CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS – SPOTTING THE EMERGING TRUTHS

7.1   Introduction

Flyvbjerg (2001:59) questions the view that the production of theory should be the ultimate goal of scientific activity. *Phronetic* research, according to Flyvbjerg (2001: 140) is an "*analytical project, but not a theoretical or methodological one*". *Phroneti*c social scientists should develop "partial answers" to research questions such as:

- "Where are we going?";
- "Is this desirable?";
- "What should be done?", and
- "Who gains and who loses; by which mechanisms of power?" (Flyvbjerg 2001:60-61).

Such partial answers should then be fed into the discourse or dialogue on problems faced in practice and possible alternative ways of doing things. As such, phronetic research can never purport to tell a "final truth" (Flyvbjerg, 2001:139), but rather participates in a discussion aimed at improving practice. This is an example of "*reflexive thought aimed at action*" that, according to Flyvbjerg (2001:127), stands at the core of Foucault's ethics.

I would then, rather than try to create new theory from the Tshwane case, attempt to discern a number of emerging patterns or trends that characterise the story in order to identify problems or risks (or strengths, for that matter) encountered during the course of the restructuring process. In so doing, I am well aware of the bias towards verification that is a danger with regard to all research methods (Flyvbjerg, 2001:81-84).

Having lived through the transformation towards a City Planning function for the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and having gathered and studied information relevant to the context of the story and the events

themselves, a number of themes or issues emerge as prominent. I would like to briefly highlight those in this, the last chapter of the study.

7.2　First, a little confession

I set out to write the story as an exposé, wishing to show how fickle and power-driven the process was and how devoid of moral integrity. Flyvbjerg (2001:135) is in support of such endeavours, stating that the *phronetic* researcher has to be willing to "*uncover and face the morally unacceptable*" and that such willingness should not itself be construed as immorality. The above notwithstanding, with the benefit of hindsight and having read Flyvbjerg's story on Aalborg, I have been faced with my own complicity in the process, especially in the heyday of the Core Team. Tasked with the Communication portfolio, one of the most powerful tools of rationalisation, I took an active part in defining a reality meant to strengthen the Core Team's power base. I believe that this study has been worthwhile just as much for its contribution to the existing body of knowledge regarding the forces that shape planning and planning functions than for the personal growth and epiphany that I have experienced in the process. Indeed, I am convinced now that scholarship is not so much about gaining academic insights, but, in that journey, to channel it toward a greater awareness and understanding of the self, albeit through exposing our own weakness and conceitedness.

7.3　Addressing theory's blind spot

Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) define planning after Lefebvre as "the public production of space; that is, all policies and practices which shape the urban and regional environment under the auspices of the modern state". I would argue, however, that planning is more than this, that it is not only all the dimensions of a profession producing, acting on or engaging with space, but that it is also the internal organization, positioning and functioning of the planning team. Although the latter issues relate to procedural rather than substantive matters, to use the distinction drawn by Forester (Argument, Power and Passion), they can play a pivotal role in determining how effective

an agent of "space-making" such a team can be. In the South African context, where the need for spatial development and integration is so great, these aspects are all the more important.

The conditions within the CTMM during the study period were far from ideal. Yet one could hardly have asked for a better environment in which to gain experience on working in an environment characterised by dynamic and complex power relations – power relations that always, however subtle, carried the added dimension of race in a city and country still struggling to redress the aftermath of its apartheid past. In that sense, the CTMM was indeed the ideal environment for planners "to learn how to make their arguments under systematically skewed conditions of access, voice, power and authority" (Forester, 1996). As such the municipality was merely a microcosm of the society it served and of which it was also an institutional member. I believe this to be true of any public institution in which planning teams/departments are constituted, which builds my argument for considering the internal organization of planning teams as an important focus for studies of planning practice.

7.4   Democracy in practice

Flyvbjerg (1998:4) writes that "*to understand the story of Aalborg is to understand central aspects of modernity and of modern politics, administration and planning*." It is hoped that such understanding is also to be gained from the Tshwane story. The central problem highlighted by Flyvbjerg (1998:4) is how to "*make democracy work in a modernity that is strong on democratic ideals but weak in their realization*."[63]

---

[63] Although we find ourselves in a (post?) postmodern epoch, and possibly even something beyond that, the Tshwane municipality and the players in the story of the transformation of its planning function still show strong characteristics of modern organization and thought, which makes it apt to use modernity, with its focus on rationality, as an angle for interpreting and criticizing the events and experiences that constitute the transformation process. Allmendinger (2001:9) supports this view when he argues that modernity and postmodernity should not be viewed as two distinct epochs. He is not convinced that we can unequivocally state that we are living in "postmodern times" and adds that postmodern "represents an eclectic shift in attitude and understanding about modernity…from *within* modernity" (emphasis in original).

The Tshwane case is therefore presented to be a "reference point against which rationality, power and democracy elsewhere can be compared" as is the Aalborg case by Flyvbjerg (1998:5). The Tshwane study is significant particularly because the number of case studies of planning praxis in Africa is so much smaller than of those in Europe and America. The Tshwane story is a prime example of how "democracy must be fought for each and every day in concrete instances, even long after democracy is first constituted in a society"[64]. In the Tshwane case study, as in the case of the Aalborg story, "*the dynamics of conflict and struggle become the center of analysis*" (Flyvbjerg, 1998:6). Flyvbjerg (1998:6) argues that such conflict should not be viewed as destructive, but could produce "*valuable ties that hold modern democratic societies together..*" and adds that "*social conflicts are themselves pillars of democratic society*". Flyvbjerg (2001) is similarly positive about conflict. He states that conflict is inevitably part of the plurality of contemporary concepts of democracy and sees distrust and criticism of authorities as necessary characteristics of strong democracies. "*Moral outrage is continuous, because actual authorities inevitably violate whatever norms civil society has for justice*" Flyvbjerg (2001:109).

The Tshwane study clearly shows that Habermas's (in Flyvbjerg, 2001:102) focus on establishing democratic constitutions will of itself not contribute to a more democratic society, or, in the case of the Tshwane case study, to a more participative and democratic organizational culture. To take a practical example: one could argue that the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), which clearly states that the internal restructuring of the municipality should be part of its Integrated Development Plan (IDP), should have played an enabling role in this regard. Although the Act does not provide much guidance with regard to *the manner in which* the municipality should be restructured, one could argue, in the same vein as Oranje et al (2000) argue regarding the IDP, that this leaves welcome room for flexibility and local innovation. In the Tshwane case, however, such innovation is sadly lacking.

---

[64] In South Africa, this happened in 1994, six years before the dawn of Thswane's new Unicity municipality.

7.5   It's all about the power

In the preface to his book on Aalborg, Flyvbjerg postulates that his book will enable later scholars to ask "*Is this an Aalborg*?" when studying cases of city planning. Having both lived and studied the Tshwane case, I hold the conviction that *all* city planning cases will share traits of the Aalborg story, i.e. that reality is shaped not on the grounds of the "*better argument*", but as a result of dynamic power relations. Certainly, in the Tshwane case, power defined reality, albeit in our case the reality of the planning function as such and not of a city planning framework or project. Rather, therefore, than present a unique case, which will beg the question "*Is this an Aalborg?*", this study adds to the body of evidence that all City Planning, whether in its internal organization or external effects, is governed by relations of power and the aspiration to power. Although Flyvbjerg's study is aimed specifically at exposing the underlying power relations and their effect on the actions (and particularly the words) of his characters, the role that power plays with regard to planning has been indicated by a number of other authors in earlier studies. These include Peattie's (1987) study of Ciudad Guayana, the study of Brindley et al (1989) of planning in the United Kingdom under the Thatcher administration, and McLoughlin's (1992) study of Melbourne. Following the publication of Flyvbjerg's Aalborg study, Hoch (1994 and 1996), Yiftachel and Huxley (2000), Hillier (2002), Gunder and Mouat (2002), among others, published papers explicitly exposing and analysing the implications of power relations for planning practice. The Tshwane case builds on this body of *phronetic* research, but in an African context.

7.5.1 Power in a managerialist environment

There can be no doubt that the CTMM presents an extremely managerialist environment. As is true of all bureaucracies (see Bennis, 1993 and Chapter 5 of this thesis) it is characterized by a strict hierarchy. Work is not only vertically segmented in terms of different job levels, but also horizontally into Departments, Divisions or Strategic Units. Issues such as office space (luxurious corner suites for the Members of the Mayoral Committee), parking

and delegated powers (whether for procurement or the approval of land-use applications) and procedures for submitting reports, among other things, feature strongly. The managerialist character of the municipality provides a vital angle for interpreting the power relations that evolved during the transformation process. In many ways, achieving power in the new structure was seen as synonymous with achieving a managerial position. This is most apparent from the manner in which the Core Team members chased the possibility of being appointed as managers of the City Planning function and the measures they employed to protect their prospects in this regard.

A managerial position in the CTMM was sought after not only because it promised attractive remuneration and perks such as a transport allowance and a large office, or because it brought with it the "power" to instruct or manage other people. It was also the key to access information and, more importantly, a change to have a say in the organization. In many respects, where one was in the hierarchical structure of the municipality determined, to a significant extent, "*who speaks? Whose voices are heard? Whose arguments are pressed and how?*" (Forester, 1996). Flyvbjerg (2001:138) does not view the duality of structural and individual analysis as problematic. He states that the *phronetic* researcher seeks to uncover those structural factors that influence the conduct of the actors, and conversely seeks to show the structural consequences of such conduct.

7.5.2 Different types/origins of power

Four types of power, in particular, emerge from this study, although I doubt whether they could ever exist completely in isolation. In all the structures discussed in this study, all four of these types of power are present in some way or another. The first is what I would call **institutional power**. This is power that a person has because of a position or status within an organization. It is this kind of power which allowed the Mayoral Committee and Municipal Manager to change the entire Tshwane organizational structure in July 2001 without consulting any of the officials. The same power allowed

Si Bogopa to substitute Verna for Belinda without providing any explanation or rationalization.

Secondly, there is the **power originating from personal relationships**. Belinda came to power through a relationship with Nomgqibelo, and a network of relationships also passed that power on to the Core Team members. Later, Verna got her power from a relationship with Si Bogopa. It could be argued that Nava Pillay was given power on the basis of his relationship with the Municipal Manager.

The third kind of power that is apparent from this study is that of the **small group**. It was especially the Core Team and the SMSP team that displayed a special kind of synergy, which enabled it to achieve extraordinary results. Although I was not privy to the functioning of more such teams during the study period, I remain convinced with McClendon and Quay (1992) and Peck (1994) that small groups are a powerful force for organizational change.

Lastly, certain individuals have **personal power** thanks to their charismatic personalities. Examples are Wonder Nkosi in the Tshwane case and Aalborg's Mayor, Bus Marius, in Flyvbjerg's (1998) study.

7.5.3   A comparative reading of Flyvbjerg's power propositions

At the end of his study, Flyvbjerg (1998) sets out ten propositions on power and rationality, which he argues "*can serve as useful guidelines for researching rationality and power in other settings*". The following is a reading of the Tshwane story against these propositions.

i)   In the restructuring of Tshwane's City Planning function, as in the life of the Aalborg Project, **power defined rationality**. It was particularly through the rationalized communication by the Core Team, both directly and by way of a variety of written media, that a reality was defined that entrenched the Core Team's power, until, of course, said power was overthrown by the stronger institutional power of the new

Top Management when they introduced a new corporate structure in July 2001. Similarly, the new Top Management had the power to place Planning (and planners) in the municipality in a position of weakness and uncertainty – a sharp contrast to the prominence and power the planners enjoyed in the previous municipal dispensation. Paradoxically, it was to a lesser extent what was communicated by Top Management and to a greater extent what wasn't, that defined the reality of the organization during the transformation process.

ii)   Flyvbjerg's proposition that **rationality is context-dependent** is similarly confirmed by the Tshwane case. What was presented as rational argument by the Core Team and by Top Management, in particular, have been shown to be nothing but flimsy smokescreens for the power-related objectives that lay underneath. It is impossible, in the context of the dynamic power relations that governed the restructuring process, to isolate uncontaminated rationality, or, as it were, the "*objective truth*" from the distortions that surround it. Much of the communication that took place is what Flyvbjerg (1998) refers to as rhetoric characterized by "*eloquence, hidden control, rationalization, charisma, [and] using dependency relations between participants*".

iii)   It emerges, too, from the Tshwane study that **rationalization presented as rationality is a principal tool in the exercise of power**. Practically all the Core Team communication, as well as that which took place when Verna assumed responsibility for the Planning function, was characterized by rationalization. The content of each communication was carefully weighed and considered, not to evaluate whether it was, in fact, rational or "*true*", but rather whether it would further the aims of those who composed it. The story shows that the principles put forward as the rationale for the restructuring process, namely participation/democracy, transparency and a commitment to open communication, as well as a commitment to further representivity or equity, represented a different reality from that which in fact prevailed in the inner sanctuary of the Core Team.

Although the Core Team had a relatively short lifespan, their approach and activities are significant, as they set the tone of the entire restructuring process as it would later unfold.

iv)   The Tshwane case does not present evidence to support Flyvbjerg's fourth proposition, namely that **rationality is inversely proportional to power**. Although the study shows that rationalization only comes into play when there is a position of power to be entrenched or protected, or when those in power wish to build support for their own objectives, those with the most power, namely the new Top Management, did not use much rationalization at all. One would have expected them, soon after they came to power on 6 December 2000, to embark on a propaganda campaign (usually good examples of rationalization with a power motive), yet there is no evidence that such a programme ever existed. Although theirs was institutional power, guaranteed for a set term and therefore not under any immediate threat, it is strange that the new Top Management did not, nonetheless, harness the power of communication in order to further the aims of the municipality within the new legislative framework and, in so doing, enhance their own performance as management.

v)   Flyvbjerg further proposes that **stable power relations are more typical of politics, administration, and planning than antagonistic confrontations**. There are several examples in the Tshwane case where parties made an active choice to avoid confrontation and rather adopt a collaborative approach. It was even decided, on occasion, to abandon a confrontational course in favour of active stroking of the other party.

vi)   On the micro level of the Tshwane study, Flyvbjerg's proposition that **power relations are constantly being produced and reproduced**, is strongly confirmed. In the course of the story, the power to define the new City Planning function moved from Amund to Belinda and the Core

Team, to Verna; and from Nomgqibelo to Si Bogopa, to Mike Yates, to Nava Pillay. There was also a constant play of power between these role players and the Top Management (the Executive Mayor and his Committee, the CEO and COO) and a number of other role players. The Tshwane case clearly illustrates that power relations are fickle and constantly under threat of change.

vii)   The proposition by Flyvbjerg that **the rationality of power has deeper historical roots than the power of rationality** indeed seems to hold true in the light of the Tshwane study. Despite the fact that the concept of democracy lies at the very root of the new local government dispensation, very little of that precipitated in the Tshwane restructuring process. The basic form of bureaucracy remained largely unchanged. Not only did the basic form of the Municipality prevail, but, below the level of Top Management, the demographic profile, also remained much the same. Despite the fact that the new Top Management (the Executive Mayor and his Committee, as well as the Municipal Manager and the Chief Operating Officer) were all African, old distinctions of privilege in the municipality prevailed to a large extent. After completion of the restructuring process in December 2003, the General Manager and all the Managers appointed in the City Planning function were white, with only a handful of black planners in the entire function.

viii)   Owing to the fact that the Tshwane case does not present any examples of open confrontation, it is not possible to make any inferences with regard to Flyvbjerg's eighth proposition, namely that, **in open confrontation, rationality yields to power**.

ix)   It is, for the same reason, equally difficult to comment on the comparative aspect of Flyvbjerg's ninth proposition, namely that **rationality-power relations are *more* characteristic of stable power relations than of confrontations.** It can merely be stated that the stable power relation that usually exists between the councillors and

officials within a municipality such as the CTMM is a rationality-power relation, as described in paragraph x below.

x)   Again, owing to the limited scope of the Tshwane study it is difficult to accept or reject the comparative aspect of Flyvbjerg's last proposition, namely that **the power of rationality is embedded in stable power relations *rather than* in confrontations**. It is true, however, that a bureaucracy presents a relatively stable power system. I would argue that this stability is derived from the fact that power in bureaucracies is organized in terms of strict hierarchies, which are not likely to be challenged. In periods of evolution (i.e. periods of normal activity) within the typical South African municipality, much of the activity is indeed based on a rationality-power relationship between the officials, or the various departments, who prepare "*rational*" reports, and the superior power of the Councillors, who consider the reports. It follows that the "*power of rationality*", or technical expertise, is strongly embedded within this stable power system. In fact, as Bennis (1993) argues, it is the very basis upon which the institution of bureaucracy was founded.

7.5.4 Planners in need of re-orientation

The survey conducted among the Tshwane planners clearly indicated a lack of understanding of the planning function as one taking place within a dynamic web of power relations. Furthermore, their activities during the transformation process, was extremely self-centered and inward-focussed. The multitude of organograms that were compiled and distributed, and often discussed at length, also indicates an unhealthy obsession with structure, rather than with action/strategy. What one would have liked to see, was an emphasis on the new role of municipal planners with regard to spatial (and inevitably social and economic) restructuring in the new democracy. The central dilemma is that of a predominantly white male cadre of planners who have to find a way in which to contribute in a new dispensation or become obsolete. The study does not suggest that this change will take place by way

of an epiphany or radical change of heart on the side of the planners employed by the CTMM during the study period. It will probably rather come as a result of, on the one hand, the municipality appointing more young black planners more aware of the need for planning as a tool for spatial integration, and, on the other, the broader national process of closing the racial divide both in a socio-economic and ideological sense. In the light of the inherent resistance to change and the persistence of entrenched approaches/ structures that emerged from the Tshwane study, this is bound to be a slow process.

In this regard, one could certainly suggest changes to the manner in which planners are trained. Allmendinger (2001:3) supports Lapintie (2001) when he criticizes planning schools for perpetuating the notion of planning as an elitist profession and pleads for training that will allow for students to "*critically reflect on the needs of people and cities*". Forester (1996) also argues that planners are poorly trained for the emotional work that is required to respond to others' ideas, fears, anger, etc. Students in planning need to understand that "*democratic planning decision-making is inevitably messy, time-consuming, turbulent, frustrating and exasperating*" Hillier (2002:15). Forester (1996) views "*professional and political literacy*" as the basic skill planners have to acquire. Flyvbjerg (2001:23) also pleads for a different approach to training professionals when he states that "*Regrettably, the pervasiveness of the rational paradigm to the near exclusion of others is a problem for the vast majority of professional education, and especially in practical fields such as engineering, policy analysis, management, planning and organizations.*" He furthermore argues that this tendency has resulted in scholarly disciplines becoming blind to "*context, experience, and intuition, even though these phenomena and ways of being are at least as important and necessary for good results as are analysis, rationality and rules*" (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 24.). He laments the fact (Flyvbjerg, 2001:142) that, as a student, he was not exposed to questions such as whether knowledge was always important or not; or which factors determined whether knowledge was deemed knowledge or not. He adds (Flyvbjerg 2001:145) that narrative case studies such as that of Aalborg (Flyvbjerg, 1998) create a "*reality*" that students can "*safely be let*

loose in" and that "*provides a useful training ground with insights into practice that academic teaching often does not provide*". Some people may argue that the opportunity to receive such training is lost to the Tshwane planners, who have stood in the profession for many years and can be regarded, for the most part, as hopelessly "old school". I do not share this view. Rather, I believe that much could be done in terms of sensitisation, awareness and skills development programmes presented in the form of short courses or refresher courses.

7.6   The importance of communication confirmed

The importance placed on communication both in the organizational theory studied and in the survey of recent planning theory is strongly supported by the story of Tshwane's City Planning function. Both in terms of the absence thereof in some instances and the use thereof in others, communication played a central role in shaping the experience of the restructuring process.

The consistent absence of clear and frequent communication by the new Top Management, particularly the Mayor and the Municipal Manager (later referred to as the Chief Executive Officer) had a significant impact on the restructuring process. Rather than encouraging the officials to become part of the new structure and winning their loyalty, the silence experienced from the top resulted in the officials experiencing the change of management as a hostile takeover, which caused emotions of fear, distrust and resentment. The fact that, on the few occasions that there was communication with the officials, it was done in a threatening tone, contributed to the alienation of the existing officials. The reality that the new top management was almost in its entirety constituted of black individuals and the vast majority of the officials were white, necessarily imbued the situation with racial overtones – a circumstance that made the possibility of achieving a new, unified structure even less likely. Officials did not understand the processes or the reasoning behind the change that was made to the macro-organizational structure towards the end of June 2001, nor did they have any prior warning that such changes were going to be made. For the officials who were still struggling to

come to terms with the first new structure, this change led to more trauma and caused an upset to the restructuring task and the daily operations of the municipality.

The significant uncertainty as to the location and status of City Planning within the new organizational structure could certainly have been addressed through timeous and open communication. Yet also in this regard, despite numerous enquiries from the officials, there was no attempt by Top Management to engage the officials to address this burning issue.

It is not clear why the new Top Management paid no attention to communicate with the officials on issues that directly involved them. It is a particularly puzzling phenomenon in the light of fact that a commitment to democracy is a cornerstone of the ANC's political ideology and the emphasis placed on transparency by the policies and legislation developed by Government.

It should be borne in mind that communication can only take place if there is something (a message) to communicate. It is possible that the lack of communication by the Tshwane Top Management (both at the political and executive level) was a direct result of the fact that no change management plan, and therefore no clear message to convey on the reasons, process and envisioned end result of the change, existed.

At the level of the City Planning function, however, communication was exploited as a tool to the maximum effect. The Core Team used communication both as a mechanism to entrench their position of power and as a "*stroking device*" to avoid confrontation and to win the support of the City Planning officials. The support that was garnered for the Nomgqibelo and the restructuring process can to a large extent be ascribed to the frequent communication she had with the officials. The response from the officials indicated that it was not so much the written communication in the form of newsletters and circulars that was appreciated, but especially the face-to-face

communication in the form of road shows, information sessions, workshops and small group meetings.

It could be argued that, had such direct communication been sustained[65], and had it been extended to include the Strategic Executive, and even the Mayor or CEO, the team spirit and motivation levels of the City Planning officials, would have been greatly improved. It would also have contributed to the establishment of a strong "*psychological contract*" (see Mir, Mir and Mosca, 2002) with the municipality, which would have contributed to increased productivity and loyalty.

7.7 Batho Pele? I think not

It should be clear from the narrative in Chapter 6 that the restructuring of the Tshwane planning function was not about plans at all – it was about people. The failure of the new Tshwane Top Management to communicate should not merely be viewed in terms of a failure to communicate operational communication, which had an impact on the productivity and efficiency of the administrative processes necessary for effective service delivery. Rather, it was a failure to establish a relationship between the officials and their new leadership and in particular, a failure to create a caring environment within which the psychological contract between employee and employer, which Mir, Mir and Mosca (2002) refers to, could be established.

Rather than putting people first, as dictated by Government's "*Batho Phele*" (people first) principle, it would seem that in the Tshwane story, the majority of people, namely the officials transferred to the new municipality from the former structures, were often the very last consideration. In the story, these people were very often ignored, sidelined, disregarded and threatened – and thereby made to feel worthless. There is very little evidence in the study of the "*Ubuntu*", or humaneness, that is a characteristic trait of African culture. Although there seemed to have been pockets of staff within which a sense of cohesion and caring existed, on the whole, the municipality lacked a sense of

---

[65] Direct communication with the City Planning officials by anyone above the level of Manager only took place once after Verna was appointed to manage the function.

"*community*" as described by Peck (1994). At the same time, as far as the new Top Management was concerned, people were indeed put first. For thse people speedy confirmation of their new posts and exorbitant salaries, select parking spaces and luxury offices, among other things, denoted their status as "first officials" of the CTMM.

As the balance of power rested in the hands of the new Tshwane Top Management, it could furthermore be argued that it was their responsibility and, in terms of the role of the Municipal Manager as the head of the municipality's administration, his, to have ensured that the Tshwane officials were made to feel part of the new municipality.

Although resistance to change, culture clashes, problems with staff morale, power play and manipulation are risks inherent to a process where different structures (Transitional Local Councils) are forced, by law, to amalgamate, no process is proposed in the relevant legislation to ensure that the internal transformation process takes place in a regulated manner. One could argue that it would have been helpful if broad guidelines for the transformation processes had been made available by Government. Such guidelines could have provided mechanisms to ensure transparency and consultation with or participation of all internal stakeholder groups in the transformation process, and could furthermore have provided a timeframe that would have prevented a situation such as that which developed at the CTMM, where officials worked in an acting capacity for almost two years (without additional remuneration). However, it is apparent from the White Paper (1998) that the manner in which transformation is implemented rests in the hands of each municipality.

Yet the manifestation of the change within the micro-environment of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality can be viewed as an example of unplanned change. Not only was it unplanned, it could furthermore be described in terms of Bennis's (1993) category of "*coercive change*", which is characterized by "*nonmutual goal setting, an imbalanced power ratio and only one-sided deliberateness*" Despite the prescriptions of the MSA regarding participation, the Tshwane City Planning officials were neither given the

opportunity to fully and meaningfully participate in the transformation of the Municipality in general or of their function in particular, nor where they communicated with or consulted on it. Rather than partners in the process of transformation, the new political and administrative management and the officials seemed to be opposing forces.

7.8   The more things change…

The study seems to confirm an inherent resistance to change, not only of individuals, but of the organization as a whole. With specific reference to the planning profession, Allmendinger (2001) states that "*planners either feel no need to change or, like a rabbit in a car's headlights, they do not know in what direction to move*". The sense of bewilderment, of paralysis in the face of change conveyed by Allmendinger's (2001) description is certainly evident in the Tshwane story. I would argue that the Tshwane story, viewed as a whole, is essentially a call for planners (and planning) to change. In his study of the Aalborg Project, Flyvbjerg (1998:91) draws the conclusion that "*it may be immensely more difficult to effect change than was imagined by the city administration's policy and planning staff when they launched the Aalborg Project*". In the Tshwane case, too, it proves that effecting change within the micro-environment of the Tshwane planning department was more difficult than initially imagined by an enthusiastic Core Team. It would certainly be incorrect to argue that the restructuring process documented in this study did not result in *any* change in the manner in which the City Planning function for the Greater Pretoria Area was manifested. In the first instance, the new function was led by a new management team. It should also be noted that, for the first time in the history of all the former municipal structures, except the Centurion Town Council, a woman was holding the highest office in the function. Apart from this, however, there were also differences to the structure and content of the function and its components. One such difference is the addition of the Land Use Legislation and Administration (LULA) function. Another is the Strategic Spatial Planning function's departure from structure planning towards a framework planning approach, which draws strongly on

strategic thinking[66]. In the Regional Spatial Planning Function (land use planning) special attention was, for the first time, given to so-called "*strategic projects*", and there was a decidedly stronger focus on liaison between that function and Strategic Spatial Planning, Building Control, Law Enforcement and private developers than that which existed in the past.

This notwithstanding, the structuring of the City Planning function, especially the primary functions of Spatial Planning and Land Use Management, was in essence the same at the time of completing this study as it was before the advent of the Unicity and the protracted restructuring process. Once again, there was a clear split among the planners responsible for processing land use applications and those managing the longer term spatial planning of the city.

The demographic composition of the City Planning function in the CTMM remains an obvious stumbling block to the implementation of developmental local government. Swanepoel (1997) points out the importance of people involved in community planning to know the people they serve and to understand their circumstances. This statement is particularly true if one agrees with Swanepoel (1997) that the ideal of poverty eradication is at the heart of developmental local government. McClendon and Quay (1998) also argue for a "*closeness to the customer*". The fact that all the town planners in the employ of the CTMM during the study period were affluent in terms of the South African reality and that only 3 of the planners more than 50 planners employed by the CTMM were from previously disadvantaged racial groups, clearly indicates that the staff profile of the function does not meet the above requirement. Most of the planners had never been to areas such as Mabopane and Winterveldt, let alone had a thorough understanding of the areas and the forces that impacted on them. If one adds to this the dimension of "*political persuasion*", which, in my experience generally leaned towards the

---

[66] Before the establishment of the SMSP function, so-called "strategic planning", or rather "forward planning" for the Pretoria area, consisted of little more than the compilation of the Pretoria Structure Plan.

right, there can be little hope for a planning response that would genuinely address the ravishes of Apartheid.

Despite repeated statements regarding the importance of affirmative action and the commitment of the management (at all levels) to promote it, the entire interim management team of the City Planning Function was white. There is furthermore a strong suspicion of racial bias among the planners inferred from the notes taken of the Co-coordinators' Meetings (see page 168). It would therefore seem that real change, which, according to Flyvbjerg (2001:122) "*requires changing our selves, our bodies, our souls, and our ways of knowing*" is yet to happen in the Tshwane municipality.

7.9   CONCLUSION

The restructuring of the planning function of the CTMM is a compelling example of symbolic violence and institutional victimization[67] against the municipal planners. The brutality enacted upon the planners through the one-sided decision making by the new top management, on the one hand, and the failure to communicate with the officials, on the other, is all the more alarming because it takes place in an environment where the principles of transparency, inclusiveness and democracy are expected to apply. The Tshwane study furthermore indicates the restrictive effects of a managerialist environment where the entrenched distribution of power leaves little room for innovation or constructive, open debate. Aspirations to managerial positions that characterize such an environment are shown by the Tshwane case to cloud the substantive issues and to encourage rationalization and power play. As most municipal planning practice takes place in similarly managerialist environments, these dynamics dare not be ignored by a planning theory that has as its aim improved praxis.

The Tshwane story displays strong parallels with Flyvbjerg's (1998) study of Aalborg, and seems to confirm most of his power propositions. However, the Tshwane case provides no evidence to confirm the simple inversely

---

[67] See Gunder and Mouat, 2002.

proportionate relationship between power and rationality Flyvbjerg (1998) suggests. Rather, it would seem that the relationship between power and rationality is a more complex and dynamic one dictated by an intricate web of situational elements.

The pivotal role of communication, both as a means of exercising power and of resisting it, emerges clearly from the Tshwane study. Moreover, it is seen that in cases where a party finds itself in an unchallenged position of power (as does the new Tshwane top management) communication as a mechanism to entrench the position of power becomes redundant. When the party in power abstains from engaging in communicative action, efforts to resist by parties with lesser power (such as the Tshwane planners) are effectively devastated.

The study unlocks a number of opportunities for further research. Firstly, it could form the basis for a comparative study with other cases of organizational change. In the South African context, specifically, it begs comparative analysis in terms of the restructuring experiences in other municipalities, particularly in the other metropolitan municipalities. In the second instance there is scope for a more in-depth study of the reasons behind the struggle for recognition of the City Planning function within the new Tshwane organizational structure. The possibility could be investigated of drawing parallels with the broader search for a new role and identity for the planning profession.