

# ASSESSING SERVICE DELIVERY: PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Tyanai MASIYA**

*School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria, South Africa  
Masiya.Masiya@up.ac.za*

**Yul D. DAVIDS**

*Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery Programme, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa  
ydavids@hsrc.ac.za*

**Mary S. MANGAI**

*School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria, South Africa  
marymangai5@gmail.com*

## Abstract

Existing research reveals that there has been increasing community impatience related to basic municipal service delivery in developing countries, for example, South Africa. Many scholars have argued that the rise in service delivery protests in South Africa can be attributed to organisational failure to provide satisfactory basic services because many communities remain un-serviced. This article investigates citizen satisfaction with basic municipal service delivery in South Africa and analyses citizen perceptions thereof based on the South African Social Attitude Survey. The study is quantitative in nature. The findings reveal that citizen dissatisfaction with service delivery is influenced by factors such as perceptions of relative deprivation and inequality, unfulfilled political promises, uneven access to services, provision of substandard services and high levels of poverty including disparities which emanate from the post-apartheid regime. The article is relevant at this point because many African municipalities are facing similar service delivery challenges.

**Keywords:** Municipalities; Service Delivery; Satisfaction; Public Participation, Co-production, South Africa.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many developing countries face service delivery challenges (Joshi and Moore, 2004; Mangai, 2016; Mangai, 2017). In many of these countries this has resulted in public protests (Alexander et al., 2018; Morudu, 2017). It is in this context that many regions in South Africa have observed service delivery protests characterised by increased violence in the past decade. Several scholars have argued that these protests can be attributed to organisational failure to provide satisfactory basic services (Peyper, 2016; Akinboade, 2012; Nkomo, 2017), while others hold that citizen satisfaction is also an expectation

of the government's performance (Mangai, 2016). Research on the drivers of satisfaction is, however, limited in Africa. Consequently, there is a growing need for scholars to contribute towards comprehending the service delivery satisfaction drivers as well as the nature of thereof or dissatisfaction in South Africa. The study adopted a quantitative analysis, and extracted data from the 2016 South African Social Attitude Survey (SASAS) to respond to key questions related to citizens' level of satisfaction with the delivery of basic services in South Africa. The key research question is what are the public perceptions of basic service delivery and whether these illustrate government failures or other causes of failing service delivery?

To respond to the primary research question, the following sub-questions are relevant to this research:

- What is the current status of service delivery in South Africa?
- What empirical justification can be inferred from the SASAS data on citizen satisfaction related to service delivery?
- What does the SASAS data reveal with regard to service delivery among the citizenry?

In this study, satisfaction indicators are used to examine basic service delivery performance based on the citizen's own experiences (Almarshad, 2015). The study explicitly employs a national representative survey to examine the levels of satisfaction related to basic services among the South African citizenry drivers. It should be noted that assessments are made based on the citizens first-hand experience of municipalities within which they reside. However, no direct link is drawn between a citizen and a specific municipality about service satisfaction. In other words, the data does not allow one to state clearly that citizen X is dissatisfied with municipality Y. However, the nature of services captured in the survey are ordinarily provided by municipalities. This study is, therefore, expected to expand the frontiers of knowledge with respect to how service delivery influences citizen satisfaction at municipal level in general. This is critical at this stage because the public sector is increasingly called upon to focus on citizen satisfaction in service delivery. Moreover, studies in this field are also increasing. In the South African context such a study is of significance given the intensifying increase in citizen protests due to service delivery dissatisfaction.

Studies related to citizen satisfaction is also a means of allowing policy-makers and public managers to clearly comprehend their customer base, help identify sub-groups and access to needs or identify gaps. Moreover, citizen satisfaction can be an important indicator of overall government performance. It is, therefore, in this context that this article provides recommendations which emanate from the findings to municipal governments.

The remaining structure of this study is as follows: The following section explores the background and context of the study; followed by the theoretical foundation; research methodology that informs the study; data presentation; including an analysis of key drivers of satisfaction and a conclusion.

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Post-apartheid South Africa continues to face challenges militating optimal municipal service delivery to citizens. In an endeavour to resolve service delivery challenges, the South African government prioritised local government reforms to promote direct service delivery to communities. As a result, local government experienced numerous stages of transformation since its first democratic local elections.

In 1998 the South African government promulgated the White Paper on Local Government. It affirms that local government is the sphere of government that interacts closely with communities. Furthermore, local government institutions are responsible for the delivery of services and infrastructure which are critical for the well-being of the citizens, and is tasked to ensure growth and development to enhance community participation and accountability. Local government also has a duty and is obliged to discuss with communities the type of basic services (e.g. health, water, electricity and sanitation) the inhabitants requires through public participation in the development process of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

The Municipal Systems Act (2000); Municipal Structures Act (Act No. 117 of 1998); Municipal Finance Management (2003) and Municipal Property Rates Act (2004) were also promulgated. The Municipal Systems Act (2000) outlines duties and requirements of all municipalities which include: 1) prioritise the basic needs of the local community; 2) promote the development of the local community; and 3) ensure that all members of the local community have access to at least the minimum level of basic municipal services.

The Municipal Systems Act (2000) also provides that municipal services must be equitable, accessible, and be provided in a manner that is conducive to prudent, economic, efficient and effective use of available resources and improve the quality over time. The services must also be financially and environmentally sustainable, and reviewed regularly with a view to upgrading, extension and improvement.

The Municipal Structures Act (1998) together with the Municipal Systems Act (2000), provide for external consultations through both formal and informal means, including public meetings with residents, business, state departments, and similar entities (Masiya, 2012). The Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) provides the framework within which municipalities compile budgets with

specific timelines for preparation and approval while the Municipal Property Rates Act (2004) promotes community participation and the determination of rate policies (Ibid).

As such, local municipalities are expected to act reasonably to extend basic services such as housing, water, refuse collection and electricity to everyone and to deliberately ensure that the poor, and especially vulnerable citizenry such as women and children, have improved access to adequate basic services. Furthermore, Section 9 of the Constitution of 1996 prohibits municipalities from unfair discrimination when delivering services based on race, gender, HIV/AIDS status, disability or any other protected ground (s. 9 of the Constitution). Consequently, municipalities are often in the limelight among South African citizens who perceive it as the centre of service delivery based on its constitutional mandate and the role it plays in bringing public services closer to the people.

### 3. SERVICE DELIVERY SATISFACTION: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section seeks to put into perspective the theoretical underpinnings of the drivers of satisfaction. A theoretical framework is necessary to support the presupposition underlining citizen satisfaction and the actual service delivered by the municipalities surveyed in this article. Satisfaction as defined by James (2009:108) as an "evaluative attitude or behaviour towards some experience or object". While the concept of satisfaction has emerged over the years in the public sector, it is fundamental to the marketing sector to evaluate customer satisfaction. In marketing research, expectations are widely considered to play a key role in determining the consumers' levels of satisfaction with goods and services. Various sectors have leverage of the concept of satisfaction to evaluate their organisation's performance. For example, evaluation of office worker's, client satisfaction in the health sector, citizen satisfaction of service delivery etc. (Clinton and Wellington, 2013; Mangai, 2016; Mangai, 2017). James (2009) holds that evaluating people's experiences could be useful for public organisations to determine whether their clients are satisfied with the product or services provided. It is on this note that such citizen satisfaction determinants are at the centre of the discussion in this section.

Three primary classic explanations that emerged to advance the reasons citizens may either be satisfied or not with service delivery. These include: Expectation disconfirmation model (Van Ryn, 2004; 2006; Oliver, 1977, 1980; Yi, 1990), performance model (Roos and Lidstrom, 2014); and individual and jurisdictional models (DeHoog, Lowery and Lyons, 1990; Sharp, 1986).

One of the interpretations of satisfaction conforms with the renowned expectancy disconfirmation model. This model dominated the private sector's quest in understanding customer satisfaction. Consequently, previous research that investigated the relationship between expectations and citizen

satisfaction focused primarily on private-sector services, such as the marketing sector (Jayanti, 1991). The expectancy disconfirmation model is being adapted increasingly in analysing municipal service delivery satisfaction among the citizenry. Van Ryzin (2004) highlights that this model perceives satisfaction judgment as determined-not only by product or service performance, but by a process in which consumers compare performance with prior expectations. In other words, the expectancy disconfirmation model begins with the idea that citizens in forming judgments about service delivery, already possess a set of expectations with respect to the characteristics or benefits a particular service will provide (Morgesson, 2012; Oliver, 1980). Upon experiencing the actual service performance, these expectations serve as the yardstick for the formation of satisfaction judgments. The discrepancy or gap between prior expectations and actual assumed performance is what defines satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a particular municipal service.

However, in the performance model, citizen satisfaction is a determinant of the kind of judgement citizens form of how government is performing compared to their expectation of how government should perform. In essence, their satisfaction is derived by comparing the actual quality of service delivery and how they think the government is performing in delivering services (Mangai, 2017). The judgement citizens form is in turn used as a feedback mechanism to improve and prioritise service delivery (Mangai, 2016). According to Elliot (2007), perceptions of the quality and sufficiency of municipal service delivery is based on expectations and are also strengthened by experience, i.e. the experience which individuals face in receiving public services including management (Elliot, 2007). The validation of citizen's satisfaction is, therefore, indicative to improve or increase the services provided. As a result, an understanding of citizens' perceptions of their experiences with municipal services will always provide valuable feedback of the effectiveness of the services received. In countries such as South Africa, where the majority of the population is marginalised, and public sector reforms have been viewed as a panacea to service delivery challenges, feedback of service delivery from citizens is paramount (Roch and Poister, 2006). Therefore, it is the apriori expectation in this article that comprehending citizen' satisfaction with service delivery provides an important assessment mechanism to measure municipalities the level of performance.

Another model of citizen satisfaction is the individual and jurisdictional level of citizen satisfaction (DeHoog et al., 1990). The model measures citizen satisfaction in terms of personal and jurisdictional inclinations. People may or may not be satisfied with service delivery because they live in the rural area and are able to observe the difference between the services delivered to them and those in the urban areas. Therefore, citizens' personal background, social status values, and circumstances can influence their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with service delivery. Their satisfaction or dissatisfaction is also

measured by their cultural differences, contextual and demographic characteristics. The notion is that individual or households can differ in their expectation and satisfaction of service delivery because of their age, gender orientation, experiences with service provision and socio-economic background (Mangai, 2016; DeHoog et al., 1990).

In most of the developing countries, including South Africa, service delivery has become one of the most debated issues in municipal governance (Islam and Mahmud, 2015). This emanates from the citizens' quest to derive satisfactory services from their municipalities and the increasing calls for municipal governments to respond to the citizen demands, while simultaneously municipalities face serious challenges in delivering basic public services.

A proxy to measure the quality of municipal service delivery is to ask residents for their opinions about the quality thereof. Studies of citizen satisfaction with public services in particular municipal service delivery has begun to attract significant scholarly attention. In South Africa, there is also a growing interest in citizen surveys by the municipalities themselves (see South Africa Public Service Commission, 2007). They are anxious to establish how well a service is received, which is the focus of the surveys in this article.

The adoption and utilisation of the individual and jurisdictional model in this article is, therefore, relevant since in Public Administration, the view is that better service performance increases individual and jurisdictional citizen satisfaction and there is a need to continue evaluating performance and service delivery processes (Bok, 2001). These assumptions will be tested in the result section of this article.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilised secondary data which comprised of 3079 South Africans aged 16 years and above. The respondents participated in the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 2016. The SASAS surveys measure the attitudes of South Africans, their beliefs, behavioural patterns and values with of a range of socio-economic issues such as democracy and governance, social identity, service delivery, access to information and other important social issues. All SASAS surveys are designed to yield a representative sample of adult South Africans who are 16 years and above. According to the 2011 Census data, South Africa is a multi-ethnic country with a total population of 51.8 million. The majority of the population are concentrated in two of the nine South African provinces (Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal; 23.7% and 19.8%, respectively [Census 2011, Statistical release, 30 October 2012; ps. 14-15]). The SASAS 2016 data comprises

predominantly of female (51.7% females vs 48.2% males), while the majority are black (79.2%), followed by white (8.9%), coloured (8.9%) and Indian/Asian (2.5%).

The HSRC utilised a Master Sample which was developed using the 2011 census and small area layers (SALs) as the primary sampling unit. A total of 500 SALs are generally selected, and stratified by province, geography type and majority population group. A total of seven household visiting points are randomly selected per SAL. Once interviewers arrive at the households, they randomly select the respondents from the selected households for interview using a Krish Grid.<sup>1</sup> Direction maps were provided to the fieldworkers to help them select the EAs to be visited (Kivilu, Roberts and Davids, 2011).

The analysis of the study is based on the following key questions on service delivery: "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the manner in which the government manages the following matters in your neighbourhood?" The respondents were asked to provide their level of satisfaction with regard to: 1) supply of water and sanitation; 2) provision of electricity; 3) refuse removal; 4) affordable housing; 5) access to health care; 6) treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS; 7) inhibit crime; 8) create jobs; 9) land reform; 10) provision of social grants (e.g. child support grant, old age pension, etc); 11) education; and 12) corruption. The response option ranged from 1 to 5. 1 implied that the respondents felt extremely dissatisfied and 5 that they felt extremely satisfied with the service. The middle of the scale was 3, that is, this score suggested that the respondents felt neutral/ neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with service provision.

### **Statistical analysis**

***The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS which was conducted in 4 stages.***

*Stage 1:* Included basic univariate statistical analysis to illustrate the frequency distribution of responses for each of the 12 'service delivery' question items.

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<sup>1</sup> The Kish grid is a tool that was developed to allow for the random selection of respondents. There are two pieces of information that one requires to be able to select. Firstly, one requires the last two digits of the four-digit questionnaire number from the SASAS cover page. If the questionnaire number is 9548, the number one will require is 48. If the questionnaire number is 6400, then the number would be 100. These numbers are listed 1-100 in the first four *columns* of the grid. The second piece of information one will require is the total number of persons at the visiting point aged 16 years and older and resident at least 15 days in the last month. This number forms the first *row* of numbers in the grid. The number at the intersection of the relevant column and row in the grid is the personal number of the respondent as found in the table of names on page ii. This would be the person that one would subsequently interview. It is important that one *circles the numbers* in the grid, as illustrated in Example in Appendix A (Source: SASAS, 2016).

Stage 2: This section included the construction of Basic Services Index (BSI) using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method to extract the components. This was followed by a varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Furthermore, the Cronbach Alpha as well as Pearson's correlation statistics helped to determine the reliability and validity of the BSI.

Stage 3: Included a comparison of the means for the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age group, education level, Living Standard Measure (LSM), and geographic location) in relation to the BSI. In other words, in this section the authors examined whether socio-demographic variables differed from the sample of South Africans aged 16 in terms of the BSI.

Stage 4: Examined whether the respondents self-assessed level of poverty (respondents who described themselves as non-poor, on the breadline (i.e. just surviving) or poor) influenced their perceptions of satisfaction with service delivery. To examine the differences among those who described themselves as non-poor, on the breadline (just surviving) and poor, a means comparisons test was conducted.

## 5. RESULTS

### *Stage 1*

To assess service delivery satisfaction the survey posed the following questions to the respondents: "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the manner in which the government manages the following matters in your neighbourhood (Table 1)?" For example, the percentage of respondents who indicated "satisfaction" with water and sanitation had received moderately consistent ratings between 2003 and 2016 (53-62%) and a national average of 56% from 2003 to 2016.

The result revealed that the respondents' level of satisfaction with electricity is high, and relative to other indicators although there is greater relative variability in assessment since 2010. Nationally, 66% were satisfied with the provision of electricity at their residences from 2003 to 2016. Social grants continued to receive the highest public approval ratings of 75% in 2016. Education also recorded a relative high level of satisfaction compared to other indicators. However, in late 2010 approximately 70% of adult South Africans registered satisfaction with the government's management of education while 58% was recorded for 2016. This represented a 12% drop in satisfaction since 2010.

Nationally, 53% were satisfied with refuse removal on average from 2003 to 2016. During the same survey period only 34% were satisfied with low-cost housing, which was significantly lower than other areas of evaluation. Nevertheless, the areas of greatest public concern was job creation (12% satisfied in 2016) and crime reduction (23% in 2016).

TABLE 1 - SATISFACTION WITH DIFFERENT AREAS OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE, 2003-2015 (% SATISFIED)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Average
Providing social grants	...	...	70	73	70	72	71	77	72	72	72	72	75	75	73
Education	...	...	...	69	69	74	68	70	66	60	68	65	62	58	66
Providing electricity	66	70	67	70	64	67	67	67	61	63	65	58	66	66	66
Water & sanitation supply	61	62	59	57	60	59	57	59	57	59	58	53	56	53	56
Removal of refuse	60	55	53	55	51	54	52	52	49	51	51	51	56	55	53
Access to health care	43	50	50	53	56	53	50	53	51	56	54	59	57	55	53
HIV/AIDS treatment	27	36	43	38	47	45	45	54	61	56	56	61	55	61	49
Affordable housing	34	37	31	28	32	33	32	34	35	32	34	36	39	40	34
Land reform	26	32	32	30	35	28	31	33	30	23	22	23	31	29	29
Cutting crime	22	26	22	18	17	18	18	27	32	20	18	19	20	23	21
Creating jobs	8	11	9	8	8	9	10	12	14	7	9	11	8	12	10
Addressing corruption	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	12	10	12	14	11

Source: HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2003-2016

**Stage 2**

The results of the PCA revealed three underlying components which displayed Eigen values that were greater than 1. The results of a screen test also suggested that the three components were meaningful. The three components were retained for rotation. Combined, components 1, 2 and 3 accounted for 53.02% of the total variance, while 70% provided a rule of thumb to select the number of components, and 53.02% was considered sufficient for analysis. Questionnaire items and corresponding factor loadings are illustrated in Table 2.

This study will only employ the first component which comprises of four question items labelled "basic services". To be specific, the following questions loaded high on the 1st component (Table 2): 1) satisfaction with the supply of water and sanitation (.782); 2) satisfaction with refuse removal (.780); 3) satisfaction with provision of electricity (.634); and 4) satisfaction with affordable housing (.566). The results of the PCA and reliability analysis revealed that a Basic Services Index (BSI) with an Eigen value of 3.411 can be formed which explained 28.426% of the common variance. The index was considered reliable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.705).

An interpretation of the rotated factor pattern in Table 2, an item was said to load on a given component if the factor loading was 0.50 or greater for that component, and was less than 0.50 for the other. Utilisation of this criterion revealed that four items were found to load on the first component, which was

subsequently labelled the “Basic Services Index”. Four items were loaded on the second component while three on the third component. The Pearson’s correlation value was lower for one item, namely access to health. Therefore, it was not included in the BSI.

TABLE 2 - CA RESULTS - ROTATED FACTOR PATTERN AND FINAL COMMUNALITY ESTIMATES FROM 12 SERVICE DELIVERY QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS UTILISED IN SASAS 2016 SURVEY.

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way that the government is handling the following matters in your neighbourhood?	Component		
	1	2	3
Supply of water and sanitation	.782	.067	.010
Removal of refuse	.780	.045	-.027
Providing electricity	.634	.034	.294
Affordable housing	.566	.318	.092
Access to health care	.488	.133	.409
Creating jobs	.174	.762	-.057
Satisfaction with handling corruption	.047	.736	.047
Satisfaction with handling crime	-.040	.684	.240
Satisfaction with land reform	.287	.501	.162
Providing social grants (e.g. child support grant, old age pension, etc)	-.015	.043	.798
Satisfaction with handling HIV and AIDS	.263	-.002	.684
Satisfaction with education	.054	.294	.677
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

**Stage 3: Socio-demographic variables and their relationship with the Basic Services Index (BSI)**

To contextualise the findings, the BSI was reviewed according to the demographic variables: geographic location, race, gender, age and standard of living. The disaggregated results revealed differences among the various socio-demographic groups in their assessments of the BSI. Table 3 below illustrates the descriptive data of the participants in the SASAS 2016 survey.

Overall, the mean for “satisfaction with basic services” as a whole was (M=3.25; SD ±0.91). This revealed that South Africans on average were dissatisfied with basic services. However, when the data is reviewed by socio-demographic variables, it reveals that satisfaction with basic services is highest for those South Africans who live in urban formal areas (M=3.48; SD±0.84); residents in rural formal areas (M= 2.89; SD±0.92); traditional (tribal) areas (M=2.82; SD±0.76); followed by the lowest for those in urban informal areas (M=2.51; SD±1.01) (Table 3).

According to race, white South Africans displayed the highest satisfaction with basic services (M=3.47; SD±0.84); coloureds (M=3.44; SD0.86); Indians/Asians (M=3.43; SD±0.85); while blacks displayed the lowest satisfaction (M=3.13; SD±0.92). Those South Africans within the high (M=3.54; SD±0.82) living standard measure (LSM) category also seemed to be more satisfied with access to basic services than those within the medium LSM (M=3.10; SD±0.88) category who were also more satisfied than the

respondents within the lowest LSM ((M=2.33; SD±0.84) category. There were no differences between male and female respondents in how they assessed satisfaction with basic services.

TABLE 3 - COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES: BSI BY RESPONDENTS SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES IN THE SASAS 2016 SURVEY

Demographic, socioeconomic, geographic characteristics	Basic Services Index (BSI)		
	Mean	N	SD
<b>Overall*</b>	3,25	3031	0,91
<b>Geographic location*</b>			
Urban formal	3,48	2091	0,84
Urban informal	2,51	210	1,01
Traditional	2,82	562	0,76
Rural formal (Farms)	2,89	168	0,92
<b>Race*</b>			
Black African	3,13	1819	0,92
Coloured	3,44	472	0,86
Indian/ Asian	3,43	360	0,85
White	3,47	380	0,84
<b>Gender*</b>			
Male	3,26	1250	0,94
Female	3,25	1781	0,88
<b>Age Group (years)*</b>			
16 – 19	3,26	154	0,97
20 – 24	3,30	300	0,90
25 – 34	3,18	665	0,91
35 – 44	3,25	537	0,94
45 – 54	3,14	470	0,91
55 – 64	3,29	444	0,91
65+	3,39	455	0,83
<b>Living Standard measure (LSM)*</b>			
Low	2,33	118	0,84
Medium	3,10	1341	0,88
High	3,54	1319	0,82
<b>Education level</b>			
Primary no schooling	3,10	538	0,87
Secondary matric	3,27	2048	0,92
Tertiary	3,42	372	0,86
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Employed	3,32	838	0,90
Unemployed	3,16	1085	0,92
Not working	3,29	1108	0,89

The various age groups also did not display any differences in their level of satisfaction with basic services. There were also limited difference among the various educational levels. However, the respondents with a tertiary education (M=3.42; SD±0.86) were marginally more satisfied with access to basic services than those with no education or only primary schooling (M=3.10; SD±0.87). The

employed ( $M=3.32$ ;  $SD\pm 0.90$ ) respondents were also slightly more satisfied with access to basic services than the unemployed ( $M=3.16$ ;  $SD\pm 0.92$ ).

#### **Stage 4: Self-assessment of citizens based on their socio-economic status**

There are many approaches to measure poverty. The literature revealed that there is no perfect or correct way to measure poverty (Creedy, 1998:82). This study opted to assess the opinions of ordinary citizens because they are best placed to determine their own well-being and extent of poverty. The present study, therefore, utilised the SASAS 2016 public opinion survey, which utilised subjective than objective measures. The SASAS survey posed the following questions: "Would you consider yourself and your family: 1) wealthy; 2) very comfortable; 3) reasonably comfortable; 4) just getting along; 5) poor or 6) very poor." The respondents who indicated that their family is wealthy, very comfortable or reasonably comfortable were categorized as "non-poor". The respondents who indicated that their family is poor or very poor were categorised as "poor", while those who indicated that they just getting along were classified as "on the breadline" (just surviving). These three levels 1) non-poor; 2) on the breadline; and 3) poor were compared in terms of their assessment of basic services. The results of this analysis is illustrated below.

Table 4 and Figure 1 illustrates that the non-poor ( $M=3.44$ ;  $SD\pm 0.87$ ) are more satisfied with basic services compared to the poor ( $M=2.87$ ;  $SD\pm 0.95$ ). Those on the breadline ( $M=3.30$ ;  $SD\pm 0.85$ ) are less optimistic about basic services than the non-poor ( $M=3.44$ ;  $SD\pm 0.87$ ). The ANOVA revealed that the differences between the groups (non-poor, on the breadline and poor) are statistically significant ( $F = 93.629$  and  $p = 0.000$ ).

TABLE 4 - SATISFACTION WITH BASIC SERVICES BY SELF-ASSESSED LEVEL OF POVERTY

Poverty Level	Mean	N	SD
Poor	2,87	686	0,95
Breadline	3,30	1219	0,85
Non Poor	3,44	1097	0,87
Total	3,25	3002	0,91

The differences among the non-poor, on the breadline and poor related to satisfaction with basic services was examined in greater detail. Table 5 illustrates that a larger proportion of the poor are dissatisfied (29.2%) or very dissatisfied (24.2%) with the supply of water and sanitation compared to the non-poor (dissatisfied – 19.9% or very dissatisfied – 9.9%). Overall, 71.7% of the respondents are satisfied with the provision of electricity. However, a larger proportion of the poor (29.7%) compared to the non-poor (19.2%) are dissatisfied with the provision of electricity. Approximately 47.8% of the poor revealed that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the removal of refuse, while a smaller proportion of the non-poor indicated that they are dissatisfied (19.9). It is evident that a larger proportion

of respondents is dissatisfied (26.5%) or very dissatisfied (17.2%) with the provision of affordable housing compared to those who are satisfied (33.5%) or very satisfied (6.8%). Furthermore, larger proportions of the poor are dissatisfied (31.5%) or very dissatisfied (29.2%) with housing compared to the non-poor (22.1%) or very dissatisfied (9.9%). In general, large proportions of those on the breadline are also dissatisfied with affordable housing.

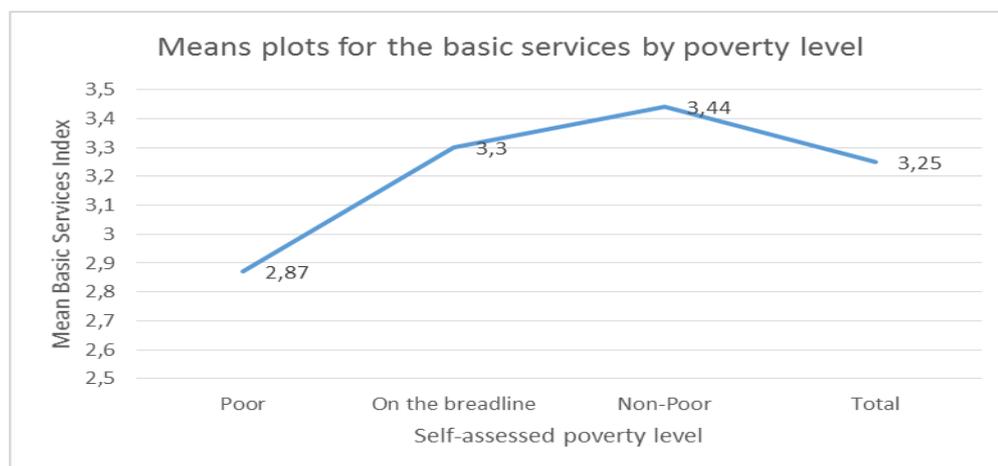


FIGURE 1 - MEANS PLOTS FOR THE BASIC SERVICES BY LEVEL OF POVERTY

TABLE 5 - SATISFACTION WITH FOUR KEY BASIC SERVICES BY SELF-ASSESSED POVERTY STATUS

	Poor	On the breadline	Non Poor	Total
<b>Water*</b>				
Very dissatisfied	24,2%	12,9%	9,9%	14,4%
Dissatisfied	29,2%	23,1%	19,9%	23,3%
Neither	6,8%	6,2%	7,4%	6,8%
Satisfied	30,4%	41,7%	45,8%	40,6%
Very satisfied	9,5%	16,2%	17,0%	14,9%
<b>Electricity*</b>				
Very dissatisfied	11,4%	6,1%	5,4%	7,1%
Dissatisfied	18,3%	13,9%	13,8%	14,9%
Neither	4,3%	5,8%	8,2%	6,4%
Satisfied	49,1%	55,8%	53,9%	53,6%
Very satisfied	16,9%	18,3%	18,6%	18,1%
<b>Refuse removal*</b>				
Very dissatisfied	19,7%	9,8%	7,2%	11,1%
Dissatisfied	28,1%	17,1%	12,7%	18,0%
Neither	8,5%	10,4%	12,8%	10,8%
Satisfied	34,6%	46,5%	50,1%	45,1%
Very satisfied	9,1%	16,3%	17,2%	15,0%
<b>Housing*</b>				
Very dissatisfied	29,2%	16,9%	9,9%	17,2%
Dissatisfied	31,5%	27,7%	22,1%	26,5%
Neither	8,2%	14,9%	22,0%	16,0%
Satisfied	25,0%	33,7%	38,5%	33,5%
Very satisfied	5,9%	6,8%	7,5%	6,8%

## 6. DISCUSSIONS

The SASAS surveys measure attitudes of South Africans, their beliefs, behavioural patterns and values with regard to a range of socio-economic issues such as democracy and governance, social identity, service delivery, access to information and other important social concerns. This article focuses on basic service delivery concerns which are primarily provided by municipalities.

Pursuant to government efforts to improve service delivery, SASAS data from 2003 to 2016 revealed variations in citizen satisfaction with a broad range of service delivery (Table 1) that includes water, electricity, healthcare, refuse collection and housing. However, it can be revealed that service delivery satisfaction levels differ based on numerous factors (DeHoog et al., 1990; Mangai, 2016). For example, the analysis revealed that citizen satisfaction differs according to race. The black majority have the lowest levels of satisfaction. This is obviously as a result of the historical disparities of the apartheid regime during which time comprehensive service delivery was primarily provided to the whites compared to the marginal services for the majority black populace.

However, dissatisfaction is not always related to real living conditions (Moore, 2015). Occasionally it has to do with a group's perception that it is worse off compared to other groups as highlighted by the individual and jurisdictional level of citizen satisfaction model (DeHoog et al., 1990). This implies that if an entire rural community lacks electricity, water, roads or employment, it might not have high aspirations because everyone they know experiences the same circumstances. In contrast, informal settlements and urban townships in affluent metros are surrounded by leafy suburbs, shopping centres, luxury cars and other forms of ostentatious wealth (Maringira and Masiya, 2018:170). Therefore, informal and urban township residents may feel worse off in relation to what they see around them. This sense of relative deprivation and inequality within an urban context raises much dissatisfaction and apprehension.

In 2004, President Mbeki stated that dissatisfaction can also be understood from exaggerated promises by national leadership and a litany of unfulfilled promises. Dissatisfaction is influenced by political promises made during electioneering that all or most of the service delivery concerns would be addressed once the new government is in place (Burger, 2009). In that context unfulfilled promises also tend to be relived after every election, and creates an unrelenting chain of dissatisfaction.

In a democratic society, citizens respond to party manifestos which are generally crafted around public opinions (Magni and Panel, 2014). When a party is elected to power, it translates the intent of the manifesto into national policy that should be adhered to and implemented (Gaster and Squire, 2001).

Therefore, when governments provide services to the people they are fulfilling the promises listed in the manifestos based on public opinion. If the citizenry holds that local government is not delivering on its promises, it may have a negative impact on their level of satisfaction.

Dissatisfaction with service delivery results not only from inadequate provision of services but also the quality provided. Brooks (2009) argues that services provided to those who need them most, there is occasionally uneven access or the services are substandard.

Complaints of poor service delivery abounds in municipalities. This may explain the service delivery protests in primarily black communities across the provinces including Bekkersdal, Khutsong, Diepsloot, Zamdela, Tlokwe, Khayelitsha, Khutsong, Sasolburg and Ficksburg among other service delivery protest hotspots (Mathlala and Aboobaker, 2013). Research also revealed that the top sources of grievances have centred on poor quality of housing, water and sanitation, and electricity (Grant, 2014).

The 2013 Statistics South Africa General Household Survey established that most South Africans have better access to basic services such as housing, water, electricity and sanitation. They are less satisfied with the quality of the services rendered. Moreover, the dissatisfaction trend is growing. For example, the General Household Survey concluded that access to piped water improved from 84.9% of households to 90.8% in 2012 but public opinion revealed growing dissatisfaction with the quality of water.

Dissatisfaction may also arise from the fact that while a household may be recorded as having a water or electricity connection, it does not always imply its functional (Dodds, 2014). Dysfunctionality may relate to sewerage, water and electricity infrastructure failures/breakdowns and cut-offs imposed on those unable to pay. Cases of sewage flowing around houses for up to a year as a result of burst pipes is not uncommon (Cox, 2016). Generally, official statistics do not measure interruptions in services. For example, officially at the local sphere of government, the municipal service provider is given a maximum number of incidences or maximum total length of time where service supply is interrupted. However, in practice, service interruptions are underreported and unlikely to be reflected in the official statistics.

The SASAS 2016 survey also revealed that of all the basic services, satisfaction with housing remained generally very low (under 50%). Black African adults are the least satisfied on average, 30.3%, compared to 37.9% coloured adults; 35.1% Indian adults; and 38.6% white adults. Nationally, only 34% are satisfied with low-cost housing, which is significantly lower than other areas of evaluation. These very low levels of satisfaction is expressed despite the fact that between 1994 and 2004 (first 10 years of democracy), free public housing programme became the de facto urban development strategy of South Africa (Pieterse, 2009). According to the government, formal housing has grown by 50% since

1994 (an additional 5.6 million formal homes since the country's first democratic elections). The 2016 Statistics South Africa General Household Survey reported that the urban population living in informal settlements had decreased from 17% in 2002 to 11% in 2014. Moreover, the percentage of households living in formal dwellings increased from 76% to 80% between 2002 and 2014 nationally.

Despite these gains, the SASAS survey revealed that satisfaction with housing has been very low. In fact, there are quadruple more protests over housing than any other service (Moore, 2015). The reasons could include that the provision of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) homes have often been embroiled in controversy. The homes have occasionally been awarded to non-deserving persons or are poorly constructed, while certain entitled beneficiaries choose to sell. The 2012 Statistics South Africa General Household Survey highlighted that 16% of the people who reside in government constructed low cost houses complained about the quality – leaking roofs and weak wall structures which have collapsed and killed a number of persons.

One could also derive elements of dissatisfaction with housing as a result of post-apartheid development policies which led to the construction of townships and government homes built far, if not farther than the original apartheid townships with limited access to social services (Mahajan, 2014). Furthermore, over the same period, there has been a massive growth of informal settlements (Ibid). Informal settlements have been home to the majority of protests in municipal areas (Allan and Heese, 2016), primarily in the metros such as Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Cape Town. The SASAS data revealed that satisfaction with basic services is highest for South Africans who lived in urban formal areas ( $M=3.48$ ;  $SD\pm 0.84$ ); rural formal areas ( $M= 2.89$ ;  $SD\pm 0.92$ ); traditional (tribal) areas ( $M=2.82$ ;  $SD\pm 0.76$ ); followed by the lowest in urban informal areas ( $M=2.51$ ;  $SD\pm 1.01$ ) (Table 2).

However, poor urban formal areas are as likely to experience protests as informal settlements. The metros are historically associated with the highest population growth linked to the influx of poor migrants to cities in search of potential job opportunities (Ibid). Their first point of contact with the city is primarily the informal settlements and also high density townships and often find themselves unemployed. These immigrants are generally effectively marginalised from both access to economic opportunity, as well as housing and services resulting in dire poverty. Consequently, the need for housing in these areas in most instances is absolutely desperate. This scenario accounts for the fact that the wealthiest and most successful regions (such as Western Cape and Gauteng) experience most service delivery protests in the urban townships and informal settlements (Moore, 2015).

To comprehend the categories of citizens most dissatisfied with service delivery, the opinions of ordinary citizens was assessed based on whether they think they are not poor/wealthy, just able to

survive (on the breadline) or poor. SASAS data (Table 4) revealed that the poor according to the following categories - non-poor, on the breadline and poor are persons most dissatisfied with basic services compared to the prosperous and those on the breadline. A detailed analysis of the different basic services provided by the SASAS data (Table 5) also revealed that a larger proportion of the poor are dissatisfied with water supply (dissatisfied, 29.2%; very dissatisfied, 24.2%). A larger proportion of the poor (29.7%) compared to the prosperous (19.2%) are dissatisfied with the provision of electricity. A total of 47.8% of the poor indicated they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with refuse removal. Furthermore, larger proportions of the poor are dissatisfied (31.5%) or very dissatisfied (29.2%) with housing.

South Africa has been rated as the world's second most unequal nation. Approximately half of its population live in poverty. The inability to access or earn income is one of the obvious expressions of poverty. According to Statistics South Africa (2016), the unemployment rate is currently at 26.6%. The expanded definition reflects unemployment at 36.4%. SASAS data revealed that the poor primarily comprise of unemployed persons who have primary education. The poor experience higher levels of poor service delivery either earn an adequate or no income whatsoever. The labour movement argues that dissatisfaction is linked to poverty. Moreover, if everyone earned a minimum wage, discontent and protests among poor communities could decline (Moore, 2015).

Furthermore, the poor, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas tend to migrate in larger numbers per household which the municipal service providers cannot anticipate because of the limited resources it is expected to survive on. Therefore, it implies that free municipal basic services policies do not alleviate the plight of the poor. For example, municipalities have installed prepaid meters for households to receive Free Basic Services (FBS), for example, water to the poor including the high price per-kilolitre for water consumed above the FBS level. Poor households are thus limited to FBS water, because subsequent utilisation is unaffordable since households have a higher than average number of residents, including tenants in the main house and backyard shack dwellings. This effectively limits the amount of free water per person to below the level intended by municipal policy. Furthermore, citizens would be dissatisfied with the service. The same concept applies to Free Basic Electricity (FBE) services offered to poor communities. According to a study conducted by SALGA entitled: Local Government Perception on Community Protests, 'the need is so great in many communities [that] even a basic package of services does not have the intended consequence of raising communities' living standards'.

Due to the lack of income, and reliance on free FBS, it is likely that 'The more people relied on government to survive, the more likely they were to protest' (Hlatshaneni, 2016). It has been argued that unemployment results in poverty which contributes towards further redundancy and its persistence (Cloete, 2015). As a result, poor people endure inequality, unemployment, hunger and disillusionment. The SASAS data analysis revealed that those who consider themselves poor are extremely dissatisfied with service delivery. SASAS data revealed that discontent also emanates as a result of the perception that the government is not making a concerted effort to create employment. A huge percentage (85.3%) is either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, while 6.2% of the respondents remained neutral. Consequently, approximately 91.5% of South Africans is dissatisfied with the government's effort to create jobs. Therefore, measures to reduce unemployment could be a solution to alleviate poverty and subsequently service delivery discontent. The 2016 Statistics SA figures revealed that unemployment remained high at 26.6%; one of the highest in the world. In fact, unemployment rate has not been below 20% for 17 years (Yueh, 2014). Subsequently, poverty and inequality have also remained very high. Furthermore, the SASAS data also revealed that the major discontent is among black South Africans with low levels of education. Moreover, most of the unemployment falls in the black youth category. Black youth without matric are most likely to remain unemployed, which has been consistent at 57% for the last five-years, while those with matric recorded unchanged unemployment level of 38% (Merten, 2016). In this regard the creation of employment to alleviate poverty must be created in sectors that can absorb both unskilled and semi-skilled labour.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to explore citizen satisfaction related to basic municipal service delivery in South Africa based on the 2016 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS). The article sought to comprehend public perception of municipal service delivery; perceived views of the reasons for its failure as well as what citizens believe should be done to enhance services. Therefore, the primary contribution this article makes to scholarship is enhancing and comprehending the drivers of service delivery satisfaction including the level of citizen satisfaction in developing countries, for example, South Africa. This research was prompted by escalating public service delivery protests in South Africa including other developing countries. The study adopted a quantitative analysis of the data. A public opinion survey approach was utilised because it is ideal to measure consumer preferences, political opinions, and public attitudes of social related concerns. Most analysts have argued that increasing protests can be attributed to the municipal governments' failure to provide satisfactory basic services. Data from the SASAS survey illustrates that there are low levels of citizen satisfaction with municipal

service delivery. According to the respondents, dissatisfaction is both a result of the unsatisfactory quality and quantity of services due to inadequate public participation. Furthermore, an analysis of the SASAS data revealed that dissatisfaction with service delivery is more apparent among the black majority communities, while citizens from all racial groupings are extremely infuriated with housing. The study confirmed the individual and jurisdictional level of citizen satisfaction model which argues that people may or may not be satisfied with service delivery based on personal background, social status values, and circumstances can influence their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with service delivery. Service delivery discontent is influenced by a number of factors including apartheid disparities, relative deprivation and inequality, exaggerated and unfulfilled political promises and uneven access to services. Frustration is compounded by the lack of responsiveness by officials and councillors as well as limited or unclear channels of communication, provision of substandard services and high levels of poverty.

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