

Introduction

Urbanization is almost as old as mankind itself. The concentration of people in one area was a natural occurrence due to the needs of people. These included the need for safety in numbers, joint efforts in obtaining resources and, in the words of Pier Giorgio Di Cicco (2004), "the instinct for human encounter".

Urbanization is creating both opportunities, which should be enhanced, and problems, which should be diminished. But this can only be achieved by people working together towards a common goal.

According to Webster's Dictionary, to commune is "to converse or talk together, usually with profound intensity, intimacy, etc.; the "interchange [of] thoughts or feelings".

Commune,
community,
communication.

It seems that in the same way as the roots of the words are intertwined, so too are their existence. If there is no conversing with one another, there can not be a sense of community, and without that there can not be proper communication. Without communication there can not be communion.

It is about being involved with someone else. This is rarely the case in the modern urban society. And if people are not involved in each other's lives, how will they work together for the benefit of each other?

"And all the earth had one language and one speech. And it came to be, as they sat out from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said to each other, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over all the face of the earth."

Then HWHY came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And HWHY said, "Look, they are one people and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do! And now, they are not going to be withheld from doing whatever they plan to do. Come, let us go there and confuse their language, so that they do not understand one another's speech."

And HWHY scattered them from there, over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. That is why its name was called Babel, because there HWHY confused the language of all the earth, and from there HWHY scattered them over the face of all the earth." (Genesis 11:1-9, The Scriptures, 1998)
Footnote 4: derived from verb meaning "to confuse."

DISCOURSE PART A



DISCOURSE – Is true democracy possible?

Robert A. Dahl makes it clear that the ideal of democracy remains a vision, a theoretical utopia, that no modern country has been able to reach. He argues that in order for it to become reality, the following criteria have to be met:

1. effective participation
2. voting equality at the decisive stage
3. enlightened understanding
4. control of the agenda
5. inclusiveness

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>]

From a Wikipedia article (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>) it is gathered that even though the concept of democracy is interpreted in various manners, there are commonalities which makes it a value system accepted throughout the world. Incorporating principles such as equality, majority rule, competitive elections, freedom of speech, freedom of association, rule of law, etc.

The article identifies three conceptual types of democracy:

Aggregative democracy - Uses democratic processes to solicit citizens' preferences and then aggregate them together to determine what social policies society should adopt.

Deliberative democracy - Based on the notion that democracy is government by discussion. It is contended that laws and policies should be based upon reasons that all citizens can accept. The political arena should be one in which leaders and citizens make arguments, listen, and change their minds.

Radical democracy - based on the idea that there are hierarchical and oppressive power relations that exist in society. Democracy's role is to make visible and challenge those relations by allowing for difference, dissent and antagonisms in decision making processes.

Aggregative democracy consists of variants that, together with the views of Downs and Dahl, are further explained in the article.

The minimalist democracy believes that citizens are unable to rule themselves as they are 'clueless', and should therefore give teams of political leaders the right to rule in periodic elections.

The proponents of direct democracy believe that citizens should rule themselves and become directly involved and not through representatives. This will promote more educated people and increase socialization. It will also check powerful elites.

Downs (1957) suggested the use of ideological political parties to mediate between individuals and government. This would check the self-interested and somewhat unaccountable political elites competing for votes.

Robert A. Dahl argues that every citizen's interest should be given equal consideration when decisions are taken. The objection is against the majority of the voters deciding policy and not the majority of the entire population, as poverty and apathy may prevent political participation. Perhaps compulsory voting or refusing power to the government until the full majority participates, could rectify this.



DISCOURSE - What gives rise to participation within a community?

According to a Wikipedia article (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>) the ancient Greek word *demokratia*, literally means 'rule by the people'.

Habermas (2006) developed the concept of 'the public sphere' in 1962, which he has revisited since but not abandoned. He defined it as the realm of our social lives in which public opinion can be formed. This happens everytime private individuals assemble to form a public body and express their opinions. The state authority is considered 'public' authority and executor of political public sphere, yet not part of it.

"Only when the exercise of political control is effectively subordinated to the democratic demand that information be accessible to the public, does the political public sphere win ... over the government through the instrument of law-making bodies. ... [It] refers to the task of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally ... practices vis-à-vis the ruling structure organized in the form of a state. ... Though mere opinions (cultural assumptions, normative attitudes, collective prejudices and values) seem to persist unchanged in their natural form as a kind of sediment of history, public opinion can by definition come into existence only when a reasoning public is presupposed."

Fraser (1990:57) comments that "The idea of "the public sphere" in Habermas's sense is a conceptual resource that ... designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction." She stresses the fact that this arena should be distinct from the state as it has to be critical of it.

She then looks at the complexities of this sphere within a multi-cultural society: "It follows that public life in egalitarian, multi-cultural societies cannot consist exclusively in a single, comprehensive public sphere. ... [as] it would effectively privilege the expressive norms of one cultural group over others; ... The result would be the demise of multi-culturalism (and the likely demise of social equality). ... [It] only makes sense if we suppose a plurality of public arenas in which groups with diverse values and rhetorics participate. ... However, this need not preclude the possibility of an additional, more comprehensive arena in which members of different, more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity. ... [and] entertain debates over policies and issues affecting everyone."

"The question is: would participants in such debates share enough in the way of values, expressive norms, and, therefore, protocols of persuasion to lend their talk the quality of deliberations aimed at reaching agreement through giving reasons?"

"... I see no reason to rule out in principle the possibility of a society in which social equality and cultural diversity coexist with participatory democracy. I certainly hope there can be such a society. That hope gains some plausibility if we consider that, however difficult it may be, communication across lines of cultural difference is not in principle impossible Granted such communication requires multi-cultural literacy, but that, I believe, can be acquired through practice. In fact, the possibilities expand once we acknowledge the complexity of cultural identities. ... After all, the concept of a public presupposes a plurality of perspectives among those who participate within it ... In addition, the unbounded character and publicist orientation of publics allows for the fact that people participate in more than one public, and that the memberships of different publics may partially overlap. This in turn makes inter-cultural communication conceivable in principle". (Fraser 1990:70)

DISCOURSE - Do we understand each other?

Le Baron (2003) highlights the fact that in order for us as humans, coming from different backgrounds, to more fully understand each other, we need to increase our cultural fluency – awareness of how different cultures communicate and handle conflict. "All communication is cultural -- it draws on ways we have learned to speak and give nonverbal messages. We do not always communicate the same way from day to day, since factors like context, individual personality, and mood interact with the variety of cultural influences we have internalized that influence our choices."

"Communication is interactive, so an important influence on its effectiveness is our relationship with others. Do they hear and understand what we are trying to say? Are [both parties] listening well? ... Is the mood positive and receptive? Is there trust between them and us? Are there differences that relate to ineffective communication, divergent goals or interests, or fundamentally different ways of seeing the world?"

He outlines cross-cultural communication by examples of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors involving four variables:

- Time and Space,
- Fate and Personal Responsibility,
- Face and Face-Saving,
- Nonverbal Communication.

Holliday et al (2004) reiterates "... that all communication is intercultural, ... [it] is ultimately about developing skilled communication strategies and principles in a globalizing world. [And unfortunately] ... we feel that much intercultural communication is marred by prejudice ..."

They argue that most people's views range between the extremes of 'non-essentialism' and essentialism'. Non-essentialism views the "complexity of culture as a fluid, creative social force which binds different groupings and aspects of behaviour in different ways, both constructing and constructed by people in a piecemeal fashion to produce myriad combinations and configurations."

Essentialism on the other hand "reduces and otherizes the individual ... imagining someone as 'alien' and 'different' to 'us' in such a way that 'they' are excluded from 'our' 'normal', 'superior' and 'civilized' group. Indeed, it is by imagining a foreign Other in this way that 'our' group can become more confident and exclusive."

It is unfortunately the normal behaviour of people in general to follow the 'easy' route of simplifying other cultures and over-generalizing their identity, instead of making the effort to understand 'others' better and consequently gain respect for them.

Discourse – what importance does a value system hold?

In his paper, *The Concept of Value in Resource Allocation*, Brown (1984) is concerned with the preference related concepts of value. He borrows it from Von Wright (1963), who defines it as an individual preferring one thing before or above another thing because of a notion of betterness. Brown identifies three realms within this definition, namely the conceptual, the relational, and the object realm.

In the conceptual realm the basis for value preference is about “things ... which are directly at issue in resource allocation.” Things that we often label as values or ideals, which he calls ‘held values’, e.g. honesty, loyalty.

In the sense of the relational realm, value arises from a preference relationship between a subject and an object. He defines ‘object’ according to Morris (1956, 10) as things that can be preferred to something else, e.g. colours, food.

In the object realm, value is the preferred “relative importance or worth of an object to an individual or group in a given context ... It is not a character of the object, but rather the standing of the object relative to other objects.” The value can thus only be determined by comparison and he calls it the ‘assigned value’.

Brown concludes that nothing has a fixed value, as it “reflects the context in which the valuation took place and the perception and held values of those assigning value.” With so many different people and circumstances this results in a constant state of flux.

There is thus a need for ‘held values’ and social influences to find common ground in defining values that “relate more closely to the welfare of the constituency to whose resources the value is to apply.” He agrees with Freeman (1979:34) who indicates that the modern ‘welfare’ concept relating purely to “economics on income and monetary transactions” is lacking in that it fails to take into consideration “other aspects of well-being, such as social relationships or sense of self-worth, [which] involves a kind of value judgment.”

In referring to Page (1977) and Rawls (1971), he suggests that social rules be established whereby a representative assembly of responsible individuals are immersed in the proper context to determine resource allocations. “[A] context that is mindful of the real ownership of the resources. ... [This would] offer the hope of more socially defensible values, values that look to the good of the whole.”

“I have always believed that in a marriage, a business partnership, or life in general, differences can be sorted out as long as both parties share the same value system. If not, the relationship will fail.”
(Werner van der Watt)

Discourse – What comprises a successful community?

McMillan & Chavis George (1986) noted that Gusfield (1975) distinguished between two major uses of the term community; not mutually exclusive in usage. The first being of geographical nature and the second concerned with human relationships. The modern trend though, tends to develop communities around interests and skills more than around locality, according to Durheim (1964).

They continue their discussion with the Sense of Community Scale developed by Doolittle and MacDonald (1978). It was used to gain insight into the “behaviors and attitudes at the community level of social organization”, which led to 3 generalizations:

1. Inverse relationship between pro-urbanism and preference for neighboring.
2. Direct relationship between safety and preference for neighboring.
3. Pro-urbanism decreases as perception of safety increases.

They also found from work done by Glynn (1981), that there is a positive relationship between a sense of community and the ability to function competently in the community. “The strongest predictors of the actual sense of community were (a) expected length of community residency, (b) satisfaction with the community, and (c) the number of neighbors one could identify by first name.”

“Bachrach and Zautra (1985) ... found that a stronger sense of community led to problem-focused coping behaviors ... that attempt directly to alter or counter the threat ... [It] contributed strongly to the level of one’s community involvement ...”, and the authors concluded that [a] stronger sense of community may lead to a “greater sense of purpose and perceived control ... In a similar study, Chavis (1983) identified the process of empowerment, which occurs through the development of community. Others have reported consistent findings; Florin and Wandersman (1984) and Wandersman and Giamartino (1980) found high self-reported levels of sense of community to distinguish those who participated in block associations from those who did not.” (McMillan & Chavis George, 1986:7)

They proposed a definition with four elements:

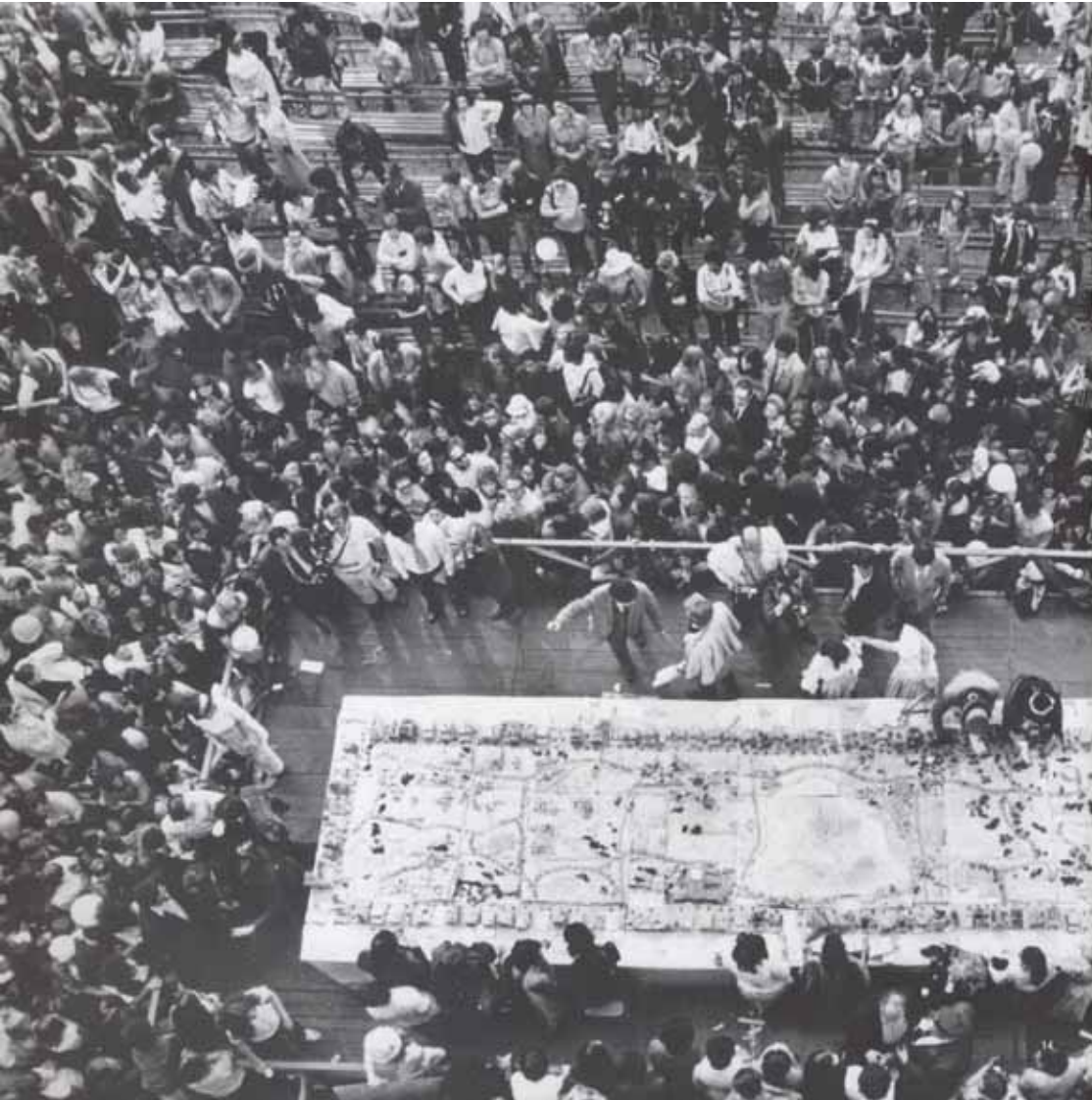
1. Membership - the feeling of belonging and of sharing
2. Influence - a sense of mattering, of making a difference.
3. Reinforcement - the feeling that members’ needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group.
4. Shared emotional connection - the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history.

Sense of Community Scale (SCS) 1978

The scale used the following five factors to class neighbourhoods from low to high:

1. Informal interaction (with neighbors)
2. Safety (having a good place to live)
3. Pro-urbanism (privacy, anonymity)
4. Neighboring preferences (preference for frequent neighbor interaction)
5. Localism (opinions and a desire to participate in neighborhood affairs).

“Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.”
(McMillan, 1976)



Objective

The cosmopolitan nature of the urban environment will produce varied perceptions; making it impossible to share values, unless the opportunity is provided for people to exchange their different worldviews. Arriving at a place of mutual respect and acceptance, people learn to live and let live, being gracious to others and oneself.

By participating in the decisionmaking process they will be more inclined to abide by the choices taken. They need to believe though that whatever input they give, big or small, will make a difference. It is also very important that the citizens are empowered by being able to hold public servants accountable.

There thus exist the need for a forum, of which the authority is recognized by both local government and the broad community. One that is not manipulated by anyone; where an environment of trust has been created.

The objective is to create a civic building that establishes a forum for the people of Tshwane, to realize a shared value system that is respected and upheld by all. This will foster a sense of ownership and community. Through this they will be able to optimize all the resources available to them, resulting in a people that enjoy the everyday life of the city.

To find the means to establish this objective, these questions will be investigated in the following pages.

Why is a value system important?

Finding common ground among people of diverse backgrounds; something that will bring them together.

What is the factors that comprise a successful community?

Achieving that feeling that members have of belonging, that they matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that their needs will be met through their commitment to be together.

What gives rise to participation within a community?

The sphere in which public opinion is given the necessary acknowledgement, where it actually is the people that decide on how they want to be governed.

Do we understand each other?

Focusing on effective communication across cultures that enables awareness and respect for each other's differences.

Is democracy possible?

There are commonalities which makes it a value system accepted throughout the world. Incorporating principles such as equality, majority rule, freedom of speech, freedom of association, rule of law, etc.

"Come now, and let us reason together"

Yeshayahu 1:18, The Scriptures

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
Article 195. Basic values and principles governing public administration

1. Public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the following principles:
 - a. A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
 - b. Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.
 - c. Public administration must be development-oriented.
 - d. Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
 - e. People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.
 - f. Public administration must be accountable.
 - g. Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.
 - h. Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated.
 - i. Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

Problem

In the introduction we mentioned the main reason for urbanization, being the benefit of people working together for their common good. Unfortunately this did not hold to be true, as most citizens are now disempowered, mostly through the loss of a community that looks after their well-being. Both the former and current national mottos of South Africa incorporated the central idea of unity. But ... we require unity, not uniformity.

In order for unity to exist, especially in a very diverse group of people, they need to share a common set of values that places worth on individuals, without it undermining the community. Values that are respected and adhered to by the whole community. Such is the purpose of the Constitution of our country.

This dissertation will focus on article 152(1), namely the manner in which the Municipality of Tshwane serves its citizens. In the past the system allowed for individual government officials to disregard the wishes of the people and then not being held accountable for their actions. 'Red tape' further smothers citizens who wish to be involved, which eventually results in apathy.

I believe the biggest problem to be, that we all lose sight of the fact that government officials are public servants.

However, "A city is not happy owing just to prosperity or economic opportunity. It is happy in the hope and business of human and meaningful things, in whatever sphere of endeavour; and art is about highlighting every sphere of endeavour, until the "artistic" is seen as a way of life, ...but if the daily life is not artistic, inspired by intimacy, zest and sociality, the passion is missing, and a city without passion is a city just of artistic events. ... the purpose of the arts in a city is to make a city fall in love with itself; by that I mean the seeing of passion at its own source, the joy of seeing what it has made, and the impulse to regenerate that joy in an atmosphere of risk, adventure and trust." (Di Cicco, 2004)

Perhaps one could rather replace the concept of art with that of creativity in a broader context. The result of people putting their skills together.

Da Costa (2007:30) reiterates the view of Ntuli (2002) on the problem that permeates African cities, which are overshadowed by globalization and the colonial past: the perception of having to be on par with Western society's ideologies. Struggling in "re-claiming their identities of a valid African urban expression", the values then should not only incorporate good governance, but also a way of thinking about life, and how we will live it together.



National Motto of South Africa

Former: Ex Unitate Vires (Latin)
From unity, strength,
(1910-2000)

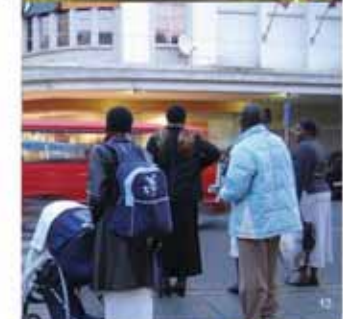
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Diverse people unite or
Unity in Diversity

Constitution of the Republic of
South Africa

Article 152. Objects of local government

1. The objects of local government are –

- a. to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- b. to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- c. to promote social and economic development;
- d. to promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- e. to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.



**Ubuntu ungamuntu
ngabanye abantu**

(people are people
through other people)
Xhosa proverb



Conclusion

There lies great strength in people that are unified. To accomplish it is not an easy task though. It comes with great effort; and to achieve it, there needs to be something that binds everyone together. A common value system.

Most people often share the same values, but due to miscommunication they are led to believe otherwise. On the other hand they may just not see eye to eye. It then becomes important that people need to reason together to find a suitable compromise.

The Metropolitan Municipality of Tshwane will greatly benefit from establishing a point of contact where its citizens can, together, find the best way forward through resolving differences to the benefit of all. This can be achieved through a civic building that facilitates the following broad process:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Awareness | 4. Conclusion |
| 2. Education | 5. Decision |
| 3. Debate | 6. Enforcement |

Change can only be affected through people that are aware of problems and which then get involved in meaningful discussions; once they have gained insight into all aspects of the matter. Through this process they will come to conclusions that inform their decision making. And given the authority, they can ensure that these decisions are carried out.

A life that is well lived could perhaps be best summarized in this maxim: 'To treat others as if it was yourself'. Accepting that things can't always be as we want it, neither always what others want. It is about give and take.

CONTEXT PART B