

CHAPTER 3

STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1 A qualitative approach

This study is qualitative rather than experimental (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 147) and research methodologies were chosen accordingly. The study therefore contains no examples of experimental research where a control group is compared with the experimental group after being subjected to certain variables (Moore, 1987). I have not gone through the cycle characteristic of experimental research of hypothesis development, prediction, testing and hypothesis modification etc (see McBurney 1994: 180). Rather, I have adopted a hermeneutic approach, which aims at interpreting that which I observe and finding the reasons behind it, rather than proving certain cause-effect relationships (McBurney, 1994).

The type of research employed is what Moore (1987) calls historical research and which is, in contrast to experimental or statistical research, mainly a product of the humanities. Leedy & Ormrod (2001) describe historical research as research that deals with the meaning of events. The historical researcher does not merely describe what events happened, but tries to “*present a factually supported rationale to explain why they happened*” (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:161). Moore (1987) states that historical research is better suited to recording and describing human behaviour, which is the angle I have chosen for telling the story of the restructuring of Tshwane’s planning function.

3.2 Observation

For this study, I used a combination of research methods, as recommended by Moore (1987). McBurney (1994) contends that the fact that multiple information sources are used in a case study distinguishes it from other types of research. A major part of the research conducted consisted of what Moore (1987) refers to as an observation survey. More specifically, I see myself as a participant observer who not only viewed events as they happened, but also

participated in the object of my study. McBurney (1994) places this in juxtaposition to naturalistic, unobtrusive or non-reactive observation, where the observer has no influence on the subject being observed. He argues that participant observation is most appropriate where a small group of people is studied, which little is known about, or when the group's activities are not open to public scrutiny.

Moore (1987) furthermore qualifies the specific category of observer applicable to me as that of a "*covert participant observer*" as none of the other role-players were aware that their actions would be the subject of a research study¹². As Moore (1987) contends, the method of direct observation has the advantage that it is a very close form of research, which provides insights other secondary or indirect research methods are unlikely to yield. He furthermore argues that observation is less prone to bias than other research methods where the researcher is further removed from the subject that is being studied. It is, however, also true that *all* observation is clouded by the bias of the observer, as well as factors such as mood, prior knowledge or information, values and norms, religious conviction and all the other factors that constitute human diversity.

Moore states that, although drawing inferences from observations should be avoided if possible, it is necessary to introduce some inference or interpretation while recording what is going on. As a participant observer, I feel that I am probably better positioned than any external observer or researcher to expose the "*actual reality*" behind the sequence of actions that constituted the restructuring of the Tshwane planning function. Indeed, a study such as this would have little value if it remained mere observation without colouring it in with so-called "*inside information*" to which only a privileged few had access. As McBurney (1994) puts it, my insider position makes it possible for me to not only present the manifest content (the objectively measurable content) of text and events, but also the latent, or interpreted, content. The latter is only apparent to someone who shared experiences, encounters and moments that made up the fibres from which the

¹² At the time that the events that are studied unfolded, I was also not yet aware that this study would follow.

story was woven. This view is supported by Boje (1991) when he argues that listeners are co-producers with tellers of story performances. Sociolinguistic studies have shown that stories are “*brief and fragmented across extended and interrupted discourse*”. As listeners, we fill in the gaps between the lines with our own experience. He adds that, “*because of what is not said, and yet shared, the audible story is only a fraction of the connection between people in their co-production performance*”. Cues such as “*you know the story*” elicit shared experience from the listener and paralinguistic elements such as body language and facial expression are interpreted as part of the story message. It is this element of “*negotiation of meaning*”, the interaction between listener and teller, that text research alone cannot capture.

In addition to my own observation of the restructuring process, I also made use of a number of other research methods, which included surveys of various types of literature and documentation and structured interviews with key role players. This was done in the first place to achieve a higher level of detail and factual accuracy (eg specific dates, times, numbers, names etc) and secondly to attempt, as far as humanly possible, to mitigate the inevitable bias of my observations.

3.3 Interviews

A questionnaire (Annexure A) was compiled and used to guide structured interviews with key players, who were selected according to the extent to which they participated in, or were affected by, the restructuring of the City Planning function. The people with whom interviews were held are:

- **Henry Bezuidenhout** (a member of the Core Team and later the Acting Manager: Land Use Planning);
- **Johnny Coetzee** (a member of the Core Team and later Acting Manager: Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning);
- **Mike Yates** (Executive Director: City Planning and Development of the former City Council of Pretoria, then Acting General Manager: Land and Environmental Planning of the City of Tshwane)

Metropolitan Municipality and later member of the Strategic Unit of the Strategic Executive Officer: Housing);

- **Verna Nel** (Chief Planner of the former Centurion Town Council, then Convenor: Local Economic Development of the Economic Development Strategic Unit of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and later the Acting General Manager: City Planning); and
- **Kestell Serfontein** (Town Planner of the former Centurion Town Council and later member of the Strategic Metropolitan Spatial Planning team).

As the subject of this study is the intentions, motivation, desires, aspirations etc of people, the questionnaire consisted mainly of open-ended questions. Nonetheless, the same questions were asked to each respondent in an attempt to discern patterns or similarities in the answers given. Asking the respondents the questions in person was a deliberate decision as I felt that they would be less likely to manipulate the answers if they had to respond on the spot (rather than ponder written answers over an extended period of time) and if they were responding to me in person. McBurney (1994) advocates face-to-face administration of questionnaires because of the rapport that can be established between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer can also intervene when the respondent misunderstands a question and can probe for more complete answers if required.

It is true, as Moore (1987) contends, that questionnaires containing mostly open-ended questions are extremely time-consuming and more difficult to analyse than questionnaires containing multiple choice or closed questions. Nonetheless, taking in to account the relatively small group of people surveyed in this manner (seven people) and the nature of the subject matter, I believe that the easier option would not have achieved the necessary qualitative depth of answers required for this study. McBurney (1994) adds that open-ended questions are more likely to lead the researcher to unanticipated discoveries. Open-ended questionnaires are more suitable for

small samples, while close-ended questions are better suited for large studies.

The sample for the above structured interviews was neither haphazard nor random, but was what McBurney (1994) refers to as a purposive sample. The sample was selected on the basis of participation in the Core Team for the Restructuring of the City Planning Function and its Task Teams as well as in the structures that followed the Core Team process. Two people who stood slightly apart from the process, but who had a significant influence on it, namely Mike Yates (former Executive Head of the Department of City Planning and Development, City Council of Pretoria and later the Acting General Manager: Land and Environmental Planning, City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality) and Amund Beneke (former Head of City Planning at the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council) were also interviewed.

3.4 Literature survey

An important part of all research is the literature survey. The survey was used both to define the research proposal (see Smit 1995:22) and as part of the study itself. It was particularly the works of three authors, namely Mclendon and Quay (1992) and Flyvbjerg (1998) that influenced the form this study took. The Doctoral thesis by Vanessa Watson of the University of Cape Town was important background reading, as it also confirmed that the narrative was the appropriate sub-genre for my study.

The literature survey focused specifically on Organizational Theory and Organizational Change/Transformation, and on certain aspects of Planning Theory. Books, journals, dissertations (published and unpublished), seminar papers and Internet documents were studied. I also surveyed a large volume of operational documentation of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Council - also referred to as *archival* documentation by McBurney (1994). These included reports to the Mayoral Committee and Council and to other structures within the municipality, circulars and memoranda, agendas and minutes of meetings, email messages and faxes, newsletters and attendance

registers. These documents enabled me to render a more detailed account of the restructuring process and to achieve a higher level of factual accuracy. The study also included an overview of the most significant legislative documents pertaining to developmental local government, which are listed in Chapter 4. As Leedy & Ormrod (2001) recommend, I tried to limit my literature survey to texts that had direct bearing on my own research. I attempted throughout the study not to merely duplicate the thoughts of the scholars whose works I quoted, but to truly synthesize these with my study, also to attempt to add some depth, or a new perspective to such thoughts (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:84).

3.5 Is it OK to do this? The question of ethics

McBurney (1994) argues that the concern for ethics in research is part of the historical trend towards the protection of civil and human rights. The current trend came to the fore pertinently after World War II. Since then, many institutions and professional associations established committees or drew up policy documents to ensure that research is conducted in an ethical and morally defensible manner. McBurney (1994) refers to the “*Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*” drawn up by the American Psychological Association. The document contains several principles of ethical research. The responsibility for adhering to those principles is that of the investigator. The principles highlighted by McBurney include

- that research should not cause harm to the participants;
- that participants in research should not be coerced into taking part but should give informed consent to participate in the study (they have the freedom to refuse or cease participation); and
- that their privacy must not be invaded.

Research should furthermore not be deceptive. Participants should ideally be debriefed after completing their part in the research and should receive feedback on the results of the study. Leedy & Ormrod (2001:107) list the same considerations in their guidelines for ethical research.

In this case, the study was only undertaken *ex post facto* after the events being studied had taken place. I declared my intention to “*tell the story*” of the restructuring of the Tshwane City Planning function as the focus of my Master’s dissertation to all the members of the Core Team and, of course, to the other city planning officials who were interviewed. No objections were raised, although some of the respondents requested that their identity not be revealed when I reported on the interviews. I deliberately chose to use the names of the players in my story and not only titles (as does Flyvbjerg (1998) in his account of the Aalborg case, e.g. “*The City Engineer*”) or pseudonyms so as to ensure that characters are perceived as real (and therefore credible or convincing) to the reader. Although this increases the risk of unethical invasion of privacy or harm to the character of my main players, I endeavoured throughout to avoid this. In so doing, I had to constantly tread the tightrope between my commitment to a frank and unbiased account of the events and the moral obligation to do so without a cost to the participants. At all times, I attempted to present my own role in the process in an unflinching and honest manner.

According to McBurney (1994), some researchers are of the opinion that participant-observer research is always unethical because the participant-observer does not obtain consent from her subjects. Conversely, it is viewed as acceptable that professionals such as journalists engage in such activity to a certain extent. Observational or case study research has yielded important insights into psychological and social problems in the past. Although fraught with risk as far as ethics is concerned, the value of such research is undisputed. Furthermore, there can be little doubt that a participant-observer is best positioned to render an accurate and credible account of how the case unfolded.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 A basket of legislation enabling democratic local government

A comprehensive body of legislation governs the establishment of democratic local government structures in a post-apartheid South Africa. The Constitution established three distinct spheres of government that are interdependent and interrelated, and broadly outlines the functions of each. The White Paper on Local Government, 1998, established the broad policy framework within which all subsequent legislation concerning local government was drafted. The Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act, Act 27 of 1998 (also referred to as the Demarcation Act), established the Demarcation Board, which was tasked with demarcating boundaries for municipalities in accordance with the factors listed in Section 25 of the Act. In terms of recommendations by the Demarcation Board, the number of municipalities was reduced from 842 to 284 and boundaries were determined for each of them. The Demarcation Act is closely linked with the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998 (also known as the Structures Act). The latter was used by the Demarcation Board to determine which municipalities should be categorised as Category A (metropolitan municipalities), B (local municipalities) and C (district areas or municipalities) Municipalities respectively.

The Structures Act further determines the type of municipalities that can be established. It determines the powers and functions of the Executive Committee/Executive Mayor. The Structures Act furthermore provides for the appointment of a Municipal Manager who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Municipality.

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (MSA), Act 32 of 2000 and the Regulations published in terms of the Act established a framework for municipal planning, performance management, effective use of resources and organizational change. The Act furthermore regulates public private

partnerships and allows municipalities certain powers to corporatise their services, establish service delivery utilities or enter into partnerships with other service providers. In the Act, there is a strong focus on the preparation of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for municipalities. The IDP addresses a five-year planning cycle and is subject to annual monitoring and review. The IDP forms the basis for the municipality's budget and provides the yardstick against which the performance of the Municipality is assessed. As the MSA is the definitive act with regard to the relationships between the new local government and its community, as well as the principles that govern internal relations within the municipality, a closer reading of the MSA is provided on page 31.

Several other pieces of legislation address specific aspects of municipal governance. The Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003, is aimed at modernising municipal budgeting and financial management and facilitates the development of a long-term municipal lending or bond market. The Act is accompanied by the Policy Framework for Municipal Borrowing and Financial Emergencies. The Local Government Property Rates Act, Act 6 of 2004, regulates the power of municipalities to levy rates on property and concomitant issues such as exemptions, reductions and rebates, valuation methods and objections and appeals processes.

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act 3 of 2000, gives effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, and to the right to demand written reasons for administrative action. The Act sets out the minimum requirements that all administrative actions must comply with in order to be lawful and fair. It *“creates a culture of accountability, openness and transparency in the exercise of public power and the performance of public functions”* (RSA, 2000b).

The Promotion of Access to Information Act, Act 2 of 2000, gives effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise

or protection of any rights. The Act seeks to address secretive and unresponsive culture that was prevalent in many public and private bodies before 27 April 1994, and to foster, in stead, a culture of transparency and accountability. By giving effect to the right of access to information, it aims to actively promote a society in which South Africans have effective access to information to enable them to more fully exercise and protect their rights.

The Remuneration of Public Office-bearers Act, Act 20 of 1998, provides, among other things, a framework for determining the upper limit of salaries and allowances or benefits of members of Municipal Councils. The Local Government Municipal Electoral Act, Act 27 of 2000, provides the framework for managing all aspects of the municipal elections. A survey of the above legislation, whether gazetted or still in draft form, again indicates transparency, accountability and equity as the main underlying principles.

With regard to Human Resource Management, the following legislation applies to local government as it applies to all other employers:

- The Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995;
- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Act 75 of 1997;
- The Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998;
- The Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998, and
- The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Act 4 of 2000.

4.2 A handful of noble principles

It is clear from the constitution and the other legislative documents pertaining to local government that the challenge to address the legacy of apartheid in terms of achieving equity with regard to municipal planning, management and service delivery falls squarely on the shoulders of local government.

Pimstone (1998) summarises the kind of local government envisaged by the Constitution as government that answers to the people and is accountable to the public for the decisions it takes. It is responsive and effective, sensitive to community needs and capable of action towards fulfilling those needs. It is transparent, i.e. open to scrutiny and criticism. It is accessible and informative. It facilitates ongoing dialogue with the community through a participatory system. To this, Pimstone (1998) adds that the Constitution “*speaks to values of equity, ethical behaviour, procedural and broader administrative justice and formal, substantive equality*”.

When studying the applicable legislation, it becomes clear that the new approach to local government redefines the role of the municipality and that it hinges, in the main, on a new relationship between local government and the community.

The Constitution mandates local government to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development, and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

This commitment to democratic, accountable, developmental, sustainable and participative local government is echoed in many of the other pieces of legislation pertaining to local government in the new political dispensation, such as the Green Paper on Local Government (1997), the White Paper on Local Government (1998) the Municipal Systems Act (2000) and the Municipal Structures act.

The concept of Integrated Development Planning (IDP) was widely touted as the primary tool for meeting this challenge. Indeed, a significant amount of resources have been expended in capacitating municipalities to compile (and to implement) IDP's. The Department of Provincial and Local Government also compiled a series of IDP Guides (known as the Guide Pack) to guide role players through the process of compiling an Integrated Development Plan in

an easy-to-follow, step-by-step manner. A large number of seminars and training sessions aimed at Councilors, Municipal Managers, Chief Financial Officers, municipal town and regional planners and other municipal officials were conducted in order to empower them to utilize the IDP as a tool for restructuring their municipalities¹³.

This study is, however, conducted from the premise that the success of the new municipal dispensation is not only dependent on political will at the national level or an enabling legislative framework. Nor is the IDP a panacea that will, of itself, cure all the ills inflicted on our settlements by Apartheid and bring about the development necessary for communities to flourish. I wish to illustrate that the so-called “*soft issues*” or “*people issues*” – particularly the manner in which municipal office bearers and officials react to power and the aspiration to power – play a determining role in how the new municipalities, as agents of developmental local government, are and will be shaped.

4.3 A closer look at the Municipal Systems Act (MSA)

As stated earlier in this chapter, the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) is one of the most prominent acts shaping the new local government landscape. It places much emphasis on transparency and communication between the Municipality and the community it serves, as well as on community participation. In fact, as it is defined in the Act, “*municipality*” includes the community.

In Chapter 2 of the Act it the responsibility of the Municipality to provide democratic and accountable government, to encourage community development and to consult the community on the level, quality and range and impact of services, as well as options with regard to service delivery is set out.

Chapter 2, paragraph 6 emphasizes the importance of the Municipality being responsive to community needs and establishing clear relationships, as well as communication and co-operation between with the community. The

¹³ According to the definition found in Section 21 of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000, a “municipality” includes the community that lives within its boundaries.

importance of the Municipality providing the community with full and accurate information on issues of municipal service rendering and management is stressed.

In Chapter 4 of the MSA it is clearly prescribed that municipalities should develop a culture that promotes participative governance. The mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation are set out and again special emphasis is placed on the municipality's obligation to communicate to the community information pertaining to community participation. The imperative of participation is reiterated in chapter 6 where the involvement of the community in the review of the Municipality's performance management system and the discussion of the Municipality's annual report is mandated.

The first reference to the Municipality's responsibility with regard to its internal management and structuring is found in Chapter 3, paragraph 11(3) (c) and (d). The following is listed among the actions required by a Municipality to:

- *“exercise its legislative or executive authority”*;
- *“establishing and maintaining an administration”*, and
- *“administering and regulating its internal affairs”*.

In Chapter 7 (Local public administration and human resources), this responsibility is more clearly set out. Paragraph 50 sets the tone for the Municipality's internal management: *“Local public administration is governed by the democratic values and principles embodied in section 195 (1) of the Constitution”*. Paragraph 51 (e) (i), (j), (l) and (m) states that a municipality must organize its administration so as to establish clear relationships, and facilitate co-operation, coordination and communication between its political structures and political office bearers and its administration. The organization must also maximise efficient communication and decision-making and should involve staff in management decisions. It must furthermore provide an equitable, fair, open and non-discriminatory working environment. In terms of Chapter 7, part 2, paragraph 55, all of the above is in the first instance the responsibility of the Municipal Manager. The study will investigate whether the Municipality performed well with regard to the above requirements during the

restructuring period and whether the Municipal Manager, as the accountable official, lived up to the responsibility that was entrusted to him.

Part 4 of the Act indicates the Municipality's responsibility to develop and adopt systems and procedures to ensure fair, efficient, effective and transparent personnel administration in accordance with the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (paragraph 67 (1)). This part (in paragraph 68) also sets out the Municipality's responsibility to develop its staff members to enable the Municipality to perform its functions in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable way.

4.4 Extrapolating legislative principles to the inner workings of the municipality

Although the emphasis in the MSA seems to be on the relationship between the Municipality and its community, enough is said about the internal relations of the Municipality to make it clear that the intention was that the same principles (democracy, transparency, sound relations, participation and an emphasis on communication) should apply in-house as well.

Nonetheless, the values or principles that underpin the envisaged new relationship between a local government and its community might therefore well be extrapolated to act as a guideline for the nature of the internal relations of the municipal structure. It could therefore be argued that the relationship between the municipality and its staff should be democratic, developmental, sustainable and participative. The principles of equity and holism could equally be applied to the working environment of municipal officials. The *Batho Pele* ("people first") principle, which was adopted by Government in 1993 in its drive to improve client service could similarly be seen to be applicable to the internal clients, or employees, of a municipality. It is clear that a municipality that endeavours to practice these principles in its relationship with the community, while being internally governed according to a different set of principles, will experience severe internal tensions and cannot hope to meet the challenge to "*have a major impact on the daily lives of South Africans*" as it is envisaged in the White Paper (1998).

According to Bennis (1993) democracy is not only an appropriate form of organization because of “*some vague yearning for human rights*”, but because democracy is, under certain conditions, a more efficient form of social organization.

Bennis (1993) views democracy as a system of values or beliefs, which “*people are internally compelled to affirm by deeds as well as words*”. The values include free communication, a reliance on consensus, the idea that influence is based on technical competence or knowledge, an atmosphere that permits expression and a human bias that is willing to mediate the conflict between the organization and the individual on rational grounds. Flyvbjerg (1998:5) says that “*democracy must be fought for each and every day in concrete instances, even long after democracy is first constituted in a society.*” As much as this holds true for society in general, it certainly also holds true for its institutions, which are none other than microcosms of the society of which they form part.

It is imperative that Local Government delivers with regard to the transformation of our cities and rural settlements in order to address the legacy of our Apartheid past. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) views local government as a point of integration and coordination for the delivery of national programmes. It furthermore states that metropolitan government provides a basis for socially just and equitable metropolitan governance, enables strategic land-use planning and coordinated public investment and the development of a citywide framework for economic and social development within the metropolitan area. It is therefore clear that the City Planning function has a major contribution to make in this regard. To this end, it is most important that the planners, technical and support staff of the municipal City Planning functions be motivated and empowered to become agents of change in line with the ideals set out in the White Paper. As stated in Chapter 1 of the study document, this is one of the main reasons why the City Planning function was chosen as the focus of the study.

Challenges facing South African municipalities, which are highlighted in the White Paper, include skewed settlement patterns, unequal distribution of taxable economic resources, lack of spatial integration and inadequate recognition of the linkages between urban and rural settlements. These challenges clearly indicate not only the importance of municipal town and regional planning, but also the obligation to ensure that municipalities become geared towards implementation of the new socio-political order. Entrenched modes of decision making, administration and delivery that were organised to be instruments of *apartheid*, need[ed] to be restructured. The White Paper emphasized the need for capacity building in many local authorities, as well as the need to restore creditworthiness and relations between the municipality and the community it serves.

The introduction to the White Paper indicates that in March 1998 when it was first published, municipalities were all already experiencing difficulties arising from the transition process. Capacity focussed inwards, rather than towards constituencies and delivery. Prolonged uncertainty about powers, functions, and areas of jurisdiction was the order of the day, as well as an “*overall lack of information and capacity*”.

The White Paper aptly summarised that:

“Developmental Local Government requires of municipalities to become more strategic, visionary and ultimately influential in the way they operate. Municipalities have a crucial role as policymakers, as thinkers and innovators, and as institutions of local democracy. A developmental municipality should play a strategic policy-making and visionary role, and seek to mobilise a range of resources to meet basic needs and achieve developmental goals.”

It is against the background of the lofty ideals of developmental Local Government, among other things, that the transformation of the Tshwane City Planning function was narrated and analysed.

CHAPTER 5

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The theoretical framework against which the Tshwane story will be analysed, stands on two legs. The one is a specific focus within the theory of planning and the other a perspective on organizational/management theory. It is the intention to use these two theoretical streams as a tool for deconstructing the narrative in Chapter 6 in order to gain a better understanding of the complex web of powers that were at play during the transformation of the Tshwane planning function. This tallies with the view expressed by Williams in Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) that theory is an “*explanatory scheme*”, or the view of Hillier (2002:25) that it serves as a “*toolbox*” with which to approach studies of praxis.

5.1 A SLICE OF PLANNING THEORY

Planning theories that focus on communicative action and power provide a useful framework for analysing the Tshwane study. I will not directly refer to, nor offer an in-depth interpretation of, the work of philosophers such as Foucault, Nietzsche and Machiavelli (power theories), Habermas (communicative action) or Wittgenstein (hermeneutic understanding of language), whose work underpins much of the current discourse around planning. Rather, I will use the work of scholars who have applied the work of these philosophers to the field of planning theory as my point of departure. Hillier (2002) provides a useful summary of the positions put forward by Habermas and Foucault, as does Flyvbjerg (2001) in his work on *phronetic* social science and Gunder and Mouat (2002) in their study of the New Zealand Resource Management Act. In this regard, I will particularly refer to Flyvbjerg (1998 and 2001), Forester (1982, 1987 and 1996), Hoch (1984 and 1996) and Hillier (2002), among others, who focus on the communicative turn and power relations in planning theory and practice. Although much has been made of the *distinction* between the philosophical approaches of Habermas, who focused on “communicative action” and Foucault, who focused on power relations, (see Flyvbjerg (2001), Allmendinger (2001) and Hillier (2002)), I concur with Forester’s (1982:76) view that “*the exercise of power is the*

management, through communication, of comprehension (or obfuscation), of trust (or false assurance), of consent (or manipulated agreement) and of knowledge (or misrepresentation” (my emphasis). Some reference will be made to two earlier works that I regard as seminal texts in this regard, namely Catanese (1974) and McClendon and Quay (1988).

The reason for choosing this specific focus within contemporary planning theory, is that the Tshwane case study is aligned with two prominent characteristics of communicative planning theory, namely:

1. Its emphasis on practice and the analysis of practice examples (part of a trend described in the literature as “*the practice movement*”), and
2. Its preference for narrative writing.

I will provide a concise overview of the focus on communicative/discursive action and power in theories of planning, while briefly describing the practice movement. Chapter 2 offers more on the use of the narrative in planning theory.

5.1.1 The call for communicative action

Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) highlight the way in which planning theorists have increasingly, since the 1970s, changed the focus of planning theory from instrumental rationality with its modernist limitations towards the rational-communicative. In addressing this “*communicative turn*” in planning, Healey (1997) describes this new wave of planning theory as argumentative, communicative and interpretative. In recent years, a growing number of planning theorists, including Jean Hillier, Charles Hoch, Judith Innes, Helen Liggett, Tom Stein and Tom Harper, Seymour Mandelbaum, Tore Sager, Jeff Throgmorton (Yiftachel & Huxley, 2002) have contributed to this focus, inspired mainly, as is Healey, by the work of Habermas.

It is not the intention here to suggest that communicative planning theories represent the emergence of a single new consensus among planning theorists. In this regard, I strongly agree with Yiftachel and Huxley (2000)

when they state that communicative planning “*despite its marked contribution to the understanding of planning, is but one in a number of recent approaches to theorise planning*”. Indeed, an assumption that communicative planning theory could have a certain “*overarching*” or “*supreme*” position with regard to the divergence of planning theories, would question the very root of communicative planning, which accepts a multiplicity of values and viewpoints and rejects the myth of neutrality of knowledge (see Hillier (2002:8). Allmendinger (2001:4-5) agrees that “*the notion that there is a single paradigm for planning is unsupportable*”. Communicative planning theories have furthermore been criticised for having lost focus of the “*core business*” of planning, namely “*urban/regional/environmental changes that are carried out by, or in relation to, the state’s power and resources*” (Yiftachel & Huxley, 2000). Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) furthermore argue that communicative planning theorists tend to treat planning as a “*generic, procedural activity*”. However, I believe this to be an overly critical view. Rather, I would support the view put forward by Forester (1996), that: “*Because planners always work on problems but in processes, their arguments involve both substantive and procedural matters*”.

Hillier (2002:12) furthermore points out that communicative planning theories have been challenged for their neglect of structure. The response has been an “*increased emphasis on analysis of the relational dynamics of local agents in the context of broader structural forces as a basis for contextualising and situating communicative analyses of planning practice*”. Such structural forces played a prominent (and possibly a dominant) role in the Tshwane study and provide, at the micro-level, the framework within which the events are contextualised.

The communicative turn in planning engaged theorists in poststructuralist and multicultural discourses on the nature of knowledge, ethics and justice. This led a number of planning theorists to focus on communicative-pragmatic logic, accumulating evidence about speech, narratives, professional profiles, consensus building and negotiation (Hoch, 1996; Yiftachel and Huxley, 2000).

The process of communicative action as defined by Habermas and applied by planning theorists provided a new perspective on the complex web of social and power relations within which planning practice takes place. Healey (1997) refers to the relational webs or networks in which we live our lives. The nodes where these webs intersect, are normally the common spaces of the institutions and associations or “*the arenas where systems of meaning, ways of acting and ways of valuing are learned, transmitted and sometimes transformed*” (Healey 1997).

5.1.2 A penchant for practice

The narrative offered in Chapter 6 is essentially a study of planning practice. Hillier (2002) argues that the aim of practice-centered theorizing, as is attempted by this study, is to use practice stories to strengthen theory. She adds that, if planning theory is to be of use to practitioners, it has to address practice as it is encountered in the worlds of planners and elected representatives. She (2002) states that “*planning theory should be grounded in practice and vice versa*”.

Flyvbjerg (1998: 3) pleads for a reorientation from Modernity’s focus on “*what should be done*” towards a focus on “*what is actually done*”, that is, examining “*how knowledge, rationality, and power work in real life*”. At the outset of his narrative study, Flyvbjerg (1998:8) clearly states his intention to use practice, rather than theory, as his point of departure: “*We will look at what people actually do, not only what they say they do nor their stated reasons for doing it. In short, we will focus on practices rather than discourse and theory.*” The fundamental question underlying practice-centered theory, is aptly captured by Forester (1982:70) as “*So what? What does this analysis mean for an effective, progressive planning practice?*”.

Flyvbjerg’s (2001) concept of *phronesis*, to which he adds the dimension of power (and specifically of power relations in the Foucauldian sense) emphasizes “*practical knowledge and practical ethics*” (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 56). Rather than a kind of science, he argues, *phronesis* is a “*sense of the*

ethically practical”, which “*cannot be articulated in terms of theoretical axioms*” (Flyvbjerg 2001:57). According to a *phronetic* approach, particular, concrete, context-dependent aspects are emphasized over universal or theoretical aspects (Flyvbjerg 2001:58). Practice is interpreted historically and in terms of politics and ethics (Flyvbjerg 2001:112). Supporting Foucault’s position in this regard, Flyvbjerg (2001:128) does not dismiss the importance of theory, but contends that “*theories, and conceptualization in general, must be constantly confronted with praxis, including the praxis of the individual scholar.*”

Mandelbaum (1996) states that there is “*a pervasive interest in the behaviour, values, character and experiences of professional planners at work*”. Theorists increasingly acknowledge the need to listen to and register the daily interactive work of planning professionals (see also Flyvbjerg (1998), Watson (2001) and Hillier (2002)).

Hillier (2002) argues for practical wisdom, which she calls prudence. She (2002:14) states that: “*Technical knowledge and practical wisdoms work together. Connection of theoretical, statistical, legislative and practical wisdoms can imbue planning practitioners with opportunities for leverage in engaging the power of other actors*”. There are strong parallels between Hillier’s (2002) concept of “*prudence*” and Flyvbjerg’s (2001) “*phronesis*”, which is a classical concept translated as “*prudence or practical wisdom*” and to which he adds the dimension of power. Forester (1982:71) similarly argues for a critical social theory that “*joins an account of power relations to an account of emancipatory, politically informed and guided practice.*”

This study is an attempt at practice-centered theorizing, as promoted by Hillier (2002). According to Hillier (2002) such theorizing is a blend of individualistic interpretation, paradigm and a practical context.

5.1.3 Power, politics and planning

The concept of power and how it impacts on, for instance, the planning and management of cities, has been a focus of the planning discourse in recent time. The viewpoints on power developed by Foucault in the 1990s were used by a number of planners to gain better understanding of the forces at work in the relational/social web within which planning is practiced. These include Kogler (1996), Lapintie (2001), Allmendinger (2001), Watson (2001) and Hillier (2002).

The work of Bent Flyvbjerg (1998, 2001, 2003), which draws heavily on the Foucauldian theory of power and rationality, as well as the work of philosophers Kant, Nietzsche and Machiavelli, has contributed greatly to this new focus. In his argument for *phronesis* as a social science that is distinct from natural science and cannot successfully be practiced along the principles (rule-based, predictive) of natural science, Flyvbjerg (2001) identifies as a shortcoming in the classical concept of *phronesis* as developed by Aristotle the fact that it does not explicitly include power. Flyvbjerg (2001:3 and 88-128) critically evaluates the philosophies put forward by Habermas (communicative action in a “perfect” democracy) and Foucault (power relations) and concludes that a contemporary *phronetic* science has to include in its repertoire of research questions questions about power. (With specific reference to planning, Forester (1982:67) concurs when he states that “*If planners ignore those in power, they assure their own powerlessness*”, as does Lapintie (2002) when he contends that “*future planning concepts will have to address the Foucauldian concepts of power /knowledge and productive power more seriously*”) Flyvbjerg (2001: 60) formulates the primary “power question” to be answered by *phronetic* research as “*Who gains and who loses; by which mechanisms of power?*”.

Flyvbjerg (2001:116) thus favours the Foucauldian model of “*power as force relations*”. He does not view power as an entity that can be possessed or as an institution, but rather as a strategic position that can be exercised within a particular society. Power must furthermore be understood as a “*multiplicity*

of force relations” that is “*produced from one moment to the next in all points and all relations*” (Flyvbjerg 2001:120) (my emphasis). Flyvbjerg (2001:121) furthermore supports Foucault’s view of power as a productive force that produces reality and truth. He views resistance as intrinsic to all power relations: “*where there is power, there is resistance*”.

Flyvbjerg’s (1998) study of the powers at play in the case of the Aalborg Project, is widely acclaimed as an example of a study of planning practice in which the role of power relations is expertly reflected. Lapintie (2002) acknowledges Flyvbjerg’s Aalborg study as a “*brilliant case study*”, which adds value to planning theory through acknowledging that urban planning is always confronted by special interests and objectives on the one hand, and confirming the importance of (specialized) communication skills and political clout for the present day planner to be effective, on the other. However, he expresses the opinion that Flyvbjerg does not adequately explore the “*theoretical perspectives opened up by the tradition of thought [Machiavelli, Nietzsche and Foucault] he refers to*”. He furthermore criticizes the fact that Flyvbjerg represents the original Aalborg Project Plan as “*rational*”, while arguments levelled against it are described as “*rationalization*”. In general, Lapintie is of the opinion that the dualistic struggle between power and rationality, with rationality “*yielding*” to power, as it is presented by Flyvbjerg, is too simplified. Flyvbjerg (2001:125) himself however states that any sort of separation of rationality and power is an oversimplification.

Forester (1999) similarly views Flyvbjerg’s (1998) case study as “*superb and compelling*”, but agrees that the accompanying theoretical analysis is over-generalised, which undermines his argument. He feels that Flyvbjerg’s analysis is at war with itself because it purports to expose the deceptions and powerplay of that particular planning case without admitting that, in accordance with the theory Flyvbjerg puts forward, he might also be deceptive and manipulative as the narrator. Of course, any narrator is at risk of being called deceptive or manipulative by those who have a different perception of the “*truth*”. Forester furthermore argues that Flyvbjerg does not draw a clear enough distinction between the “*truth*” or rationality and instances of

rationalization¹⁴. He also views it as a weakness in Flyvbjerg's study that he does not draw comparisons with earlier cases of transportation planning.

More recently, Hillier (2002) argues that Foucault's work aids understanding of power in the multiplicity of micropractices that comprise everyday life as well as understanding power as a relational process rather than as a commodity operating from the top down. Hoch (1996) argues that Foucault's concept of power relations provides an important critique on the professions (such as the planning profession) that claim to serve the communal good.

Hillier (2002) uses the allegory of chiaroscuro, using terms such as "*tenebrism*" (sharp contrasts of light and dark) and "*sfumato*" (gentle transitions from light to dark) to describe and analyse the play of power in two practice stories. The title of her book, *Shadows of Power*, is derived from a Mexican proverbial expression implying subtle, rather than overt, power.

John Forester (1996) confirms the importance of an awareness of power when he says that "*planners do not work in a political vacuum*". In his seminal work, *Planning in the Face of Power* (1982), Forester explores the control of information as a key source of planners' power. He identifies five perspectives on information as a source of power, namely:

1. The power of technical information;
2. The power of "*knowing the ropes*" (Forester, 1982:68) within an organization;
3. The power of information to enable underrepresented groups to participate in planning processes;
4. The power of information to legitimize/rationalize existing power structures' and
5. The power of information to enable citizen participation (without rationalizing existing power structures), while recognizing the structural and political barriers that "*may unnecessarily distort*" such information.

Forester (1982) points out the limitations of the first four perspectives and argues in favour of the fifth, which he calls the "*progressive perspective*". He

¹⁴ The question is whether it is ever possible in a [post] post-modern paradigm to distinguish with absolute certainty between rationalization and rationality.

contends that, by adopting a progressive perspective on information as a source of power, planners can develop the skill of anticipating, identifying, understanding and taking action against misinformation.

The different powers at play in the lifeworlds and systems in which planners find themselves require that they engage with other role players – hence the need for what Hillier (2002) refers to as “*discursive democratic planning praxis*”.

The question of the relationship of planning and politics is densely interwoven with the question of planning, planners and power. On the one hand, power can be seen as the motivation for planning. On the other hand is the question whether, and to what extent, planners really have the power to influence the city form.

Herington (1989: 38) states that planners have to respond to prevailing political priorities. The autonomy of local government planners is limited both by decisions/policies of higher levels (other spheres) of government and by the values of political representatives.

Fowler (1993) argues that, although it seems that local authorities have considerable control over what happens within their boundaries, this is not the case. He states that, in fact, “*municipalities are relatively powerless. They are subject to the ebb and flow of increasingly large sums of international capital, and they are routinely devastated by the actions of large corporations closing factories and changing office locations.*” Although Fowler (1993) draws this inference from the American experience, there is no evidence to suggest that South African municipalities have a higher degree of power to shape their urban or rural centres, be it spatially or otherwise. Fowler (1993) continues to say that, although planners are often blamed for city problems, they are “*politically powerless and sometimes barely accepted as legitimate parts of the policy-making process*”.

Devas and Rakodi (1993) touch on the motive for planners to engage with the city as well as their capacity to do so when they call for a realistic approach to the task of planning and managing urban development. They call for realism

“about the capacity of governments to intervene effectively with complex urban systems, about the capacity of institutions to deliver what is required, and about both the motives and the competence of the actors involved – politicians, planners, managers.”

Lisa Peattie (1987) strikes at the root of the fear of impotence plaguing the planning profession when she asks: *“Can it be that planning is not the way to a better environment at all?”* This is supported by Oranje and Harrison (2001) who argue that *“there is no longer a naivety or facile optimism about the power of planners and the inherent goodness of planning”*.

In his classical text on planners and politics, Catanese (1974)¹⁵ states that experience has taught him that *“integrating planning into the political process is equally as problematic as integrating it into life itself.”*

Catanese (1974) sees the fact that the planner is never in a role to implement his/her own plans as a fundamental difficulty of the municipal planning profession. He states that *“Planners must rely on politicians to accept and implement recommendations of substance”*. Catanese is scathing in his criticism of planning which *“broke away from its elitist home”* only to *“settle in a bureaucratic maze”*. He states that this has resulted in more than half a century (from 1920 to 1970) of ineffective planning and says that, in America, no historically significant accomplishments were made by planners. He argues that planning becomes the scapegoat for political failure. Catanese’s statement sounds a warning bell to planners in South Africa. Already sullied by its role in implementing apartheid, the profession runs the risk of also becoming the scapegoat for the failure of the new democracy in years to come. One could, however, just as well argue that the success with which spatial planning was used to manifest apartheid in urban and rural settlements

¹⁵ Although this is indeed a very old source and the relevance thereof for this study might be questioned on those grounds, I view it as a seminal text that influences the discourse on planning and politics even today.

holds the promise of equal success in giving expression, through spatial intervention, to the ideals of developmental local government¹⁶. The Green Paper on Development and Planning (RSA 1999), supports this view:

“The failure of the planning system to protect the rights and to meet the needs of the majority of South Africans ... is not a case for abandoning spatial planning. Indeed, positive, creative planning is now more necessary than ever. ... The current distorted settlement pattern ... will (not) be addressed by default. The development of more efficient and enabling settlement systems, which is necessary to improve the quality of life of all South Africans, requires creative thought and bold, purposeful action.”

Catanese (1974) does not view an advisory role for planners as a strategy to attain a measure of influence in a political environment. Rather, he sees the advisory role of planning as a way of avoiding involvement and commitment, a non-role of sorts. He states that: *“The elusive and puerile concept that the wisdom of the planner can stay alive above the fray of political life is nonsense.”* He sees it as the task of planning theorists to develop a philosophical basis for planners from which to serve the municipality’s executive management and the community.

It is clear that the relationship between Planning and politics is a complex one. Planners are always at risk of being exploited by those in power to secure their position and they are often not equipped to play the political game of influence and manipulation. Very often, the only tool available to planners to leverage power is what Habermas (in Flyvbjerg, 1998) refers to as *“the better argument”*. Habermas believed *“the better argument”* to be a rational argument arrived at through open discussion. The catch, of course, is that in reality *“the better argument”* is not necessarily the rational argument, but merely the argument preferred by the party that holds the most power...

¹⁶ For more on the ideals of developmental local government, see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1: *“The political and legislative framework of Local Government transformation in South Africa”*.

5.2 ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY – VIGNETTES FROM A VAST DOMAIN

5.2.1 Management and Communication – tools to turn legislative ideals into reality

The ideal of developmental local government, and the legislative and policy framework that has been put into place in order to achieve it, cannot be faulted. The principles of a developmental approach, community participation, holism and sustainability are sound and are acceptable across the spectrum of political ideology.

However, management theorists today are unanimous in arguing that an enabling legislative framework, albeit necessary, is in itself not sufficient to ensure that objectives are realised. The key outcomes of developmental local government, namely the provision of household infrastructure and services; the creation of liveable, integrated cities, towns and rural areas; local economic development, and community empowerment and redistribution will not materialise simply because it is mandated by law.

Wilson (1994) observes that *“the values, motivation, and behaviour of the organization’s members are critical determinants of corporate performance – and so of success or failure in implementing strategy”*. Puth (1994:10) argues along the same lines that *“the best interests of the organization are ensured not by its structures and procedures, but rather by the quality of life experienced by its members”*. He views an organization’s employees as its most important audience and sees managers as ultimately responsible for the organizational culture and climate in an organization. Schütte et al (1995) stated in the mid-1990s that:

“For the RDP to be realised, the South African public service requires well trained persons with a proactive, problem-solving orientation and attitude. People who are capable of analysing, reflecting, deciding and, most importantly, acting appropriately.”

I would argue, however, that, in ensuring such appropriate action, power relations and politics, especially what Flyvbjerg (1998), among others, refers to as *Realpolitik*, play a determining role. It is not only the type of people in the municipality that play a role, but also the amount of power that they wield, or their aspirations to power. They wield power through their alliances and skills to create a beneficial “*effective reality*” (see Flyvbjerg, 1998).

In 1993, Lessem argued that management approaches that have evolved out of the Western cultural heritage were prevalent in South Africa. Such approaches were dominated by individualism and competition rather than by the African heritage of community and co-operation. Even after the first democratic election in 1994, Koster (1996) maintains that this is still the case. With specific reference to Planning, Oranje (2001) argues that “*African Planning*” as a distinct expression of planning practice is yet to emerge.

Skopec (1990) argues that, in management “*The ability to manage, motivate and lead is far more important than any of the technical skills. Being a manager means working with people, and working with people requires refined communication skills.*” He views developing and maintaining relationships as the key to meeting the challenges facing managers today.

Skopec (1990) furthermore argues that, as managers “*work through*” other people to get things done, they have to be acutely aware of employees’ expectations. Such expectations are not limited to adequate pay and fringe benefits. Skopec (1990) states that employees demand participation in decisions that affect them. With the growing global awareness of democracy, participative management has become an even stronger imperative since Skopec’s (1990) study. This is particularly true of South Africa where the specific socio-political history resulted in heightened sensitivity around issues such as participation and consultation.

In putting forward their theory of post-modernist management as “*coping*”, Beech et al (2002) argue that the primary skills required for managing are

“*questioning, sensing and imagining*”. They argue for increased granularity¹⁷ in management and claim that there is proof that “*treating employees better*” will increase performance to the benefit of the organization.

The role of communication as an integral part of management is widely acknowledged. Gellerman (1995) views communication as essential for continuous improvement in an organization. Puth (1994) calls communication the lifeblood of an organization and deems it important that managers adopt a positive attitude towards communication. He views a well-designed communication strategy and effective communication skills as elements that could contribute to a manager being highly successful. He argues that what is needed is the emergence of the “*communicating manager*”. Davis (1972) goes even further by contending that management in an organization is only possible through communication. Myers and Myers (1982) regard communication as an essential part of the functioning of any organization. In his argument around the 1990’s being the decade of the employee, Smith (1991) also sees communication as central to obtaining and keeping the commitment and loyalty of the best employees.

Definitions of what exactly is meant by communication abound. Many definitions revolve around information flow, or the encoding and decoding of messages, as put forward by Gellerman (1995) and Kuga (1996) among others. However, I find the definition formulated by Puth (1994), namely “*the sharing of meaning*” to most aptly capture what communication is aimed at achieving.

It is clear from the above that communication and effective management are inextricably linked. In the ANC’s policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa, which were adopted at the National Conference in May 1992, it was even then stated that “*The ANC is committed to the administration of local government on the basis of participatory management and to reorganize the bureaucracy accordingly.*” The policy guidelines also state the belief that municipal officials will have to be trained in order for them to deal effectively

¹⁷ As opposed to a one-dimensional approach to management.

with the development challenges facing them. Such training would also be used to address affirmative action in the municipal bureaucracies. It also stated that local government would adopt “*progressive employment practices*”.

Communication, or discourse, is a powerful tool in the exercise of, or resistance to, power. Flyvbjerg (2001:142) accords discourse a central place in the study of “*the relationship between rationality and power, truth and politics*”, which he describes as his own professional interest. He states that (Flyvbjerg, 2001:124) “*the reasearcher’s methodology must take account of the complex and unstable process according to which discourses can be both an instrument of power and its effect, but also an obstacle, a point of resistance of a starting point for a counterposing strategy.*”

5.2.2 Organizational Change

Aldrich (2000) defines transformation as a major change in an organization occurring over three possible dimensions (which are interdependent), namely changes in

1. goals,
2. boundaries, and
3. activities.

Transformation can only be studied if relative inertia, or stability, constitutes the normal state of the organization’s life. Such “*relative inertia*” does not imply the absence of small fluctuations or deviations from established routines. Greiner (in Barnes & Kaftan, 1991) calls the inertia phase “*evolution*”, while the transformation phase is referred to as “*revolution*”.

Aldrich (2000) argues that the strategic choice theory, top management team theories and planned variation theories of organizational change largely assume that an elite group in the organization (managers) makes the decisions leading to transformation and control the transformation process. On the other hand, human relations and socio-technical theories place more emphasis on involving members in change processes. However, studies

mostly focus (as does this one) on the sub-unit level and not on the level of the whole organization.

Old school theories of organization development (OD) (see Huse, 1980) placed the emphasis on scientific interventions, such as “*laboratory training of change agents*”, “*encounter groups*” and the “*T-group*” which is the core group responsible for implementing so-called “*organization design interventions*” and applied special techniques such as the “*Job Expectation Technique (JET)*” and “*Management by Objectives (MBO)*”. The OD theories were all pro-active in their approach. Management decided what needed to be changed and typically involved an OD consultant to assist them in this by applying a number of techniques towards implementing the required intervention. OD theorists have little to say regarding so-called “*unplanned change*” and have trouble finding solutions for “*fixing the plane in flight*” (CTMM 2 May 2002). A further criticism against these theories is that they assumed that there was a “*recipe*” for initiating and managing organizational change, whatever the environment. There was limited awareness of the need for unique or customised change management approaches in different organizational environments.

In their study of organizational transitions, Barnes and Kaftan (1991) state that a recurring theme in case studies of transitions in work groups (their focus is on business enterprises) is that individuals and work groups at all levels of the organization can make a difference in the organization’s life. There is not only potential for initiative at the top of the hierarchy, but throughout the interactive parts of the organization. In that sense, they argue, organizational transition is also about individuals who spend significant parts of their lives as members of organizations.

Greiner (in Barnes & Kaftan, 1991) takes the position that the future of an organization is determined less by outside forces than by the organization’s history. The Tshwane case will investigate whether, in this case too, environmental characteristics that have been embedded over many years

have survived despite a significant change in the institutional and political framework within which the municipality operated.

Koster (1996) states that there are doubts as to whether the new local government system in South Africa can respond positively to environmental challenges, especially since local government has failed in the past to recognize or develop attributes of civic responsibility and local leadership. He adds that local government not only needs to manage its interaction with the environment, but also has to bring about and manage internal change in order to align it with its environment. Although Koster (1996) made these statements almost a decade ago, Local Government is still in the throes of transformation and it is still too early to assess whether it has been successful in bringing about positive societal changes. The imperative highlighted by Koster (1996) for municipalities to effect internal changes in order to meet external challenges also remains equally relevant.

Bennis (1993) postulates that, although finite violent or drastic changes have been known to take place under autocratic regimes, democracy is the only organizational form compatible with perpetual change. Therefore, "*democracy becomes a functional necessity whenever a social system is competing for survival under conditions of chronic change*". A democratic system is furthermore argued to have more flexibility to deal with problems and is characterised by generally higher staff morale and loyalty. Bennis (1993) views planned change as the crucial link between the theory and practice of the behavioural sciences.

In his study of the role of communication in organizational change, Puth (1994) concurs when he notes that changes often have to be implemented in order to ensure an organization's survival and that organizations that cannot effectively manage change will not survive. He views communication as key for successful change management and notes that organizational change that is not accompanied by appropriate communication can devastate the organization and its people. Puth (1994) states that resistance to change is inherent to human nature and that the greater the magnitude of the change,

the more the discomfort and reluctance that will accompany it. It is my contention, however, that where human nature is concerned, such purely linear relationships seldom occur in reality. In any change situation, as was the case in the Tshwane study, there are usually forces seeking to initiate/accelerate change, and opposing forces seeking to prevent/slow down change. Any number of smaller or transient forces can influence the dynamic relationship between the two at a given point in time.

Good communication can help convince employees of the eventual benefits of changes and that they will be worth the risks and pain involved. The worker-management partnership that is thus achieved is only possible through communication, as this must be built on a solid, factual understanding of the organization's position.

Puth (1994) views communication as a powerful change-agent in itself, which can provide employees and unions, as well as external stakeholders, with reasons that may lead to understanding and acceptance. A key objective of communication in times of change is defining the new corporate culture to employees. According to Puth (1994), management desperately needs the support of employees in defending its positions, also to the outside world. He adds that managers are more likely to secure such support if they have an established base of credibility, a reputation for openness and honesty towards employees.

Puth refers to the distinction Bridges (1991) draws between change and transition. Change represents the new situation as manifested by a new site, new management, new policy etcetera. Transition, however, is the psychological processes people undergo in order to deal with the new situation. While change takes place externally, transition is an internal process. Transition, and not change, is the challenge to the communicating manager. According to Puth (1994), transition is about the "*endings*" and "*losses*" that people will have to accept in coming to terms with change. After the ending, follows a "*neutral zone*" or limbo between the old and the new. Only after this, comes the new beginning. Puth sees a clear role for the

communicating manager to assist employees to let go, to comfort and reassure them in the neutral zone and to lead them successfully into the “*new beginning*”.

Bridges (1991) argues that, in order to facilitate letting go of the old, it is necessary to clearly identify and relate who is losing what. Although some losses are subjective they have to be acknowledged and stated openly and sympathetically. Employees have to be given the opportunity to grieve their real or perceived losses. Clear, accurate information has to be communicated throughout the process.

The endings associated with transition should be marked activities or occasions that mark them in a symbolic and tangible way. It is important to treat the past with respect and to show employees how endings form part of the transition towards future success.

Communication in the neutral zone is made more difficult by the fact that many employees do not understand that it is necessary, but expect to move directly from the old to the new. The neutral zone provides the opportunity for essential reorientation and redefinition. Puth (1994) argues that short-range goals are helpful in combating feelings of being lost or meaningless in the neutral zone. The neutral zone is not the time to promise or demand high levels of productivity. Special training e.g. in problem solving, team building and communication skills may help supervisors and managers to function in the neutral zone. Employees can easily feel lonely and isolated in the neutral zone, especially if they do not understand what is happening to them. Communication can help them feel part of the organization. Puth argues that, without effective communication in the neutral zone, rumours multiply and employees experience anxiety or apathy.

In order to prepare employees for a new beginning, Puth (1994) argues that it is essential to clearly explain the purpose of the change. Furthermore, it is important to convey the envisaged outcome in concrete terms that can be visualized. Another essential element is a plan providing a step-by-step

timetable for the transition. The plan should also indicate how and when employees would receive the necessary information, training and support to make the transition. It is of cardinal importance to also outline the part that each individual will play in the “*new journey*”.

Human reactions to change have been widely documented and analysed. The most well known model is the psychological model of the process for dealing with loss or trauma, which consists of phases of denial, anger, depression and acceptance. Puth (1994) confirms that individuals will react to change in different ways. Some may experience a feeling of disengagement and will withdraw from the situation. Another response is disidentification. Employees experience a loss of identity when familiar structures, tasks or teams are changed or taken away. Employees may also experience disorientation. Explanation is a key element in combating disorientation. Some employees may experience disenchantment and will feel the need to vent their anger. It is important to acknowledge each of these reactions and to allow employees opportunity to express their feelings within a framework of structured change management.

Puth (1994) states that one of the most difficult challenges of the communicating manager is to keep employees motivated during times of change. The best way to motivate and boost morale is for managers to demonstrate that they really care about their employees. In this period it is crucial, for instance, to give recognition for a job well done.

5.2.3 Diversity

Diversity features prominently in the current discourse on organizational and management theory, particularly in the South African context. Arai et al (2001) describe diversity as differences in age, ethnic heritage, gender, physical ability and qualities, religious belief and sexual/affectional orientation. They claim that the influx of women and people of colour into the workplace (which, in South Africa, became a strong trend after the dawn of democracy in 1994) is often met by confusion, discomfort and irritation on the side of existing

employees. Kuga (1996) simplifies the definition of diversity when she states that “*Diversity implies different*”. She reminds the reader that dimensions such as economic level, educational level, lifestyle, geographical and regional differences are all factors that contribute to diversity.

From a survey of existing research, Arai et al (2001) conclude that few large organizations find effective strategies that change their employees’ behaviour regarding diversity. They state that “*Rather than simply committing to valuing diversity, companies must create an atmosphere of inclusion, fairness, openness, and empowerment that can support diversity initiatives.*”

Loden and Rosener (1991) view communication as one of the most complex aspects of managing a diverse workforce. They state that: “*Without an awareness of nuances in language and differences in style, the potential for garbled communication is enormous...*”

Kuga (1996) places the concept of inclusion at the center of effective communication in diverse work groups. According to her, such communication “*reaches out and captures ideas, opinions, experiences and perspectives from people of diverse backgrounds*”. Kuga (1996) argues that it is worth acknowledging different perspectives in an organization as this leads to higher levels of creativity, more options for the organization and better products for its customers. New leaders who enter the work group have to be sensitive to the expectations that work group members have of them and have to assess their communication needs and preferences. In order to get the work done, work groups have to organize themselves. In a diverse environment, this can give rise to conflict and problems. Kuga (1996) views effective communication as a critical element for avoiding and/or addressing such problems. She sees a special role for the leader to set the tone for open communication and to lead negotiations.

Starosta (1998) proposes the adoption of of an open-systems approach to diversity. According to this approach, any individual is a member of various systems, many of which are embedded with others. The groups or systems

could be based on the individual's nation, region, language group or ethnicity, gender, university, quality circle or age. According to Starosta (1998), the ideal situation in a business is one where the activities of different "*microcultures*" are harmonized into the corporate "*overculture*". He argues that "*The ideal situation is one within which each individual pools unique skills and insights to create a product that surpasses the abilities of individuals and of individual microcultures*". He describes the end state of this process as "*synergy*" – a transcendent process that fulfills employees both professionally and personally, much the same as the state of "*community*" described by Peck (1994).

Starosta (1998) drives home the importance of training or capacity building to make employees aware of cultural differences that exist and to accept that such differences are valid. He views it as the task of the corporate communicator to ensure that employees are made to feel welcome in the business setting regardless of their cultural background. Communication is to be used as a tool to make membership of the corporate culture attractive to all employees. Van der Colff (2002) states that:

"The leader of the future has to learn to assist people of divergent values, beliefs and backgrounds and to weave all employees' efforts into benefiting each individual and the organisation as a whole".

Within the municipal environment, it could similarly be argued that the municipal manager of the future would have to learn to manage diversity within the municipality to benefit the community (which is, after all, part of the municipality as defined in the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000) as a whole.

5.2.4 Bureaucracy

Bennis (1993) describes bureaucracy as "*a social invention which relies exclusively on the power to influence through reason and law*". The German sociologist Max Weber defined the concept of "*bureaucracy*" around the 1900's. He likened bureaucracy to a vending machine that could dispense

judgements on the basis of a written pleading (accompanied by the appropriate fee) that was inserted into the correct slot. Bennis (1993) argues that bureaucracy developed as a reaction to the managerial vices of personal subjugation, nepotism, emotional instability, cruelty and subjective judgements that emerged during the Industrial Revolution. It was an attempt to eliminate chaos and unanticipated situations through rationality and predictability. Technical competence was emphasized and arbitrary decisions rejected.

Flyvbjerg's (1998) study seems to indicate, therefore, the failure of bureaucracy as a result of the initial assumptions underlying it being flawed. According to Flyvbjerg (1998), any attempt at creating a system within which rationality prevails is doomed to fail because of the influence of power, which leads to "*rationalization*"¹⁸ gaining prominence over rationality.

Bennis (1993) characterises a bureaucracy as an organization within which there is a division of labour in terms of functional specialisation; a well-defined hierarchy of authority; a system of rules governing the employees' duties and rights; a system of procedures for work situations; impersonal relationships and promotion based on technical competence.

Bennis (1993) states that bureaucracies have been widely criticized from a theoretical perspective, for moral or ethical reasons and for weaknesses in methodology. Common criticisms include that bureaucracy does not allow for personal growth, breeds conformity and does not take account of the "*informal organization*", has outdated systems of control and authority, does not have efficient means of conflict resolution, thwarts communication and innovative ideas through its hierarchical structure and has difficulty assimilating new technology. Furthermore, Bennis (1993) argues that bureaucracies modify the personalities of officials so that they become dull, gray and conditioned "*organization men*".

¹⁸ Presenting subjective or self-serving arguments as rationality.

Bennis (1993) concurs that, in order to survive, organizations must be able to adapt to and shape the external environment on the one hand, and maintain and coordinate the internal system of “*mutual compliance*” or “*reciprocity*” on the other.

Bureaucracies, which are large public organizations dominated by rules and formal procedures, have, over the years, gained the reputation of being slow, faceless institutions devoid of creativity and unable to respond to changing environmental demands. Mir, Mir and Mosca (2002) argue, however, that the employee-employer relations are much the same in the private and public sectors and are characterised by a paradoxical combination of high hopes and declining trust. They suggest that there is a psychological contract between employees and organizations that goes far beyond market transactions. They claim that empirical examinations of the issue have found that mutuality of investment is the foremost determinant of the strength and success of the employee-organization relationship. Already in the late-1990s, Lippit (1998) recognized this trend when he stated that it was not only the bottom line that determines employees’ commitment, but also the “*top line*”. Employees need to feel a spiritual connection, or calling, or have to recognize a deeper meaning to the work they are performing.

What Mir, Mir and Mosca (2002) refer to as “*new age employees*”¹⁹ expect more equitable treatment in the workplace and have the potential to transform the workplace for the better. They require continuous training and want information on how the organization is performing. Apart from feedback on their progress, they also want proper tools to assist them in achieving goals. They want reward systems and higher compensation for their work. They expect management to be honest and to have an understanding of their values. At the same time, however, new age graduates are willing to accept lower remuneration in favour of a higher quality of life.

Mir, Mir and Mosca (2002) furthermore cite leader communication as one of the factors that strengthen the bond or commitment between employees and

¹⁹ Statistics quoted by Mir, Mir and Mosca (2002) indicate that in 1998, over 30 percent of the United States public sector workforce could be classified as “new age employees”.

their organizations. Commitment is lowered by role ambiguity, conflict and work overload. Commitment is deemed desirable, because it lowers employee turnover and increases productivity.

Ellickson (2002) conducted a survey of 1227 full-time municipal employees in the US Midwest region representing 18 departments and serving a population of approximately 200 000 people. He found that satisfied workers engage in organizational citizenship and exceed formal job requirements. Dissatisfied workers withdraw, suffer burnout and are prone to workplace aggression.

In order to identify and measure the variables related to job satisfaction, Ellickson (2002) formulated and tested 14 hypotheses. The variable of “*departmental pride*” was found to be the key determinant of variation in overall job satisfaction of municipal employees. Ellickson (2002) accedes that additional research would be needed to identify the elements of departmental pride. Nonetheless, the preliminary research indicates that:

“departmental pride is part of a larger psychological climate that includes an atmosphere of cooperation and friendliness among work group members, a group perception that they produce work of higher quality and quantity than other groups in the organization, and the existence of open lines of communication and trust among all members of the department”.

Ellickson (2002) found that the second most powerful determinant of job satisfaction was promotional opportunities, while good relationships with supervisors also had a significant effect on employee satisfaction. Ellickson (2002) states that the results suggest that local governments should “*develop work environments that foster mutually trustworthy relationships with supervisors, perhaps through better communications and employee empowerment.*”

Drawing on a study of strategic planning in Chicago during the early 1980's, Mier, Moe and Sherr (1986) elucidate a number of factors that limit the capacity of municipalities to engage in local strategic planning. The Tshwane

will attempt to test whether the factors indicated by Mier, Moe and Sherr (1986) almost two decades before, were still relevant at the time of the study. These include staff capacity, communication, intercultural sensitivity, co-operative working relationships both within the municipality and with other spheres of government and systems to monitor performance. Mier, Moe and Sherr (ibid) are of the opinion that many of the Chicago planners were inadequately trained and reflected decades of hiring dominated by a patronage system. More recently, Landry and Bianchini (1995) have argued that the networks of patronage and long-standing elites that characterise bureaucracies reduce freedom of access to power and information. They contend that the elites that ensue, lose the means to draw on the creativity of the people they are meant to serve.

Landry and Bianchini (1995) furthermore argue that bureaucracies block creativity because they have to keep the urban machine running by way of complex rules and regulations. Such rules are resistant to change and bureaucratic mindsets can imbue the whole organization. Merton (in Ott, 1989) states that bureaucracy pressures people to be methodical and disciplined, to conform to patterns of obligations. This causes blind conformance and is responsible for mostly negative behavioural consequences. According to Merton this can eventually lead to the creation of so-called "*bureau-pathological personalities*"²⁰.

Although published in 1988, the study by McClendon and Quay (1988) is one of few focusing pertinently on (public sector) planners and change. They state that many planning agencies in the USA have become "*tired bureaucracies more concerned with survival than the search for excellence*". They advocate the creation of a team-based competitive work environment, which includes performance incentives and an expectation of excellence as a strategy for more effective planning.

²⁰ Personalities characterised by blind conformance to bureaucratic rules and regulations.

5.2.5 Managerialism

Theorists such as Boje (1991, 2001, 2002) may argue that the above theories are all managerialist in their approach. In other words, they argue from the premise that “*better management will prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills*” (Pollit in Boje 2002). As such, it was a by-product of the emergence of corporate capitalism at the beginning of the 20th century and displays a masculine and paternalistic ethic. Boje (2002) argues that the “*ideal type*” managerialism is characterized by concepts such as “*corporate planning; grouping of activities by outputs or outcomes; a divisionalised organizational structure²¹; performance monitoring; generalist managers and results oriented remuneration*”. In a managerialist organization, storytelling is a “*meaning-making and sense-making process*” (Boje, 2002). In other words, managerialists follow a functionalist approach that focuses mainly on the use of stories to transfer knowledge, communicate vision and accomplish change.

By contrast, Boje (2002) proposes an approach to storytelling organizations that is neither managerialist nor functionalist. This approach, which he calls “*critical postmodern*” draws upon critical and postmodern theory, deconstruction, feminist critique and intertextuality. It focuses strongly on power in storytelling and acknowledges the pluralism of plots, the multiple ways in which stories may be interpreted, as well as the interplay between marginalized (silent) stories and the dominant (hegemonic) stories in an organization. Furthermore, the focus of the post-managerialist ideology is on “*collective self-determination*” rather than on control or so-called empowerment by managers.

Boje (2002) does not propose, however, that the managerialist perspective should be discarded or ignored, rather, he states that: “*Critical postmodern*

²¹ Braverman (1976) illustrates that the division of labour into core tasks results in a degradation (referred to as “deskilling” by Braverman) of work from a high to a low level of skill and a high to a low level of remuneration. This division of work is an inherent characteristic of a bureaucratic organization such as the CTMM. In the context of South Africa’s apartheid past, it furthermore introduced an element of race. I.e. the highly skilled, well paid work (e.g. that of city planners) was performed by whites, while unskilled, low paid jobs were performed by blacks.

approaches to storytelling allows for a dialectic relationship between managerialist narrative and critical narrative". Boje (2001) also states that critical postmodern theory does not accept the total rejection of the grand narrative as put forward by Lyotard, but rather is a theory that is "*up to the task of exploring the postmodern turn that never transcends modern*".

This dialectic approach was also followed in the Tshwane study. Therefore, the entrenched managerialism of the municipality is not merely reflected, but also criticized by way of exposing so-called "*contested emplotments*" (see Boje, 2002). The metanarrative of the transformation of the Tshwane local government is deconstructed by way of telling the "*microstoria*"²² of the experience of the planners employed by the municipality during the study period.

²² "Alternative histories" see Boje, 2002.