapter 4. This was done by applying the theoretically derived ideal type Evaluation Instrument, featuring 15 criteria, to the communication patterns established between the three main participating groups in the Vista process. This instrument particularly focused on assessing whether the benefactors, the beneficiaries and the DSC type unit achieved positive results and performed well in terms of the ideals of participatory development communication. The results of the evaluation indicated that the role players only achieved positive results in a number of areas but that as a whole they failed to comply with the criteria.

Chapter 5 reflected on the structure of the research inquiring and found that the use of two sets of research question, 10 in total, had contributed significantly to the focus and logical framework of the inquiry. A number of ways of establishing the soundness of the study were also discussed in this chapter. These included testing for validity and reliability, and sources of error. Limitations of the study were also discussed..

A final section in Chapter 5 recommended further research and application of DCS insights in development projects and service delivery.

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