

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF AND BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY

“...let me emphasise that traditional leaders have a key role to play as partners with government, to build a better life for all our people. I am here to request a stronger partnership between us, a partnership for progress and sustainable development, especially in rural areas...” Zuma (2010)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The above quotation from the speech by the President implies that the government is not the only role-player in service delivery. The President is of the opinion that service delivery hinges on the building of partnerships between the government and traditional authorities. The institution of traditional authority comprises an integral part of the social, political and cultural values of African society. The traditional authorities' institution pre-dates any colonial and apartheid establishments; and they are represented by their traditional leaders. Traditional authorities were the only governance structures in place before both colonial and apartheid governments in Africa. Colonial governments, however, used traditional leaders to implement their policies – through direct and indirect rule – thereby reducing their status as representatives of their community members, who alleged that they were collaborators of the colonial system.

However, the 1960s, which heralded the emergence of independent states in Africa, revitalized the institutions of traditional authorities in most of the Sub-Saharan African countries (Muriaas 2009:28). Ray and van Nieuwaal van Rouveroy (1996:7) were of the view that traditional institutions were revitalized because of the apparent failure of the newly independent states to deliver services to the citizens of the new states. However, even after independence, traditional authorities were also used by some of the independent governments in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Malawi, where the government used them through patronage to solicit the loyalty of the people (Chiweza 2007:61).

In light of the above, the citizens of the newly independent states would have to make a choice on whether to use traditional authorities to promote development, or not.

It is also asserted that the institutions of traditional authorities gained strength and repositioned themselves in South Africa as well (Bekker 1993:200). This was in contrast to the policy of the African National Congress (ANC), which called for the destruction of the institutions of traditional authorities, because they were perceived to be puppets of the apartheid system (ANC 1986). The President of the Republic of South Africa, who is also the President of the ANC, pleaded with them to form partnerships with government, in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas (Zuma 2010:2).

Bank and Southall (1996:421) argued that comrades, civic bodies and traditional leaders have all failed to deliver on the promises they made to their respective followers to deliver services; and that they, therefore, need to co-operate to achieve more. However, the debate in the academic circle is about the actual role traditional authorities can play in the democratic dispensation (Beall *et al.* 2005).

The objective of this chapter is to introduce and provide motivation for this study. This chapter also provides the background to the problem statement, the study objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, a brief description of the case study, together with the justification for the choice of this case study, the ethical issues, the definition of concepts; and in addition, it describes the general layout of the study.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

Traditional authorities have existed all over the world from time immemorial. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, various traditional authorities dominated the daily socio-economic lives of the people long before the introduction of colonialism and apartheid. Powerful traditional authorities existed in Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Uganda, Malawi and South Africa amongst others (Van Dijk 2006:74-78; Nemudzivhadi 2007:1).

This implies that traditional authorities are not a product of colonialism or apartheid per se because they were in existence long before the arrival and introduction of some of these political regimes and their systems. Traditional authorities, in particular, presided over a socio-economic system that was suitable for the indigenous peoples of the region at the time.

However, during colonialism in Africa in general and apartheid in South Africa in particular, political systems shifted – with the emergence of a new arrangement for the role of traditional leadership. Traditional leadership systems were systematically dismantled and eroded by the successive European colonial settlers and the apartheid regimes. This was done to promote and sustain the objectives and interests of the colonial masters – especially with regard to the acquisition of productive resources – particularly land, which was customarily the responsibility of traditional authorities long before settler colonialism and apartheid (Mijiga 1998:6).

The traditional authorities could also not escape the wrath of the new post-colonial regimes. Some new African governments and political elites, such as those of Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania and Uganda, amongst others, premised that traditional authorities threatened their political power and influence. Traditional authorities were also perceived to be a hindrance to democratization, modernization and nation-building, in particular (van Nieuwaal van Rouveroy 1996: 37-38). The integration of traditional authorities into the colonial systems could have benefited new states with experience, since they were new and inexperienced post-independent states.

Later on, there was a change of approach in the policies of some of these countries, where some of them began to recognise and rebuild the institutions of traditional authority. For example, the old indigenous kingdoms in countries, such as Uganda, were also restored (Englebert 2002). In other countries, such as Malawi (Chiweza 2007) and South Africa in particular (Ntsebenza 2005; Oomen 2005), as quoted in Muriaas (2009:27), traditional leaders continued to play a major role in modern society. These traditional authorities had played an important role in their respective communities with regard to crucial public service delivery, in terms of health provision, education, agriculture, heritage management and judicial processes in their respective communities (Nicholson 2006:2-3; Kenworthy 2010:2).

This might suggest that the role of traditional authorities in the discharging of the day-to-day life of indigenous Africans might still be relevant in the modern socio-economic set-up, especially on the issue of development, as partners in the modern state (Zuma 2010:7; Motlanthe 2009:4). In crucial aspects, such as communal land tenure rights, especially in rural communities, traditional authority is still a major partner in the modern state (The Independent Venda 1979:26).

During the African colonialism traditional authorities were responsible for the administrative functions, while simultaneously being incorporated into the colonial ruling systems, and as such strengthening the new local councils (van Nieuwaal van Rouveroy 1996:37). In the rural areas of the former homelands of South Africa, these traditional authorities were an important factor of public governance and service delivery to their communities in partnership with Bantustan governments (Beall and Ngonyama 2009:5). Despite their purported support of colonial and apartheid governments, traditional authorities were viewed as role-players, particularly in calming rural communities from mobilizing against modern governments, which are apparently failing to deliver services (Muriaas 2009:29).

However, despite the apparent failure of modern governments in service delivery, the concern is that by their very nature traditional authorities remain threats to democracy (Beall and Ngonyama 2009:12). Traditional authorities are accused of being the representatives of a privileged few who rule over the majority (Economic Commission for Africa 2007:15). What may be deduced from this argument is that there is an acknowledgement of the role that traditional authorities have played in the past. The role they played in the past might have exposed them to modern experience, knowledge and skill, which they could transfer to new modern states after the demise of colonial governments, in which traditional authorities were embedded. This could be supported by the saying: “Do not throw the baby away with the bath water”.

Consequently, modern states should use traditional authorities for the good of the communities, because these modern states are still modelled on the same pattern of the colonial systems, which were served by traditional authorities.

Allowing traditional authorities to continue playing the role of governance could make sense, since they have gained some experience and knowledge in this field.

When a new political dispensation emerged in South Africa in 1994, the post-apartheid democratic government of South Africa embraced traditional authorities in line with the human rights system, as enshrined in the constitution of the country (Sithole and Mbele 2008:4). As a result, the post-apartheid South African government ascertained that for the local and national spheres of government to be operationally effective and efficient (Brinkerhoff 2002, as quoted in McNabb 2010:xvii), stakeholders, such as traditional authorities, should participate in the implementation of government policies.

To fulfill this requirement, the South African democratic government enacted the **Municipal Structures Act, 1998** (Act 117 of 1998), Section (81), which requires that traditional leaders who represent traditional authorities should be identified, and required to attend and participate in municipal councils, as ex-officio members in the South African local government structures. However, this act of parliament prevented these traditional leaders from having voting rights in local government processes (Nicholson 2006:8).

Government further argued that the involvement and participation of these traditional leaders in the local municipal councils would accord them an opportunity to actively participate in municipal processes on issues that fundamentally affect their communities (**Municipal Structures Act, 1998** [Act 117 of 1998]).

Furthermore, the need to involve these traditional authorities also emanates from the fact that local municipalities and district councils in particular, cannot operate effectively without their participation – as communities would still venerate these authorities and hold them in high esteem (Materu **et al.** 2000:18). This view is corroborated by the study of Diaz-Cayeros **et al.** (2009:8) in Mexico, whose findings revealed that municipalities fared worse than traditional authorities on the issue of involving communities in decision-making and information dissemination.

From the above, it may be deduced that traditional authorities and elected leaders would need to work together in policy-making and implementation. It is also clear that traditional leaders would continue their culture of inviting their communities to participate in decision-making process, thereby promoting a bottom-up approach and offering elected leaders an opportunity to learn from this rich experience of administration. The purported rich experience acquired during the pre-colonial, colonial and apartheid governments needs to be investigated. Could it not benefit the new modern states?

This study will investigate their participation in the implementation of policies, such as Integrated Development Planning (IDP).

1.3 BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

The 1994 era is regarded as the turning point for South Africa politics, since it marked the dawn of a new political period that was based on democracy, equality, fundamental rights and the promotion of national unity (Du Plessis and Scheepers 1999:22). The **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**, 1996 recognized the institution, role and status of traditional leaders. However, it did not grant them any powers beyond supervising the customary law. The **Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act**, 2003 (41 of 2003) provides that traditional leaders should be involved in the promotion of the socio-economic development of their communities. They must also disseminate information for government policies and programmes.

Section 5 (1) states that in order to enhance the role of promoting socio-economic development and the dissemination of government information, there must be partnerships between municipalities and traditional leaders. Traditional authorities have the potential to complement and offer support to elected government leaders (Bank and Southall 1996:407). The survey conducted by the Department of Constitutional Development and Provincial Affairs in 1999 found that traditional authorities were credited with encouraging consultations by holding meetings, taking collective decisions, and relying on advisory structures – thereby creating the

impression that they are more transparent than the elected leaders (Department of Constitutional Development and Provincial Affairs 1999:2).

These findings are corroborated by the study of Diaz-Cayeros **et al.** (2009:8) in Mexico. Their results revealed that municipalities fared worse than traditional authorities on the issue involving communities in decision-making and information dissemination. However, the study by the Department of Constitutional Development and Provincial Affairs (1999) also revealed that respondents showed that local government should take the lead in the implementation of projects, such as electricity and road construction; but traditional authorities should be informed.

However, in Ghana, at the 4th Tripartite Seminar on Deepening the Democratic Process in Ghana – the Role of Chiefs in 2005 – the Ministry for Finance and Economic Planning praised the chieftains for their role in the development initiatives, such as Health Foundations, Environmental Protection and afforestation initiatives (2005:2). Traditional institutions have been involved in local governance in Ghana in the past. Hence, the 1992 **Constitution of Ghana**, articles 270-275, established and protected them (Constitution of Ghana 2005:5).

Traditional authorities in South Africa have been accorded a constitutional right to actively participate in the processes of governance and public service delivery in the local government sphere. The **Municipal Systems Act, 2000** (Act 32 of 2000) Section (29) compels municipal councils to identify and consult with the organs of State, including traditional authorities on the drafting of the IDPs. The **Municipal Systems Act, 2000** (Act 32 of 2000) lays down the processes of IDPs, which comprise those phases the municipality undertakes, in order to formulate IDPs. These phases are areas where they should participate in IDP implementation.

The traditional authorities should participate as an organized structure, since they represent communities and also their structures on land matters and other customary issues. Traditional authorities have the potential to derail the implementation of policies if they are not involved in policy processes (Cloete and Thornhill 2005:123).

Traditional authorities have assumed an important role in African life because elected African States have failed to unite and bring development (van Nieuwaal van Rouveroy 1996:7). The recognition of traditional authorities in Sub-Saharan countries, such as Uganda (Englebert 2002), in Malawi (Chiweza 2007), in South Africa (Ntsebenza 2005 and Oomen 2005) sparked a debate on the role they had to play in the new dispensation (Sklar 1999 and Beall **et al.** 2005).

In the pre-colonial period, traditional authorities occupied a paramount position in African culture, because they managed the day-to-day administration of the lives of their communities. Traditional leaders were accountable to the people they ruled through advisory bodies (Khunou 2011:278). There are other scholars who differ with this conclusion by arguing that traditional authorities were never elected, but were forced on the communities, thereby becoming unaccountable, autocratic and feared (Manona 1998; Mbeki 1984; Lodge 1983). This could be the basis for the obvious animosities, resentments and disregard of traditional authorities amongst a considerable proportion of the populace in South Africa, despite Government's continuous insistence that traditional authorities must be accorded the rights enshrined in the post-liberation **Constitution of the Republic of the Republic of South Africa**, 1996.

It should be further stated that in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Ghana, there are mixed reactions and opinions on the role played by traditional authorities in modern government processes (Hoffman and Metzroth 2010:15). This is corroborated by Beall and Ngonyama (2009:12) who argue that opinions as to their role in South Africa also remain largely fragmented and highly contested, both in the academic and social spheres.

Although the issues around the challenges faced by local government in South Africa have until most recently received some considerable interest in empirical research, it remains that research on the role that these traditional authorities might play in IDP implementation in South Africa remains fundamentally insufficient or non-existent. It is therefore, envisaged that this study might provide some fundamental and crucial policy tool with regard to the role played by the traditional authorities in IDP

implementation in South Africa in general, and in Limpopo Province, in particular. This is the primary focus area of this study.

1.4 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Traditional authorities in South Africa have been accorded a constitutional right to actively participate in the processes of governance and public service delivery in the local government sphere. This is despite the earlier commitment by the ANC to destroy traditional authorities – whom it called puppets of the colonial and apartheid government (ANC 1986). The role of traditional authorities is provided for by the **Municipal Structures Act** 117 of 1998 and the **White Paper on Local Government** of 1998, which stipulate that traditional authorities have a role to play in local government processes in South Africa.

There are debates in the academic circle about the actual role that traditional authorities could play in local government (Muriaas 2009:32). This could also be influenced by the confusion in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Ghana, where there are mixed reactions and opinions on the role played by traditional authorities in modern government processes (Hoffman and Metzroth 2010:15). This is agreed on by Beall and Ngonyama (2009:12) who argue that opinions on the role of traditional authorities in South Africa remain largely fragmented and highly contested – both from the academic and social perspectives.

Perceptions, animosities, resentments and disregard exist towards traditional authorities amongst a considerable proportion of the populace in South Africa, on the basis that they lack legitimacy (Bank and Southall 1996:421). This is despite government's continuous insistence that traditional authorities be accorded the rights enshrined in the post-liberation **Constitution of the Republic of the Republic of South Africa**, 1996. Traditional authorities are credited with legitimizing colonial and apartheid governments through indirect rule. It might be assumed that they gained experience, which could be useful to the new governments, since these modern States are perceived to have failed (Muriaas 2009:29).

This view is corroborated by Sklar (1994:1) who argued that in Africa new governments are being founded on the foundations of both the traditional and modern features. The argument about the common foundations being the new basis of modern States could be interpreted as implying that neither traditional authorities nor modern States have the sole right of existence independent of the other. Furthermore, this could mean that if merged together, a new form of government never experienced before in Africa could be established, which harmonizes both the interests of those who favour traditional authorities and modern States – for the ultimate good of the country as a whole.

Yet, the issues around the challenges faced by local government operations in South Africa have until recently received little interest in empirical research. It may however, be submitted that research on the role that these traditional authorities might play in local government systems in South Africa remains fundamentally insufficient or non-existent. It is envisaged that this study will provide some fundamental and crucial policy tool with regard to the role played by traditional authorities in local government systems in South Africa and in Limpopo Province in particular.

While government has a legislative position on the role of traditional authorities in local government processes – especially with regard to IDP policy process, what is actually happening in local government contradicts the provision and government commitment on the role of traditional authorities in most of the municipalities in South Africa. In view of this, this study wants to establish the role played by traditional authorities in IDP policy processes in Limpopo Province – with a special focus on the Vhembe District Municipality.

1.5 THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the role played by traditional authorities in the IDP policy implementation in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. This will be done by measuring, amongst others, their participation, involvement, submission of IDP policy proposals to the municipal council, participation in ward committee meetings and attendance of municipal council meetings – using the

Vhembe District Municipality as a case study. The specific objectives of this study were to:

- Characterize the demographic and endowment characteristics of traditional leaders serving in municipal councils in the Vhembe District Municipality.
- Provide ways and means to resolve the challenges faced by municipalities with regard to IDP policy processes in the Limpopo Province, with a particular focus on the Vhembe District Municipality.
- Provide policy guidelines to policy-makers with regard to the role of traditional authorities in local government processes.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS GUIDING THE OBJECTIVES

- To what extent are traditional authorities participating in the IDP policy implementation in Limpopo Province with respect to Vhembe District Municipality?
- What are the perceptions of stakeholders on the participation of traditional authorities in governance processes?
- What is the significance of demographic and endowment typologies in the implementation of IDP policy?
- What are the challenges of traditional authorities with regard to their role in local government processes in the Limpopo Province? This question must be seen in relation to their participation, involvement, submission of IDP policy proposals, their role in IDP policy deliberations, the value of their views in council, and their participation in ward council meetings, amongst other issues.

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study is intended to provide an effective and efficient policy tool for the future on local government systems' operation in the rural areas of South Africa in general, and in Limpopo Province, in particular, where municipalities still have to cope with an

increasing need to co-operate with traditional authorities to discharge their operations and delivery of service to the communities. The findings and recommendations of this study should improve the implementation of service delivery to the communities in this province, in general, and the Vhembe District Municipality, in particular.

These issues are represented by traditional leaders in local government, and in municipal IDP policy processes. This study might also provide a valuable and new knowledge base on traditional authorities and their role in local government systems in the Limpopo Province. No previous study has ever focused on the demographic and endowment typologies of traditional leaders in South Africa. Previous studies have ignored this important aspect.

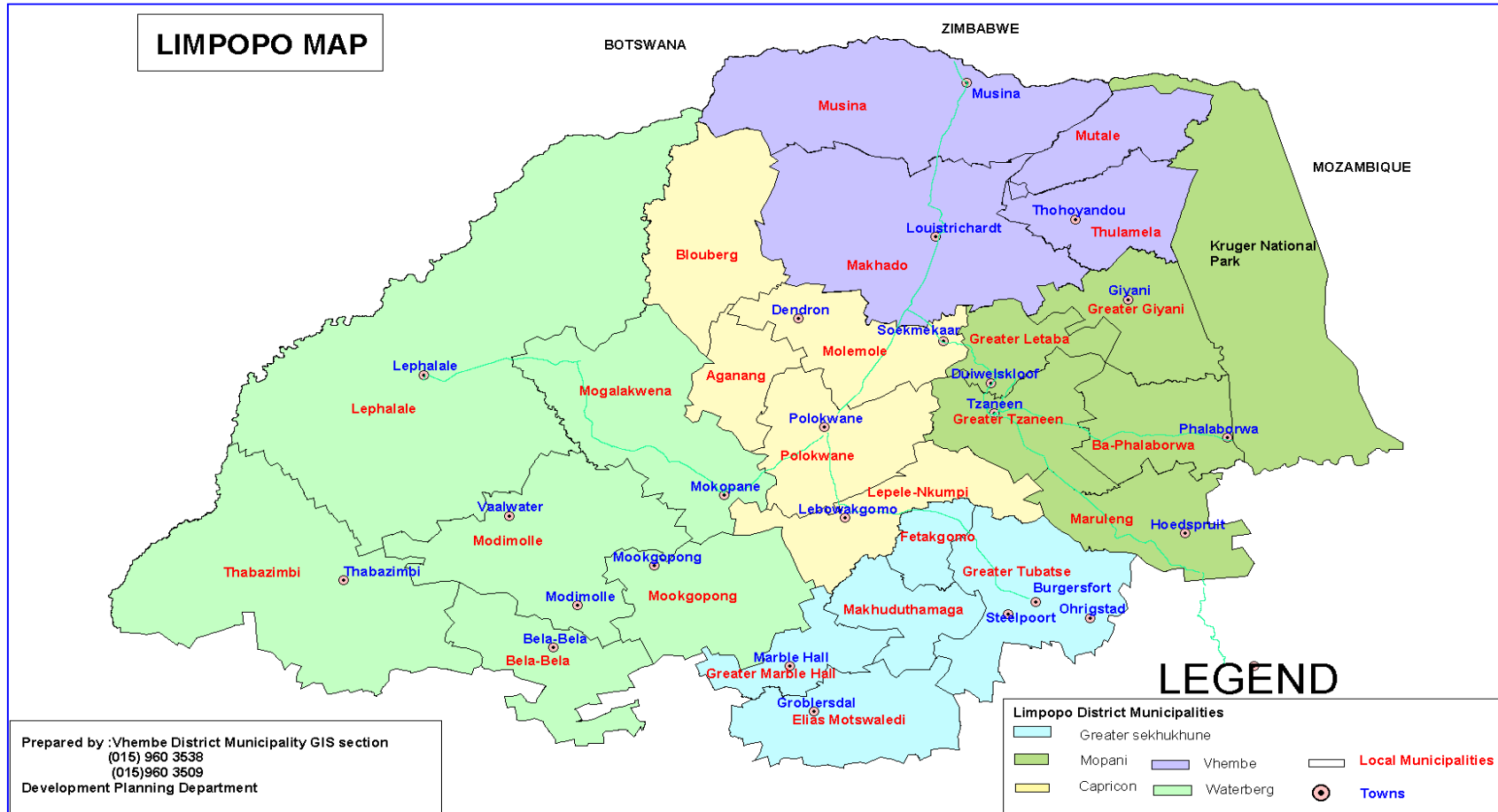
1.8 THE STUDY AREA

Traditional authorities are most common in the rural areas in South Africa, particularly in provinces, such as the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West. Provinces, such as Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape are not renowned for functional traditional authorities. Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces are mainly urban provinces. The focus of this study is the predominantly rural Limpopo Province, which is home to many traditional authorities in South Africa. Vhembe District Municipality will be the focus of this study.

The Limpopo Province comprises approximately 10.25 % of the total South African land space, with approximately 123 910km² of land area. Approximately 37.0 % of this land is suitable for arable farming, 50.1 % for grazing, and 12.2 % for wild life.

There are five geographic district municipalities in the Limpopo Province: Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg, as indicated in Figure 1.1.

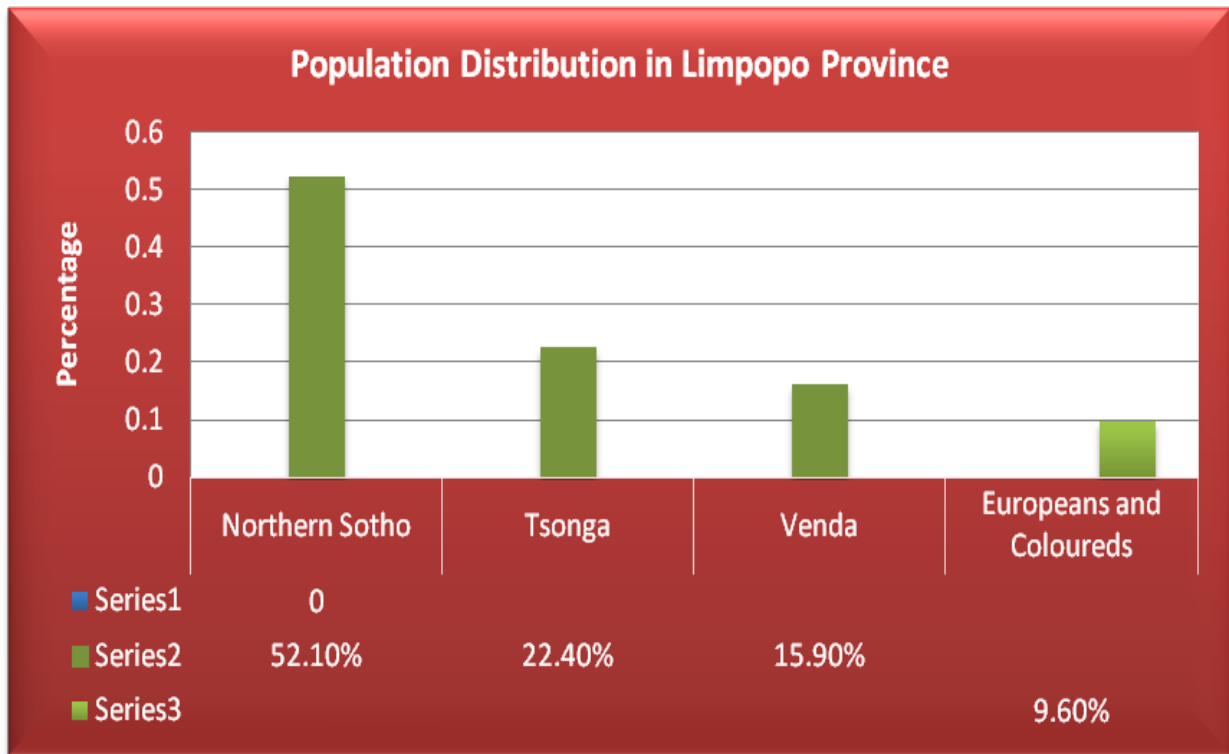
Figure 1.1 Map of the Limpopo Province with five district municipalities



Source: Vhembe District Municipality

The population in this province is approximately 5.6 million people, made up as follows: Europeans and Coloureds (9.6 %), Northern Sotho (52.1 %), Tsonga (22.4 %) and Venda (15.9 %) tribes, as indicated in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Population distribution in the Limpopo Province, South Africa



Source: South African Yearbook (2010/2011).

It is clear that the majority of the population in the Limpopo Province comprises indigenous Africans. These comprise the three major tribes of this province: Northern Sotho, Tsonga and Venda. It should, therefore, be expected that traditional authorities would be a major focus in this province. Limpopo Province, by virtue of its vastness, cannot be covered by a single research. Consequently, Vhembe District will be the focus area of this study.

This province contributes approximately 6.5 % of the National Gross Domestic Product (NGDP) of the Republic of South Africa. The provincial Annual Gross Geographical Product (AGGP) per capita is approximately R1 264, with a Human

Development Index (HDI) of 0.4. Approximately 32.4 % of the population earns less than US\$1 per day, making this province one of the poorest (Mapedza **et al.** 2008).

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design is the plan for an intended study. The plan includes the determination of what is going to be observed and analysed, based on the why and how questions (Babbie 2008:96). It is also defined as a route planner on how to address the research problem (Mouton 2008:107). In this study the design is defined as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation – to answer the research problem on the role of traditional authority in the IDP policy implementation in Limpopo Province. This is a case study, which will not be limited to a single research technique, but employs the techniques of qualitative and quantitative analysis, in order to explain the social situation being studied.

Qualitative data are data that take the form of descriptive accounts of observations; while quantitative data are presented in numbers or through numerical values (Crowther and Lancaster 2009:79). The qualitative research utilises the methods of data collection and analysis – aiming at the exploration of social relations – and describing reality as told by the respondents (Adams **et al.** 2007: 26). Qualitative research involves field notes, interviews, conversations and the recording of conversations (Davies 2007:10). Quantitative research employs quantitative measurements and statistical analysis (Adams **et al.** 2007:26).

Quantitative research is utilised to obtain answers pertaining to the questions by using the application of scientific procedures. These procedures increase the likelihood for the information collected to be relevant to those questions asked, and it also enhances the reliability and the lack of any bias (Davies 2007:9). However, qualitative and quantitative techniques should be viewed as mutually inclusive, since a research design might include the characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative research (Du Plooy 2001:81). This approach is referred to as mixed methods. This approach offers the best technique to answer a research problem (Pierce 2008:47).

Therefore, this study employs a qualitative-quantitative methodology; and it was conducted by using face-to-face interviews, questionnaires, focus-group interviews,

together with a review of the literature and observation. A qualitative technique was used to present the findings in narration; while a quantitative technique was used to present the data in numbers and percentages on the graphs. However, the use of mixed methods does not mean that they were applied equally. In this study, the qualitative technique was the dominant technique; while the quantitative approach was used as a secondary technique (Pierce 2008:48).

This study has used face-to-face interviews, focus-group interviews, a review of the literature and observation. The face-to-face interviews took place at the royal kraals; while focus-group interviews were conducted at the Premier's office, where the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders was based, but has since relocated to the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs. The observation process took place at the Vhembe District Municipality. The purpose of collecting data through interviews, focus-group discussions, a review of the literature and observation was aimed at collecting data from a number of different data sources. A combination of various data sources enabled the researcher to explore these sources, so that more insight into the understanding of the role traditional authorities played in IDP policy processes could be arrived at.

Methodology has to state and show some degree of consistency between the underlying philosophy, the inductive or deductive approach, as well as the qualitative and quantitative methods (Pierce 2008:71). The data-collection methods used in this study are discussed below.

1.9.1 Face-to-face interviews

The face-to-face interviews were conducted with some of the respondents, in order to collect first-hand information from them, because they are traditional leaders, municipal officials and SANCO, who could provide information on the role of traditional authorities in the implementation of IDP policy processes in the Vhembe District Municipality. In this study, four telephonic interviews with structured questions were conducted with the researcher, asking the various respondents one question after the other. The process of collecting the data was much quicker, because the researcher had delivered the questionnaires to the respondents in advance. This method is also recommended by De Vos **et al.** (2005:169).

The researcher, after some days, called the respondents telephonically and requested them to read to him the answers to the questions. This was as an attempt to get them back because the respondents would say that they were too busy to fill them in. When this failed, the last resort was to engage in telephonic interviews.

1.9.2 Mailed questionnaires

Questionnaires were sent to the respondents by the email for this study. Sometimes it needed two or three and telephonic calls to beg the respondents to fill them in. After filling them in, they were emailed back to the researcher. A total of eight questionnaires were emailed, of this number only four were returned to the researcher.

1.9.3 Sampling procedure

This study has employed purposive or judgmental sampling. The researcher chose this sampling technique because only those participants with particular knowledge about the role of traditional authorities in IDP policy implementation were relevant to this study. Maree **et al.** (2007:178) also support the selection of participants who can provide specific data for particular studies.

The researcher just selected anyone from the available categories as a sample for this study. It would, however, have been ideal to interview all the traditional leaders, but due to costs and time constraints, this proved impossible. Consequently, a sample of respondents was chosen, as supported by Bhattacharrya (2003:78).

Sixty-two face-to-face interview respondents were sampled in terms of the purposive or judgmental sampling procedure. They were sampled on the basis of the following criteria:

- Being traditional leaders who attended and participated in the municipal council meetings;
- Being traditional leaders who were members of the Executive Committee in the Vhembe House Traditional Leaders;
- Being traditional leaders who were members of the Executive Committee in the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders;

- Being Vhembe regional members of SANCO;
- Being municipal officials who worked closely with traditional leaders; and
- Being an MEC and HOD of Department of Local Government at Provincial sphere.

Table 1.1 presents the informants herein referred to as respondents as follows:

Table 1.1: Respondents for this study

Traditional leaders in municipal councils	15
Vhembe House of Traditional Leaders	10
Provincial House of Traditional Leaders	10
Local Municipal Mayors	4
Local Municipal Managers	4
Executive Mayor	1
District Municipal Manager	1
IDP Managers	5
SANCO	10
MEC	1
HOD	1
TOTAL SAMPLE	62

The aim was to make this study representative through this sampling technique.

1.9.4 Focus-group interviews

Focus-group interviews were conducted with the Executive Committee of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders. The Executive Committee of full-time members was crucial in this study, because they were located in the office of the

Premier, and they advised the government on matters that affect traditional authorities. They are privy to the policies that govern the affairs of traditional leaders, and as such they could not be left out. Any serious discussion on the role of traditional authorities should include them. The focus-group interview is recommended in a qualitative study, in order to collect the data from the respondents (Johnson 2010:102).

1.9.5 Interview procedure

Just before the interview, the researcher introduced himself to the respondents, although he had known the two very well. In this focus group, two full-time Executive Committee members: the chairperson and the deputy chairperson were convened, in order to discuss the research topic. This is a reasonable alternative to conducting a number of individual interviews (Van der Stoep and Johnston 2009:235). The researcher produced and showed them the ethical clearance letter obtained from the University of Pretoria. The questionnaire reflected the topic of the study, as also did the ethical clearance letter. The broad question was: *The role of traditional authority in the IDP policy implementation in Limpopo Province*. The permission to record the proceedings of the interview was made in advance to the respondents, who both gave their approval of that; and the tape recorder was used to record the interview. However, taking notes also took place during the interview, and this became time-consuming (De Vos **et al.** 2002:304).

The questionnaire contained structured questions, and a few semi-structured questions. Here, the researcher employed the structured approach in terms of the objectives of the research (Welman 2005:201). Structured questions provided the respondents with an opportunity to provide in-depth responses, and also to describe their experiences (Johnson 2010:99).

1.9.6 Observation

In this study, the researcher conducted observations, when he attended some municipal council meetings, in order to observe the participation of the traditional leaders in council meetings, but could not find anyone in attendance. One also attended IDP Representative Forum meetings, notably the one organized by the District on the 13 March 2011, in order to observe the proceedings.

Traditional leaders are members of the IDP Representative Forum. The purpose was to observe how traditional leaders participate in council meetings.

Dane (1990:158) defined participant observation as an observational research method, in which the researcher becomes part of the events being observed. The researcher collected data by observing the process of the proceedings of the IDP Representative Forum, as argued by Bhattacharyya (2003:51).

1.9.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is described as a product of statistical software that is utilised by the researcher (McNabb 2010:85). According to Johnson (2010:142), in the process of analysis, researchers looked for common words, themes and patterns. This study has used questionnaires, interviews, and observation for the collection of data.

In this study, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the level of the role of traditional authorities in IDP policy implementation in the local municipality (in Vhembe District Municipality). The responses ranged from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and do not know. The data that were collected came from the respondents who were selected in terms of their characteristics – to provide relevant data needed for this study. The responses were captured in the spreadsheet and analysed by means of SPSS, version 18 of 2010. The responses of each category were recorded separately on the spreadsheet, tables and figures. The responses of each category were to be added together to give a single percentage for presenting the results. The results of the data analyses were comprehensively interpreted, and written up in Chapter Seven in a descriptive manner.

1.9.8 Validity and reliability of the data

Validity and reliability assist the researcher in making the research findings rationally convincing, not only to himself, but also to other people as well.

Research should produce valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner (Barzun and Graff 1985:112). Validity and reliability are also referred to as credibility, transferability, and dependability, in addition to objectivity (Lincorn and Guba 1985:300). In order to ensure that credibility is attained, they proposed the triangulation of data: of sources, methods and investigators.

i. Validity

In this study, validity was achieved through the use of multiple sources for the collection of data. The sources complemented each other, unlike in some cases where the researcher only uses a single source of data collection. Validity is the process of ensuring that the measure measures what it is supposed to measure (Dane 1990:257).

Validity helps researchers to obtain authentic data, and to ensure their objectivity, by using different sources of data collection to reach that goal – rather than using only one version of truth (Neuman 2006:196). Validity is a criterion for ensuring that the findings of the study are generalizable to similar situations elsewhere (McNabb 2010:39).

The findings of this study are generalizable to other similar areas. This is because traditional leaders in the whole country are subjected to the same legislation that determines the attendance and participation of municipal councils and ward committees alike. They are also affected by the same mandate that they should participate in IDP matters, and that they are the custodians of the land on which IDP projects take place. Traditional authorities are also members of the IDP Representative Forums.

ii. Reliability

This study was completed through the utilization of similar questionnaires compiled for different group of respondents, a literature review and observation. Of course, replicating this study may not lead to the same conclusions – even if the same respondents were interviewed, due to the fact that the perceptions of respondents change from time to time.

Reliability is the extent to which a measure produces the same scores across different times, groups of people, or versions of the instrument. Reliability is the extent to which the measure is consistent (Dane 1990:257). Reliability should lead to the same results, when the same methods are used by different researchers (Smith 1975:58). Reliable data are collated utilizing the same decision rules all the time (Johnson 2010:51). Consistency is accompanied by accuracy of measures.

This means that same instrument must be able to yield the same findings at a later stage, when employed in similar conditions, for example by means of test-retest (Brynard and Hanekom 2005:41).

iii. Triangulation

In this study, 44 questionnaires were completed; and this provided different opinions, thereby ensuring that not only one source of data collection was used and interpreted. Therefore, triangulation of theory can only happen when a researcher uses multiple theoretical perspectives in the planning stages of research, or when interpreting the data. Triangulation of method is utilised when one employs the mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, as in this study.

Triangulation refers to the process whereby something is viewed from various viewpoints, rather than from one angle only (Neuman 2006:149-150). It includes a number of sources for data collection in a research study, and it increases the reliability of the observation (Marais and Mouton 1996). Triangulation is, in fact, a research approach that employs a number of methods for the collation of information, and for answering the research problem; and it is intended to enhance the validity of the research results (Johnson 2010:255).

1.10 THE ETHICAL ISSUES IN THIS STUDY

In the conducting of research, people can choose to be either ethical or unethical. The biggest ethical issue is that of invading participants' privacy. In this research, ethical issues were maintained, in order to complete it. The respondents for this study were not taken for granted. The objectives of the research were shared with the respondents after the researcher had introduced himself to them. The respondents were not induced with any incentive to provide the necessary data. The respondents were informed in advance that there would be no benefits handed out. However, they were also informed that the study might provide benefits when the recommendations are implemented and become policies, which might assist with service delivery.

In research ethics, researchers are required to balance their obligations to promote intellectual freedom and to contribute to knowledge with fair treatment of the people to whom these obligations are owed, and to whom the knowledge is to be distributed (Erickson 1967, as quoted in Dane 1990:38).

1.10.1 Ethical issues before the project

Before this study was conducted, an ethical clearance form was completed and submitted to the Ethics Committee, in order to indicate how the ethical matters would be addressed. The research project could not begin before the Ethical Committee was satisfied. There was a letter of introduction to those who would take part in the research. The whole research had to be introduced to them. There was a letter of permission that had to be provided by the institution to show that they agreed that the research should be conducted in their area. The respondents themselves gave the consent that they would participate in the research. The copies of these letters had to accompany the ethical clearance form. The ethical clearance form took consideration of the age and any disabilities of the respondents.

1.10.2 Voluntary participation

Participation in social research directly or indirectly leads to participants revealing personal information about their lives. This information may not even be known to their friends. The purpose of social research may lead them to reveal such information to strangers (Babbie 1992:464). As a result of this revelation, their identity has to be protected. Dane (1990:39) maintains that “...*voluntary participation refers to the participants’ rights to freely choose to subject themselves to the scrutiny inherent in research...*”

In research, participants must be willing to participate. They must not be forced to participate in any research. There are however, two separate issues that characterize the ethical balance of voluntary participation. These two issues are coercion and awareness. They will now be briefly discussed.

(i) Coercion

Dane (1990:39) defines coercion as “...*using threats or force, as well as offering more incentive than what would reasonably be considered fair compensation*”. Coercion may be in the form of rewards or promises to avoid punishment. A researcher may offer the participant money to participate. Rewards limit the participant’s freedom of choice or ability to make a rational decision. In this study, each questionnaire to the respondents was accompanied by a consent form, so that they could always remember their rights.

(ii) Awareness

Voluntary participation includes awareness of their participation in the research project. This is only possible when the participant is aware of his/her participation. In the research, the participant must be informed about the research and the reasons for carrying it out. This should include even the completion of a questionnaire. Participants must be clear about the purpose of the research. In order to complete this study, the participants were informed of the reasons for conducting the study; and the informed form was attached to the questionnaires.

(iii) Informed consent

Informed consent refers to allowing the participants an opportunity to take decisions unhindered that protect their own interests. The attention of the participants should be drawn to the purpose, methods, duration of the project and any potential harm that might come to them (Johnson 2010:12). Informed consent refers to “...*providing potential research participants with all of the information necessary to allow them to make a decision...*”, as was argued by Dane (1990:40). The purpose of the study was detailed in the consent form. It also revealed that the participants would not be harmed, and that their names would remain anonymous, but known to the researcher. The questionnaires did not have any provision for them to fill in their personal details.

(iv) Deception

Van der Stoep and Johnston (2009:15) define deception as the practice of giving false information to research participants on certain aspects of the study. It is intended to lure the participant into giving information, which they would not give if they were told the truth. For example, informing them that if they were to reveal that their Chief Executive Officer (CEO) comes to work late, their identities would not be revealed. This makes them feel free, because they know that the information alone will be known, but not their names.

In this study there was transparency, since the informed consent letter attached to the questionnaires contained all the necessary information, and the questionnaires were clear, but not complicated.

(v) Debriefing

During the research, or even before, researchers might be tempted not to disclose all the information about the research – for fear that the respondents might refuse to participate in the process. If this is the case, a process referred to as debriefing is embarked on, in order to rectify this matter. Dane (1990:49) defines debriefing as “...*a procedure by which any relevant information about the project that has been withheld or misrepresented is made known to participants...*”. It is addressed at the end of the study, and it involves revealing the purpose of the research. It can take the form of a written or an oral nature. It has two purposes: Firstly, to clear the air about the rationale of the study. Secondly, it educates the participants about the topic and increases their knowledge about the issue in which they have participated (Van der Stoep and Johnston 2009:16).

In this study, a letter of consent detailing the rights of the respondents was given to them. The names of respondents would be kept anonymous. Their names would not be published. The purpose of the research was provided to the respondents before they were interviewed. Therefore, no information was concealed from the respondents. They would have known about the whole research purpose right from the beginning.

Permission was also sought to use a tape recorder before a group focus was conducted with the traditional leaders in the provincial house. This was done in an attempt to promote transparency.

1.11 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS USED IN THIS STUDY

This study used various concepts that might be confused with their respective meanings in other disciplines, unless their intended meanings have been clarified for the purpose of this study.

1.11.1 Traditional authorities

Traditional authorities are defined as those “structures of governance that derive part of their legitimacy from an association with the past” (Oomen 2005:32). They encompass kings and other aristocrats holding office in political structures that pre-date the colonial State and the post-colonial State, as well as the heads of extended families and other political religious offices in decentralized polities that also date back to the pre-colonial period. It is also worth noting that currently traditional authority refers to “Chiefs” in English (Tettey *et al.* 2003:242).

Traditional authorities are represented by traditional leaders. These are defined by the **Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act, 2005** (Act 6 of 2005) as any person who, in terms of the customary law of the traditional community concerned, holds a traditional leadership position, and is recognized in terms of this Act. Traditional leaders function within a traditional leadership system through customary institutions or structures, or customary systems or procedures of governance, recognized, utilized or practised by traditional communities (**Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act 6 of 2005**).

1.11.2 Integrated development planning

The introduction of IDP in South Africa was aimed at trying to make a break from the apartheid centralized planning to a more decentralized planning, in order to strengthen the new forms of local government.

The IDPs were linked to a system of intergovernmental planning and coordination (Harrison 2003 quoted in Pillay **et al.** 2006:203). IDP was first regarded as the instrument of local planning and coordination; but it has since shifted to be linked to intergovernmental planning system with instruments, such as national government's Medium-Term Strategic Framework and the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (Harrison 2003, as quoted in Pillay **et al.** (2006:187).

Integrated Development Planning is a process through which municipalities prepare a strategic development plan for a five-year period. It is also a crucial process of development planning in the local sphere. It is a management tool that assists municipalities to take a broad strategic view of their development requirements, and to address all of their key issues in a holistic IDP [Integrated Development Plan] (Department of Provincial and Local Government and GTZ 2005:4; DBSA and NBI (2000:5).

1.11.3 The implementation of policy

Implementation has been defined as a process of putting decisions into action; and this refers to an issue that faces and concerns policy-makers in government. It is about putting mechanisms in place to deal with a particular social problem. It is also a sequence of events triggered off by a policy decision involving the translation of policy into operational tasks to be carried out by a variety of actors and agencies. This requires a substantial coordinating activity, to ensure that resources are available and that things happen as intended (Barrett and Fudge 1981:17).

Hanekom (1991:61) refers to policy implementation as the enforcement of legislations. Policy implementation and policy-making are interrelated (Hanekom 1991:70). In this study, implementation is viewed as an integral part of policy formulation, and not as an end-product of policy formulation. Implementation concludes the policy cycle, and it also marks the beginning of a new one (Gerston 2010:92).

1.11.4 Sustainable development

Although there are many definitions of sustainable development, it is widely accepted that it is the process that fulfils present needs, without endangering the opportunities of future generations to fulfil their own needs (WCED 1987). It is also seen as the process, whereby society has the capacity to manage limited resources to fulfil present and future needs indefinitely (Van Ballan as quoted in Cloete and Mokgoro 1995:29). Sustainable development is effectively promoted by the participation of local people. Local people know their communities – having lived in deprivation, and surviving the hardships of their poverty, while outside people would not know such experiences. Their common sense knowledge of the political, social, economic, cultural and natural environment dynamics can be of immense value to development efforts. Participation has the potential to promote sustainable development and maintain facilities that are instituted developmental agencies (Swanepoel 1997:46).

1.11.5 Public participation

Public participation in development is defined as the involvement of community members in development activities, in order to benefit from those activities (Cloete **et al.** 2006:114). Arnstein (1969:216-224) listed eight types of participation as follows:

1.11.5.1 Citizen Control

The people who are not in power are given the opportunity to have the majority decision-making seats, or full managerial power. This means that the people are able to participate in a meaningful manner.

1.11.5.2 Partnership

In the delegation of power, the people are given the opportunity to hold the government and its officials accountable. They also have decision-making authority over specific projects. In order to make this more effective, it also includes the veto rights to resolve issues.

1.11.5.3 Delegated Power

Partnership refers to the redistribution of power to the people, who are sometimes called citizens. This distribution is negotiated with the authorities. In this case they form structures, which promote joint planning and the implementation of projects.

1.11.5.4 Placation

In placation, the people are given some degree of power and influence. This type of participation is merely a token – in order to please or manage them. In other words, the people do not have power to take any decision; but they can approve any decisions taken.

1.11.5.5 Consultation

In this type of power, the people are consulted. But the problem arises when their proposals are not taken into consideration or valued for implementation. Their participation is only measured by the number of people who attend the meetings, if they are invited. Of course, the government officials would have confirmation that they sent out invitations. Additionally, an attendance register would attest thereto that people came to the meeting.

1.11.5.6 Informing

In participation, the people are informed of their roles and rights in decision-making processes. This is desirable because it empowers them. The problem arises when their involvement is limited to receiving information – without them being enabled to make their input. They should make input into projects for their own benefit. Meetings should not take the one-way communication path, but should get them fully involved in taking decisions that concern their communities.

1.11.5.7 Therapy

Therapy as a type means that the people are made to believe that they are involved in participation. The aim is to silence them when challenging the *status quo*, and not to give them any real power. They are made to believe that they have power and influence over decisions, while in actual fact they do not have any such power.

1.11.5.8 Manipulation

With regard to manipulation, people are not given any real opportunity to participate. They merely rubber-stamp those decisions that are passed by government and its officials. They are merely given advisory positions. This study agrees with the definition that participation should give the people the right and power to participate in the decision-making processes – leading to the planning and implementation of policies that benefit them. They should take decisions, and not just listen to other stakeholders deciding on their behalf. This definition would help assess the role that traditional authorities play in the implementation of IDP policy.

1.11.6 Spheres of government

Spheres of government refer to three types of government in South Africa: national, provincial and local government. The **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996** Section 151 (i) stipulates that local government is a sphere of government that consists of municipalities, which must be established for the territory of the Republic of South Africa; (ii) The executive and legislative authority of a municipality is vested in its municipal council; (iii) A municipality has the right to govern on its own initiative the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislative bodies, as provided for in the **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996**; (iv) the national or a provincial government may not compromise or impede a municipality's ability or right to exercise its powers or perform its functions.

1.11.7 Public policy

The meaning of the concept of public policy is a complex one, since there is no consensus on a universally acceptable single definition. It may refer to a proposal, programme, or to the goals of a programme, or to the impact of a programme on a social problem. For example, Sharkansky (1975:4) defines public policy as the important activities of government. Anderson (2003:2-3) defines a policy as a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem. However, Dye (2000:1) describes policy as anything government chooses to do, or not do. Public policies involve the role of public agencies (Hogwood and Gunn [1984], as quoted in Turner and Hulme [1997:59]).

Hanekom (1978:7) refers to a policy as, "...a policy statement as the making known, formal articulation, declaration of intent or the publication of a goal to be pursued". Public policy is seen as the formal articulation, statement, or [the] publication of a goal, which government aims at pursuing with the society (Hanekom and Thornhill 1993:63).

It is a guide of action or a statement of those goals that should be followed in an institution – in order to deal with a particular problem or a phenomenon (Fox and Meyer 1996:96). Public policy is defined as a relatively stable, purposive course of action to be implemented by bureaucrats in addressing the problem identified. It is formulated by government bodies and officials to address a specific goal (Anderson 2003:2-3).

1.11.8 Decentralisation

Decentralization as a term has been used to encompass a number of alternative institutional and financial arrangements for sharing power and allocating resources. It embraces de-concentration, delegation, devolution and privatization (Martinussen 1997:210). It is crucial for the promotion of good governance through the improvement of efficiency and transparency. Decentralisation also improves equitable development, through the creation of responsive local government (Williamson and Sithole 2006:2).

Decentralization motivates communities to contribute financially to local projects and initiatives, since they would thereby feel that they are involved in decision-making that promotes their quality of life (Van Niekerk **et al.** 2001:249).

Decentralization is part and parcel of the devolution of power. This refers to a system of government, where responsibilities and functions are assigned to local governments, sometimes with the necessary resources to carry out those functions. However, the essence of devolution is discretionary authority. As a result, local governments have discretionary authority to do what they think would be within the law (Materu **et al.** 2000:16).

1.11.9 Intergovernmental relations

Intergovernmental relations encompass all the complex and interdependent relations among those at various levels. It is a forum for the co-ordination of public policies among central, provincial and local governments – through programme-reporting requirements, grants-in-aid, the planning and budgetary processes, and impersonal communications among officials. It is a fiscal and administrative process by which higher units of government share revenue and other resources with lower units of government (Fox and Meyer 1996:66). Of paramount importance, intergovernmental relations serve as a forum for policy-formulation debates. The representatives of local authorities and other public sector agencies are brought together through intergovernmental relations (Stoker 1991:75).

1.12 ORGANISATION OF THIS STUDY

This study has seven chapters. Chapter one deals with the orientation, motivation and background of this study. This chapter further explains the background to the research problem statement, its objectives, the research questions, its significance and ethical issues. This chapter also clarifies the meanings of concepts, as used in this study. Chapter two presents the history of traditional authorities in South Africa. Chapter three discusses the conceptualization of the role of traditional authorities in policy implementation within the discipline of public administration. International and national public administrations are two of the issues that will be discussed.

The question of the participation of traditional authorities will also be outlined. Policy formulation and implementation are treated as separate entities, since recipient countries are expected to implement such projects, without necessarily knowing how they were proposed. This led to total failure; and the new theory of bottom-up was envisaged, which proposed mass participation in policy-making. The role of traditional authorities in IDP policy implementation will also be discussed. However, where convenient and applicable, literature from elsewhere in developed and developing regions would also have been consulted.

Chapter four focuses on the implementation of the Integrated Development Planning in South African local government systems. Chapter five presents the case study of the Vhembe District with respect to the organisation of the case study and context. Chapter six further presents the case study of Vhembe District with respect to the results of the study. Chapter seven presents the conclusions, findings and recommendations.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reasoned that traditional authorities were in existence – even before the arrival of colonial and apartheid governments. Traditional authorities were the only governance authorities of communities. They presided over the welfare of their communities by providing services to them. However, the arrival of colonial and apartheid governments changed their status of being the guardian of their communities to one of acting for the interests of colonial and apartheid governments. The colonial and apartheid governments – through direct and indirect rule – used traditional authorities to gain access to those communities that were under traditional authorities. Traditional authorities implemented the colonial and apartheid policies, and they received payments; subsequently, becoming paid agents. They no longer represented the interests of their own communities, but compromised the governance of their own communities.

However, when the new independent states were formed in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s, some of them abolished traditional authorities because they felt that they had colluded with colonial and apartheid policies against the will of their communities.

Other new States felt that traditional authorities would be a threat to nation-building. The new independent States re-introduced traditional authorities, although in different guise. Their roles were included in the constitutions that were adopted. This could have been an admission that traditional authorities had accumulated experience in governance and service delivery to their communities.

When South Africa South Africa became a democracy in 1994, she also revived traditional authorities by accommodating them in the new democratic constitution. The **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa** of 1996 recognised the institution of traditional authorities. The government wants a partnership between traditional authorities and government to promote sustainable development in South Africa. Despite this development, the role played by traditional authorities in this country remains largely divisive – and is seen as a sensitive issue by the South African public. It is in this context that traditional authorities are fast emerging as a crucial factor of interest for modern research, particularly in South Africa.