EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY: A SYSTEMS' THINKING PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Systems theory leverages effective diagnosis and management of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the contemporary polycentric local governance systems. It is in that context that this research uses systems theory to evaluate the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in uThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Such analysis is aimed to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in uThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system.

The study is motivated by both practical deficiencies in uThukela District Municipality and its local Municipalities as well as theoretical deficiencies that characterise most of the existing studies on managing complex local governance systems. To therefore, address such practical and theoretical deficiencies, this study uses systems theory to evaluate the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-a-vis other actors in uThukela District Municipality and its local Municipalities. Through such analysis, the study aimed to identify a comprehensive systems model that can be extracted and suggested to uThukela for diagnosing and managing such complexities.

The entire research process is guided by certain six critical research objectives and questions. First research objective and question evaluate and identify the critical political actors and their interactive activities in uThukela District Municipalities. Second research objective and question examine and identify the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in uThukela District Municipalities. Third research objective and question assess and identify the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with political-administrative interface in uThukela District Municipalities.

Fourth research objective and question analyse the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts in uThukela District Municipalities. Fifth research objective and question examine the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing such complexities in uThukela District Municipalities. Sixth research

objective and question sought to identify and extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in uThukela District Municipalities, but also in the entire South African local governance system.

Basing on these six critical research objectives and questions, theories revealed local governance organisations to be analogous to systems that constitute of different internal interactive subsystems and actors that also influence or are instead influenced by certain external actors. Certainly, such theoretical articulations echoed fundamental argument in this research that the use of systems approach would aid effective diagnosis and management of the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors in uThukela District Municipality and its local Municipalities.

Primary research was undertaken to analyse, compare and triangulate such theoretical articulations with empirical findings reflecting actual experiences of actual political, administrative and other actors in such complexities. Primary research was based on phenomenological ontology as the research philosophy to elicit practical views from the actual actors or participants in the political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors' complexities in uThukela District Municipalities. Phenomenological ontology dictated the use of case study and exploratory research designs as well as qualitative research method. Qualitative research method entailed the use of interviews as the principal technique to elicit facts in their real natural settings and context. This aided thorough diagnosis and identifications of the points of conflicts and antagonisms in such complexities.

Such research ontology, designs and methods were used to elicit views from a sample of thirty participants consisting of mayors, speakers, members executive council committees, oversight committees and all Section 54 and 56 in uThukela District Municipality and its local Municipalities.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews to permit eliciting of new insights from the participants. Obtained qualitative data from each of the thirty participants was thematically analysed. Thematic analysis was used to extract coherent common set of themes, subthemes and their associated narratives that logically and chronologically explain the critical political actors, administrative actors, other actors, such actors' interactive activities, points of

conflicts and antagonisms that induce complexities from such interactive activities. It also extracted themes and narratives on the impacts of such complexities on service delivery and the effectiveness of the approach so far used for managing such complexities.

Findings imply that besides political-administrative interface, uThukela District Municipality as a "system" also constitutes of other subsystems that are reflected in the form of Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. However, as actors in such political and administrative subsystems interact with each other, they were also found to interact with certain other critical actors like certain community activists as well as business actors.

To mitigate and manage these complexities of political-administrative, uThukela District Municipality was found to emphasise prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices and enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct to prevent their interference in municipal administration. Other measures were reiterated to include suggestion for abolition of speaker's office, streamlining relationship between the mayor and municipal manager and use of relevant laws to manage collusions leading to corruption.

To deal with such complexities, this study triangulated findings with theories to extract and suggest a systems model that can be adopted to comprehensively diagnose and manage the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors in uThukela District and its local Municipalities. It is argued in that systems model that effective diagnosis and management of the complexities of political-administrative interface would require the application of certain six critical steps.

In otherwords, the study not only suggested a systems model that can be emulated by uThukela District Municipality and its local Municipalities, but also by the entire South African local governance system. Even though through such systems model, this research enriched the existing theories on public administration and management, future studies must still assess how such a model can be scientifically tested using confirmatory factor analysis.

Keywords: *Complexities; Systems Approach; Political Actors; Administrative Actors; Other Actors; Municipal Performance; Service Delivery; Diagnosis and Management*

DECLARATION

I Patrick Sibusiso Mkhize, hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation/thesis has never been submitted for a degree to any other university, and its prior publication might be on the form of conference papers and/or journal articles that I might undertake in future.

Where other sources/authors have been cited, this has been acknowledged in the text and referenced at the end of this work I the bibliography.

Signature:…….. Date:……..

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIC-African Independent Congress

ANC-African National Congress

CATWOE-Customers, Actors, Transformation, Worldview, Owner & Environment)

CoGTA- Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

COPE-Congress of the People

IFP-Inkatha Freedom Party

DA-Democratic Alliance

EFF-Economic Freedom Fighters

MEC-Members of the Executive Committees

MFMA-Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003

MSA-Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

MSA-Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

NCOP-National Council of Provinces

SALGA-South African Local Government Association

ICT- Information and Communications Technology

RSA-Republic of South Africa

AGSA-Auditor-General of South Africa

HRC-Human Rights Commission

GEC-Gender Equity Commission

IDP-Municipal Integrated Development Plan

NDP-National Development Plan

BATWOVE-Beneficiaries, Actors, Transformation, Worldview, Owner & Environment

Three Es-Effectiveness, Efficacy & Efficiency

NPM-New Public Management

IDP-Integrated Development Plan

SDBIP-Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan

CFO-Chief Financial Officer

PGDP-Provincial Growth and Development Plan

ANOVA-Analysis of Variance

M&E-Monitoring and Evaluation

KAP- Knowledge, Attitude & Practices

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the increasing complexities of political/administrative interface in the South African local governance system, this thesis uses systems thinking to diagnose the dynamics of political/administrative interface in UThukela District Municipality. Through such analysis, the study sought to discern a more plausible system model that can be extracted and adopted by UThukela District Municipality. Such reasoning is attributable to the fact that systems theory has over the years proved essential for leveraging effective diagnosis and management of the political-administrative complexities in the increasingly polycentric local governance systems (Lai & Lin, 2017:9).

Usage of systems approach eliminates conflicts, incompatibilities, incongruence and lack of synergies that often hamper the operational efficiency and effectiveness of modern polycentric local governance systems. Systems theory refers to an organisational diagnostic approach that construes organisations as a collection of different interrelated and interactive subsystems or actors that also interact with other external systems to either bolster or even constrain an organisations' effective performance (Lai & Lin, 2017:9).

A polycentric local governance system refers to a government's service delivery framework espousing certain interactive political and administrative systems that also link with related external critical actors to edify or inhibit its effective performance (Blaschke, Schoeneborn & Seidl, 2012:879). In a polycentric local governance system, political systems constitute structures and elected officials entrusted with policy formulation, as administrative systems comprise unelected skilled technocrats and managers charged with the execution of administrative activities associated with policy implementation. However, in the accomplishment of different polycentric local governance activities, these political and administrative systems still often interact with other external actors to enhance or constrain the accomplishment of effective activities' (Rottger & Preusse, 2013:99).

In the event of complexities emerging from different actors' antagonistic interactions, systems theory uses certain analytical approaches such as complexities' analysis, dynamics' complexities, self-organisation, co-evolution and governance networks' diagnosis to aid effective diagnosis, identification, response and coherent management of such complexities (Rottger & Preusse, 2013:99). Since an organisation is posited in systems theory to connote a "system" associated with a certain "*raison d'être*, analytical approach in systems theory aids diagnosis of how the outcomes of certain interactions and networking behaviours among its critical actors are aligned with its "*raison d'être"* (Rottger & Preusse, 2013:99).

Such diagnosis spawns the identification of certain actors' interactive behaviours that can leverage or even hamper the achievement of their desired outcomes. To achieve the desired outcomes, systems theory bolsters the identification of actors' interactive behaviours that must be leveraged or mitigated and modified to achieve the desired outcomes. In the context of public administration and management, systems theory is part of the new public management approach that spawns local governance systems' effective performance and capabilities to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes (Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud & Taylor, 2014:173).

Systems theory aids effective diagnosis of the entire local governance system's value chains to identify the undesired complexities that must be mitigated and managed to leverage achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes. It spurs synergy, coherence and complementarity between different subsystems or groups of actors to enable local governance to operate smoothly and efficiently as a system to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes (Ice & Cooper, 2010:5). Even though this would bolster the effective and efficient performance of the South African local governance system, there is, however, only limited evidence that approaches analogous to the analytical approach in systems theory are used in the South African local governance system.

Pragmatic approaches undertaken in the contemporary polycentric South African local governance system indicate only the application of a less integral and comprehensive approach that cannot be equated to the more comprehensive analytical approach in systems theory (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2014:17). As only a few integral and comprehensive approaches are used, little evidence exists that significant attention has been directed towards addressing conflicts, incompatibilities, incongruence and lack of synergies that often characterise different polycentric South African local

governance subsystems. Such a view echoes Ncalane (2018:10), Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) and Cameron's (2010:676) revelations that effective activities' accomplishment in the South African local government is still punctuated by endless unsupportive complexities of political-administrative interface. A lack of synergies among politicians and administrators has undermined effective oversight and performance in most municipalities because of conflicts, incompatibilities, incongruence, and incompatibility (Mantzaris and Pillay, 2014:17).

As oversight declines, De Visser (2016:3) notes that it has also induced the emergence of certain uncontrolled corrupt behaviours, fruitless and wasted expenditure and financial mismanagement that in turn affect service delivery. The emergence of such uncontrolled behaviours affects the optimisation of the often-limited financial resources to implement an array of different service delivery policies as possible. Such a view also echoes Ngamlana's (2011:13) assertion that poor coherent political-administrative interface at municipalities has undermined the forging of coherent collaboration and cooperation of politicians with administrators, which are critical for leveraging successful policy formulation and implementation.

As facts from the UThukela District Municipality indicate, all these have subsequently affected municipalities' capabilities to deliver the required socio-economic services to meet the communities' needs and preferences. Since communities perceive that their needs and preferences are not being met, this has instigated the emergence of certain new groups of actors from the communities. Such groups of actors demand that their needs and preferences be integrated into policy formulation and implementation.

To accomplish this, they demand deeper involvement and engagement in policy formulation and implementation decisions to a level that is deeper than the present level of communities' involvement and engagement. Unfortunately, as trends from UThukela District Municipality indicate, management has not been able to respond to such demands, thereby causing more complexities. Yet, facts from UThukela District Municipality further indicate that the emergence of such groups of actors, combined with the demands from service delivery activists, contracted service providers, community advocacy groups, and partners in public-private partnerships, further complicates the already complex political-administrative interface in most municipalities.

Such complexities are further exacerbated by the array of demands from opposition political activists, environmentalists, community activists and other critical community stakeholders. Yet, even in the midst of such complexities, suggestions from authors such as Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17), De Visser (2010:3), Chipkin (2012:5) and Ngamlana (2011:13) have only emphasised the need for harmonisation of the relationships between politicians and administrators without stipulating a model on how such complexities can be managed.

To accomplish this, such authors suggest, inter alia, the elimination of conflicts, role duplication, leverage of oversight and review of laws to separate the executive from the legislative functions accomplished by the municipal councils. As contrasted to the systems approach, such proposals are less integral and comprehensive to effectively identify and manage the complexities of the political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric local governance system.

Yet, just like in the South African local governance system, Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) reveal that the increasingly democratic local governance systems are not only characterised by a complex network of political and administrative actors, but also other critical actors that can either influence or constrain municipalities' effective performance. Thus, Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17), De Visser (2016:3), Chipkin (2012:5) and Ngamlana's (2011:13) proposals do not only focus on political-administrative interface to the exclusion of other critical actors, but also do not reflect a deep understanding of the deep complexities of political-administrative interface in which the modern polycentric South African local governance system operates.

Therefore, in that context, this research uses systems approach to evaluate and identify the complexities of political-administrative interfaces in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. Such analysis is not only aimed at evaluating the complexities of political-administrative interfaces in UThukela but also to address the existing lack of a systems model for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface not only in UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system. To accomplish that, analysis of relevant theories will be contrasted with primary findings to extract and suggest a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing, identifying and managing political-administrative interface complexities by not only the authorities at UThukela District Municipality, but also by the entire South African local governance system. In other-words, as reflected below, the problems that motivate this research

are as elucidated in the contextualisation of the situation and problem of political/administrative interface in South Africa.

1.2 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE SITUATION AND PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Contextualisation of the situation and problem of political/administrative interface implies challenges arising from the political and administrative leaders that do not want to keep in their lane. The Municipal Systems Act as well as the Municipal Structures Act clearly designate the roles that politicians and administrative officials at the municipal levels are expected to accomplish. However, as indicated in most of the empirical studies, there is often a tendency and preponderance of some politicians to attempt to cross their lanes.

Politicians are often politicians by their nature and character, and since they are elected by the majority of local residents, they believe that they have all the powers to control and command all the directions that municipal activities' implementation must take (Kamara, Leonard & Haines, 2017).

To accomplish that, some politicians attempt to influence municipal policy direction through lobbying and voting in the municipal council. If they fail, they resort to activities that interfere with the administrative activities of the municipalities. They attempt to even influence certain municipal administrative officials with some form of intimidations in certain cases to make decisions that favour the position that they are espousing.

As this has often led to the blackmailing of some municipal managers with accusations of incompetence or engagement in corruption. In some instances, the interference in the administrative activities has also resulted in the firing of some municipal managers because the municipal council, that politicians control, has the overall mandate to hire and fire municipal managers. Given such a mandate, politicians not only influence decisions on municipal managers who must be hired, but also on the municipal managers to be fired.

In most cases, there may be certain designated political cadres who have proper qualifications but do not have experience in local government operation and management. Alternatively, the political cadre candidate may have experience but lack technical educational qualifications in the area that he is to manage (Meyer, 2013). The implication is that as politicians influence decisions to hire municipal managers on the basis of political cadreship rather than technical competence, it is often the service delivery issues that suffer at the municipal level.

This affects the capabilities of the municipalities to respond to the service delivery needs of the population as well as the capabilities of the politicians themselves to deliver the key deliverables designated in their political party manifesto. Besides that, some of the politicians also tend to influence the kinds of municipal programmes that must be implemented or not implemented in their wards. Drawing from the fact that politicians feel that they are elected by the majority of residents and therefore hold the overriding authority to adopt and implement policies that are responsive to the dichotomous needs and preferences of their residents, they also tend to intermeddle in tender award decisions.

Politicians' intermeddling in municipal tender processes is often the instigator of corruption at the municipal level. This is because most of the entrepreneurs who are also key political mobilisers at the ward level or even municipal level tend to even dictate to the politicians the kinds of tenders that they must be given (Maphazi, Raga & Taylor, 2013). With such pressure, some influential politicians are also often influenced to influence tender decisions in favour of their designated candidates. This results in the award of tenders to bidders who do not meet the stipulated procurement requirements.

As some of the politicians interfere with municipal administrative activities, their quest to do so has often not been a mere walk in the park, as some of the municipal administrators have often resisted their interference. In those instances, some municipal administrators often demand that all municipal activities and decisions must be accomplished in the context of municipal operational policies, regulations and laws. While some of the municipal managers have often done that in good faith, others have often used their knowledge to undermine politicians and interfere in political decisions.

Some of the managers indirectly become politicians to attempt to influence some of the council decisions in their desired direction. This is often reflected in budgeting decisions where some of the municipal programmes are not allocated an adequate budget as compared to others. However, as the municipal administrators use their technical competence and knowledge to stamp their authority, conflicts and rifts have often emerged between the municipal administrators and politicians (Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018).

The fact that some municipal administrators are recruited from the pool of cadres implies that they are more likely to act as politicians rather than municipal technocrats and administrators. This instigates conflicts and complexities that undermine service delivery because some of the programmes may not be approved by the council because they were introduced by a particular manager. On the other hand, some of the programmes approved by the council may not be implemented by the municipal administrators because some of the managers feel that such programmes are not informed by their technical knowledge.

Such complexities of political/administrative interface motivated this research to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. While systems theory can diagnose the nature of such complexities, its application is accompanied by change and transformation of the present behaviours and practices. In such change and transformation processes, the politicians and the municipal managers themselves must act as the change agents to drive change and transformation to create a new environment that facilitates the amicable working relationships of politicians and municipal administrators (Koma, 2014).

However, for politicians and municipal administrators to act as change agents, training and development of the requisite leadership skills and tactics are a necessity. Politicians and municipal administrators must be trained and developed in critical leadership skills for aiding collaboration and liaison with all the groups, as well as negotiation, compromise and trade-off skills and tactics.

To further drive change and transformation, each of the municipal managers and politicians must also be trained as transformational leaders and change agents to create new situations that diffuse political-administrative conflicts. That will influence the extent to which politicians and municipal administrators are able to work with each other to set the designated municipal vision and drive transformation to achieve that vision. While transformation leadership is important, it must also

be integrated with elements of participative leadership to smoothen the working relationships of politicians and municipal administrators (Greijing, 2017).

Participative leadership, also known as democratic leadership style or approach, focuses on creating consensus by involving and consulting all the stakeholders in key decision-making processes. It recognises that organisations constitute different actors with different interests and their frequent consultation and involvement is critical for smoothening the operational working and performance of the organisation. To accomplish this, participative leadership often facilitates free conversation among all the stakeholders with the common objective of reaching a consensus. It also encourages free information and idea exchange and sharing without infringing on each other's rights in order to reach amicable decisions.

Subsequently, it uses utilitarian approach to ensure that the decisions reached are in the best interests of the majority of the organisational actors. However, participatory leadership does not only use a democratic approach but also a collective, autocratic and consensus approach. A democratic approach encourages the participation of all the stakeholders, with the effect that the final decisions are made by the leaders in a way that meets the needs of all the stakeholders. A collective approach requires decisions to be made by groups of stakeholders who become responsible for all the undertaken decisions (Kahn, Madue & Kalema, 2011).

Whereas these approaches imply there is need for collaboration and liaison between politicians and municipal administrators, participatory leadership also has an autocratic aspect where leaders are expected to stamp their authority in situations where the decision to be made is in the best interest of the majority and the organisation.

Training and developing politicians and municipal administrators to recognise such participatory leadership style would help them not only to use such tactics, but also to recognise when to use them for the sake of making the best decisions for the municipality. As the autocratic approach is applied in situations where leaders must stamp their authority, the consensus approach requires leaders to grant the decision-making powers to the organisational actors to negotiate and make compromises on how a particular situation must be addressed. In other words, such a view seems to echo the findings in most of the past studies on the complexities of political/administrative interface in South African municipalities.

1.2.1 Previous Studies on Political/Administrative Complexities in the South African Local Governance System

Some of the complexities arising from political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality as well as in most South African municipalities are instigated by the dual activities accomplished by municipal council. At the municipal level, council tends to operate as the executive as well as the legislative body. As de Visser (2016:3) notes, this is attributable to Section 151(2) of the South African Constitution that promulgates the municipal council as the executive and legislative body. With such legislative and executive powers, the municipal council deliberates over both policy and law-making decisions as well as their implementation.

This contrasts with the approach at the national and provincial government levels where the legislature deliberates over laws as the executive implements them in the midst of the oversight exercised by the legislature. As much as that approach enhances checks and balances, the use of such an approach is, however, not evident in most of the municipalities.

Dual roles of the municipal council induce complexities that limit its capabilities to effectively exercise oversight on the municipal executive's activities. This explains why there are often frequent incidents of mismanagement, misgovernance, corruption and financial mismanagement that undermine the implementation of relevant municipal service delivery initiatives. Certainly, Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 attempts to establish some level of separation of powers by emphasising the creation of the executive and executive mayoral committee systems.

However, complexities often still emerge from the fact that both the executive and executive mayoral committees still rely on the municipal council to obtain executive powers to operate effectively. According to de Visser (2016:3), this is because the municipal council is not only the authorised source of executive power but also the executives' main oversight entity. This affects effective municipal governance, and it is the reason former South African President Jacob Zuma once lamented that given the governance challenges that municipalities are facing, there is a need for separating the executive and legislative roles accomplished by municipal councils. Apart from the directives from the provincial and national governments, this oversight challenge leaves the municipal administration without the body that can control and direct its activities.

It contrasts with the situation at the national level, where the president and cabinet control central government administration as the legislature exercises oversight. At the same time, the municipal council is legally framed as the executive entity as it is the authorised employer of all municipal staff. In that instance, the law has to some degree delineated the municipal council from the administration. In such situations, Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 authorises the municipal council to recruit senior managers, as the administration can only recruit the other staff.

However, in most cases, complexities arise from the tendency of some council members to influence the council to appoint certain politically affiliated candidates or friends and relatives. This causes political interference in administrative activities. The view that political interference in administration creates complexities is also accentuated in Twala's (2019:492) research findings. In a study titled: *"The African National Congress (ANC) and the Cadre Deployment Policy in the Post-apartheid South Africa"*, Twala (2019:492) points out that the adoption of the cadre deployment policy complicates the already complex political-administrative interface in the local governance system.

It causes the infiltration of the politics into municipal administration, resulting in a situation where the political system is involved in both policy formulation and implementation. Yet, administrators are not permitted to engage in such dual activities. He notes that such a situation is not the only problem, but also a complication and confusion with the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) 32 of 2000 on staff recruitment and discipline.

Twala (2019:492) explains that, as per the Act, the municipal council decides the human resource policies that municipal managers must implement. It also appoints senior managers who are later not responsible and accountable to the council but to the municipal manager. This creates complexity because senior managers are not responsible and accountable to the council that appoints them. Although the municipal council ensures the successful implementation of such human resource policies, complexities still often arise in instances where some councillors are engaged in recruitment exercises by participating as members of the recruitment committees, either as active decision-makers or as just passive observers during interviews. This causes politicians' interference in administration to complicate the already complex politics-administration interface.

In contrast to the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) 56 of 2003, which limits councillors' participation in tender decision-making, staff recruitment should be undertaken by managers and not councillors. Such political interference often still occurs, even in the midst of the provision of the councillors' code of conduct that bars councillors from unnecessary interference in municipal administrative affairs. Among many provisions that seek to separate the council from the administration, councillors are also barred by the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 from participating in the tender decision-making.

However, despite such laws, there are still instances where certain councillors have sought to interfere in and influence tender decisions in favour of certain politically connected tender-entrepreneurs as well as bidders who are relatives, friends, or secret business partners. Some councillors even exchange their influence over tender decisions for cash. In other words, even in the midst of the existence of different laws separating politics from administration, facts from the UThukela District Municipality as well as in most of the South African municipalities still indicate that there are various instances where politicians have interfered with municipal administration. This unnecessary political interference has complicated the municipal political-administrative interface.

Quite often, if the interference does not emerge from one of the powerful councillors or local politicians, it may emerge from the political system at the provincial level. As the provincial political system attempts to remote control municipalities, such interferences often occur in municipal employees' recruitment, tender decisions, credit control decisions and the implementation of the code of conduct.

This unwarranted interference complicates the administrative process to recruit competent staff, award bids to the best companies, and apply the administrators' expertise and skills to accomplish different tasks. These situations cause some municipalities to fail to achieve desired outcomes, leading to community protests over service delivery. Other forms of complexities often arise when a senior political party member or official or even a former political office-holder is recruited as a member of the municipal staff. Due to such seniority as well as a senior political member's capability to influence or constrain the executive mayor's electability in future elections, the executive mayor, who is often elected from the ordinary councillors, may fail to politically control and influence such a member. Instead, it is such a senior political member who may exert control

and influence over the executive mayor to thereby limit the level of accountability that is expected from such a senior political member.

However, instances where the executive mayor has attempted to politically counter the influence of such senior political party members turned municipal staff members have often caused the emergence of more complex power struggles. Such power struggles induce emergence of aligning and non-aligning contrasting groups that engage in incidents of sabotage that adversely affect the accomplishment of municipal activities. Subsequently, this also affects the achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes.

Even if such power struggles do not arise from such situations, they often still arise in instances where the municipal manager as the administrative head, fails to cooperate with the executive mayor, as the political head of the municipality. Certainly, it has so far emerged from studies that the smooth political-administrative interface depends on common personalities, common values, shared management and leadership styles, as well as shared mission and objectives among the municipal political and administrative figures.

However, it has often still emerged that as personalities, values, management and leadership styles, mission and objectives clash between municipal political and administrative figures, it tends to create endless conflicts until one exits. This leads to the emergence of complexities as different centres of power, groups and actors supporting different contending figures. As some engage in sabotage, the other valuable municipal employees tend to leave due to the hostile working environment created by the emergence of such chaotic situations. Subsequently, the negative results are often reflected in blurring the normal accountability channels and distorting the process of activities' accomplishment to undermine achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes.

Ngamlana (2011:13) points out that the complexities also tend to arise from certain overlapping responsibilities and grey areas that cause disputes between politicians and administrators. To address such gaps, he highlights that Section 53 of the Municipal Systems Act empowers municipalities to adopt the instrument reflecting critical values, conflict resolution rules and clear reporting lines to minimise conflicts. Such instruments must be adopted by the majority of the councillors and endorsed by all councillors. However, in certain cases, Ngamlana (2011:13) reveals that due to the increasing political infiltration into municipal administration, most of the

municipalities have either not adopted such instruments or have just adopted the less effective ones. As a result, such conflicts persist, resulting in situations that undermine the effective accomplishment of certain activities.

Such negative outcomes of political infiltration into municipal administration are also noted by Surty (2010:98) to have affected the effectiveness of oversight committees. The emergence of such situations has undermined the effective utilisation of committees as mechanisms for vigorous engagement between councillors, municipal executives and administration.

Surty (2010:98) elaborates that Municipal Structures Act (MSA) 117 of 1998 emphasises the need for the establishment of Sections 79 and 80 committees. Section 79 committees are supposed to be chaired by a councillor who does not sit on executive and reports directly to the municipal council. Section 80 committees that are aimed at aiding the mayoral executive committee are chaired by a councillor who is a member of the executive mayoral committee.

Such a councillor reports directly to the mayoral executive committee and not the municipal council. To enhance effective oversight and municipal performance, municipalities are required to simultaneously use the two committee systems. However, Surty (2010:98) points out that most municipal practices indicate that most municipalities tend to use only Section 80 committees due to their effects on leveraging the executive mayor's influence.

In those situations, he explains the administration prepares and discusses reports, recommendations and draft resolutions that are subsequently re-evaluated by the Section 80 Committee,led by a member of the mayoral committee. Such reports, recommendations and draft resolutions are subsequently submitted by the mayoral executive committee to the plenary council meeting.

Surty (2010:98) notes that since most of the essential work is accomplished by the Section 80 committee, the municipal council tends to just rubber stamp Section 80 committee decisions. This undermines the municipal council's execution of effective oversight over the executive committee and administration. It also limits the municipal council's ability, as the "engine of local democracy", to vigorously evaluate different policies and decisions made by the municipal executive committee and administration. Although the establishment of Section 79 committees is critical for countering such loopholes, Surty (2010:98) argues that their effectiveness is often

hampered by the limited number of councillors with the requisite competence to steer such committees.

In other words, some of the complexities of political-administrative interfaces have not only caused instances where conflicts and distrust emerge but also situations where politicians and administrators tend to collude to undermine effective accomplishment of certain municipal activities. This not only undermines oversight, but also enables the emergence of corrupt practices. Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) highlight that such situations too often emerge from the antagonistic or even colluding relationships arising from the relationship between municipal political-administrative interfaces to instigate corrupt practices.

Such antagonistic or even colluding relationships cause a breakdown of good governance and ethical and moral integrity practices among municipal officials. Subsequently, the emergence of such a situation creates a municipal environment in which corruption tends to thrive. Quite often, Ncalane (2018:79) argues, this affects the municipalities' capabilities to deliver critical services to their communities. Yet, as some of the municipalities fail to deliver such services, some of the dissatisfied councillors often mobilise and instigate the communities to protest.

The people shall govern, according to Chapter 1 of the 1996 South African Constitution, has led to the emergence of new groups of actors who tend to influence or even constrain how municipal activities are accomplished. In other words, the interests of the local communities as well as other groups of local actors are often not considered or even valued in some of the municipal political-administrative interfaces.

Municipal political-administrative interfaces, whether during policy formulation or implementation, tend to rely solely on councillors as representatives of the communities to determine what constitutes the communities' preference. This is often done in lieu of the use of appropriate consultation mechanisms to engage and involve community members, other groups of actors and stakeholders in the accomplishment of different service delivery policy formulation and implementation activities. Yet, in the increasingly polycentric local governance systems, Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) posit that it is not only the complementary political-administrative interface that influences achievement of the desired community service delivery

outcomes, but also the nexus of such political-administrative interface with other groups of actors and critical stakeholders from the communities.

Positive service delivery outcomes are determined by the interplay of political-administrative interfaces in conjunction with the consideration of the needs and preferences of the other groups of actors and stakeholders in the communities. Unfortunately, the present political-administrative interface has not been favourable to the application of such an integral approach. This undermines the extent to which the use of the present political-administrative interface is able to induce service delivery outcomes that perfectly respond to the actual needs and preferences of the communities.

It is on that basis that this research uses a systems approach to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interfaces in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District municipality. The use of a systems approach certainly differs from the approach that has been used or suggested in other studies to enhance evaluation of how municipal political-administrative interfaces influence the achievement of the desired outcomes. Instead of proposing a systems model that integrates all political and administrative actors, most studies only focus on analysing how the complexities of the political-administrative interface can be mitigated to leverage its efficient functioning.

In such studies that only focus on the complexities of the political-administrative interface, de Visser (2016:3) suggests the need for changing regulations to separate executive functions from the legislative activities accomplished by municipal councils. He also emphasises the need for senior political party members to be prohibited from taking up municipal administrative positions.

De Visser (2016:3) also proposes the need for the ruling political system to focus on using strategic directions and municipal empowerment instead of micro-managing them. Besides the need to improve oversight by strengthening the capabilities of oversight committees, he also reiterates the need for the use of clear terms of reference, rules and orders to clarify the conflicting roles of political-office bearers, structures and administration. Although such measures are critical for streamlining political-administrative interface, they do not highlight how such approach is analogous to a systems approach that would aid in the coherent linkage of politicians and administrators with different groups of actors and stakeholders from the communities.

Similar deficiencies are also reflected in Mantzaris and Pillay's (2014:17) suggestions. Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) emphasise the need for the reduction of role ambiguity and ambivalence, dealing with conflicting expectations among elected leaders and administrators, and the use of common shared values and ideals. They also suggest the need for political neutrality and the use of more people-centred developmental initiatives that enhance administrative and political efficiency, effectiveness and excellence.

Despite highlighting the importance of using people-centred developmental initiatives, Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) do not explain how such initiatives can be integrated into municipal political-administrative interfaces. Ncalane (2018:10), on the other hand, suggests the need for the adoption and increment of the entrenchment of the doctrine of separation of powers at the municipal level. He adds that this must be accompanied by the training and development of councillors to enhance their understanding of the legislative environment and their required oversight roles.

Ncalane (2018:10) also proposes the need for the uniform application of the councillors' code of conduct as well as disciplinary measures irrespective of the political or administrative status. Certainly, all these suggestions attempt to deal with certain complexities, but not all the complexities that arise from municipal political-administrative interface. Additionally, such suggestions also neglect to elaborate on how municipal political-administrative interfaces can integrate other groups of actors and stakeholders from the communities to leverage municipal effectiveness in the increasingly complex polycentric South African municipalities.

Such challenges also echo the kinds of challenges being experienced in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. It is on that basis that this research uses a systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interfaces in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. Through such analysis, the study aims to explore how political-administrative complexities enhance or even constrain the effectiveness of UThukela District Municipality as a system to achieve its desired service delivery outcomes. To accomplish that, the entire research is based on the reasoning and logic of systems theory.

In other words, views from both the contextualisation of the situation and problem as well as previous studies on the complexities of the political/administrative interface in South Africa suggest that participatory leadership would acknowledge all the stakeholders to diffuse the

tensions and conflicts between politicians and municipal administrators seems to echo the fundamental reasoning in systems theory.

According to Poole (2014:49), systems theory posits organisations as being analogous to organisms that constitute different interactive components or subsystems that influence the achievement of their missions. For local government as an open system, Figure 1.1 illustrates that in the interactions of such components or subsystems with each other, each of the actors or components also tends to be influenced by certain external actors. Thus, Poole (2014:49) highlights that an organisation's analytical capabilities to identify and manage the outcomes of such internal and external actors' complex interactions determine its effective performance. It also subsequently edifies its ability to achieve the desired outcomes.

As an organisation operates in the midst of such external interactive forces, it tends to extract its inputs from such an environment and uses its internal interactive subsystems to process such inputs into outputs that are exported again into the external environment. This process tends to be cyclical for as long as the organisation exists. However, as an organisation engages in such a process, Boulding (1956), as cited in Poole (2014:49), notes that it tends to use negative or positive feedback mechanisms.

Negative feedback mechanisms enhance errors' correction for the organisation to maintain its current state of equilibrium. Positive feedback mechanisms offer insights for the system to be improved to realise the desired outcomes. Thus, the interactive relationships between its internal actors either constrain or leverage a system's capabilities to respond to the complexities unfolding in its external environment. Boulding (1956), as cited in Poole (2014:49), further contends that this implies an organisation's ability to ensure efficient and effective functioning of its internal systems is critical for achieving a strategic fit with its environment to bolster its sustainability. Regarding the contemporary local governance systems, Lai and Lin (2017:19) argue that this signifies a failure to manage the complex political-administrative interface as well as their interactions with other actors can constrain the public manager's abilities to respond to the interests and preferences of local citizens in their external environment.

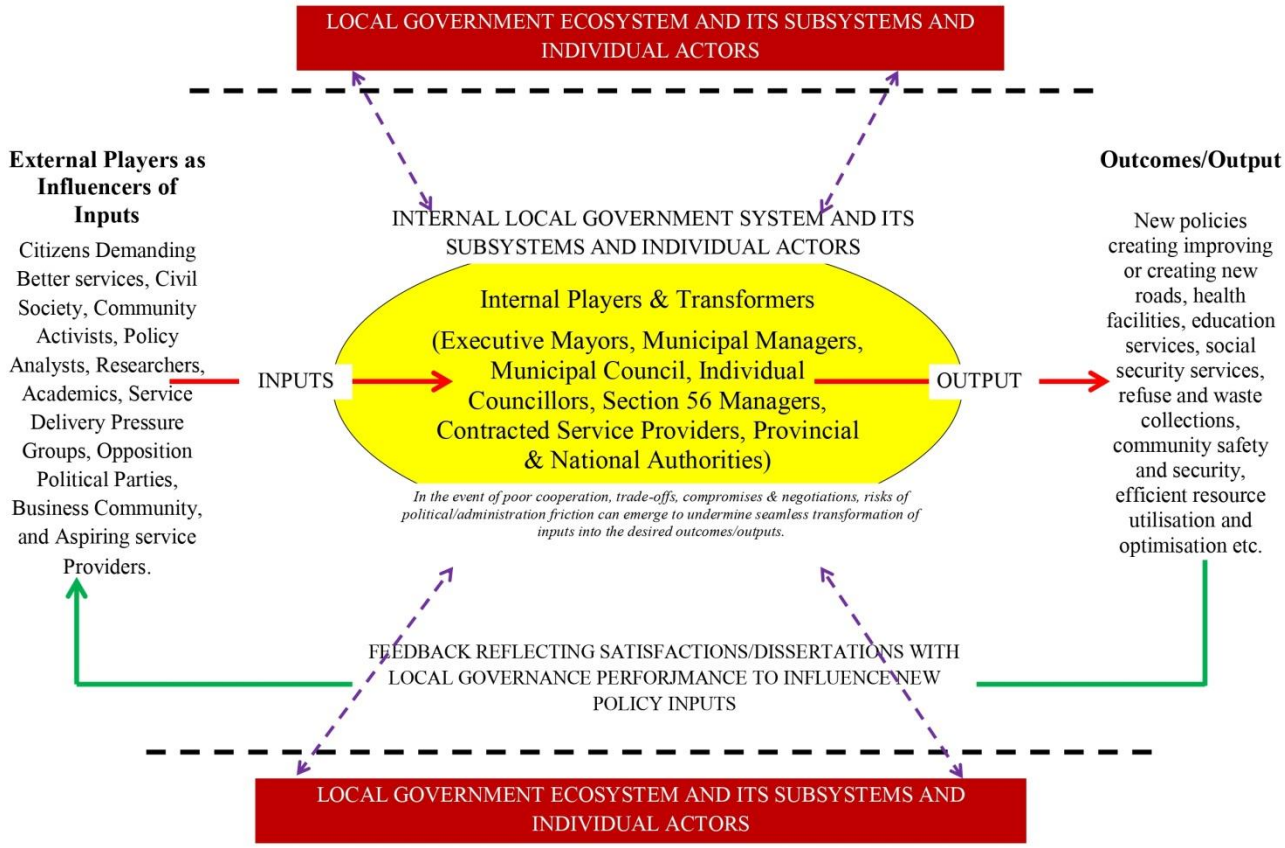

Figure 1.1: Local Government as an Open System

Source: Extracted from the Interpretation and Triangulation of Poole's (2014:49) Systems Theory with different Literature from the South African Local Government

Unfortunately, empirical facts imply the South African local government system tends to be characterised by poor cooperation, trade-offs, compromises & negotiations that instigate risks of political/administration friction that often emerge to undermine seamless transformation of inputs into the desired outcomes/outputs.

Despite the pragmatic approaches undertaken by public administrators and managers, there is little evidence of a more comprehensive systems model that espouses critical approaches for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces in a government setting. Instead, different theories tend to propose piecemeal and discrete approaches for managing such complexities. Besides the deficiencies in such theories, this research is also motivated by the fact that there is

little evidence that such approaches have been embraced by South African local government managers and administrators.

Similarly, it is also evident that such systems approaches have not been adopted for analysing, identifying and managing the increasingly complex political-administrative interface in the increasingly complex polycentric South African local governance system. Yet, as it is elaborated in the problem statement, such deficiencies are not only evident in the entire South African local government but also specifically in UThukela District Municipality.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces is a challenge that still bedevils the UThukela District Municipality. Quite often, this is exacerbated by the increasing emergence of rather more complex interactive networks of other communities' actors. Such complexities constrain the UThukela District Municipality's capabilities from operating effectively to achieve the desired outcomes.

Just like any other municipality in the South African local governance system, the UThukela District Municipality faces the challenge of managing the complex dual legislative and executive functions of the municipal council. Such facts accentuate De Visser's (2010) revelations that locate the complex relationship that exists between local government and the complex nature of how municipalities are governed.

De Visser (2010) associates this complex environment with the fact, that unlike the national and provincial governments, the municipal councils hold both the legislative and executive powers. This causes unwarranted politicians' interference in the UThukela District Municipality's administrative and management activities. Yet, as the municipal council exercises such dual legislative and executive functions, its skills and capabilities in executing such executive functions have often raised scepticism and doubt from the UThukela District Municipality's administrative and management officials. Members of the municipal council are drawn from the pool of councillors elected from the general communities without much consideration for their educational status.

As councillors sitting in the municipal council execute executive-related functions, Chipkin (2012:9) reveals that it often instigates some administrative and management officials to question their capabilities to execute the often-daunting executive tasks. In most instances, questioning councillors' competencies has induced a rift between elected councillors and municipal administrators. Eventually, Chipkin (2012:9) points out that such rifts have undermined the forging of the required coherent collaboration and interface between certain political officials and municipal administrators.

The lack of cooperation between elected government officials and municipal administrators, however, has often resulted in some unintended negative consequences that undermine municipal policy accomplishments. Subsequently, this has also often affected the UThukela District Municipality's capabilities to effectively implement certain policies and achieve desired service delivery outcomes. In turn, the UThukela District Municipality's failure to deliver certain required services often prompts reactions from certain sections of the community leading to the emergence of certain new networks of actors that further complicate the already complex political-administrative interface.

Therefore, to thrive, the UThukela District Municipality's management must craft and apply certain coherent systems approach strategies to coherently manage both the complexities of political-administrative interfaces as well as the complexities of the other networks of community actors. Unfortunately, the conceptualisation and application of such coherent strategies have often been lacking thereby implying that public administrators in the UThukela District Municipality tend to often manage in the midst of chaos.

Even in the midst of such chaos, Sections 54 and 56 of the Municipal Systems Act 2003, as amended, still place the appointment of the municipal manager and other senior managers that report directly to him under the mandate of the municipal councils (De Visser, 2010; Salzberger and Voigt, 2009 as cited in Ngamlana, 2011:13).

In the context of the facts so far experienced at the UThukela District Municipality, such provisions as Sections 54 and 56 alone raise questions in terms of the autonomy of the administration from political influence and interference. Certainly, councillors are relied on by the municipalities as critical sources of insights and inputs into policy formulation from the communities that elected

them. However, such unwarranted political influence and interference frequently undermine successful policy implementation and have unintended consequences for service delivery. Such political influence and interference have often not only been felt in administrative activities but also in certain reserved administrative decisions, such as tender decisions.

This is reflected in the fact that although in UThukela District Municipality, issues of high interest, like the awarding of tenders is, according to the Municipal Finance Management Act, the sole prerogative of the administration, politicians still find it difficult to stay away from such decisions. Quite often, politicians find themselves tempted to become part of the people making decisions on such matters, either directly or indirectly.

In such situations, complexities tend to arise irrespective of whether or not they are successful in influencing tender decisions. If such politicians are successful in influencing tender decisions, tenders may be allocated to less competent service providers. This affects the successful implementation of certain community programmes and projects. In contrast, if they are unsuccessful in influencing tender decisions, a rift tends to arise between such politicians and the municipal administration.

In certain cases, some discontented influential politicians in the communities tend to go as far as mobilising and inciting certain communities against the municipality to instigate the emergence certain new actors. As such sections of the communities view municipal authorities as less responsive to their needs, it causes complexities in not only the relationship between politicians and administrators but also between municipal administrators and certain community interest groups.

Besides the emergence of such situations, facts from UThukela District Municipality further imply that a lack of synergy between these two important political and administrative structures of local government can also induce mismanagement of funds. This is because when there are antagonistic tendencies between administrators and politicians, they lose sight of the oversight duties they need to perform. Councillors who are required by legislation to perform an oversight role may end up wanting to do administrative work such as preparing the organisational structure that would commit the council to unbudgeted mandates. As this causes financial mismanagement, it also affects their oversight roles.

Yet, Stadelmann, Eichenberger and Portmann (2014:43) note that considering that municipal councils can hire and fire municipal managers and other senior managers, there are also instances where municipal councils have misused such mandates. Due to political interference, the municipal councils have often misused such mandates to fire certain managers who are deemed uncooperative with the municipal political structure. As certain management positions become vacant, it affects the effective and efficient accomplishment of municipal activities.

In such instances, Stadelmann et al. (2014:43) reveal that fruitless and wasteful expenditure has also often been incurred where councils would seek to terminate managers procedurally, thereby opening up the council to costly litigation. Complexities arise from the fact that the emergence of such situations undermine the optimisation of the usually limited municipal financial resources to undertake as wide an array of different policy implementation activities as possible.

In UThukela District Municipality, a lack of synergy between the two important structures of local government (politics and administration) has not only led to mismanagement of public funds but also role ambiguity, duplication of duties, wasteful expenditure and unnecessary litigation. It is also true that, in some instances, politicians have been barred from carrying out their legislated mandate in the pretence of being seen as interfering with administrative duties.

Yet, as UThukela District Municipality's management seeks to deal with such complexities of the relationships between politicians and administrators, it is also increasingly emerging that it is becoming quite complex for the municipality to deal with certain other complex groups of actors from the communities. Such groups of actors encompass service delivery activists, contracted service providers, partners in public-private partnerships, opposition political activists, environmentalists, community activists, and other critical community stakeholders. As politicians and administrators interface to determine municipal policies that must be formulated and implemented, such groups of actors also demand their views to be integrated into policy formulation and implementation.

Given the limited resources at the disposal of the municipality, the UThukela District Municipality's management is often unable to accommodate some of the groups' demands. This has often caused discontent among communities as well as the emergence of certain unfavourable conditions for effective policy implementation. Thus, understanding the points of conflict between

the political and administrative interfaces vis-à-vis needs and preferences of the different communities' actors using a systems approach would smoothen the coherent working together of equally important role players in the local government environment.

Zlatanovic (2015) postulates that the use of systems thinking, especially the soft systems theory, provides a proper platform to deal with management conflict situations, especially those that are more complex. Taking this into consideration, the systems theory will then be applied as the preferred approach in the case of complexities within the local government. Based on these problems, this study seeks to use systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

This is attributable to the fact that despite the bedevilling complexities of political-administrative interface, a systems approach has not been used by any of the prior studies, as most of them only focused on using simplified and less coherent approaches for evaluating such complexities. Thus, the use of systems theory will aid the extraction and suggestion of a systems' model that can be adopted to manage the complexities of the political-administrative interfaces not only in the UThukela District Municipality but also in the increasingly polycentric South African local government. To accomplish this, it is indicated below that the entire research process is guided by certain research aim, objectives and questions.

1.5 AIM

Overriding aim of this research is to use systems theory to evaluate the complexities of the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality, so as to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality but also in the entire South African local governance system.

1.6 OBJECTIVES

In line with the overriding aim of the study, the fundamental research objectives are to use the soft systems theory to:

1. Analyse the different roles of councillors and administrators within the local government environment.
2. Explore the problematic interface and challenges between the two (politics and administration).
3. Assess the impact of politics and administration relationships on service delivery.
4. Investigate how the negative impact of the interface can be minimised through the implementation of the systems theory, specifically the soft systems methodology.
5. Identify a systems model that can be extracted and adopted from theories and empirical findings to manage the complexities of political-administrative interface not only in the UThukela District Municipality but also in the entire South African local governance system.

1.7 QUESTIONS

To respond to the research aim and objectives, the critical research questions entailing the utilisation of soft systems theory will evaluate:

1. What are the roles of councillors and administrators within the local government environment?
2. What are the challenges between politics and administration?
3. What is the impact of politics and administration relationships on service delivery?
4. How can the negative impact of the interface be minimised through the implementation of the systems theory, specifically the soft systems methodology?
5. Which systems' model can be extracted and adopted from theories and empirical findings to manage the complexities of political-administrative interface not only in the UThukela District Municipality but also in the entire South African local governance system?

To accomplish the study in line with this research aim, objectives and questions, the entire research process is guided by the conceptual framework reflecting the arguments in Peter Checkland's soft systems methodology.

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CHECKLAND's SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY

Developed by Peter Checkland in 1999 and later modified by Brian Wilson in 2001, the soft systems methodology is an organisational diagnostic approach that evaluates the compatibility of soft systems like behaviours, attitudes, views and perceptions in an organisation to aid hard systems' capabilities to deliver the desired organisational outcomes (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). Motivated by hard systems' failures, Checkland argues in soft systems methodology that diagnosis and improvement of the organisational performance may not only require review and realignment of its hard systems like structures, policies, regulations and operational procedures, but also overhaul and realignment of the views, behaviours, perceptions and attitudes (soft systems) of the actors in such hard systems (Da Costa, Diehl & Snelders, 2019). Supported by Wilson (2001),

In line with Figure 1.2 illustration, Checkland explains that organisations operate within the complex soft systems in which different perceptions and views of actors in such systems influence questions as to what, how, when and for whom should the organisational activities be accomplished.

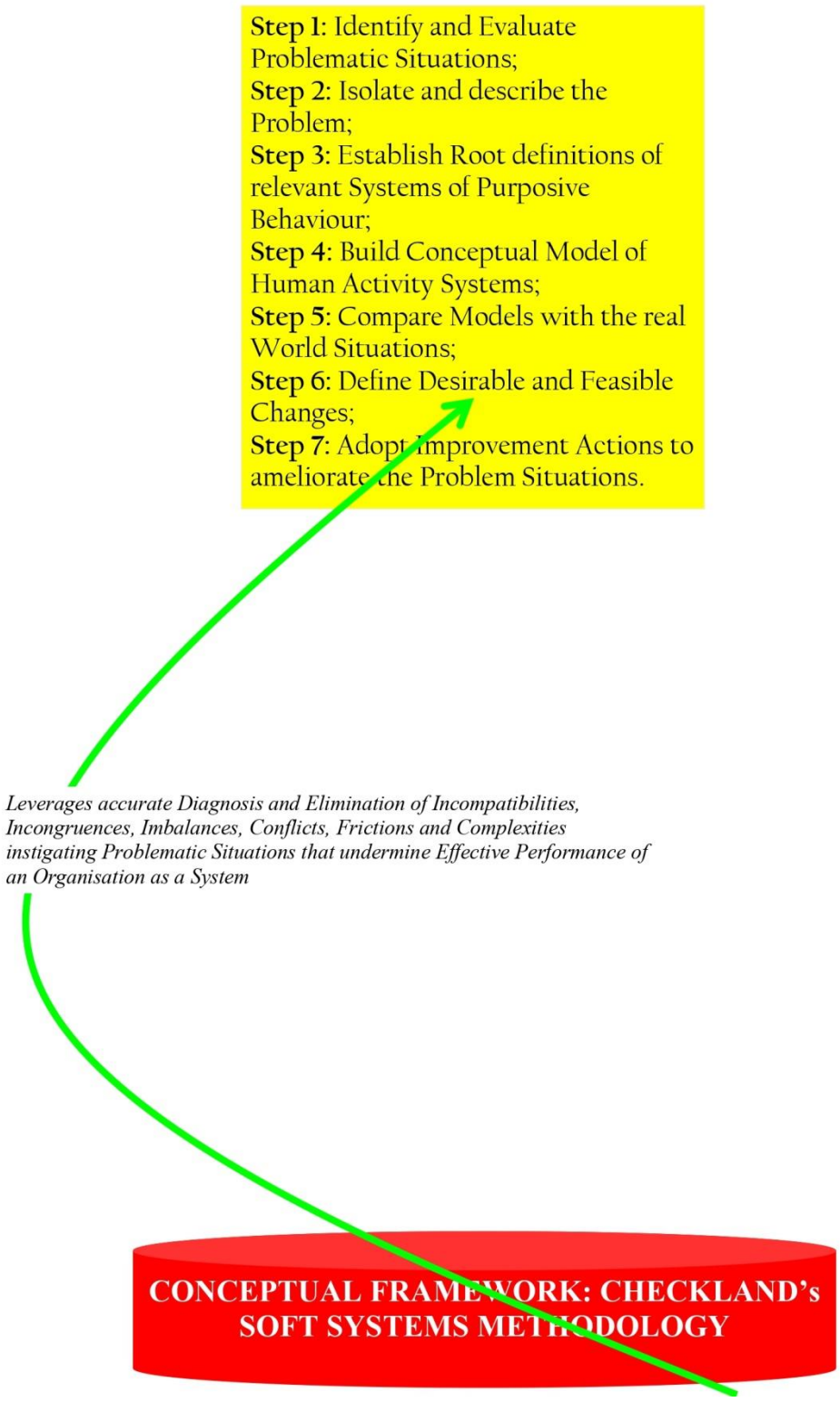

Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework: Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology

Source: Adopted from Checkland's (1999) Soft Systems Methodology

Failure to strike a consensus between such varying views can induce situations that undermine the successful conceptualisation and implementation of a range of plans to achieve the desired organisational outcomes. It requires managers to diagnose all the complexities in the soft systems to emerge with a decision that accommodates and integrates all the divergent views (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012).

This creates a favourable condition for a seamless organisational operation in the quest to achieve its designated goals and mission. Soft systems methodology is, therefore, an organisational re-engineering methodology that aims to reshape attitudes, behaviours and perceptions to support hard systems' capabilities to create and deliver the desired outcomes.

To accomplish this, Checkland and Wilson suggest a combination of tools for soft systems' diagnosis and realignment to include rich picture, conceptual model, CATWOE (customers, actors, transformation, worldview, owner & environment) and formal systems model. A rich picture is gained through a comprehensive analysis of the organisational soft systems to identify different views and perceptions that explain how activities are accomplished in the way they are.

As Figure 1.2 illustrates, such varying views are often accompanied with different mental models and logic that lead to the emergence of certain conceptual models on how certain things should be done. When such conceptual models are compared with the realities within which CATWOE operates, they are modified to create a practical formal systems model (Da Costa et *al.*, 2019).

However, as soft systems' diagnostic tools are being used, Checkland highlights in Figure 1.2 the seven main steps which can be applied to identify and resolve the major organisational soft systems problems. Such seven steps include: Step 1: Identify and evaluate problematic situations; Step 2: Isolate and describe the problem; Step 3: Establish root definitions of relevant systems of purposive behaviour; Step 4: Build a conceptual model of human activity systems; Step 5: Compare models with the real-world situations; Step 6: Define desirable and feasible changes; and Step 7: Adopt improvement actions to ameliorate the problem situation.

But even if it is the fundamental reasoning in Checkland's soft systems methodology that guides the entire philosophical reasoning in this study, it is noted below that such reasoning will be modified using findings from theories and literature as well as the outcomes of the empirical investigations accomplished using Sartre's phenomenological ontology.

1.9 METHODOLOGY

Basing on the thinking in systems theory, the methodology section highlights that the study used systems thinking, creative methodology and phenomenological ontology as the research philosophy to elicit practical views from the actual actors or participants in the political-administrative interface's complexities in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. Besides describing sampling method as well as data collection and analysis methods, it also offers insights into the measures used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations of the study.

1.9.1 Systems Thinking, Creative Methodology and Phenomenological Ontology

To diagnose the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality, the study used systems thinking entailing the application of Checkland's soft systems diagnostic tools, creative methodology and phenomenological ontology as the research philosophy to elicit practical views from the actual actors or participants in the political-administrative interface's complexities in UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

Usage of systems thinking was found to be critical for extracting and analysing the views of all the actors. In this way logical conclusions can be reached on how the complexities of political/administrative interface in UThukela can be addressed. Systems thinking is important for the study to extract all the views of all the actors to diagnose the points of convergence that minimise political/administrative conflicts as well as the points of divergence that must be mitigated to ameliorate the complexities of political/administrative interface that undermine service delivery in UThukela. To accomplish this, systems thinking were integrated with creative methodology and phenomenological ontology.

Creative methodology is an epistemological process and method of empirical investigation that uses methods and techniques that go beyond the traditional parameters of qualitative data collection and analysis to use empathetic, artistic, narrative and aesthetic expression to understand and convey information about the phenomenon being investigated. To explore and extract all the

dimensions of the facets of factors explaining the complexities of political/administrative interface in uThukela, this research used the techniques in creative methodology. The creative methodology techniques that were used encompassed empathetic, artistic, narrative and aesthetic expression to understand and elicit critical in-depth information as the basis for investigating, intervening, creating knowledge and sharing information about the complexities of political-administrative interface in UThukela District Municipality.

Such in-depth insights evoked deeper thinking and more nuanced interpretations of the points of convergence and divergence that instigate complexities of political/administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality as well as in other municipalities across South Africa. To effectively accomplish that, the application of such creative methodologies and techniques was integrated with Sartre's phenomenological ontology as a research philosophy to elicit views from the actual actors in the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

Phenomenological ontology research philosophy was critical for identification of the actual points of conflict and complexities. The use of phenomenological ontology is in line with the definition that posits a research philosophy to connote the general paradigm or epistemological thinking or belief that influences and guides the investigation and research into a particular phenomenon (Niraula, 2019:2). It also influences views on the conclusions emerging from such investigations and research. Adopted epistemological thinking often drives decisions on the selection of the research design, methods and techniques for accomplishing primary research.

Ontologically, research philosophy is often classified as either positivist or phenomenological ontology. Ontology is the branch of philosophy that studies concepts such as existence, being, and reality (Niraula, 2019:2). It integrates the analysis of questions as to how entities are grouped into basic categories and as to which such categories exist on the most fundamental level (Niraula, 2019:2). In line with such ontological thinking, positivist ontology construes reality as detached from humans, and not moderated by human senses, but rather by certain immutable laws.

Unfortunately, in this study, it is interpreted that the application of scientific thinking in positivist ontology would not be suitable. Positivism would not aid effective diagnosis and identification of points of certain social dynamic complexities that emerge from rather more dynamic and complex

networks of political and administrative actors in the UThukela District Municipality and the larger South African local governance system. Understanding and identification of such points of complexity can only be accomplished by eliciting real perspectives and views from the actual actors or participants in such complex social networks. In effect, as contrasted to positivist ontology, this research opts for the use of phenomenological ontology.

Phenomenological ontology, also known as realism or interpretivism, emphasises that social phenomena should be analysed and understood from the perspectives and views of the participants in such social phenomena rather than the researcher (Gill et al. 2016:19). This aids effective understanding of such phenomena in their social and natural contexts. To accomplish this, phenomenological ontology stresses the importance of utilising methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, field notes and observation to elicit rich in-depth detailed insights about the actual participants' experiences, approaches and perspectives in dealing with such phenomena (Kabir, 2016:42).

This edifies extraction of real insights and experiences on how such similar phenomena should be dealt with in the future. It is in that context that this research used phenomenological ontology based on systems theory to evaluate the real insights from the actual actors in different networks of political officials and municipal administrators in the UThukela District Municipality. The use of phenomenological ontology was also accompanied by the application of a case study research designs.

1.9.2 Case Study Research Design

The research design used in this study encompasses the use of case study research design. As the study was based on a case study analysis of the UThukela District Municipality, it aided in-depth analysis to explore, discover and identify points of conflict and complexity of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. This approach was consonant with the notion that a research design is the overall strategy used for integrating different components of the study in a coherent and logical way to enhance the addressing of the research problem (Niraula, 2019:006). It is a blueprint constituting different techniques and methods that are used in the collection, measurement and analysis of the data.

Since a research design must address the research problem, the choice of the research design often depends on the research problem (Niraula, 2019:006). The purpose of the research design is to facilitate the gathering and analysis of evidence to enable an effective response to the research problem in a way that is as unambiguous as possible. Over the years, the types of research designs that have emerged from different pragmatic approaches encompass case study research design, causal research design, cohort research design, cross-sectional research design, descriptive research design, experimental research design, exploratory research design, historical research design and longitudinal research design (Kabir, 2016:49).

A case study research design is the research approach where the study is limited to a particular organisation or to only a few subjects in a particular geographical area (Kabir, 2016:49). A case study research approach is usually aimed at facilitating in-depth analysis of the situation in that particular organisation to enable necessary conclusions and generalisations to be drawn about the phenomenon being investigated. However, as contrasted to causal research design, cohort research design, cross-sectional research design, descriptive research design, experimental research design, historical research design and longitudinal research design, this research uses case study research design.

This view is attributable to the fact that as much as this research aims to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the South African local governance system; the actual research was limited to the UThukela District Municipality. It is from the research on the UThukela District Municipality that conclusions and generalisations were made about the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the South African local governance system. This enhanced extraction and development of a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system. To extract detailed insights from the actual participants in such complexities, phenomenological ontology, case study research design was used in combination with the qualitative research method, specifically interviews.

1.9.3 Research Method

Since this research is based on the thinking and reasoning in phenomenological ontology, the research method entailed the use of the qualitative research method, specifically interviews. This

aided the extraction of the real insights and experiences of the actual actors in different complex political and administrative networks in the UThukela District Municipality. Certainly, a research method connotes an approach reflecting critical techniques that are used in the accomplishment of primary research. A research method can be either quantitative or qualitative or both (Creswell, 2013). The quantitative research method is based on a positivist ontology that emphasises the application of scientific and statistical thinking in the research process. It connotes a research approach that utilises certain statistical-based techniques to extract mainly certain summarised numerical responses from the respondents.

To accomplish that, the quantitative research method uses techniques such as surveys, confirmatory factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis, or certain prescribed statistical formulas for statistical document analysis (Creswell, 2013). Since quantitative research is based on positivist ontology, it was considered that its emphasis on scientific and statistical thinking would not be accurate for eliciting critical real insights and experiences of the actual actors in different complex actors' networks in the UThukela District Municipality. In contrast, since this research is based on phenomenological ontology, the researcher opted for the utilisation of a qualitative research method, which is based on phenomenological ontology.

A qualitative research method refers to an approach reflecting certain techniques that are used for eliciting participants' detailed narratives reflecting in-depth rich insights about their actual experiences, shared meanings, cognitions and human behaviours about the phenomenon being investigated (Dawson, 2013). In such quests, qualitative research methods use techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions, observation and content analysis (Dawson, 2013). However, since this research is based on phenomenological ontology, the epistemological process of inquiry in this research uses qualitative research, specifically interviews, as a technique for data collection.

This decision is in line with the aim of this research, which seeks to use a systems approach to elicit detailed insights about the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District municipality. Through the application of a qualitative interview method based on a systems approach, the study was able to elicit detailed participants' narratives and rich insights on the critical political and administrative actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. The sample participants from whom such critical qualitative interview

narratives were elicited, analysed and extracted were drawn from the target population using a non-probability sampling approach.

1.9.4 Sampling

Target population connotes the entire specified group of people that the researcher wishes to investigate and the subject on which the measurement is being taken (Flick, 2015). Sampling, on the other hand, connotes the process of drawing the units of analysis from such a target population. In terms of the target population, this research focuses on the municipalities within the UThukela District. Thus, three municipalities within this district, namely Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local municipalities were targeted. In effect, the target population encompasses all the elected politicians and contracted administrative and management officials that constitute a population of 120 people in the above-mentioned municipalities.

From this target population of 120 people, the study used non-probability sampling, especially purposive sampling, as the main non-probability sampling technique to draw about 30 sample participants. Such a decision is in tandem with Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) postulation that a qualitative research sample is selected through a non-probability sampling strategy rather than probability sampling.

A non-probability sampling strategy does not give all the research participants equal chances to be included in the study and is not random in nature (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Non-probability sampling techniques include judgmental, convenience, quota, purposive and snowballing sampling. In contrast, probability sampling is based on randomness and chance as the criteria for drawing the respondents that must be included in the sample population. Probability sampling techniques encompass simple random sampling, systemic, cluster and stratified sampling. However, this study utilised the purposive sampling technique to draw 30 sample participants from the 120 target population.

While using such purposive sampling approach, the research only drew about 30 participants constituting of mayors, speakers and councillors who are members of the executive council committees and oversight committees in conjunction with administrative officials such as

municipal managers, chief financial officers and all Section 54 and 56 managers who report directly to the municipal managers in Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

In the context of purposive sampling, it was only such categories of municipal elected politicians and administrative and management officials that were considered by virtue of their positions to possess in-depth insights, experience and knowledge about the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. In other words, purposive sampling aided selection of the actual participants with real insights and experience in different complex actors' networks in the UThukela District Municipality. The use of only such participants was critical for identifying points of conflict and non-alignment in such complexities. Following completion of sample selection, data collection was undertaken through interviews.

1.9.5 Data Collection

Since this research uses phenomenological ontology, interviews are therefore opted for as the main data collection method in this research. To elicit relevant information, the interview guide was structured on the six research objectives and questions as outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis. In effect, the interview guide contains five main sections.

The first section examines the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. The second section diagnoses the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. The third section assesses the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

The fourth section analyses the complexities that arise from political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts in the UThukela District Municipality.

The fifth section evaluates the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface and other actors in the UThukela District Municipality. During the design of the interview guide, initiatives were undertaken to ensure that

statements and questions contained therein were unambiguous for the participants to respond to with relative ease. A pilot study was conducted on three sample participants to ensure the effectiveness of the interview guide. This aided in the identification and correction of errors that were highlighted by the three sample participants. Subsequently, one-on-one and face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the thirty sample participants. The obtained qualitative data was thematically analysed.

1.9.6 Data Analysis

Since this research is based on phenomenological ontology, it uses inductive reasoning and specifically, a thematic approach to accomplish data analysis. The thematic analysis method used in this study entailed the application of O'Connor and Gibson's (2019:49) *"Five Step-by-Step Approach to Qualitative Data Analysis"*. These five chronological steps encompass organising interview transcripts, reading and re-reading each interview transcripts, extraction of themes and subthemes from each interview transcripts, comparative analysis of themes and subthemes on common narratives emerging from different participants' responses and formulation of common narratives that chronologically explain the phenomenon being investigated.

While using these five steps, each set of the obtained interview data was organised and subsequently thoroughly read and re-read. Firstly, thematic analysis was undertaken to extract themes and subthemes as well as their accompanying narratives from each participant's response, which offered narratives on the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality.

This was accompanied by the identification and extraction of themes and subthemes that explain the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. Subsequently, further thematic analysis was undertaken to extract themes, subthemes and their associated narratives from each participant's response on the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface of the UThukela District Municipality.

Further analysis entailed the evaluation and extraction of themes and subthemes and their associated narratives from each participant's insights about the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts on the District Municipality. Such thematic analysis was accompanied by evaluation and extraction of themes, subthemes and their accompanying narratives from each participant's response on the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

Finally, thematic analysis was undertaken to extract themes, subthemes and their associated narratives from each participant's propositions to determine the approach that can be adopted to identify and manage the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. Completion of such analysis was followed by comparing and combining themes from the thirty participants to identify and extract a coherent common set of themes, subthemes and their associated narratives that chronologically explain critical political actors, administrative actors and other actors as well as such actors' interactive activities, points of conflicts and antagonisms that induce complexities from such interactive activities, impacts of such complexities on service delivery and the effectiveness of the approach used so far for managing such complexities.

Such analysis was followed by further analysis and extraction of themes and subthemes that offer insights on the discourses that explain a systems model that can be extracted and developed in the context of such findings and different systems theories for it to be adopted for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. However, despite reaching such a conclusion, measures were still undertaken to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness, as well as ethical considerations, of the entire research.

1.9.7 Credibility and Trustworthiness

For phenomenological ontology-based research, measures for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness or the overall quality of the research entail use of criteria such as credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity) (Taherdoost, 2016:18). In this research, all these measures for enhancing credibility

and trustworthiness are considered. Credibility connotes the relativeness of the study to practical reality (Sandero, 2016). This study ensures credibility by investigating a practical problem being experienced by local South African municipalities. To accomplish this, the sample used in the study is representative of the target population. The study also used the interview research instrument, which was designed in alignment with the critical research objectives and questions.

In the analysis of the findings, evaluation is also undertaken to assess the extent to which such findings are supported or disputed by previous studies. The credibility of the study was enhanced by the use of theory triangulation and methodological triangulation as well as consistent analysis and triangulation of the views of the participants with the existing theories. This was accompanied by comparing and contrasting the views of the different participants. As all these leveraged the credibility of the study, it also enhanced the transferability of the study.

This study ensures transferability by using a systems approach that has been tested over time to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. The application of a systems approach was based on facts explaining how such complexities constrain municipalities' effective activities' accomplishment. This implies that the output of this research in terms of the suggested systems model can easily be replicated and applied in other municipalities facing similar complexities. Transferability was examined by assessing whether the results of the study could be easily replicated to address similar challenges in other similar organisations. To accomplish this, the study was based only on the opinions of the elected councillors and managers that are actual actors in the investigated complexities of political-administrative interface. This not only improved the credibility and dependability of the study, but also the transferability of the study on the basis that if this study is undertaken again, similar findings will still be obtained.

Dependability of the study was assessed by evaluating whether the study was to be conducted again, the same findings would still be obtained by such similar studies. This was accompanied with evaluation of confirmability. To ensure confirmability, the research findings were triangulated with the findings of the other previous studies to assess the extent to which they support or dispute such findings. The other measures for improving credibility, transferability,

dependability and confirmability of the study entailed comparing and contrasting the opinions of different participants on the same concept to test and improve the overall veracity of the findings. Such measures for enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study were also accompanied by initiatives for enhancing ethical considerations.

1.9.8 Ethical Considerations

In this study, compliance with all ethical standards and codes was abided with all the time. Ethical forms were also signed to ensure that all ethical practices would be adhered to throughout the study. In effect, it was ensured that the participants were given the necessary degree of independence during interviews. Given the sensistive nature of the topic that involves analysing how politicians and top municipal administrators behave, the principle of avoidance of harm was highly prioritised to ensure that participation in the study did not induce any form of harm to the participants. This was accomplished by maintaining high levels of confidentiality and anonymity to ensure that the identities of the participants were not revealed to anyone.

Though some aspects of the interviews were recorded, the participants were advised and cautioned not to use their names or describe their positions. But even still the collected raw interview data has been stored in the safest place where it is only the researcher that has the key and the password. So far this has proved effective for preventing any harm occurring on the interviewed participants and the researcher believes that it will continue to do so. In order to achieve this, the researcher maintained the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the study. In addition, the researcher also guaranteed that integrity and cultural affiliations and any other forms of falsification were avoided during the process of this study. Ethical considerations have to do with the manner in which people are treated and respected during the conduct of research (Hamilton, 2014).

This assumes that the people with the researcher interacts with for the purpose of accomplishing the research should not be treated as mere subjects but people with feelings and rights (Berg and Lune, 2012). It therefore becomes crucial that they are treated in a manner that recognises the limitations that exist on the researcher's scope of how he/she deals with people or information made available to him/her (Berg and Lune, 2012). During this research, such ethical principles were considered by treating participants in the study with respect as well as taking initiatives to

respect their rights. Bryman and Anis (2013) refer to research ethics as the human conduct that has to do with both what is morally acceptable and that which is not.

Creswell (2014) regards ethical consideration as being able to anticipate the repercussions of conducting research on certain groups of people and to take decisions that would protect participants from harm. With regard to these views, ethical considerations in this research observed informed consent, avoidance of harm or injury, confidentiality and anonymity, and sought the necessary permission for the study to be conducted. Informed consent refers to the researcher asking participants for their willingness to participate in the study (Holmes, 2012).

In this study, assurances were provided and precautions were taken to avoid any form of harm or injury to the participants. Regarding confidentiality and anonymity, Chambers (2013) states that it refers to the protection of the identity of the participants. To promote confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in this research, raw and processed data were secured at all times, and the identity of the participants was not and will not be disclosed at any stage. Granting of permission refers to asking for permission from officials from the case study organisation (Dawson, 2013). In this study, permission to conduct the study was sought way before the collection of data or conduct of interviews. In other words, the researcher upheld the necessary honesty and conscientiousness during the study to enhance the maximisation of the truthfulness of the research.

In other words, the overall value and benefits of this study are as reflected in the significance of the research.

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research is important because no previous studies have used systems theory to analytically evaluate the increasing complexities of political-administrative interfaces in the contemporary meta-South African local governance system. Instead, most of the previous studies only focused on using a less integral approach to evaluate the complex networks of political-administrative interfaces. Such studies not only ignore the use of systems theory to focus only on political-administrative interfaces, but also underrate the governance complexities induced by the other critical networks of actors.

As such studies use a less integral approach, they have also often only suggested one or two approaches for harmonising the relationships between politicians and administrators at the local government level. In such studies, De Visser (2010) highlights such suggestions have often entailed reiterating that laws be reviewed to separate executive from the legislative functions accomplished by the municipal councils.

Other authors, such as Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) emphasise the need for the reduction of role ambiguity and ambivalence, dealing with conflicting expectations among elected leaders and administrators and the use of common shared values and ideals. Certainly, such suggestions aim to streamline the relationships between politicians and administrators. However, they are less integral and comprehensive in dealing with the increasing complexities induced by political-administrative interface as well as other actors in the contemporary complex South African local governance system. This research is significant because it deals with such practical and theoretical deficiencies.

Yet, just like in the South African local governance system, Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) argue that the increasingly democratic local governance systems are not only characterised by a complex network of political and administrative actors. Instead, they also highlight that such complex local governance systems are characterised by a combination of certain different new actors who are increasingly emerging to further complicate the already complex political-administrative interface.

Thus, the application of an analytical approach less than the systems theory approach is unlikely to aid effective diagnosis, identification, response and management of the complexities emerging from such complex local governance networks. In effect, this research responds to such practical and theoretical deficiencies by offering critical new insights on how a systems approach can be used to analyse, identify and manage such complexities to leverage the overall effective performance of the South African local governance system.

While using systems theory, this research offers insights on how to diagnose, identify and manage complexities arising not only from political-administrative interfaces but also complexities arising from the complex actions of other actors. In a bid to diagnose and identify such complexities, the study is based on the UThukela District Municipality system. It evaluates and identifies the critical

political actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality system.

Such evaluation is important for understanding and identifying the points at which politicians infringe on administrative roles. To further understand and identify such points, the study also examines and isolates the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality system. This is accompanied by the assessment and identification of the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with political-administrative interface to complicate the already complex situations in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality system. Such analysis is important for understanding how political-administrative activities interact to aid or constrain effective municipalities' performance.

To further understand and isolate the likely emerging complexities, the study analyses the complexities that often arise from political-administrative interfaces as well as other actors and their impacts on service delivery in the UThukela District Municipality system. Such analysis is of importance for understanding and identifying the areas of complexity that affect municipalities' effective performance as well as their inherent capabilities to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes. To enhance understanding of how municipalities cope with such complexities, the research further evaluates the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface and other actors in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality system.

Such evaluation was of importance for understanding the kinds of approaches as well as their inherent limitations to inform decisions on how such complexities can be effectively managed. Given the identified limitations of this approach, the study becomes even more significant on the basis that it extracts and suggests a new systems model from theories and the emerging findings on how to diagnose, identify and manage the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-a-vis the networks of other communities' actors. This will enhance not only the abilities of the polycentric UThukela District Municipality but also the capabilities of the entire South African local governance system to identify and manage such complexities.

Effective identification and management of such complexities will certainly influence identification and mitigation of the inherent constraints and paradoxes that often affect municipalities' effective performance and achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes. As municipalities and the entire South African local government adopt such an approach, it will also influence the overall socio-economic transformation and development of South Africa.

Certainly, the adoption of systems approach to complexity management offers new insights on how conflicting networks of actors in the contemporary local governance systems can be identified and managed. Yet, as it offers such critical new insights, the suggestion of the systems approach also provides a new theory that enriches not only the existing theories on managing complex local governance systems, but also the entire existing public administration and management theories.

In the quest to achieve these research values, the entire research process was accomplished within certain structure.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Presentation of the research and discussions in this thesis is structured according to seven chapters that encompass:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Background: This chapter provides the introduction highlighting, the complexities and theoretical and practical gaps that motivate this research to use the systems approach to evaluate and identify the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. It also details the policy and legal foundations of the contemporary complex political-administrative interface in the South African local governance system. Drawing from such policy and legal foundations, the chapter points out the areas of complexities of the political-administrative interface in the South African Local Governance System.

Due to such complex local governance systems, the chapter highlights that the entire research is based on systems theory and then evaluates systems theory. This is followed by the analysis of the problem statement as well as the research aim, objectives and questions. In the context of such research aim, objectives and questions, the chapter also provides an overview of the methodology

used in primary research. Subsequently, it concludes with the evaluation of the significance of the research and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Local Government In South Africa And Its Governance System: Critical analysis of the South African Local Government System is undertaken in this chapter to discern the root cause of the problem. Such analysis is structured according to three sections that include governance mechanisms for leveraging local government efficiency, policy and regulatory framework for local government operations in South Africa, and the complexities of political/administrative interface in the South African local government system.

Chapter 3: Theories and Literature on Managing Complex Local Governance Systems: In line with the overriding aim of the research, which is to use systems theory to evaluate the complexities of the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality, this chapter offers a critical analysis of theories and literature on managing complex local governance systems. To provide insights into systems theory as the overriding theory for the study, it commences by evaluating systems theory, after pointing out that the approaches for identifying and managing the complexities arising from the interface between politicians and administrators as well as other actors in the contemporary meta-local governance organisations are inherently echoed in systems theory, the chapter examines the foundational theories on politics-administration interface. This is followed by analysis of the models for politics-administration complementarity, theories on complex networks of actors in polycentric local governance systems and operational models for polycentric local governance system. The chapter then critically examines theories for managing complex policy-making in a polycentric local governance system and models in systems theory for managing the complexities of polycentric local governance systems.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology: Basing systems theory to evaluate complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality, this chapter emphasizes that primary research involves the use of phenomenological research philosophy, case study research design, and qualitative research methods in order to evaluate the complexities of the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. The chapter also provides a critical description of the sampling, data collection and analysis

methodologies and techniques used in primary research. Subsequently, it examines measures for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Findings' Analysis and Presentation: The findings are analysed and presented in this chapter. The presentation of the findings is structured according to six sections aligned to the five sections in the interview research instrument as well as the six research objectives and questions outlined in chapter 1 of this thesis. These five sections encompass Sections A, B, C, D and E. Section A examines the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system. Section B evaluates the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system.

Section C assesses the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system. Section D analyses the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system. Section E evaluates the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface and other actors in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system.

Chapter 6: Discussions of Findings and Linking to Theories and Literature in Chapter 2 of this Thesis: Discussions in this chapter evaluate findings against theories and literature on systems approach for managing complex local governance systems discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Such discussions are in context of the overriding aim of this research which is indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis to entail the use of systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. Through such analysis, the study aims to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance. Thus, discussions in this chapter are structured according to three sections that encompass the UThukela District Municipality as a system, complexities in the UThukela District Municipality as a system and managing complexities in the UThukela District Municipality as a system. The first section was aligned to

the first, second and third research objectives and questions and was aimed at using systems theory to evaluate how different political actors and municipal administrators interact in the uThukela District Municipality as a system.

The second section of the discussions was aligned to the fourth research objective and question and aimed to use systems theory to diagnose against theories the kinds of complexities that exist in the UThukela District Municipality as a system. The third section was aligned to the fifth research objective and question and using systems theory it evaluated the effectiveness of the approaches to managing the complexities in the UThukela District Municipality as a system. Certainly, by evaluating and discussing these findings against theories and literature on systems approach for managing complex local governance systems discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the study was able to respond to its critical research objectives and questions.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations: This chapter evaluates the general conclusions and recommendations of the study. Evaluation is undertaken in the context of the overriding research aim and research objectives and questions which are indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis to entail the use of systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. Through such analysis, it is highlighted that the study aimed to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system. To finally accomplish that, the evaluation of the entire theoretical and empirical findings of the study in this chapter is structured according to two sections that include conclusions and recommendations. The conclusion section examines key practical and theoretical deficiencies, which are highlighted in Chapter 1 of this study and to have motivated the research as well as the key systems theories discussed in chapter 2.

Subsequently, the conclusion section examines the methodology used in the study, key findings and key insights on the UThukela District Municipality as a system. Against the emerging key theoretical and empirical findings of the study, the conclusion section points out that it is evident that the study has been able to respond to its overriding aim, which is to use systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. In effect, the conclusion highlights that the study has also been

able to respond to its critical research objectives and questions that were to evaluate and identify the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality.

It is also noted in the conclusion section that the study was also able to examine and identify the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. The conclusion section also indicates that the study further achieved its objectives and questions of assessing and identifying the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. The conclusion section further points out that it is also evident that the study was able to analyse the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface, other actors and their impacts, as well as the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing such complexities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality.

Subsequently, it is noted in the conclusion section that the achievement of the final objective and question, which is to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality but also in the entire South African local governance system is reflected in the systems model extracted and discussed in the recommendations. The recommendation section highlights Figure 7.2 that illustrates the systems model for diagnosing and managing complexities of political-administrative interface in the uThukela District Municipality as a system that has been extracted from theoretical and empirical findings of this research. Subsequently, the recommendation section elucidates the six critical steps for applying such a model. Finally, the chapter examines the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is clear from the analysis in this chapter that the overriding aim of this research is to use systems theory to evaluate the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality. Through such analysis, it is indicated that the study aims to extract a systems model that can be adopted for identifying and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality but also in the entire South

African local governance. To accomplish this, it is highlighted that the study is motivated by the existing practical and theoretical deficiencies that are less effective for diagnosing and managing the increasingly complex networks of political-administrative interface in contemporary South African local government.

To address such complexities, it is argued that systems theory would leverage effective diagnosis and management of the complexities of political-administrative interface and other actors in the contemporary polycentric local governance system. In the context of that argument, it is reiterated that the entire research is based on a systems approach to evaluate and extract a systems model for diagnosing and managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the contemporary meta-South African local governance system.

To accomplish this, the chapter provided an evaluation of systems theory as the overriding theory of the study, and then examines the research problem statement and research aim, objectives and questions. Subsequently, the chapter notes that by using systems theory to diagnose such complexities, the study will use the phenomenological research philosophy to guide its research methodology. The chapter concludes by evaluating the significance of the research as well as the structure of the thesis. However, against this backdrop, the discussions in the next chapter offer a critical analysis of the theories and literature on managing complex local governance systems.

CHAPTER 2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In line with the fundamental research aim, which is to evaluate the complexities of the political/administrative interface in South African municipalities, a critical analysis of the South African Local Government System is undertaken in this chapter to discern the root cause of the problem. Such analysis is structured according to three sections that include governance mechanisms for leveraging local government efficiency, policy and regulatory framework for local government operations in South Africa, and the complexities of political/administrative interface in the South African local government system.

The chapter highlights the governance mechanisms for leveraging local government efficiency to include the Municipal Structuring Framework reflecting Metro, District and Local municipalities and Ward Committee Systems, as well as the Municipal Governance System as dictated by the Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000 and Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. The policy and regulatory framework for leveraging local government operational efficiency in South Africa reflected discussions on the Decentralisation and Developmental Local Government Framework as well as the Intergovernmental Relations Framework.

It is pointed out in the chapter that even in the midst of the existence of all these measures for leveraging the operational efficiency of the South African local government, empirical facts still imply that the conflicts and complexities of political/administrative interface across different South African municipalities are undermining the efficiency of the overall local government system to create and deliver the desired outcomes. In that context, details of the evaluation of the South African local government system follows.

2.2 SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Just like in any democratic system, local government in South Africa is a sphere of government that is quite close to the local population, in contrast to the national and provincial spheres of government. Due to its closeness to the ordinary population, local government in South Africa links the local population with the provincial and national spheres of government. In the context of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, it is the local government that is charged with the planning and provision of basic socio-economic services like electricity, primary health, roads, water and sanitation, housing and the management of urban and rural development for the local population (Botha, Brand, Engelbrecht & Van Eijbergen, 2015; Brown, 2020).

The local government system is therefore central in linking the national and provincial governments to offer the required basic services to the population. This is because the 1996 Constitution and the 1998 White Paper on Local Government in South Africa require local government to adopt the operational structure of a developmental local government. In the accomplishment of its role as a developmental local government, the local government is expected to partner with civil society and the local residents in the planning and delivery of the required basic services to the population.

Local government, through district and local municipalities, is expected to consult and involve the population to understand their needs and integrate those needs into the Municipal Strategic Plan and Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (Weiss, Seyle & Coolidge, 2013).

Stronger emphasis on the principle of public participation in municipal affairs is in line with Section 152 of the 1996 Constitution, which requires the South African government to offer democratic and accountable local government to local communities. It also seeks to leverage sustainable socio-economic development, the provision of critical socio-economic services and integrate local communities and their associated organisations in all matters of local governance.

To further encourage local communities' participation in all government activities, Section 118(1) of the 1996 Constitution requires provincial legislatures to allow public access into the legislatures and to engage and involve them in different legislative deliberations (Makwela, 2012:5). It stresses the need for the legislatures to not only create the mechanisms for such public engagement and

involvement, but also ensure that legislative activities are accomplished in more transparent way. In enhancing transparency of the legislative processes, Section 118(1) highlights that the public may only be prevented from accessing legislatures in situations that can only be deemed fit on certain reasonable grounds. Sections 118(1) and 152(1) highlight the need for local government to facilitate the involvement and engagement of local communities and organisations in the accomplishment of different local government activities.

Such broad and ambiguous Constitutional principles on public participation are further reflected in the 1997 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery that elucidates the critical Batho Pele principles for leveraging public participation in local government activities. Batho Pele, a Sesotho phrase meaning "people first", outlines principles that require the government to place people at the centre of service delivery initiatives.

This enhances the capabilities of the South African public service system to plan in conjunction with local communities and provide services that meet the needs and demands of the local population (Watermeyer & Phillips, 2020). To achieve that, Batho Pele enunciates consultation, service level standards, courtesy, access, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money as critical principles that must be integrated into governmental operations and service delivery processes (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997 as cited in Department of Public Service and Administration, 2019:13).

But as most of the local government structures at the municipal levels are characterised by political/administrative conflicts induced by conflicting self-interests, it is doubtful whether ordinary people that municipalities aspire to serve are still at the centre of service delivery planning and delivery. Nevertheless, even in the midst of such political/administration dynamics and complexities, local government as part of the three spheres of government still plays a significant pivotal role in mediating the interface of the local population with the provincial and national spheres of government (Ntaopane & Vermeulen, 2019).

In such a process, all the three spheres of government including local, provincial and national government are guided by the doctrine of separation of powers where each of the sphere of government constitutes of three parts that include elected members, cabinet or executive committees, and departments comprising of civil servants. In each of the three spheres, the elected

members are voted in by the public to develop and approve policies and laws in consultation with their constituents.

The cabinet or the executive committees coordinate policy and legislation making processes and exercise oversight in ensuring the successful implementation of such policies, laws and legislation. The departments that are constituted of civil servants are the technocrats that execute, manage and govern the implementation of different government programmes. Hence, though local government is the sphere closest to the people to plan and offer the required basic services, it still receives policy instructions and guidelines from the national sphere of government through the policies and laws passed at the national level (Ngobese, 2018).

In the national sphere of government, policies and laws are promulgated and approved by the National Assembly/Parliament that is constituted of elected members for a five-year tenure and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) that is constituted of the representatives from the provincial legislatures and local government. As parliament is charged with law making under the doctrine of separation of powers, the president, who is elected by parliament, heads the executive to appoint cabinet ministers who constitute the government's executive committee of which each minister becomes the political head of the government departments that are constituted of different civil servants and technocrats.

Government departments are headed by ministers and managed by bureaucrats and technical civil servants like director generals. Directors and managers are in charge of implementing policies passed by cabinet and laws promulgated by parliament. To accomplish this, government departments that also include the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) which is charged with managing local government activities and programmes are expected to submit budgets reflecting key activities and programmes that must be financed during each financial year.

The prepared budgets from all government departments are consolidated by the National Treasury and Department of Finance as the overall government budget for a particular financial year and put forward to parliament for approval (Meyer, 2014). Given such governmental structuring, provincial and local governments cannot contravene or act contrary to the laws and policies passed at the national level. However, since laws and policies often reflect the aspirations of the ruling

political party, it is such a position that often induces complexities when political actors from other political parties confront and question such policies and laws at the provincial and local government levels.

Nonetheless, with the national sphere of government charged with formulating and implementing policies and laws throughout the country, the provincial sphere of government manages the provincial government's activities and programmes. In South Africa, the provincial government includes the nine provincial governments that are the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Free State, Gauteng and North-West Provincial governments (Financial and Fiscal Commission, 2018).

However, just like in the national government sphere, the governance structure in the provincial sphere of government is also aligned with the doctrine of separation of powers where the provincial legislatures that are constituted of elected representatives of the population are charged with law and policy-making. The executive branch of the provincial government is headed by the premier, who is elected by the provincial legislature to appoint the MECs (Members of the Executive Committees) that become the political heads of different provincial government departments.

As these MECs must liaise with the national government departments, the premier and the MECs also constitute the Provincial Executive Council or cabinet that plans and influences policies to manage the political and administrative affairs of the provincial government (Kamara, 2015). However, to implement its policies as well as the national government's policies, the provincial departments also constitute technical directors and civil servants who are charged with the actual execution and implementation of the provincial government's programmes.

It is at that level that the provincial MEC and the Department of Local Government are charged with the duties of liaising, coordinating, monitoring and supporting the municipalities in the province. As the authority flows from the provincial government to the municipalities, the municipalities are divided into district and local municipalities to leverage efficient delivery of the required basic services to the population. In all such municipalities, some aspects of the doctrine of separation of powers are also emphasised as the council performs the legislative and oversight roles, and the municipal administration accomplishes the management and administrative activities for implementing council decisions (Meyer, 2013). Even though the council also tends

to make and implement policies, the council, which is usually constituted of the elected representatives of the population, is charged with the promulgation of municipalities and by-laws that must be in alignment with the national policies and by-laws.

The municipal council also approves the municipal strategic plan, service delivery budget implementation plan and the overall municipal budget for the implementation of different municipal service delivery programmes in line with the Municipal Finance Management Act. Although the municipal is headed by the speaker, the mayor, who is elected by council, is charged with coordinating council work. In conjunction with the executive mayoral committee, the mayor is expected to exercise the required oversight on municipal activities to ensure the process for the implementation of different service delivery programmes is able to achieve the intended service delivery objectives and goals.

In this process, the mayor also liaises and collaborates with the municipal manager, who is the head of municipal administration, to ensure the successful implementation of different service delivery programmes as approved by the council (Kamara, Leonard & Haines, 2017). However, with the increasing conflicts, dynamics and complexities of political/administrative interface at the municipal level that is often not the case, as municipal operations are often punctuated by sabotage and lack of cooperation from each side. A combination of governance system has been put in place to further ensure the efficiency of the local government operational system to create and deliver the desired service delivery outcomes.

2.3 GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS FOR LEVERAGING LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

The governance mechanisms for leveraging local government efficiency include the Municipal Structuring Framework reflecting Metro, District and Local municipalities and Ward Committee Systems, as well as the Municipal Governance System as dictated by the Municipal Systems Act and Municipal Structures Act.

2.3.1 Municipal Structuring (Metro, District, Local municipalities and Ward Committee Systems)

One of the governance mechanisms for leveraging local government efficiency has been the structuring of the local government sphere based on the metro, district, local municipalities and ward committee systems. In such structuring, all the cities like Johannesburg, Durban, East Rand, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth are also classified as metropolitan municipalities. Metropolitan municipalities govern the process of planning and management of the delivery of different services within the cities (Maphazi, Raga & Taylor, 2013). It also plans and manages revenue and rates collection from millions of city residents, as well as the formulation and passing of by-laws and policies that govern the affairs of the cities.

Just like other types of municipalities, metropolitan municipalities are also divided into wards. However, the local government structure has the geographical areas situated outside the cities classified as the local municipalities. Presently, there are approximately 231 local municipalities that are divided into wards, and each ward is represented by a councillor. Besides local municipalities, residents living in low population density areas like parks do not fall under the local municipalities but under the District Management Area, which is directly managed by the District Municipality (Luthuli, Nyawo & Mashau, 2019).

In all these municipalities, the political system has a proportional representation system where residents vote for the party that selects half of the councillors to sit on the municipal councils, as the other half are directly elected by ward residents as ward councillors. However, metropolitan municipalities are categorised as category A municipalities and local municipalities are treated as category B municipalities and the district municipalities are classified as category C municipalities. A district municipality constitutes group of local municipalities that fall into proximate geographical locations and aggregated into a district with the effect that there are often four to six local municipalities that come together to constitute the district council. District municipalities also include the District Management Areas that have low population density and fall directly under the district council.

The district municipality in charge of planning, coordinating and managing the implementation of service delivery programmes throughout the district also consist of two sets of councillors. The

first set of councillors is the elected councillors that comprise 40% of the district councillors that are directly elected through proportional representation by the voters in the district. The second category of councillors that comprise 60% of the district councillors are sent by local municipalities to represent their local municipalities on the district council (Kroukamp & Cloete, 2018). Contrasted with metropolitan municipalities that take charge of the service delivery programmes in the entire cities, the district municipalities share the responsibilities of delivering services in the district with the local municipalities. In the accomplishment of such responsibilities, all categories of municipalities are responsible for providing electricity, household water, sewage and sanitation, storm water systems, refuse removal and fire-fighting services.

All municipalities are also charged with the functions and responsibility of providing municipal health services, land use management services, roads, bridges, public transport, abattoirs and fresh food markets, street lighting, parks and recreational facilities, library facilities and local tourism. However, besides the typical roles, functions and responsibilities of the municipalities, the national and provincial spheres of government can also delegate certain specific responsibilities and mandates to the district and local municipalities. As municipalities are structured according to such structures and functions to leverage the efficiency of the local government system, a multi-level and layered governance system is also used for governing and managing municipal activities.

2.3.2 Municipal Governance System

Apart from the administrative aspect of the municipality that consists of unelected technocrats, municipal governance system is based on the municipal council system. The municipal council initiates, adopts and monitors the implementation of different service delivery programmes (Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018). Municipal councils are charged with policy formulation and oversight of the entire municipality. And in the accomplishment of such roles, the municipal council formulates and passes by-laws that govern the operational affairs of the entire municipality as well as the conduct and behaviour of the residents in a particular municipality. Such by-laws must, however, not contradict the national laws or the constitutional principles.

Each financial year, the municipal council must also approve the Integrated Development Plan for the municipality as well as the budget for the implementation of such a plan while also generating revenue for the municipality.

As the major source of municipal revenue, the municipal council is also mandated to impose rates and taxes on the property and business activities within its jurisdiction to raise the required revenues. To raise more revenue, the municipal council is also mandated to introduce service fee charges for the municipal services such as water, libraries, electricity, refuse removal and parks and recreational facilities.

Municipal council can also impose fines for residents breaching municipal by-laws or traffic fines as the other sources of municipal revenues. In the event of financial shortfalls, the municipal council can also make a decision to take a loan from financial institutions using municipal assets as security (Koma, 2014). In other words, the municipal council has an overriding responsibility to act in cohort with the municipal administrators to ensure the efficient functioning and operation of the municipality as a local government vehicle for delivering the required basic services to the population.

For certain critical council decisions to be valid, they must be made in a full council meeting with a full quorum, though minor decisions are often delegated to the executive committee, designated officials, or the assigned contracted agencies. As the executive committee or designated officials and assigned agencies accomplish the delegated tasks, it is still the mandate of the municipal council to ensure that stipulated policy frameworks and agreements are complied with. Councillors that constitute the municipal council are elected after five years. In both metros and local municipalities, councillors are elected through proportional representation, in which the political party with the largest number of votes takes the largest percentage of council seats. In such elections, candidates can contest either as representatives of their political parties or as independents.

Metro councils also have the mandate to establish sub-councils that are not directly elected by voters to serve certain designated areas of the municipality (Greijing, 2017). In the district council, 40% of the councillors are elected through their parties via the proportional representation system, while 60% of the councillors drawn from the local councils in a particular district municipality. Whether it is a district council or a local council, all councils are structured to have a mayor that heads the council as well as an executive committee or mayoral committee that meets frequently to coordinate and evaluate the work of the municipality so as to report to council with appropriate recommendations. All councils also have a speaker that chairs council meetings as well as special

council meetings where a council with a full quorum is expected to meet to discuss municipal policy issues and take the required decisions.

Municipal councils also have specific committees that frequently meet to discuss specific municipal policies and make the appropriate report and recommendations to the council. Even though it is through these functions that councils are able to ensure the effective performance of the municipalities, different municipalities still tend to have different forms of mayors, executives and committees. The kinds of mayors, executives and committees that the municipality adopts depend on the decision of the provincial MEC for local government on the structures that can be used by different councils (Kahn, Madue & Kalema, 2011).

As all councils must have a mayor and the executive, the three different forms of executives that can be set up include mayoral executive, collective executive and plenary executive. Most municipal councils often have the executive mayor of which although the executive mayor is elected by council, he/she still appoints the mayoral committee that assists in managing municipal policy-making issues. The mayoral committee must not have more than 10 councillors or 20% of the councillors is often charged with assisting the mayor to evaluate and make the required policy decisions.

Since the mayoral committee is like a cabinet at the local level, the municipal council can also delegate certain critical policy functions and decision-making responsibilities to the mayoral committee. Besides the mayoral committee, a municipal council can also have a collective executive system. In a collective executive system, the municipal council elects the mayor as well as the executive committee. The executive committee comprises of the political party councillors, depending on each political party's performance in the local council elections (Krishna, 2011).

As the mayor also becomes the chairperson of the collective executive system, the speaker is elected by the council. However, the collective executive system is not commonly used since most provinces and municipalities prefer using the mayoral committee, which excludes the representation of the opposition councillors from the executive committee. Besides the collective executive system, the municipal council may alternatively have a plenary executive. The plenary executive system tends to apply in very small municipalities where the mayor is elected by the municipal council but without the executive or the speaker. Thus, the mayor becomes the

chairperson of the municipal council and the entire municipal council becomes the executive that plans and makes policy decisions on certain important policy issues.

Besides the mayoral executive, collective executive and plenary executive, municipal councils are also mandated to set up council committees. Council committees are the different forms of specific committees that the municipal council establishes to deal with certain specific issues before discussion by the council. Hence, most specific policy issues are discussed and concluded by the council committees prior to the submission of recommendations to the executive committee that reviews such decisions and makes further recommendations to the council. Council committees are meant to save council deliberation time over certain complex issues, as well as to avoid controversies and humiliations during council meetings as different councillors clash with each other on certain controversial issues.

Such different forms of council committees often include the portfolio committees, geographically based committees and issue-specific committees (Botha et al., 2015). Portfolio committees are the common council committees like planning committee, economic planning and development committee and social welfare committee that deal with the departmental issues. Geographically based committees are established once in a while to deal with certain specific issues that are affecting the population in a certain geographical area.

It is commonly used by the larger municipalities and metros that have sub-councils that deal with certain geographical areas. Issue-specific committees are established by the council to deal with certain specific and complex issues and tend to draw members who are presumed to have expert knowledge and understanding of such issues from the other committees. In addition to these council committees, Section 80 committees are often the permanent committees that specialise in specific areas to make frequent decisions on small uncontentious issues. Section 80 committees also advise the executive committee on the required policy issues so as to make the required recommendations to council. This contrasts with Section 79 committees that are often temporarily established to investigate or deal with only specific issues that need urgent attention but without powers to make any decision (Brown, 2020). Although Section 79 Committee does not have decision-making powers, it still reports and makes recommendations to the council on their findings just like the Section 80 committees. Section 79 committees also tend to have externally

appointed experts who are not councillors, and upon completion of their tasks, Section 79 committees are often disbanded.

In addition to council committees, ward committees are often set up at the community level to link the community with the municipal council. Ward committee members are elected by the local residents of the ward and should not have more than 10 members. The ward councillor is also included in the ward committee to act mainly as the chairperson of the ward committee. Ward committees are mechanisms for aiding public participation in municipal decision-making processes, as it is through ward committees that local residents across the municipality are consulted to inform municipal council decisions on some critical policy decisions that must be made.

To accomplish this, the council must ensure that there is effective communication between the council, ward committees and the communities. Such improved communication can enable the ward councillor to consult with the communities through ward committees and report back to the council. Although ward committees have no formal power, they simply evaluate situations and report back to council, but they are still often involved and engaged in the drawing up of the Municipal Integrated Development Plan (Weiss et al., 2013).

With ward committees integrated to collaborate and liaise with the municipal council, the process for decision-making in council is still often subjected to a set of rules which are referred to as standing orders. Standing orders seek to improve the transparency and fairness of how council decisions are made. It outlines critical rules for council meetings, including how members can propose motions and pass resolutions. It is the duty and obligation of the speaker to ensure compliance with the standing orders by all the members during council deliberations.

In the process of making decisions, the council also tends to follow four cyclical stages of decision-making. The four cyclical stages encompass setting the agenda prior to any council meeting, with the effect that any committee report, petitions, or motions for discussion must appear on the agenda before they are discussed and deliberated on. In the second stage, any issue that emerges during council deliberations is referred to the committee or the executive committee for evaluation and reporting to the council. In the third stage, if a particular matter is referred to the committee for

evaluation, the committee is expected to report to the executive committee that may validate the report or dispute it while reporting and providing the final recommendations to the council.

Finally, in the fourth stage, the municipal council votes on the matter and the decision adopted by the majority becomes the final position of the council (Watermeyer & Phillips, 2020). Even though the decision adopted by the council is often final, other avenues often remain for certain controversial issues to be raised with the council. Such avenues include raising issues by way of motions, petitions, questions and requests to the council, and public meetings and forums. All such avenues ensure the involvement of ordinary councillors as well as local residents in council decisions. However, as these governance structures and mechanisms seek to leverage local government efficiency, they still have to operate within the policy and regulatory context that govern local government operations in South Africa.

2.4 POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Policy and regulatory framework for leveraging local government operational efficiency in South Africa are reflected in the Decentralisation and Developmental of Local Government Framework as well as in the Intergovernmental Relations Framework.

2.4.1 Decentralisation and Developmental Local Government Framework

One of the policy and regulatory regimes that has influenced the evolution of the modern South African local government is the policy on decentralisation and local government as a developmental state which are derived from the 1996 Constitutional Principles. The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa emphasises the importance of decentralisation as a model framework for good governance that edifies effective delivery of the required services in the new South Africa. To accomplish that, Section 40 of the 1996 Constitution requires the government of the Republic of South Africa to establish the national, provincial and local spheres of government that are “distinctive, inter-dependent and inter-related”. In such a constitutional provision, decentralisation and devolution of power to the local government are strongly

emphasised as Section 151(3) recognises municipalities as critical local government vehicles for delivering the required services to the population. It states that the municipalities must be granted the requisite degree of autonomy to exercise their rights to government on their own and plan to deliver the requisite services to local residents without interference from the central government, but subject to the national and provincial legislation as indicated in the Constitution (Financial and Fiscal Commission, 2018).

Such constitutional provisions led to the establishment of nine provincial governments that include the Western Cape, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, North-West, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Northern Cape and North-West provincial governments and their constituent municipalities. As reflected in Section 151(1) of the 1996 Constitution, the local sphere of government must constitute municipalities that must be established in the designated areas of the country irrespective of their viability and potential capacity to govern.

Stronger emphasis of decentralisation in the 1996 Constitution was followed by the introduction of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government in South Africa that sought to operationalise the constitutional principles on decentralisation in South Africa. It stressed the importance of the establishment of cooperative government, local government administration and local government finance as instruments for realising the decentralisation of local government. To achieve a decentralised local government system that plans and delivers the required services to the local population, the 1996 Constitution and the 1998 White Paper stressed the importance of embracing the concept of a developmental local government (Watermeyer & Phillips, 2020).

These policy and constitutional provisions stress the importance of creating a developmental local government that is committed to collaborating, liaising and working with local citizens, activists, diverse groups and communities to create sustainable human settlements that offer a decent quality of life to the population and meet the social, economic and material needs of the communities in a holistic way. To accomplish these, Section 152 of the 1996 Constitution outlines that the objectives of a developmental local government must be to ensure the provision of services to the communities in a sustainable manner. It also states that a developmental local government must strive to promote social and economic development, a healthy and safe environment, and the involvement of local communities in the matters of local government operations.

In such initiatives, municipalities are recognised as pivotal vehicles for the developmental local government to achieve its objectives. Such a view is accentuated under Section 153 of the Constitution, which states that a municipality must be accorded the autonomy to structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes in a way that prioritises the basic needs of the community. It also requires municipalities to promote and encourage the social and economic development of their communities and participate in national and provincial development programmes.

The importance of creating a developmental local government is also emphasised in the 1998 White Paper, which states that a developmental local government system must aim at maximising social development and growth as well as integrating and co-ordinating the process of planning, implementing and delivering the required basic socio-economic services to the population (Ntaopane & Vermeulen, 2019). It also highlights that a developmental local government must democratise development, empower citizens and redistribute resources to minimise socio-economic inequalities. A developmental local government is also required to lead and learn in order to affect the required continuous improvement.

To achieve these, the 1998 White Paper states that the developmental local government must strive to achieve four fundamental outcomes, including the provision of household infrastructure and services, the creation of liveable integrated cities, towns and rural areas, local economic development and community empowerment and resource redistribution to minimise socio-economic inequities. Municipalities are also required to encourage active participation of citizens at four levels including voters and citizens that express their concerns before, during and after policy development and implementation processes to ensure the adopted policies are reflective of their dichotomous needs and preferences.

Municipalities must also encourage active citizens' participation as consumers and end-users who expect value for money as well as affordable services. However, to ensure the South African local government operates within the context of decentralisation and a developmental state governance framework, a plethora of local government legislations has been promulgated to provide a democratic, accountable and developmental local government system (Kamara, 2015). Such local government legislation encompasses the Municipal Structures Act, Municipal Systems Act,

Municipal Finance Management Act, Municipal Property Rates Act and Intergovernmental Monitoring Support and Intervention Bill 2013.

The Municipal Structures Act requires the division of the functions and powers among different categories of municipalities that can be metro, district or local municipalities. It also regulates the relationships between the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of the municipalities as well as the designation of the appropriate electoral systems for local government. The Municipal Systems Act operationalises the constitutional provisions by requiring municipalities to set the appropriate standards and oversight mechanisms for ensuring that the allocated public resources are optimised in the best way possible to provide the desired services to the population.

As it requires the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to set such standards, the Municipal Finance Management Act emphasises the importance for the municipalities to adopt sound financial management system. To accomplish this, it requires municipalities to use the appropriate budgeting processes as well as mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of the process for the implementation of such budget plans.

The Municipal Property Rates Act, on the other hand, mandates municipalities to value and charge rates for immovable property in their jurisdictions. Although decentralisation and a developmental local government have been emphasised, stringent policies and regulations have also been developed to facilitate effective intergovernmental relations among municipalities themselves, and between the municipalities as well as other spheres of government.

2.4.2 Intergovernmental Relations

The intergovernmental relations framework emphasises the importance of inter-relations and collaboration between all the spheres of government, which includes the national, provincial and local spheres. It highlights that although the three spheres of government are independent of each other, a stronger degree of inter-relation, collaboration and cooperation amongst them is still critical for their unitary operation in South Africa as a country. The intergovernmental relations framework posits improved cooperation among the different spheres of government as important for harmonising service delivery programmes to timely respond to the needs and demands of the local population (Ngobese, 2018). To accomplish this, it requires all spheres of government to

collaborate and cooperate on certain critical policy decision-making, budgeting and resource mobilisation and other activities and functions that require cross-boundary collaboration across the three government spheres.

It is such a high level of cooperation that influences information exchange and sharing between local government officials and those at the provincial and national levels. Though intergovernmental relations have been used as an excuse for interference in certain municipal activities by the provincial or national government authorities, its successful implementation is still reflected in the establishment of the National Council of Provinces and other institutions like the Financial and Fiscal Commission and the Budget Council. In addition to such institutions, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is the other institution or organisation that has been put in place to leverage the implementation of intergovernmental relations framework. Municipalities can join their respective provincial SALGA from one of nine provincial associations.

SALGA often conducts its elections to elect its leaders who manage policy formulation and decision-making at the provincial or national general assembly. SALGA is also recognised as the employers' organisation to take a seat at the South African Local Government Bargaining Council. SALGA, which is funded by the membership contribution from the municipalities as its members, is mandated to exercise the requisite oversight over the municipalities and the entire local government system.

As this ensures that the required services are delivered to the population, SALGA also has two further strategic roles, which are to act as the protector that stringently enforces the rights of the local government system and as an advocate that disrupts incompatible systems that do not support the local government's mandate to deliver the required services (Meyer, 2014). To accomplish this, SALGA's (2017-2022) strategy recognises that since local government is the sphere, which is closest to the local population, it must be empowered, resourced and capacitated to deliver the required quality services. It also aspires to achieve spatial justice, social justice and cohesion by encouraging the integrated management of space, economies and people that it serves. SALGA notes that such goals can be achieved through strategic initiatives that aid sustainable, inclusive economic growth based on spatial transformation, good governance and resilient municipal institutions, financial sustainability of the local government sector and greater fiscal equity.

To further leverage the operational efficiency of the local government system, SALGA further requires local government to embrace ICT, which enables local government to benefit from technological advancements to provide better and more efficient services to the population. It also stresses the importance of using data intelligence to provide indicators that influence empirically-based planning as well as innovativeness in governance and decision-making processes so as to explore better ways of delivering the required services to the population (Kamara, Leonard & Haines, 2017).

SALGA also highlights the importance of research and knowledge management as a driver for effective future policy decision-making as well as the usage of structured engagement that ensures local government is effectively represented at various levels, which include the National Council of Provinces and parliamentary committees.

It also emphasises the essence of partnership between local government and other government agencies as well as the private sector to conceptualise and deliver the desired services to the South African population. However, even in the midst of the existence of all these measures for leveraging the operational efficiency of the South African local government, empirical facts still imply the conflicts and complexities of political/administrative interface across different South African municipalities are undermining the efficiency of the overall local government system to create and deliver the desired outcomes.

2.5 COMPLEXITIES OF POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The policy and legal foundations giving rise to the contemporary complex political-administrative interface in the modern South African local governance system can be traced to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) of 1996. Chapter 1 of the 1996 South African Constitution states that the people shall govern; a fact that has been misinterpreted to instigate the emergence of different interest groups and stakeholders both at the national and local governance levels. Thus, it explains the complexities and difficulties that the contemporary South African local government faces in seeking to balance such different competing interests vis-à-vis the complexities of political and administrative interface during policy formulation and

implementation. At the same time, the South African Constitution of 1996 also promulgated the ancient doctrine of the separation of powers.

In this doctrine of the separation of powers, Mojapelo (2012:9) explains that the 1996 Constitution divided government entities into the executive, legislature and judiciary. Laws and policies are promulgated by the legislature, implemented by the executive, and interpreted and applied by the judiciary. Mojapelo (2012:9) highlights that such political philosophy has subsequently meta-morphed into a political-administrative dichotomy where politicians are charged with policy formulation, as public administrators and managers are charged with policy implementation. Unfortunately, in such a dichotomy, politicians' supremacy also becomes over-emphasised as compared to the roles of public administrators and managers.

Yet, as such a dichotomy gained traction at the national level, Ngamlana (2011:13) highlights that it subsequently cascaded to the provincial and local governance structures, thereby creating a rift between politicians and administrators. This political dichotomy led some politicians to gain confidence not only to engage in policy formulation but also to intermeddle in policy implementation processes in some of the municipalities. Yet, as politicians interfered with policy implementation, most public administrators and managers dismayed at politicians' lack of experience and expertise in different required areas for policy implementation. Likewise, Ngamlana (2011:13) points out that the politicians also dislike any public administrator's form of engagement in influencing policy decisions.

This political dichotomy has created a rift where politicians and administrators are unable to interface even in situations where they are required to do so. It is such complexities of the political-administrative interface that still characterise the process of the accomplishment of different activities in the contemporary South African local governance system. Nonetheless, with public administrative regarded as the mechanism for policy implementation, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa further sought to create and establish an effective public administration system. Such a view is echoed in Chapter 10 of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa, which establishes public administration as a branch which is complementary to political systems for executing different government policies and programmes. It emphasises the need for public administration to uphold democratic and accountability principles to enhance equitable and fair resource distribution.

To accomplish that, Chapter 10 of the 1996 South African Constitution also establishes the Public Service Commission to provide guidelines and direct public servants in the process of accomplishing different public administration activities. As Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) note, the establishment of the Public Service Commission is also accompanied by the establishment of certain Chapter 9 institutions as watchdogs of public administration. These Chapter 9 institutions encompass the Public Protector, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), the Human Rights Commission (HRC), the Commission for Gender Equity (CGE) and the Commission for the Protection of Culture, Religious and Linguistic Communities. The motive of the establishment of these Chapter 9 institutions is to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation of public administration activities.

Through this, it aims to influence the extent to which different policy executions by public administration are able to enhance the achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes. Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17) further highlight that the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa isolated certain critical values that must be upheld by all public administrators as well as other public officials in all the spheres of government. These critical values include the embracement of high professional ethics and effective and efficient economic resource utilisation. As these constitutional principles cascade from the central government to the local government sphere, the 1996 South African Constitution further offers insights on how local governance can be strengthened.

As Paradza, Mokwena and Richards (2010:34) note, since there was to be a transition from the apartheid segregated type of governance, there was a need for an amalgamation of local and regional councils that served as the local government of the time. Thus, local government was to be known as a "developmental local government". This idea of a "developmental local government" is enshrined in Section 40(1) and Section 151(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Section 40(1) of the Constitution of South Africa (996) describes the government of the republic as constituting national, provincial and local spheres of government (Schmidt, 2010). Section 151(1) further describes the local government as the local sphere of government which consists of municipalities, which must be established for the whole of South Africa.

To enhance capabilities to respond to the goal of establishing a "developmental local government", the 1996 South African Constitution further sought to strengthen local government by providing certain powers and functions to the municipal councils to take charge of the activities in their jurisdictions. In the initiatives that either leverage political-administrative interface or even explain the basis of the existing complexities of political-administrative interface in local governance systems, Sections 151-164 of the 1996 South African Constitution grant municipal councils both executive and legislative powers and authorities.

In line with Cameron's (2010:676) views, Sections 151-164 require municipal councils to execute functions entailing offering democratic and accountable governance to local communities. Such sections also require municipal councils to provide community services in an effective, economical, efficient and sustainable way. It emphasises the need for municipal councils to develop and implement policy initiatives for socio-economic transformation and the development of their local communities.

Sections 151-164 also require municipal councils to engage and involve local communities and other stakeholders in the accomplishment of different municipal activities. Finally, Sections 151-164 emphasise the need for municipal councils to encourage the development of safe and healthy community environments. Certainly, municipal councils are constituted of both elected and administrative officials.

However, Cameron (2010:676) argues that although the 1996 Constitution emphasises separation of powers of the executive, legislature and judiciary at the national level, its inherent intention must have been to enhance coherent collaborations of politicians and administrators at the municipal level. Such coherent collaboration is critical for stabilising local governance systems to bolster delivery of services that effectively respond to the population's needs and preferences. The principle of coherent collaboration and interface between politicians and administrators is also emphasised at the government level. However, Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 and Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 still highlight the distinction between the roles of the executive mayor and that of the municipal manager. While working in cohort with the municipal manager, Section 56 of the Municipal Structures Act 1998 requires the executive mayor to evaluate and identify initiatives for the implementation of different service delivery policies and programmes at the municipal level.

Inter alia, it also requires the executive mayor to work with the municipal council to exercise oversight over the process of the implementation of different municipal service delivery activities. Such functions of the executive mayor differ from municipal manager's roles, which are outlined in the Municipal Systems Act 2000. Municipal managers are expected by the Municipal Systems Act 2000 to manage the linkage of the municipal administrative system to its political structures and officials. It also emphasises that municipal managers must adopt and the implement policy decisions of the political system at the municipal level.

Besides the management and administration of the overall municipal activities, municipal managers are also required to ensure an effective, economical and efficient municipal operation. As Cameron (2010:676) highlights, the Municipal Systems Act 2000 further stresses the need for municipal managers to develop and implement the Municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This must be accomplished in line with general development policy initiatives of the central government as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP). In addition to monitoring the implementation of such municipal programmes, municipal managers are also required to enforce staff discipline, sound employment relations, compliance with municipal rules and manage municipal financial affairs.

Despite the distinction in the functions of the executive mayor and municipal manager, Ncalane (2018:10) points out that the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 and Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 still inherently encourage the interactive interface between the executive mayor as the elected municipal official and the municipal manager as the municipal administrator.

Even though the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, emphasises of such a political-administrative interface it still highlights the distinction of executive mayor's functions as the political head of the municipality from those of the municipal manager as the municipal administrator. Besides emphasising the need for engagement in budget approval and reporting on policy and budget implementation monitoring, Section 52 of the Act also requires the executive mayor to offer general political direction on municipal fiscal affairs. It also requires the executive mayor to exercise oversight, but not interfere with the municipal financial management activities and responsibilities as assigned by the Act to the accounting officer and chief financial officer.

Executive mayors are further empowered by Section 52 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 to take all initiatives to enhance municipal performance within the confines of the constitution and statutory obligations as well as the approved budget. In a period of thirty days from the end of each quarter, the executive mayor is expected by Section 52 of the Act to report to the municipal council on budget implementation and general municipal financial affairs. The executive mayor is also required to perform all other duties as delegated by the municipal council.

Yet, as the executive mayor executes such functions, the municipal manager as the municipal administrator, on the other hand, is expected by Section 60 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 to accomplish functions allocated to the accounting officer as per the requirements of the Act. The municipal manager is expected to provide direction to the municipality as well as its political structures and officials to enhance compliance with the Act.

In the accomplishment of these functions, the municipal manager is required to exhibit the requisite integrity, fairness, honesty and achievement of the best municipal interests. In the case of poor performance, Section 34 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 empowers national and provincial governments to intervene to undertake capacity building and leverage accountable and transparent municipal financial management.

Despite the assignment of different functions, Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 and Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 still expect political-administrative interface in the accomplishment of different municipal activities. The inherent nature of the functions allocated to the executive mayor and the municipal certainly requires them to coherently collaborate and work together. Without such collaboration, it can become difficult to accomplish required activities and achieve the desired outcomes as expected by the local communities and the provincial and central governments. However, despite the policy and legislative framework indicating how and when politicians and public administrators and managers should interface, the nature and outcomes of such interactions still remain quite complex.

The nature of political-administrative interface in most of the local governance structures including the UThukela District Municipality, has not only often become complex, but also in certain cases, anarchical rendering it relatively difficult for some of the municipalities to achieve the desired service delivery policy outcomes. It is such complexities combined with other constraints that

motivate this research to use a systems approach to evaluate the complexities of the relationship between political and administrative interfaces in the UThukela District Municipality.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

A critical analysis of the South African Local Government revealed the governance mechanisms put in place for leveraging local government efficiency to include the Municipal Structuring Framework reflecting Metro, District and Local municipalities and Ward Committee Systems, as well as the Municipal Governance System as dictated by the Municipal Systems Act and Municipal Structures Act.

However, as these governance structures and mechanisms seek to leverage local government operational efficiency, they still have to operate within the policy and regulatory context that govern local government operations in South Africa. Such policy and regulatory frameworks for leveraging local government operational efficiency in South Africa were found to be reflected in the Decentralisation and Developmental Local Government Framework as well as in the Intergovernmental Relations Framework.

But even amid the existence of all these measures for leveraging the operational efficiency of the South African local government, empirical facts still imply that the conflicts and complexities of political/administrative interface across different South African municipalities are still undermining the efficiency of the overall local government system to create and deliver the desired outcomes. Since the South African local government emphasises the need for its operation as a system, it is in that context that the discussion in the next chapter evaluates systems theory to create a theoretical foundation for evaluating the nature of the complexities of political administrative interface in the South African municipalities.

CHAPTER 3

THEORIES AND LITERATURE ON MANAGING COMPLEX LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

An analytical approach in systems theory edifies effective diagnosis and management of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric local governance systems. Based on systems thinking, this chapter offers a critical synthesis of theories and literature on managing complex local governance systems. A critical analysis of this type is undertaken in the context of the overriding aim of this research, which as indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis is to use systems theory to evaluate the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality.

Through such analysis, the study aims to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance. To aid analysis and understanding of the fundamental systems' thinking and reasoning, the chapter commences by analysing the fundamental concepts in systems theory. This created the theoretical basis for evaluating theories on the politics-administration interface. In such analysis, it is highlighted that just like systems theory, general theories on the politics-administration dichotomy also inherently exhibit the complex interplay of different actors in modern local governance systems that are, in other words, also analogous to "systems".

The chapter highlights the criticisms of the political-administrative dichotomy as polarising politicians from administrators and examines how such limitations are solved in the models for politics-administration complementarity. To accomplish this, the complementarity models discussed include Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman's (1981) politics-administration complementarity model, and Peters' (1987:256) model for leveraging the collaboration and complementarity of politicians and public administrators. Other models include Svara's (1999:676) theory for creating cohesion and complementarity between the roles of politicians and

administrators, and Svara's (2001) new theory of typology on elected officials and administrators' interface. Despite echoing the idea of complementarity, which is typical of the thinking and reasoning in systems theory, such complementarity models were still noted to be less effective in the midst of the increasingly complex multi-actors in the modern local governance systems.

In effect, the chapter examines theories on complex networks of actors in polycentric local governance systems. To operate in such environment that constitutes not only political-administrative actors, but also other actors, the chapter analyses certain operational models for polycentric local governance system.

Such operational models encompass Alford's (2013:75) theory for engaging citizens in co-producing service outcomes, Borgonovi and Sancino's (2014:7:8) as well as Bryson (2004:21) and Archer's (2003) theories for local governance stakeholder management. Against this backdrop of the increasingly complex multi-actors' networks in polycentric local governance systems, the chapter subsequently evaluates theories for managing more complex policymaking in a polycentric local governance system.

Such complex policy-making theories include group theory, elite theory, institutionalism theory, incremental theory and rational-choice theory. Although such theories aided the understanding of how complex policy decisions are made in the midst of different conflicting actors, the chapter further analyses models in systems theory that are used for diagnosing and managing complexities of the entire polycentric local governance systems.

Such models encompass complexity theory, managing the "unmanageable" and governance network theory. Certainly, all these aided the understanding of how systems approach can be used to diagnose and manage the complexities of different actors in the contemporary complex polycentric local governance systems to leverage achievement of desired service delivery outcomes.

3.2 SYSTEMS THEORY

Approaches for diagnosing and managing the complexities arising from the interface between politicians and administrators as well as other actors in the contemporary meta-local governance organisations are explicitly and implicitly echoed in systems theory. Systems theory, according to

Poole (2014:49), posits organisations to be analogous to systems that constitute different internal interactive subsystems and actors that also influence or are instead influenced by certain external actors. Certain emergent properties reflecting an organisation's critical features and characteristics are influenced by the interactive relationships between these subsystems and actors.

Poole (2014:49) reveals that these unique emergent properties either edify or constrain a system's capabilities to achieve its desired outcomes. In effect, just like in a system, Lai and Lin (2017:9) argue that effective management of the interactive relationships between politicians, administrators and other actors such as service delivery activists and partners in the public-private partnerships is critical for enhancing successful policy formulation and implementation.

Lai and Lin (2017:9) state that this also catalyses the abilities of government organisations to achieve the desired policy outcomes. Certainly, the modern concept of a "system" in systems theory owes its origin to the outcomes of research in natural and biological sciences. Using the Gestalt principle, Jan Christian Smuts, a South African lawyer and military officer, as cited in Lai and Lin (2017:9), discovered the notion of a "system" in 1926. This was when his research revealed an organism is more than the sum of all its constituent parts. Smuts espoused a synergistic view and inter-relationships in the universe when he discovered a tendency towards holism, or wholeness, in all its forms: matter, life and personality.

According to Lai and Lin (2017:9), when Boulding (1956), Churchman (1968) and Ackoft (1981) took the study further, Smuts' findings soon set the precedent for further exploration and development of the concept of a "system" in systems theory. After extensive research, Boulding (1956), in a study titled *"General Systems Theory: The Skeleton of Science",* defines a "system" as an "assemblage of objects or ideas unified in some form of regular interaction and interdependence forming a unified, organic and an organised whole" (Lai, She & Ye, 2015:49).

As Figure 3.1 reflects, Boulding (1956) as indicated in Lai et al. (2015:49) further argues that a "system" is a concept integrating not only individual persons, but also the plan, method, order and arrangement in a unified framework antithesis of chaos, confusion and disorder. Research and application of systems theory subsequently evolved in natural and biological sciences and extended to psychology and sociology studies. However, as it evolved, Blaschke, Schoeneborn and Seidl (2012:879) revealed that studies in organisational and management theories also began

to explore how the analytical approach in systems theory could also be adopted and applied to manage more complex organisations.

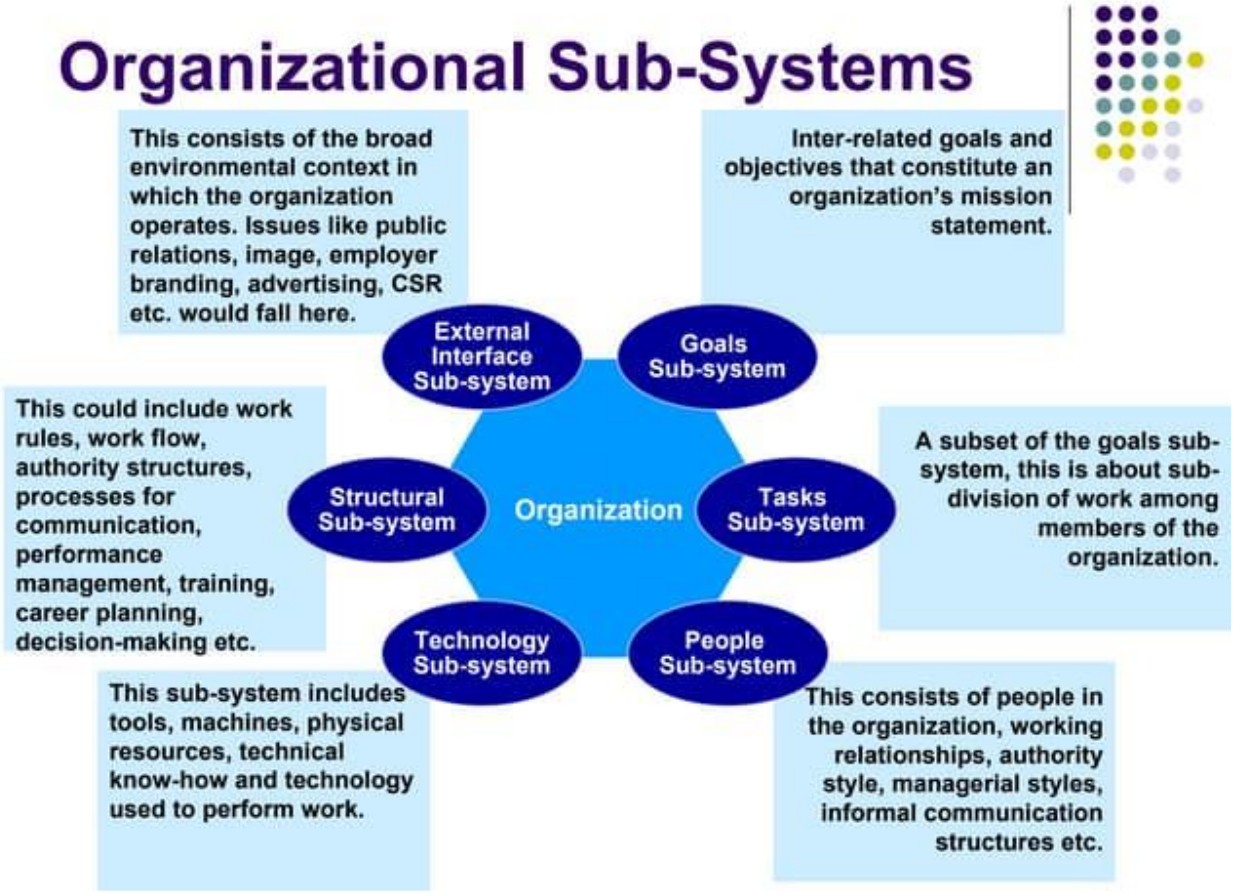

Figure 3.1: System Perspective of Organisations

Source: Lai et al. (2015:49)

This is attributable to the fact that in the twentieth century, organisations began to develop more complex structures constituting of more interactive formal and informal structures and relationships in the midst of more complex environments. Yet, as organisations became more complex, Blaschke et al. (2012:879) contend that the analytical management approach articulated in Talyor's (1916) scientific management theory that was previously used by most managers proved to be ineffective. Consequently, organisational and management theorists were motivated to evaluate how the analytical approach in systems theory could be used to analyse and manage more complex organisations. Kast and Rosenzweig (1979) and Parsons (1960), as cited in

Blaschke et al. (2012:879), revealed that these organisational challenges and complexities led to the development of systems theory for organisational management.

In the organisational context, a system was construed to imply an entity constituting of inter-related sets of different parts which is created to enhance the accomplishment of certain specified mission. Rottger and Preusse (2013:99) posit that an entity as a social system was interpreted to possess certain interactive subsystems and to constitute part of a supra-system which, continuously interacts with one another.

Besides having a certain mission to accomplish, Rottger and Preusse (2013:99) also highlight that an entity as a system was also found to exhibit an inflow-transformation-outflow cycle of human and material resources. An organisation as a system also has certain performance evaluation methods, and effective management is essential to its overall operation. It was also found that an organisation as a system also tends to engage in certain interactive cyclical behaviour entailing the obtaining of inputs from its external environment, processing them using its internal production systems and sending out the output to the external environment.

Ice and Cooper (2010:5) note that through that analysis, organisational and management studies concluded that as an organisation a system is influenced by the outcomes of its internal subsystems, it also tends to be affected by certain forces in external systems. This enables management to respond by maintaining a stable dynamic state of equilibrium and homeostasis, which is favourable for an organisation to successfully conceptualise and apply a combination of the required policies and strategies to achieve the desired outcomes (Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud & Taylor, 2014:173).

An organisation as a system aims to leverage its overall activities' coordination to enhance the accomplishment of the outlined goals in a rather more dynamic environment. In effect, the smooth flow of information and activities along all the internal structures from and to the external environment was found to be critical for effective performance of an organisation as a system. Brummans et al. (2014:173) further contend that organisations as systems also tend to have hierarchical structures comprising of systems and subsystems as well as parts that flow from the top to the bottom. Culliton (1981) as cited in Brummans et al. (2014:173) highlights that the

increasing adoption of systems theory is being motivated by the fact that the age of analysis is being surpassed by the age of synthesis.

In effect, the application of the integrated analytical approach in systems theory is significant because the whole system is intrinsically different from the mere aggregate of its different parts. The age of synthesis would lure management to think in the context of the wholeness of operations. According to Brummans et al. (2014:173), systems theory was basically extracted from the practices and behaviours in private sector organisations. However, most of its key principles have since been increasingly adopted in the management of most contemporary government organisations.

As more organisations increasingly adopt the application of systems theory, Brummans et al. (2014:173) reveal that the emergence of such management practice has also influenced the analysis of how systems theory can be used to analyse and manage the often more complex networks in government organisations. Miller (2011:60) notes that systems theory's practical application in the context of politics and public administration only became evident in 1953 when Easton (1953) used it to analyse the interactive process of policy formulation and implementation.

In a book titled *"A Systems Analysis of Political Life",* Easton (1953), as cited in Adam (2017:8) uses systems theory to analyse the behaviours in political science and public administration. Using work that became known as the conceptual foundation behaviourist revolution in political science, Easton (1953) offers certain critical characteristics, which are called the intellectual foundation stone of behaviourism. These eight characteristics encompass regularities, verification, techniques, quantification, values, systemisation, pure science and integration. The intellectual foundation stone of behaviourism was extracted from different behavioural theories.

However, the eight characteristics still constitute the basis for organic connection of systems reasoning with behaviourism. Easton (1953) as cited in Lartey (2020:44), explains that a political system is analogous to the interactive system in any country in which authoritative allocations are made and implemented through a combination of different policies and decisions.

For that reason, he construes public policy to connote a political system's deliberate effort to respond to the demands emerging from its environment. According to Fischer, Miller and Sydney (2017:5), Easton defines a political system to refer to a system constituting of identifiable

interactive and inter-related organisations and activities in a country that decide on the authoritative allocation of resources that bind on the citizens in that country.

Easton (1953), as cited in Adam (2017:8), states a political system is bounded and separate from the other environments in the country. He reveals that the outer environment of the political system constitutes a social system, economic system, citizens, activists, international systems, political parties and biological systems. However, even though the political system is bounded and separate from the outer environment in the country, he highlights that the political system still maintains a continuous interactive relationship with its outer environment.

In other words, Easton (1953), as cited in Adam (2017:8), subscribes to an open systems approach which, if applied to political system, would see constituent subsystems and external systems or the supra-system that directly impinges on the political system.

Due to the interaction and inter-relatedness of the political system to its environment or external systems, he argues that inputs into the political system from its external systems constitute demands and support. As Figure 3.2 illustrates, demands are pressure for governmental actions from individuals or groups of citizens as well as organisations to meet their needs and preferences. According to Easton (1953), as cited in Lartey (2020:44), support on the other hand connotes the obedient behaviours exhibited by groups and individual citizens through the accomplishment of activities such as accepting election outcomes, paying taxes, respecting regulations and laws and respecting decisions and actions undertaken by the political system.

In effect, the level of support among citizens tends to explain the extent to which a political system is considered as legitimate, authoritative and binding on the population in that country. Quite often, Easton (1953), as indicated in Fornasier and Franklin (2019:327), notes these inputs are processed by the political system to produce outputs that are reflected in the promulgation of different laws, rules, judicial decisions, policy implementation, positive policy outcomes and improved service delivery. These policy outputs may subsequently alter the environment and the needs arising from the population as well as the character of the political system itself.

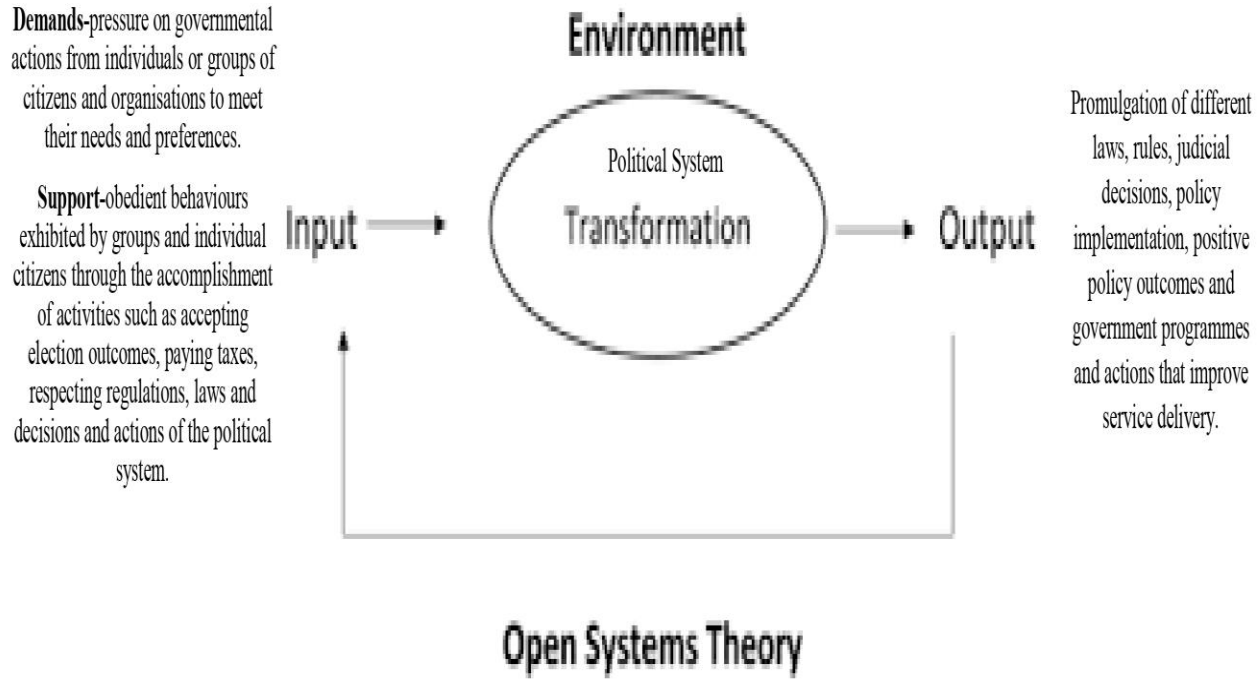

Figure 3.2: Political System as an Open System

Source: Easton (1953), as cited in Adam (2017:8)

With political system considered as the authoritative allocation of resources, it therefore tends to be analogous to public policy. However, Easton (1953), as cited in Adam (2017:8), points out that as the political system processes inputs into policy output, which is provided to citizens, it tends to get feedback from the population. Such feedbacks about policy outputs which may be negative or positive often inform new policy inputs that are further processed into new outputs to meet new demands from the population. Cyclically, as he states, the process of input-processing-output and feedback goes on like that and it never ends. Despite the fact that Easton (1953), as cited in Fornasier and Franklin (2019:327), emphasises the importance of interactively drawing inputs from the population as critical for responding to realties and challenges facing the population, he does not deal with the often-complex processes of policy decision-making and implementation.

Contrary to the view that inputs from the population are automatically transformed into outputs, Fornasier and Franklin (2019:327) reveal that a policy decision-making process is often constituted by multi-actors from opposition political parties and activists as well as administrative bureaucrats with different interests that may frustrate certain policy decisions. Besides that, policy decision-making is also often controlled by certain "gatekeepers" that can pull all the coalitions of different groups to reject certain policies.

Easton's (1953) political systems theory also does not explain how the complexities arising from the complex interactive relationship between politicians and administrative bureaucrats, as well as other actors, can be identified and managed during policy decision-making and implementation to produce the desired outputs. Easton's (1953) political systems theory, as noted in Fischer et al. (2017:5), further fails to elaborate on how the complex politicised government organisations with various actors can be effectively managed. Despite such limitations, Easton's (1953) political systems theory, as cited in Fornasier and Franklin (2019:327), still offers critical insights on how systems theory can be interactively used to ensure that views from different individuals and groups of citizens are integrated in policy decisions and implementation. Easton's (1953) political systems theory is consonant with Peter Checkland's soft systems methodology that guides the philosophical reasoning in this research.

3.3 SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY

Soft systems methodology is an organisational diagnostic and modelling approach that evaluates the compatibility of soft systems like behaviours, attitudes, views and perceptions in an organisation to aid hard systems' capabilities to deliver the desired organisational outcomes (Checkland, 1999 & Wilson, 2001 as cited in Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). Motivated by hard systems' failures, Checkland argues that in soft systems' methodology diagnosis and improvement of the organisational performance may not only require review and realignment of its hard systems like structures, policies, regulations and operational procedures, but also overhaul and realignment of the views, behaviours, perceptions and attitudes (soft systems) of the actors in such hard systems (Da Costa, Diehl & Snelders, 2019). Supported by Wilson (2001), Checkland explains that organisations operate within the complex soft systems in which different perceptions and views of actors in such systems influence questions as to what, how, when and for whom should the

organisational activities be accomplished. Failure to strike a consensus between such varying views can induce situations that undermine the successful conceptualisation and implementation of a range of plans to achieve the desired organisational outcomes. It requires managers to diagnose all the complexities in the soft systems to emerge with a decision that accommodates and integrates all the divergent views (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). This creates a favourable condition for a seamless organisational operation in the quest to achieve its designated goals and mission. Soft systems methodology is therefore an organisational re-engineering methodology that aims to reshape attitudes, behaviours and perceptions to support hard systems' capabilities to create and deliver the desired outcomes.

To accomplish this, Checkland and Wilson suggest a combination of tools for soft systems' diagnosis and realignment to include rich picture, conceptual model, CATWOE (customers, actors, transformation, worldview, owner & environment) and formal systems model. Rich picture is gained through a comprehensive analysis of the organisational soft systems to identify different views and perceptions that explain how activities are accomplished in the way they are. Such varying views are often accompanied with different mental models and logic that lead to the emergence of certain conceptual models on how certain things should be or ought to be done. When such conceptual models are compared with the realities within which CATWOE operates, they are modified to create a practical formal systems model (Da Costa et al., 2019).

As such soft systems' diagnostic tools are being used, Checkland highlights seven main steps through which they can be applied to identify and resolve the major organisational soft systems problems. Figure 3.3 illustrates such steps to include: Step 1: Identify and Evaluate Problematic Situations; Step 2: Isolate and describe the Problem; Step 3: Establish Root definitions of relevant Systems of Purposive Behaviour; Step 4: Build Conceptual Model of Human Activity Systems; Step 5: Compare Models with the real World Situations; Step 6: Define Desirable and Feasible Changes; and Step 7: Adopt Improvement Actions to ameliorate the Problem Situation.

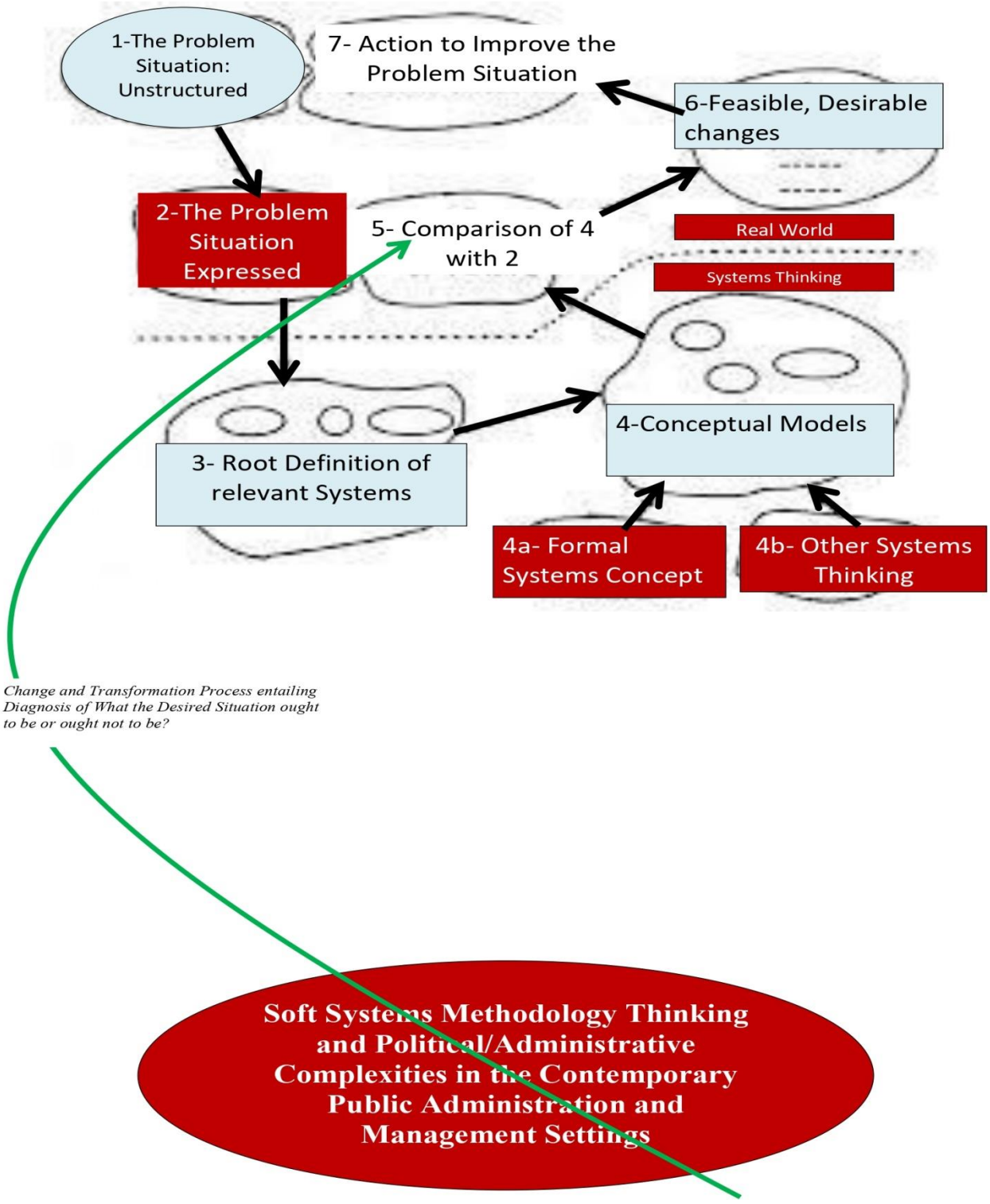

Figure 3.3: Soft Systems and Use-case Modelling

Source: Bustard and Wilkie (1999)

3.3.1 Step 1: Identify and Evaluate Problematic Situations

This step entails identification and diagnosis of the real-world situation in which the organisation exists and operates. It evaluates the internal and external eco-systems in which the organisation operates, as well as the actors in such eco-systems and their expectations (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). Evaluation of the problem situations also diagnoses how the aspirations and expectations of such actors not only clash with each other but also the organisational expectations and aspirations to raise conflicts and performance-related issues. With problematic areas identified, the next step involves in-depth diagnosis and modelling of different stakeholders' perceptions.

3.3.2 Step 2: Isolate and describe the Problem

A thorough in-depth analysis of the identified problematic situation is undertaken in this step. It involves the gathering and analysis of both the contradicting and positive views about the situation as well as the areas of discontent and consensus. However, Checkland (1999) notes that to gain better insight and understanding of the situation, it is critical to use a rich picture to map and model different views about the problematic situation through a diagram. Rich picture enables the identification of different interpretations and perceptions about the problem from different actors.

This aids the identification of the areas of complexities and conflicts. It also enables exploration of how the contentious areas of conflicts and incompatibilities can be resolved through consensus among different conflicting actors. A rich picture further aids the modelling of the real-world situation in the organisation to discern how attitudes, perceptions and behaviours must be reshaped to create and assimilate relationships that support the organisation's overall effective performance.

Even though this creates the foundation for modelling and recreating a new system, researchers still caution that, over time, it has been established that since different organisations face different systematic problems, rich picture analysis must be undertaken with an open mind to diagnose and emerge with system solutions that fit the organisation in question rather than seeking to extrapolate system models from other organisations. With a rich picture in place, the next step requires diagnosis of root definitions of relevant systems of purposive behaviour.

3.3.3 Step 3: Establish Root Definitions of relevant Systems of Purposive Behaviour

It is during this stage that soft systems methodology goes deeper into the analysis to understand the logic, reasons and rationale why different actors in different subsystems as well as the entire organisational system behave in the way they do. It also entails the analysis of the different views, thinking and perceptions behind such behaviours (Da Costa et *al.*, 2019). It is such analysis that creates the foundation for the development of a conceptual model through which different conflicting systems can be synchronised to create a seamlessly operational organisational system.

But to achieve that, Checkland and Smyth (1976) proposed the CATWOE Framework. Customers examine the views of those who have gained from the output of different transformation processes in this framework (Murthy, 2000).

Customers for public administration and management are citizens or local residents who benefit from different service delivery programmes such as electricity, healthcare, water and sanitation. However, such customers may have either positive or negative views about the services that they receive, as well as negative or positive ratings of the organisation that delivers such services to them. Thus, CATWOE was modified into BATWOVE (beneficiaries, actors, transformation, worldview, owner & environment) to have customers divided into the categories of beneficiaries and victims (Murthy, 2000).

As BATWOVE aids effective understanding of customers' views about the organisation, diagnosis of the actors CATWOE involves analysis of the actual employees, personnel and officials who are involved in the transformation of different inputs and activities into outputs that are delivered to the customers. Such analysis enhances the discerning extent to which they have compatible views, perceptions and behaviours to transform and deliver the required outputs to customers in a way desired by the entire organisation as a system.

In the CATWOE acronym, T stands for transformation, and it requires a thorough diagnosis of the actual processes or world view of how different inputs and activities are transformed into outputs that are delivered to the customers. It discerns how the existing views, perceptions and behaviours

either undermine or leverage the efficiency and effectiveness of the transformation process to deliver the expected organisational outcomes that meet customer expectations.

This must be accompanied with a critical analysis of the "W" in the CATWOE acronym, which refers to the world view reflecting the stakeholders and actors' perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs about the organisation as a system and the larger system in which it operates.

This aids assessment of whether such world views create thinking and practices that either bolster or constrain effective organisational performance as a system (Sevaldson, 2013). Even though owners are part of the stakeholders, specific analysis of the "O" owner in the CATWOE acronym is critical for discerning the views and perceptions that influence decisions that owners make as major decision-makers of the organisation. In the context of public administration and management government officials make decisions based on their opinions, perceptions, beliefs, and policies.

With a detailed understanding of the internal views, "E"-Environment in the CATWOE acronym emphasises the need for also diagnosing the complexities of the variables in the external system (environment) in which the organisation operates. This aids the understanding of whether such dynamics are supportive of the organisational operation as a system or whether the organisation will need to modify its operation as a system to adapt in the midst of such changes (Murthy, 2000).

Nonetheless, having established the root definition of the problem through analysis of the views and perceptions of the customers, actors, transformation, worldview and owner as well as the variables in the environment, Checkland proposes that the next step must entail the building of a conceptual model of human activity systems.

3.3.4 Step 4: Build Conceptual Model of Human Activity Systems

A conceptual model of human activity systems is a logical theoretical framework reflecting a network of how different actors interact across different activities to transform inputs into outputs. As Checkland explains, the conceptual model of human activity systems is constructed from the diagnosis and understanding of a network of different actors and a range of inter-related activities that they accomplish in translating/transforming inputs into outputs (Sevaldson, 2013).

Although it is a defensible logic, extracted from the root definition of the problem, Checkland reveals that the conceptual model of human activity systems is just a theoretical perspective that must still be compared and contrasted with the actual real-world perspective to develop the final practical model that can be adopted (Sevaldson, 2009).

However, Checkland still explains that the conceptual model of human activity systems must be built to reflect activity flow networks, as well as the interactions of different actors across such networks. This aids the evaluation of the effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency of the organisational operational systems to create and transform inputs into outputs. As part of the Three Es (Effectiveness, Efficacy & Efficiency), effectiveness aids the evaluation of whether the existing subsystems and the overall system are doing the right things to achieve the desired organisational outcomes (Sevaldson, 2009).

Efficacy measures whether such systems are achieving the intended results, and efficiency examines the level of resource optimisation to achieve as many outcomes as possible. With a conceptual model of human activity systems developed, Checkland suggests that it must be compared and contrasted with the real-world situation in the next step.

3.3.5 Step 5: Compare Models with the Real-World Situations

Since the conceptual model of human activity systems is just a theoretical solution for the identified problematic situations, its comparison against the real-world views and situations is therefore critical for eliciting views on how they can be modified (Sevaldson, 2014).

This requires extensive consultation of stakeholders and actors about the proposed solutions for consensus to be reached on how improvements can be undertaken (Sevaldson, 2009). This eliminates conflicts to enhance the capabilities of the conceptual model of human activity systems to create a coherent system that bolsters an organisation's overall seamless operation.

Checkland explains that such a process requires the accomplishment of three activities: evaluating the key activities reflected in the conceptual model; diagnosis of the realities that take place in organisations and shifting of the conceptual model to a defensible logic that matches the actual organisational realities. But even after reaching such conclusions, step 6 of soft systems methodology still requires the definition of desirable and feasible changes.

3.3.6 Step 6: Define Desirable and Feasible Changes

As the conceptual model introduces the defensible logic that seeks to introduce new changes and transform the overall organisational performance, it is still critical to define the desirable and feasible changes that can be undertaken in the context of the available organisational resources (Jackson, 1985). Such analysis must be accompanied by the modification and transformation of actors' perceptions, views and behaviours to drive the change and transformation introduced by the new system.

This may require a change in the organisational culture as well as motivation of the actors to support the new change by developing a shared vision and objectives. Other determinants may also include encouragement of good communication and debates for constant modifications to be undertaken to drive change and transformation through the newly introduced system (Murthy, 2000). Thus, with all these in place, step 7 still requires managers to adopt improvement actions to ameliorate the problem situation.

3.3.7 Step 7: Adopt Improvement Actions to ameliorate the Problem Situation

It is in this step that managers must ensure that the improvement actions reflected in the conceptual model are introduced and implemented to ameliorate the identified problem situations (Murthy, 2000). However, as the organisation changes and transforms into the new system, Checkland argues that it tends to also cause changes in its external systems (environment) that in turn instigate the need for the application of new soft systems methodology and the process cyclically continues for as long as the organisation continues to exist.

In other words, soft systems methodology is one of the systems approaches that include hard systems and critical systems thinking (Jackson, 2001). Hard systems focus on creating structures, policies and regulations governing how different actors in a system must accomplish different activities. Although it emphasises structural efficiency as critical for leveraging organisational efficacy to achieve the desired goals and objectives, it also received criticism from both soft systems methodology and critical systems thinking (Murthy, 2000). Fundamental criticisms of

hard systems thinking are that it ignores the roles, values, views and behaviours of actors in such organisational systems (Sevaldson, 2014).

Yet, as it does so, proponents of soft systems thinking argue that certain behaviours, attitudes and perceptions can emerge from the soft system to either leverage or even undermine the capabilities of hard systems to create and deliver the desired outcomes. This explains why the application of hard systems thinking must be integrated with soft systems thinking if organisations are to change and deliver the desired outcomes.

However, both hard and soft systems methodologies are still criticised in critical systems thinking. Critical systems thinking posits that focusing on reaching consensus between different actors without regard to other underlying structural and social design, as in the case of soft systems methodology, can undermine the creation of organisational systems that can deliver the desired outcomes (Jackson, 2001). It notes that ignoring the views of the minority can create continuous situations of animosity where the minority persistently seeks to overcome dominance by the majority. This creates rifts that undermine the efficient performance of the organisation as a system.

To address such limitations, critical systems thinking emphasises the need for evaluating all views against their own weaknesses and strengths to resolve the organisational problems in the context of the underlying structural and social designs (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). Despite criticisms of Checkland's soft systems methodology, it still influences the views in later systems theories as well as contemporary organisational practices.

As compared to simplified policy decision-making process in Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology as well as Easton's (1953) political systems theory, theories on the practical approach for policy decision-making imply policy decision-making is a daunting process constituting several interactive competing views and values from different groups (Ward, 2014:6; Frohnen & Carey, 2016:16).

Nonetheless, the fundamental argument in this research is that government institutions are systems that are analogous to organisms constituting of different interactive groups of actors that influence their emergent properties to edify or constrain the achievement of desired service delivery outcomes. This reasoning is not only echoed in Easton's (1953) political systems theory, but also

in the general foundational theories on the interface between politics and administration as well as other groups of actors in the modern public administration and management system.

3.4 THEORIES ON POLITICS-ADMINISTRATION INTERFACE

Just like systems theory, general theories on politics-administration interface also exhibit complex interplay of different actors in the modern government organisations that are in other words analogous to "systems". However, the conceptual foundation of such a complex interplay of politics-administrative dichotomy in conjunction with other actors can be traced to the sixteenth century's constitutional law principle of the doctrine of "separation of powers". Developed by Aristotle (384 BC) and Montesquieu (1689), as cited in Frohnen and Carey (2016:16), the doctrine of "separation of powers" emphasises the need for the division of government institutions into three critical systems that encompass legislative, executive and judicial branches. In such a constitutional system, the legislature is charged with the development and promulgation of laws, the executive is entrusted with the authority and responsibilities of the operationalisation of the laws and the judiciary is charged with the interpretation and application of laws.

The motive of the separation of powers and responsibilities of each of these branches of government was to eliminate conflicts among different government institutions and leverage a government's functioning as a holistic system. It was also aimed at reducing the concentration of power in a single government institution so as to leverage checks and balances among different government institutions. Frohnen and Carey (2016:16) explain that as each branch of government institutions focused on exercising its authorities and responsibilities, the doctrine of "separation of powers" also aimed to spawn improvement in the overall level of government effectiveness and efficiency.

Though the doctrine of separation of powers emphasises the division of authorities and responsibility among different governments, it is inherently evident that it also advocates the interaction of different government institutions as subsystems that constitute a comprehensive representation of government as a whole. Such a view is consonant with the fundamental argument in this research, in which it is posited that government organisations as systems constitute different interactive components that either constrain or leverage their effective performance.

As the executive operationalises laws promulgated by the legislature and the judiciary interprets and applies such laws, Frohnen and Carey (2016:16) argue such an approach tends to facilitate the coherent interactions of government institutions as a system. Such coherent interactions are also often reflected in situations where such branches of government institutions evaluate each other's performance to ensure checks and balances.

Such a view echoes Ward's (2014:6) argument that despite the emphasis on the doctrine of the separation of powers, the inherent practical interactions between different government institutions often still cause the fusion of certain branches of government institutions, such as the executive and legislature. In most political systems, Ward (2014:6) contends that whether it is in autocratic or democratic systems, the executive often still tends to exert influence over the legislature as well as the judiciary. In most cases, this is accomplished by influencing the content as well as voting patterns on different laws and policies that the legislature promulgates.

As for the judiciary, Ward (2014:6) states that such executive influence is often manifested in the mundane influence of the appointments of the head of the judiciary as well as the judges. In certain cases, such influence even extends to exercising undue influence on certain judges to reach certain decisions in certain cases that are considered politically sensitive. It is such interactive influences and relationships between different government institutions as systems that reflect the real-world situation that most governments go through in a bid to achieve the desired outcomes.

However, despite such limitations, Sancino, Meneguzzo, Braga and Esposito (2018:5) reveal that Aristotle (384 BC) and Montesquieu's (1689) logic in the doctrine of "separation of powers" still influenced the emergence of other public administration theories on how politics can be differentiated from administration. One such public administration theory is reflected in Wilson's (1887) theory on politics and administration.

As cited in Sancino et al. (2018:5), Wilson (1887) emphasises the need for the separation of politics and administration. In the distinction between politics and administration, Wilson proposes that politics must be limited to setting a vision and executing activities or tasks that must be accomplished or executed by the administration as the technical branch of public administration as a system to enhance the achievement of the desired outcomes. This implies that as politics is devoted to policy formulation and decisions, administration should be dedicated to the execution

and implementation of such policies. Wilson's (1887) theory was based on the fundamental reasoning that the delineation of the authorities and responsibilities between politics and administration would leverage the effectiveness and efficiency of government institutions to achieve the desired outcomes.

Limiting the level of interference between politics and administration was also posited to be critical for enhancing accountability to mitigate the rate of corruption. As more governments and public administrators adopted Wilson's (1887) theory on the distinction between politics and public administration, Sancino et al. (2018:5) highlighted that it subsequently became known as the "dichotomy model". Just like Wilson's (1887) theory, the dichotomy model argues that public administrators and managers must be prevented from engaging in purely political activities such as mission and policy formulation decisions.

Likewise, it also states that politicians should be insulated from engaging in purely administrative activities like administration and management as well as policy execution and implementation. Certainly, the "dichotomy model" stresses the importance of public administrators and managers maintaining the requisite level of neutrality in the midst of the emergence of all forms of political forces and interference from different political actors. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011:5), Wilson's (1887) theory as well as the emergence of the dichotomy model subsequently instigated the rethinking and revolution in public administration and management.

During this period of rethinking and revolution, certain bureaucratic approaches to public management and administration emerged. Such approaches were echoed in Weber's (1922) theory of "bureaucratic systems". For organisations to manage all actors and operate effectively and efficiently, Weber (1922), as cited in Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011:5), identified and emphasised the six tenets of bureaucracy encompass clearly delineated division of labour and authority, well-written administrative rules, basing recruitments on specialisation and expertise, office-holding as a career and vocation and linking of duties and authorities to positions and not persons. Weber (1922) did not directly deal with the issue of separating politics from administration.

Weber's (1922) first tenet that emphasises the need for clearly delineated division of labour and authority still echoes the "dichotomy model" that authorities and responsibilities between different persons of power in public administration and management must be clearly defined. This would

aid the elimination of conflicts between roles as well as the undesired negative outcomes of such conflicts. Such six tenets also suggest how the interactive interface of different actors in public administration and management can be managed. It implies that a clear definition of roles in conjunction with clear rules and regulations is important for managing the interactive relationships between different actors to enhance the achievement of the desired outcomes.

Weber (1922) introduced and defined a new approach that had and still has far-reaching effects on how government organisations as systems are governed, administered and managed. As time unfolded, Carboni (2010:90) revealed that Weber's (1922) bureaucratic systems was soon found to induce the creation of more bureaucratic and less effective and efficient public administration and management systems. This rendered most government institutions less effective and efficient for responding to the increasing complex needs and preferences of the population. This ineffectiveness prompted a review of the approach to public administration and management, which introduced the notion of "new public management" (NPM). Certainly, some of the bureaucratic approaches were just modified in NPM.

Carboni (2010:90) highlights that it is still argued in NPM that the introduction of certain economic rationality principles would significantly leverage the effectiveness and efficiency of government organisations. NPM emphasises that such initiatives must be accompanied by the transformation of classical bureaucrats in public administration and management into managers with a significant degree of autonomy from politics. Osborne, Radnor and Nasi (2013:135) highlight the five distinct interconnected features of NPM to include improving the effectiveness and efficiency of government performance.

Such features also encompass adopting value-adding mechanisms from the private sector, privatisation and contracting out certain government services to catalyse improvement of governmental effectiveness and efficiency. Besides creating and using market and semi-market mechanisms to instigate competition for service provision to enhance the realisation of public policy, Osborne et al. (2013:135) also note that NPM also emphasises the need for utilising certain performance indicators to influence the achievement of the desired outcomes from privatised and separated entities of government.

This implies that NPM still echoed the view that public administrators and managers are expected to focus on interpreting and implementing policies in conjunction with ensuring good financial and human resource management. Although NPM still retained the normative division between politicians and public managers, Nabatchi, Sancino and Sicilia (2017:766) argue that it attempted to replace traditional political supremacy with management supremacy.

However, even in the midst of such NPM reforms, Nabatchi et al. (2017:766) point out that neither the bureaucratic approach, NPM nor the new governance model have proved effective in dealing with certain "pathological degeneration" in public administration. Such "pathological degeneration" in public administration arises from the increasing tendencies of certain authoritarian or politicised actors to pursue individual interests at the expense of common interests.

The outcomes of these persistent and complex interactions of different groups of actors with different interests affect public administrators and managers' capabilities to effectively and efficiently manage government organisations to achieve the desired outcomes. Such views are also echoed in Pollitt and Bouckaert's (2011:5) revelations that the modern public administration is increasingly being characterised by a complex web of vertical and horizontal multilevel governance systems.

This implies that in the context of the systems theory, public organisations are analogous to systems constituting different actors that must be carefully managed to influence the achievement of the desired outcomes. Nonetheless, to address these complexities in the relationships between different political actors and public managers, certain theories have emerged to emphasise the movement away from dichotomy to complementarity in the approach to managing politicians-administrators' interface.

3.4.1 Models for Politics-Administration Complementarity

According to Sancino et al. (2018:5), models for politics-administration complementarity connote a set of theories that seek to discern how different political actors as well as administrators can collaboratively and coherently work together in government organisations as systems. Politics-administration complementarity models not only contradict the position in dichotomy model but also emerge from the criticisms of the dichotomy model. As Budd and Sancino (2016:129)

revealed, one of the criticisms of the dichotomy model is reflected in its polarisation of politics from administration.

Instead of evaluating how politicians and administrators can coherently function together as critical inter-related actors in one system, the dichotomy model focuses on using polarisation mechanisms. This over-emphasised polarisation creates rifts between politicians and administrations to undermine the effective accomplishment of different public administration and management activities. The dichotomy model was found not to reflect the typical nuanced and complex relationships between politics and administration. Consequently, certain theories have emerged to address such limitations.

Such theories encompass Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman's (1981) politics-administration complementary model, and Peters' (1987:256) model for leveraging the collaboration and complementarity of politicians and public administrators. Other models include Svara's (1999:676) theory for creating cohesion and complementarity between the roles of politicians and administrators, and Svara's (2001) new theory of typology on elected officials and administrators' interface. As cited in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), Aberbach et al.'s (1981) politics-administration complementary model emphasises the need for the creation of cohesive relationships between politicians and administrators. To accomplish this, Aberbach et al. (1981) undertook extensive evaluation of the complex networks of political actors and public managers in public organisations across Europe.

After such analysis, Aberbach et al. (1981) highlighted four images reflecting the nuanced networks between politicians and public managers. These four images encompass Image 1 (policy and administration), Image 2 (interests and facts), Image 3 (energy and equilibrium) and Image 4 (pure hybrid). In Image 1 which reflects policy and administration, the nexus between politicians and public managers was found to be modelled along the dichotomy model in which politicians are separated from administrators. In Image 2 that deals with interests and facts, politicians and public managers were found to collaboratively engage in policy-making-decisions.

Yet, as they collaboratively engage in such practice, they were also found to use rational reasoning to reach logical conclusions about the interests presented by politicians vis-à-vis the facts put forward by public managers. In Image 3, which deals with energy and equilibrium, Aberbach et

al. (1981) reveal that it equally considers politicians and public managers as energisers and equilibrators in the policy decision-making processes. Subsequently, Image 4, which reflects a pure hybrid, indicates the situation where politicians and public managers interactively engage in the accomplishment of rather more overlapping activities during policy decision-making and public management. Following this observation, Aberbach et al. (1981:87) concluded and suggested that instead of segregating politicians from administrators, the two groups of actors should be permitted to work collaboratively with each other during policy formulation and implementation.

Such a view seems consonant with the fundamental reasoning in systems theory that the synergistic interactive interplay between political and administrative activities leverages the effective performance of government organisations. In government organisations such as systems, politicians and administrators perform collaborative roles that complement each other.

Aberbach et al.'s (1981:87) politics-administration complementarity model, Peters (1987:256), as cited in Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:3), also suggests a model for leveraging the collaboration and complementarity of politicians and public administrators. To explain this, Peters (1987:256), in a study titled *"Politicians and Bureaucrats in the Politics of Policy-Making",* elaborates on certain five models illustrating the relationships between politicians and public managers. These five models integrate "formal model", "administrative state", "village of life", "functional village life" and "adversarial politics".

Peters (1987:256) explains the formal model and administrative state concurrently to reflect the continuum in which politicians and administrators interact. Along that continuum, politicians and administrators engage in the behaviours entailing the use of the formal model where public managers are subordinate to politicians. This continuum leads to the application of the administrative state where public managers contribute significantly to successful policy-making due to their unique skills and expertise. In contrast to "formal model" and "administrative state", Peters (1987:256), as cited in Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:3), asserts that in such a continuum, "village of life", "functional village life" and "adversarial politics" constitute the intermediate models.

In “village of life, he explains that politicians and public managers tend to exhibit a high level of collaboration and social cohesion. Politicians and public managers also tend to share common objectives, goals, logistics and reciprocal approaches to ensure good governance for positive outcomes in their careers. For “functional village of life”, some politicians as well as public managers from certain policy sectors tend to forge a coalition and an alliance to outmatch politicians and public managers in other policy sectors so as to obtain the greatest funds and resource allocation. This demonstrates how, in public organisations as systems, the actions and behaviours of one group of actors can shape the behaviours and actions of other groups of actors.

Peters (1987:256) states that in the adversarial model, politicians and public managers tend engage in supremacy rivalry over policy-making and implementation which varies with that of village of life. Nevertheless, in contrast to Peters’ (1987:256) five models, Svara (1999:676), as cited in Nalbandian, et al. (2013:567), developed and postulated a model on the typologies of politicians-public managers’ relationships. In his model, he adopts a dichotomy-duality model in which governmental organisational processes are classified into four functions that include mission, policy, administration and management.

Svara (1999:676) explains that mission connotes the philosophy underlying a government organisation as well as the values that influence its actions, strategic positioning, portfolio of functions and public services delivered. A mission can be explicitly or implicitly drawn from the outcomes of decisions that have not yet been issued. For policy, Svara (1999:676) states that it refers to all budget and public service related decisions. Administration, on the other hand, deals with the management of administrative activities that are initiated to enhance achievement of the desired policy outcomes. It also encompasses management of administrative procedures and regulations.

Regarding management, Svara (1999:676) elaborates that it pertains to the residual functions that integrate all processes accomplished to aid policy implementation and administration. It also integrates activities with the management of financial resources and human resources. After the analysis of these typologies, Svara (1999:676), as cited in Nalbandian et al. (2013:567), concludes that elected local government officials and administrators have a dichotomous-like relationship in executing activities associated with mission and management. However, in the case of policy and

administration, elected local government officials and administrators seem to accomplish overlapping roles to thereby signify a form of duality.

In other words, Svara's (1999:676) theory implies that as much as there are situations where the separation of politics and administration is required, there are also other situations where the synergistic interplay between the two is critical for accomplishing certain overlapping roles. Such synergistic interplay between different political and administrative actors is typical of the reasoning in the systems theory that organisations are systems constituting different interacting agents.

Yet, in addition to that theory, Svara (2001), as cited in Torfing, Peters, Pierre and Sorensen (2012:5), further developed another theory on the relationships between politicians and administrators. In a study titled "*The Myth of the Dichotomy: Complementarity of Politics and Administration in the Past and Future of Public Administration",* Svara (2001) based the analysis of his new theory of typology on two interactive sets of actors. These two sets of interactive actors encompass the elected officials' level of control and administrators' level of independence. Four combinations of interactions between politicians and administrators arose from that analysis.

The first combination indicated political dominance in situations of high political control and low administrative autonomy. The second combination revealed the emergence of bureaucratic autonomy in situations of low political control and high administrative autonomy. The third combination reflected a "laissez faire" situation where control as well as independence is low. The fourth combination indicated complementarity, in which control and independence are high. Svara (2001), as cited in Torfing et al. (2012:5). explains that although elected officials and administrators accomplish different roles in the last combination, their functions as well as activities still overlap.

As for "laissez faire" situations, dichotomy situations tend to emerge due to the fact that the distance between elected officials and administrators does not induce real control, autonomy, or mutual co-existence. Subsequently, Svara (2001) evaluated the degree of the distance and differentiation between elected officials and administrators and elected officials' level of control over administrators to highlight four models that may emerge. These four models encompass separate roles: independent administrator, responsive administrator and overlapping roles.

Separate roles emerge in situations where administrators are subordinated to elected officials in the midst of separate roles and norms.

As for independent administrators, Svara (2001), as cited in Torfing et al. (2012:5), notes that such situations tend to arise in instances where administrators are engaged in policy-making as elected officials are prevented from accomplishing administrative activities. A responsive administrator emerges in the instances where administrators are subordinated to elected officials in the midst of the political norms that exceed administrative norms.

Overlapping roles tend to arise in situations of reciprocal interactive relationships and influence of politicians and administrators in the midst of the existence of effective mechanism for roles' sharing. Just like Svara's (2001) new theory of typology, Aberbach et al.'s (1981) politics-administration complementary model and Peters' (1987:256) model offer interesting insights for leveraging the collaboration and complementarity of politicians and public administrators.

Svara's (1999:676) theory also provides valuable information on how to create cohesion and complementarity between the roles of politicians and administrators in modern public administration and management. These theories also echo the fundamental argument in this research that public administration and management as a system constitute different actors that need to be coherently integrated to spawn government organisations' effective and efficient performance.

The complementarity theories as articulated by Svara (2001), Aberbach et al. (1981), Peters (1987:256) and Svara (1999:676), still appear to fall short of an effective systems' model that can comprehensively deal with and manage the complex relationships between all political and non-political actors in contemporary public administration and management. Most of these complementarity theories only focus on enhancing the interactive relationships and collaboration of politicians and administrators.

Yet, in the increasing democratic systems, a combination of different new actors is increasingly emerging to affect the overall process of public administration and management. Such situations are evident in the local government arena, where different actors are increasingly emerging to complicate the already complex relationships between politicians and administrators. Such a view is accentuated in Nalbandian et al.'s (2013:567) argument that unless a comprehensive system is

adopted to manage the increasingly complex networks of new actors as well as the existing complexities of politicians-administrators' relationships in a polycentric local governance system, effective public administration and management will remain a daunting task far from reality.

3.5 COMPLEX NETWORKS OF ACTORS IN POLYCENTRIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Local governance, according to Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39), is the process through which politicians and administrators act in cohort with a combination of different formal and informal local community actors to set and implement policies that respond to the needs and preferences of the local communities. This creates a polycentric local governance system in which activities' accomplishments arise from collaborative interactions of politicians and administrators with other networks of local stakeholders.

Local governance is a mechanism through which the local communities are linked with the central government. Local government is a vehicle through which a political system ensures the successful implementation of its policies to achieve the desired outcomes. Besides the elected political officials and administrators, the local government's activities are often influenced by a combination of certain different actors.

Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) highlight that these actors too often encompass local community political activists, partners in the public-private partnerships, community pressure groups, local business communities, local environmental groups and local community service delivery activists. Failure to effectively manage and govern a combination of these different groups of actors renders it difficult to effectively accomplish public administration and management at the local government level.

Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) states that such complexities have induced the shifting of most studies from analysing the implications of politics-administration relationships to the evaluation of how politicians and administrators at the local government levels interact with local citizens and groups in the communities. Such a view accentuates Lane's (2013:85) argument that the next big issue in public administration and management is for researchers to evaluate not the relevance of management but the relevance of democracy is to respond to the local needs. He elaborates that following the emergence of new governance model to supplement bureaucratic and NPM models,

significant focus has been redirected towards an analysis of complementary activities that local citizens and non-governmental organisations accomplish to aid government respond to the local public interests.

At the same time, he notes that public administration and management theories have been extracted and influenced by Wilson (1887) and Weber's (1922) politics-administration dichotomy. Such dichotomy exhibited a high level of politicisation of public administration and management activities in which public managers were subordinated to political interests.

However, the new local governance situation, Lane (2013:85) emphasises that it requires government to assess how politics-administrative interface at the local government levels can coherently interact with certain new local actors to provide the required services to the local population. As a result of such new changes, local governance is increasingly emerging as a practice where politicians and administrators collaboratively involve and engage different formal and informal actors in different community governance activities.

Local governance is also emerging as a multilevel governance framework through which different forms of networks and partnerships are engaged and coordinated to collaborate in the accomplishment of different community activities to achieve desired public and social outcomes. Lane (2013:85) further contends that the new governance era is changing and transforming how traditional institutions are managed and governed in the context of a more protean environment.

The revolution of such a protean environment has dictated the adoption of the rules and processes for more interactive and collaborative management of different networks and relationships with stakeholders. This approach contrasts with the traditional management approach that was based on the dictation of certain traditional hierarchical and contractual structures. Certainly, as Schatten, Coelho and von Liers (2010:9) note, local governance is increasingly shifting towards a meta-governance approach.

In such meta-governance approach, politicians and administrators tend to interact and engage different new actors and stakeholders in the accomplishment of different local governance activities. As contrasted to the previously hierarchical model based only on the interplay between politicians and administrations, a meta-governance tends to aid in the achievement of the desired outcomes.

Schatten et al. (2010:9) argue that a meta-governance approach creates opportunities that leverage representative democracy at the community level. It also induces the rise in interactive governance practice in which the often-dominant role of politicians is countered by demands from other actors.

As Figure 3.4 reflects, such views accentuate the fundamental argument of Drake, Koch and Steckler (2003:12) that decision making in public administration as a system is influenced by different players that interact to influence not only decision-making, but also the process of accomplishing different activities to achieve the desired outcomes.

Through meta-governance, local governance is a system through which politicians and administrators, as critical main players, use a framework for involving and engaging a growing network of other stakeholders in the accomplishment of the required community activities. Thus, meta-governance, as Schatten et al. (2010:9) highlight, reshapes public managers' functions to reposition them as responsively effective main actors in a polycentric local governance system rather than as mere servants of a political system.

The emergence of such a polycentric local governance system, as Van Damme and Brans (2012:1047) note, aids effective governance and management of the increasingly complex local governance arenas. Local governance arenas connote an organised local governance framework in which different local community actors' interplay with politicians and administrators in decision-making as well as service delivery activities.

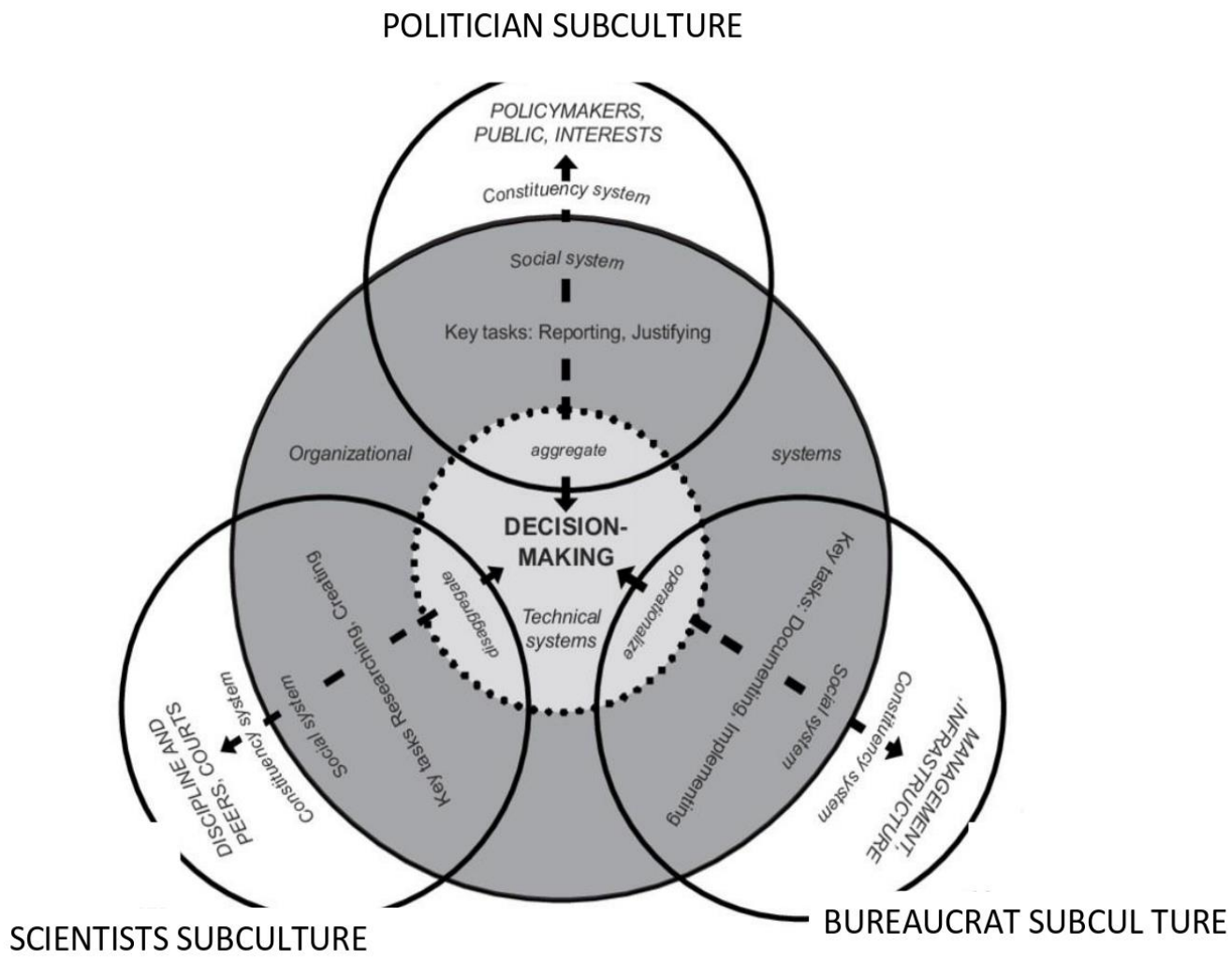

Figure 3.4: Decision-Making in Public Administration as a System

Source; Drake, Koch and Steckler (2003:12)

Van Damme and Brans (2012:1047) argue that the existence of collaboratively interactive local governance arenas leverage the convergence of different government levels and other stakeholders in a political system to spawn information exchange and embracement of democratic values. However, in a study titled *"The Connected Community: Local Governments as Partners in Citizen Engagement and Community Building"*, Svara and Denhardt (2010:4) point out one of the limitations of interactive local governance arenas.

Svara and Denhardt argue that since interactive local governance arenas are based on informal structures and rules, it tends to be daunting to hold different actors responsible and accountable for their activities. Local governance arenas often constitute different external stakeholders to engage in the accomplishment of a variety of community activities. This creates accountability issues. A combination of different models has been proposed to manage these different interactive actors in a polycentric local governance system.

3.5.1 Operational Models for Polycentric Local Governance System

Some of the operational models for a polycentric local governance system that have so far emerged from theories encompass Alford's (2013:75) theory for engaging citizens in co-producing service outcomes. The other model is Borgonovi and Sancino's (2014:7:8) four main classifications of the activities in local governance stakeholder management. Such models also integrate Bryson's (2004:21) and Archer's (2003) local governance stakeholder management models.

3.5.1.1 Alford's Theory for Co-producing Service Outcomes

To address issues of multiple actors in different local governance arenas, Alford (2013:75), through his theory for engaging citizens in co-producing service outcomes, identifies five arenas reflecting five specific functions for engaging external stakeholders in local governance arenas. Figure 3.5 indicates the five functions to integrate co-consultation, co-deliberation, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation. Co-consultation arenas is a framework through external stakeholders are engaged to elicit relevant ideas, information and contributions from the local community members on a specific government programme.

Even though such external stakeholders are consulted, final decisions still often reside with the traditional democratic systems. A co-deliberation arena is a collaborative mechanism through which politicians and administrators act in cohort with relevant external stakeholders to make certain policy decisions as well as the accomplishment of other relevant community activities.

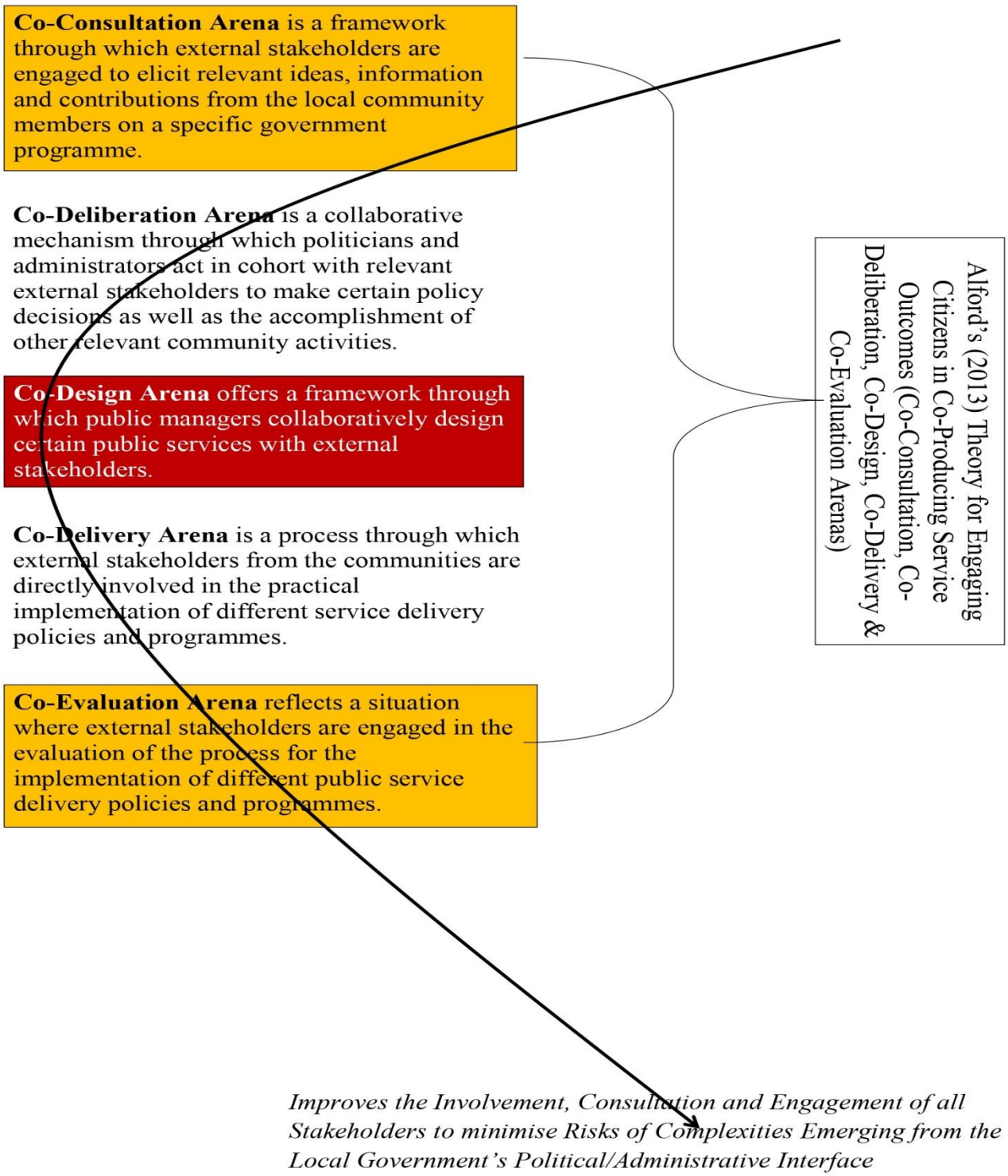

Figure 3.5: Alford's Theory for Co-producing Service Outcomes

Source: Alford (2013)

As Alford (2013:75) elaborates, such co-deliberation practices are often evident in the local government's participatory budgeting processes. The co-design arena offers a framework through which public managers collaboratively design certain public services with external stakeholders. The co-designing arena often manifests itself in focus group discussions where public managers solicit views from certain external stakeholders involved in community social welfare services to co-design certain social services.

Alford (2013:75) reveals that for co-delivery arena, external stakeholders from the communities are directly involved in the practical implementation of different service delivery policies and programmes. Finally, the co-evaluation arena reflects a situation where external stakeholders are engaged in the co-evaluation of the process for the implementation of different public service delivery policies and programmes.

The co-evaluation arena is often evident in the use of popular juries and community evaluation panels in different public service delivery models. Despite the relevance of Alford's (2013:75) theory to aid politicians and administrators engage with external community stakeholders, Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:7:8) still point out that such a theory is often used in conjunction with certain local governance stakeholder management models. In line with this reasoning, Kathyola (2010:5) shares similar views with Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:7:8) that the inefficiencies of modern local governance systems are recognised as caused by political interference in local governance activities.

Local governance systems are becoming increasingly integrated with local economies and communities despite such interference. In effect, failure to develop a mechanism through which municipalities and the entire local government system can be engaged and involved in the accomplishment of different service delivery activities undermine the capabilities of local governance systems to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes. Kathyola (2010:5) further contends that since local communities are the primary consumers of public services provided by local governance systems, eliciting critical insights from them would improve the quality of public services.

Inputs from local communities are critical for enhancing the design of the service delivery policies in a way that effectively responds to the interests and preferences of the local population.

Consequently, Kathyola (2010:5) emphasises that local citizens must not only be involved and engaged in policy formulation but also implementation through monitoring and evaluation to offer perspectives on the success or the identified failures.

On the other hand, Mafunisa (2010:33) revealed that local governance systems are not only providers of critical services to the local communities but also moderate a critical interface between government and the local communities as well as other groups such as businesses and community service delivery activists. That implies that modifications of the existing regulations and laws to support such crucial municipal functions are critical for bolstering the overall effectiveness of municipalities as intermediaries of service delivery. Mafunisa (2010:33) argues that although decentralisation was undertaken with the aim of achieving such objectives, it has not been effective for integrating different interest groups at the local governance level.

Instead, he emphasises the need for the development and use of a more integrated framework and vision that link municipalities to different groups in the local communities. Such views are echoed by Ndudula (2013:19), who emphasised that local citizens must be engaged and involved in the accomplishment of different local service delivery mechanisms. He argues that although the existing laws and regulations are still major impediments, there must be a quest to integrate the existing technologies, such as e-government.

Such complementary technologies would leverage the interactive engagement of citizens in the planning and implementation of different local policies. According to Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:7:8), some of these mechanisms for leveraging the engagement of local communities have been reflected in the recent emergence of certain stakeholder management models for local governance.

3.5.1.2 Models for Local Governance Stakeholder Management

Some of the models that have emerged to leverage the effectiveness of local governance stakeholder management encompass Borgonovi and Sancino's (2014:7:8) four main classifications of the activities in local governance stakeholder management, Bryson's (2004:21) and Archer's (2003) local governance stakeholder management models. Based on Borgonovi and Sancino's (2014) model, local governance stakeholder management refers to a set of norms,

techniques, and mechanisms that public officials and politicians use to identify, engage, involve, and manage stakeholders' interactions as they deliver various community services.

As indicated in this definition, stakeholder management is often used by both politicians and public managers. To enhance the effectiveness of stakeholder management, Bryson (2004:21), as cited in Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:7:8), proposes four main classifications of the activities that must be accomplished in local governance stakeholder management. The activities encompass organising participation, conceptualising and developing ideas for strategic interventions, engaging coalition for the proposed development, review and adoption, and implementing, monitoring and evaluating strategic interventions.

Effective accomplishment of these activities enhances the abilities of politicians and public managers to ensure that engagement and involvement of different stakeholders influence the achievement of the desired community service delivery outcomes. However, Budd and Sancino (2016:129) point out that in addition to such activities, stakeholder management is also predicted by five chronologically interlocked and cyclical stages of activities. As indicated in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), the five stages of activities that are reflected in Archer's (2003) *"Stakeholder Management Guidelines"* encompass identifying, analysing, planning and scheduling, executing and monitoring.

To leverage its application in the local governance context, Archer's (2003) five cyclical stages of stakeholder management were further readapted by Sancino et al. (2018:16) to reflect five modified cyclical stages that integrate stakeholder identification, stakeholder mapping, stakeholder engagement design, stakeholder interaction and stakeholder evaluation. Stakeholder identification entails analysis and identification of relevant stakeholders that can be engaged and involved in the development and implementation of different local government programmes. It is a dynamic process with analysis and identification criteria that often change with the programme in question. As cited in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), Archer (2003) emphasises that stakeholder identification must be preceded by clear identification of the problem and the kind of programmes that would effectively respond to such problems.

Stakeholder mapping deals with the evaluation of the stakeholders' features as identified in the previous stage vis-à-vis the relevant features of the programme being evaluated. Such variables

for stakeholder analysis include power, legitimacy and urgency. These variables enhance the definition of stakeholders as well as how they are critical for influencing successful programme implementation. Power refers to the stakeholders' capabilities to influence the success or failure of the programme. Stoker (2011:15) states that legitimacy connotes the level of interest and involvement the stakeholder has in the project. It also evaluates the extent to which stakeholders' interests integrate and overlap with the project needs.

Urgency examines the extent to which the programme or project is critical for responding to the challenges that are faced by the identified stakeholders. According to Archer (2003) as cited in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), the motive of stakeholder mapping is often to enhance analysis of the stakeholders with the greatest positive impact on the project. Stakeholder mapping is the systematic process of identifying, evaluating and prioritising every stakeholder that can influence successful project implementation. Stakeholder mapping creates a foundation for shared understanding of the key people that influence project implementation as well as basis for effective communication and engagement strategies. It also aids in the identification of potential risks from incapable stakeholders and the prioritisation of stakeholders for purposes of effective resource allocation.

Sancino et al. (2018:16) highlight some of the local governance entities to also use certain stakeholder profile scorecards reflecting interests, influence, capabilities and experience to evaluate and profile a stakeholder's features. Stakeholder mapping is often followed by stakeholder engagement design. As cited in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), Archer (2003) explains that stakeholder engagement design is the process of creating the organisational framework through which the identified stakeholders can be involved and engaged in the accomplishment of the specified activities. Some such stakeholder engagement designs may entail the establishment of a stakeholder advisory committee or new organisational structures through which stakeholders can be engaged in the accomplishment of the identified activities. Subsequently, the establishment of an effective stakeholder engagement design often leads to stakeholder interaction.

Stakeholder interaction is the actual engagement and interaction with stakeholders to elicit their opinions and inputs into the contemplated programme or the programme already being implemented. However, as cited in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), Archer (2003) argues that the approach to stakeholder interaction may differ depending on the adopted techniques. Some of such

techniques encompass the use of stakeholder meetings, public hearings accessible to all community members, focus group discussions, stakeholder interviews, physical or online stakeholder suggestion boxes, deliberative polling, and the use of stakeholder representatives to participate in key decision-making processes of the identified programme.

However, Stoker (2011:15) highlights that for stakeholder interaction to be effective, it must be accompanied by the initiative to provide timely feedback to provoke further discussions and interactions. Nonetheless, effective accomplishment of stakeholder interaction often leads to the final step which is stakeholder evaluation.

As cited in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), Archer (2003) defines stakeholder evaluation to entail the process of reviewing and analysing the overall effectiveness of stakeholder engagement and involvement in different activities. Stakeholder evaluation may be based on certain subjective or objective measures. Subjective methods of stakeholder evaluation often entail the use of interviews or document analysis to assess the overall perceptions of local government officials, politicians, project managers and the communities about the effectiveness of the so far undertaken stakeholder engagement. Stoker (2011:15) indicates that it entails the assessment of whether stakeholder engagement has influenced achievement of the desired outcomes. The objective method of stakeholder evaluation is often based on indicators extracted from project objectives and expected outcomes.

The evaluation also examines whether the project has responded to the needs and preferences of the communities in terms of being involved and engaged in the implementation of different public service delivery programmes. Some of the operational models for a polycentric local governance system that have so far emerged from theories encompass Alford's (2013:75) theory for engaging citizens in co-producing service outcomes and Bryson's (2004:21) and Archer's (2003) local governance stakeholder management models.

These models critically illustrate how politicians and administrators can effectively integrate with different networks of actors and stakeholders to influence the overall effective performance of a polycentric local governance system. It also highlights how the use of such a comprehensive, interactive and integral framework enhances the successful implementation of different government programmes to achieve different desired outcomes. This contrasts with the approach

in Svara's (2001) new theory of typology, Aberbach et al.'s (1981) politics-administration complementary model and Peters' (1987:256) model for leveraging the collaboration and complementarity of politicians and public administrators.

In such models, such theories over-emphasise the need for politics-administration complementarity to the exclusion of other critical stakeholders and actors that are often typical of a meta-local governance system. In the context of the systems theory articulated in this research, Alford's (2013:75), Bryson (2004:21) and Archer's (2003) operational models for polycentric local governance systems certainly echo the fundamental argument in this research that local governance operates as a system. In such a system, it is argued that politicians and administrators interact with other actors to influence achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes. As Greenwood (2016:30) notes, characteristics of such a system are also reflected in different theories that have been adopted for managing the often-complex interactions between different actors during policy decision-making in the modern polycentric local governance systems.

3.6 THEORIES FOR MANAGING COMPLEX POLICY-MAKING IN A POLYCENTRIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Anderson (2015:5) posits that public policy is a statement reflecting the outline of critical activities that the state intends to accomplish to enhance the achievement of the desired outcomes. Public policies are often initiated by the ruling political party. However, its process of development, formulation and implementation often involves a combination of different interactive actors. This view is echoed in Ebenezer's (2019:3) definition that policy connotes a relatively stable purposive course of action that an actor or a set of actors aims to pursue to enhance an effective response to the problems or concerns raised by the citizens. This implies that although public policy is initiated by a particular political system, the decision-making processes of its formulation and implementation are still influenced by a combination of certain state and non-state actors.

In a polycentric local governance system, such non-state actors may encompass activists, citizens' pressure groups, partners in public-private partnerships, social non-governmental organisations, opposition political parties and certain sections of the population that are the likely beneficiaries of such a policy. Combined with the differences in the preferences of the state political actors as

well as the separation of powers between the political and administrative systems in government organisations,

Knill and Tosun (2012:19) highlight that this renders decisions on policy formulation and implementation a complex and daunting process. Understanding the complex policy decision-making process is within the scope of this research on the basis that it would leverage the analysis of the complex nature of the relationship between politicians and administrators as well as other actors in public administration and management systems.

To enhance analysis and understanding of the complexities of policy decision-making to identify the intervention strategies that can be undertaken, different political and social scientists have extracted and suggested a variety of approaches for analysing and managing policy decision-making in modern polycentric local governance systems. These different policy decision-making approaches encompass group theory, elite theory, institutionalism theory, incremental theory and rational-choice theory (Anderson, 2015:5; Ebenezer, 2019:3; Knill & Tosun, 2012:19).

3.6.1 Latham's Group Theory

Extracted and refined from August Louis Cauchy's work on the study of groups in 1846, Latham's (1965) group theory, as cited in Ebenezer (2019:3), states that public policy of political systems is often the outcome of group struggle. The theory explains that the process of policy decision-making is often characterised by different contending factions and groups of actors. These different factions and groups of actors usually have different preferences that they seek to see emerge supreme over the preferences of the other groups of actors.

Consequently, group theory notes that what often emerges as public policy is the outcome of the equilibrium reached by balancing or neutralising the pressure and demands of other groups through compromises and trade-offs. Certainly, this implies that most public policies are not actual reflections of the views and preferences of several other groups. Ebenezer (2019:3) argues that group theory also explains why, when it comes to practical implementation, some of the public policies succeed while others fail due to sabotage and poor cooperation from the previously contending factions or groups of actors.

Given the complexity of policy decision-making, Knill and Tosun (2012:19) elaborate that group theory seeks to aid the understanding of the complex processes that different groups go through to have their preferences considered during policy formulation. To reach a decision in the midst of such complexities, group theory argues that the initiation of interactive relationships with different actors is critical for developing public policy. Knill and Tosun (2012:19) note such approach to enhance reaching compromises and trade-offs in the midst of competing views and debates from the mosaics of different actors with cross-cutting memberships.

Group theory posits that one group's ability to influence policy decision-making to its favour is predicted by the power that the group possesses to counteract the demands of other groups of actors. In a democratic political system, Knill and Tosun (2012:19) explain that such power may only arise from the numbers that a group has in a particular policy decision-making body. Power may also arise from the influence of a particular group of actors over voters to tilt the electoral ground against the political system in government.

With such power and influence, Anderson (2015:5) highlights that a particular group can either lure other groups to compromise and/or to make trade-offs or can simply vote them out. This implies that the groups with significant power and influence over other groups often determine public policy decisions. Such groups also determine the patterns of resource allocation in the country. Certainly, the capabilities to maintain dominance and influence over other groups are predicted by one group's capabilities to continuously assert control and influence over other groups. In group theory, as Anderson (2015:5) notes, the centre of power shifts from time to time depending on each group's abilities to influence and assert dominance over other groups.

In policy decision-making processes, different groups of actors tend to engage in different forms of gaming with different interactive groups to reshape such groups' opinions in their favour. In the context of the systems approach, Anderson (2015:5) argues that group theory subscribes to the open systems approach, which in a typical democratic system means policy formulation is shaped by views of both certain internal and external actors. It is such an approach that permits the equilibrium to change from time to time as new influential groups of actors emerge.

According to Anderson (2015:5), emergence of new groups of influential actors enables the review of the old policies as well as the existing policies to enhance either their modifications or even the

introduction of new policies. Consequently, the emergence of such a situation enables a political system to continuously modify and/or introduce new policies to respond to the continuously changing needs and preferences of the local population.

As different groups of actors engage in such interactive behaviours to influence other groups to their favour, Latham (1965), as cited in Ebenezer (2019:3), argues in his book titled *"The Group Basis of Politics"* that the legislature or the municipal council only acts as the moderator in such situations. Following the victory of the dominant and influential group, the legislature or the municipal council only subsequently passes legislation or a bill as a record of surrender, compromise and conquest.

Latham (1965) points out that, considering that the ability to influence policy decisions is predicted by the coalitions and solidarity forged among different groups, policy decision-making may tend to be dynamically complicated, fierce and vibrant in plural communities as contrasted to more homogenous societies. In effect, Adam (2017:8) notes that in more plural societies, the capabilities of the groups of actors to influence policy decision-making may tend to be influenced by a combination of certain factors. Such factors encompass financial resources, organisational skills, leadership, bargaining skills and access to decision-makers.

Financial resources are critical for the mobilisation of other political actors. Thus, Adam (2017:8) states that it is only groups with substantial financial resources that can effectively mobilise all the other groups of actors to tilt the political ground in their favour. However, the existence of enormous financial resources must be combined with more effective organisational skills.

Adam (2017:8) contends that organisational skills would influence the crafting and promotion of more attractive ideas to other groups of actors to influence policy decisions to their advantage. Organisational skills enhance mobilisation and the integration, as well as effective coordination of the other groups of actors towards a common goal. This enables such different groups to subscribe to the ideas being promoted to them.

Organisational skills must be combined with effective leadership skills. As the mobilisation becomes successful and the groups of stakeholders and other political actors increase, Adam (2017:8) emphasises that it would require tactical leadership skills to provide direction and hold all the different actors together. Tactical leadership must be combined with a rather more

charismatic leadership to promote the group's agenda and influence other actors to support it. As Adam (2017:8) states, such a leader must be capable of lobbying, bargaining and initiating agreements on trade-offs and compromises with the other actors. This enhances the reaching of a consensus on the position, which is relevant to all the actors' preferences and needs.

However, Ebenezer (2019:3) points out that one of the weaknesses of the group theory is that it assumes the levers of power keep shifting the equilibrium. As new dominant groups emerge to influence the status quo, it assumes that a new centre of power tends to emerge. Certainly, that is typical of a democratic political system.

Ebenezer (2019:3) notes that that may not be the case in more authoritarian political systems. In more authoritarian political systems and even in certain democracies, one group of actors often tends to take all it takes to retain and perennially influence power in their favour. According to Ebenezer (2019:3), that implies one group of actors will always remain in control and determine the process of policy formulation and implementation. Nonetheless, despite such weaknesses, group theory still illustrates the kinds of complexities that often emerge from the interactions of different groups of actors and stakeholders during policy formulation and implementation. Such complexities are also explained in the elite theory of policy decision-making.

3.6.2 Pareto's Elite Theory

As indicated in Ebenezer (2019:15), Pareto's elite theory contradicts the view in group theory that policy decision-making in a pluralist political system is influenced by the consensus reached by groups of different actors. Instead, it is the fundamental argument of the elite theory that policy decisions are often the outcome of the decisions of only certain ruling elite groups.

In such processes, Ebenezer (2019:15) asserts that elite theory to hold that there is no initiative of ensuring equity and balance of power among the different segments of the society. Groups of certain actors with the abilities and capacity often seek to perennially influence and exert dominance over the other social and political groups of actors.

Quite often, it is the elites that are endowed with such powers and capabilities. Ebenezer (2019:15) explains that due to the knowledge and skills that they possess, elites tend to influence all activities through power of rational reasoning that the other disadvantaged groups do not possess. As

Anderson (2015:10) states, critical views in elites' theory are summarised by Thomas Dye and Harmon Zeigler (1990) to indicate that society is classified into the ruling few and the majority who are ruled.

Besides noting that in such societies, only a few rulers decide for the majority of the governed, they also highlight that the few ruling elites are often not typical of the masses of the governed. Thus, members of the ruling elite are unequivocally drawn only from the higher socio-economic strata of society. As indicated in Anderson (2015:10), Thomas Dye and Harmon Zeigler (1990) further note that such a political system is characterised by the slow, gradual and continuous shifting of non-elites into elite positions to maintain the status quo and avoid revolution.

However, Cairney (2012:95) points out that such a movement of non-elites to governing circles often only encompasses the promotion of those non-elites who have embraced and accepted the elites' government principles and policies. Elites in such political systems have common point-of-views as well as preferences regarding the basic socio-economic system and the status quo. Thus, most policies tend to reflect the views of a few elites rather than the majority of the population.

When any changes are to be undertaken in such a political system, Cairney (2012:95) explains that such changes tend to only be incremental rather than revolutionary to preserve the status quo. As cited in Anderson (2015:10), Thomas Dye and Harmon Zeigler (1990), also noted that in such a political system the masses tend not to exert enormous pressure on the ruling elites, thereby creating enormous opportunities for elites to continuously influence the large mass of the population.

Consequently, most of the policies that are formulated and implemented often mirror only the views of the elites. Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42) highlight that Pareto's elite theory notes that the elites constitute the governing and non-governing groups. Thus, due to the unique qualities reflected in a combination of the skills, cunningness, material things and intelligence that they possess, they often have access to governing structures while the rest of the population remains to be governed. This leads to the creation of social classifications among the population in societies. In these classifications, only a few ruling elites tend to influence policy decision-making. Pareto's views on elite theory are also consonant with Mosca's (1939) opinions on the governing elites vis-a-vis the governed class.

As cited in Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42), Gaetano Mosca (1939), an Italian sociologist, notes, the governing elites are often the only groups that have access to power and enjoy the monopoly associated with the possession of power. He argues that since the history of man, it has only been oligarchy that has often existed as the form of government. In this form of government, the non-governing class, which is often the largest mass of the population is controlled and directed by the governing class through a combination of different legal, arbitrary and even violent means in certain cases. The governing class possesses all the powers to ensure that all political functions and activities are performed in a way that aids the achievement of their preferences.

Mosca (1939), as cited in Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42), explains that the governing class enjoys the advantage since they are often few and constitute certain powerful and superior individuals, the governing class tends to be more organised. Through such levels of organisation, the ruling elite often creates and portrays the image of superiority, intelligence and certain unique qualities that create fear in the governed masses. Such a superior level of organisation contrasts with the large mass of the non-governing class that often constitutes different unorganised groups of actors.

Due to the heterogeneity of the large mass of the governed population, they are often unable to effectively organise against the organised ruling class (Fatemi and Behmanesh, 2012:42). It is such high level of organisation combined with the inabilities of the large mass of the governed population to organise that enables the governing class to command control and influence over the non-governing mass of the population.

Mosca (1939) as cited in Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42), points out that power may tend to shift once the ruling class loses the abilities and capabilities to control and govern the governed. In such situations, a certain section of the governed, on realising that the ruling class has lost the ability to govern may, organise themselves and overthrow the ruling class.

This creates a new centre of political power. During such situations, he argues that the role of the middle class as the sub-elite is of importance for highlighting and influencing the change of the other political actors' perceptions of the status quo. Thus, Mosca (1939) argues that the stability of any political system is significantly predicted by the degree of middle-class morality, intelligence and activities.

Consequently, Knill and Tosun (2012:42) reveal that due to the enormous power that the ruling elites wield, most policies in such political systems often reflect the views and wills of the ruling elites rather than the preferences of the mass of the governed population. Such policies determine not only the policies in the other government agencies but also the overall policies dictated by the ruling elites on the initiatives that must be undertaken to improve the overall welfare of the population.

Knill and Tosun (2012:42) further contend that due to the ruling elites' belief that it is only they that can determine how the welfare of the population can be improved, most of the policy formulation and implementation in such political systems often tend to flow from the top to the lower down structures and then to the population. Adam (2017:8) points out that although in such a political system, there are often well-crafted and coordinated efforts to continuously thwart the views of the majority, in the increasingly more democratic modern political systems, such an approach would leave to the elites' government more vulnerable to revolutions.

For any government that cares about the masses, checking and thwarting the influence of the elites is critical for it to develop and implement democratically acceptable policies. Adam (2017:8) argues that this would require the use of a participatory process to engage and involve all stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation. Such initiatives must be accompanied by the quests to ensure that the process of forming a government integrates members from all strata of society appointed to different positions in government.

Adam (2017:8) also highlights that although elites' theory assumes that elites dominate and influence all aspects of policy formulation and implementation, in most cases that is not the reality. Instead, in reality, he argues that empirical evidence indicates that in certain cases, some of the elite groups of actors have sympathised with and supported the views of the masses.

With time, he notes that such embracement of the views of the masses by some of the elites also tends to influence the entire elites' policy decisions. This illustrates how political systems based on the elites' theory can be overthrown by the subsequent emergence of more liberal elites. As Ebenezer (2019:3) notes, such a situation also demonstrates that the elites' theory is a more dictatorial process of policy formulation and implementation that can only be used in more autocratic political systems rather than in more democratic ones. Nonetheless, such weaknesses in

the elites' theory are also reflected in the institutionalism theory of policy-making and implementation.

3.6.3 Institutionalism Theory

Rifat (2017:135) explains institutionalism to connote a general approach to governance that focuses on institutions and evaluates them using inductive, historical and comparative methods. In the context of public administration and management, institutions connote formal government institutions or entities governed by certain written formal and informal rules and regulations. Institutionalism influences policy decisions just as public policy may also influence institutions. Rifat (2017:135) further states that institutionalism is a theory that focuses on evaluating and understanding the roles of economic and political evolutionary processes as well as the roles of institutions in shaping the behaviours of policy formulation and implementation.

Institutionalism stresses the importance of a wide analysis of institutions and treats political and economic systems as well as public policies as emerging from the complex interactions of various institutions. These institutions encompass individuals, firms, states and social norms. In the context of government and public administration, such institutions include the legislature, executive and judiciary.

Thoenig (2011:9) highlights that traditional institutionalism combined with institutionalist political economic reject the reduction of institutions to mere tastes, technology and nature. Tastes, along with the expectations of the future, habits and motivations, not only determine the nature of institutions but are also limited and shaped by them.

According to Thoenig (2011:9), institutionalism emphasises the need for the creation of a sound legal foundation for an economy as well as evolutionary, habituated and volitional processes through which institutions are created and changed. It stresses the need for learning, bounded rationality and evolution rather than assuming stable preferences, rationality and equilibrium.

Thoenig (2011:9) further contends that institutionalism connotes a system of collectively binding working rules that are critical for coordinating and influencing the reach of collective decision-making. In public administration and management, Thoenig (2011:9) argues that institutionalism influences policy decisions as policies are decided and implemented in the context of the

institutions' working rules and regulations. Policy-making processes are pursued from an institutional rather individualist approach to analysis.

Thoenig (2011:9) explains that the linkage between policy formulation and the acquisition of relevant information through the use of the appropriate feedback mechanisms is moderated through complex learning and adaptation processes that occur at the level of the policy formulating institution. These processes offer critical information for managing errors and corrections in the policy formulation and implementation processes.

Policy formulations are influenced by the perceptions of the officials as well as the rules of a given institution. If the entire institution perceives a particular policy not to be viable in the context of the existing resources, Thoenig (2011:9) argues that such a policy may not be adopted irrespective of the level of demand from the citizens. This dictatorial institutionalism affects the extent to which the policies formulated and implemented by a political system are able to reflect the views of all the stakeholders and citizens. Quite often, such views influence not only policy formulation in one institution but also in other institutions.

At the local government level, for instance, Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42) reveal that policy decisions are moderated by the institutional views at the central government level, local government level, regional government level, as well as the institutional views in other related municipalities. Institutionalism theory reflects the complex reality of policymaking and interactions of government institutions. In this complex system, Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42) state that institutions tend to shape public policy just as public policy may also inversely shape institutions.

This implies the use of an interactive mechanism that facilitates intra-institutional interactions as well as the interaction of the institutions with their macro-environment is significant for successful policy formulation and implementation. Institutions structure and restructure information and ideas arising from different actors in the macro-environment. Certainly, institutionalism subscribes to the systems approach to public administration and management in which information on policy is drawn from the environment, processed and passed again to the macro-environment through policy decisions.

As institutions structure or reshape information obtained from the actors in the macro-environment, Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42) argue that such institutions may also have their own perspectives of what may constitute a "good" or "bad" public policy. Drawing from the analysis of the institutional resources as well as the number of beneficiaries that may benefit from such a policy, certain policies may be considered bad while others are treated as good. Subsequently, such institutional factors and decisions may influence the kinds of policies that a political system adopts. However, Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42) point out that most developing countries often have less capacitated institutions and even non-governmental organisations.

Given such weaknesses, poor people tend not to have access to such institutions, thereby affecting the extent to which the needs of such poor people are integrated into policy decisions. According to Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:42), most institutions also have diverse and competing interests and motivations, as well as contradictory policies that may affect the decisions of the new policies that are to be formulated and implemented. This implies that in certain cases, certain good policies may be rejected by institutions due to competing needs as well as policy contradictions.

Yet, quite often, Rifat (2017:135) argues that the relationship as well as the roles between the central government, provincial government and districts may not be delineated. This affects the working relationships between such key government institutions. Yet, some of the policies within certain key government institutions may only be political rhetorical statements without the intent to translate such policies into reality. As all these may tend to affect decisions on policy formulation and implementation, Rifat (2017:135) further states that some of the challenges may arise from poor internal rules and systems of certain institutions on issues such as how the population must be consulted on certain policies.

Since policy formulation is often a politically robust process, Rifat (2017:135) argues that the aspirations and preferences of most institutions often reflect the aspirations and preferences of the ruling political system. That implies that policies that are not consonant with the aspirations and preferences of the ruling political system may be weeded out and classified as not suitable by the institutions.

According to Rifat (2017:135), such a situation affects the contribution of different actors, such as opposition political parties and groups of activists, to policy formulation and implementation. In other words, institutional factors may inhibit or influence certain policy decisions. However, Peters (2011:78) highlights that besides the institutionalism theory, the complex process of policy decision-making is also explained in Lindblom's (1959) incremental theory.

3.6.4 Lindblom's Incremental Theory

Unlike other theories such as the elite and institutionalism theory, Lindblom's (1959) incremental theory, as cited in Atkinson (2011:9), seems to focus on policy implementation rather than formulation. Incremental theory emphasises the importance of using a small-by-small gradual process of introducing and implementing new policies to counter the likely opposing views that may arise from the complex networks of other actors. As only a small percentage of the policy changes is introduced at a time, Atkinson (2011:9) argues that only limited changes are affected and added onto the existing policies.

However, with time, the political system becomes able to realise the total implementation of policy changes as the gradual bit-by-bit policy changes subsequently turn out to be a major change. Atkinson (2011:9) posits that incrementalism is significant where there is a strong opposition from multiple actors agitating for the retention of the status.

In effect, since the tangible impact of incremental policy changes may not initially be felt by several opposing actors, such small changes tend to be accepted, thus paving the way for the gradual implementation of a major policy change in the long run. Considering only the initial implications of incremental policy changes, Lindblom (1959), as cited in Atkinson (2011:9), argues that it becomes easier for a particular group of actors to strike trade-offs, consensus and compromises with other influential groups of actors. In a pluralist political system, incrementalism turns out to be a more participatory and politically expedient process that permits the political system to adopt and implement good policies that are rather unpopular with several political actors.

Hayes (2017:49) argues that incrementalism is also important because it insulates policymakers from susceptibility to the future uncertainties that often affect the comprehensive and holistic implementation of certain long-term policies. As long-term policies are comprehensively

implemented at once, it becomes difficult to adjust and make modifications in the event of the emergence of future major changes and eventualities. Since incrementalism emphasises only the step-by-step process of policy implementation, Hayes (2017:49) reveals that it therefore renders certain policies subject to modifications and change if new uncertainties and changes emerge.

Certainly, incrementalism leverages the rather more dynamic policy of the implementation of certain complex policies. Yet, in the context of the increasingly constrained and limited government resources, Hayes (2017:49) argues that incrementalism also tends to be useful for ensuring that the government optimises its limited resources by introducing and implementing certain complex but valuable policies in bits. Therefore, governments are capable of optimising their limited resources to implement such policies and at the same time implementing other policies that address other needs. Such a view is echoed in Simon's (1957) assertion, as cited in Hayes (2017:49), that:

> Our world is a world of limited, serial information processors dealing with complexity that for all practical purposes is infinite in comparison with their information powers. It is a world peopled by creatures of bounded rationality. Because we cannot simultaneously attend to everything that is potentially relevant, we must have processes that determine the focus of attention.

Incrementalism therefore tends to subscribe to the system's approach by not only the needs of the actors that will be served through such a policy but also the use of the limited resources to meet other policy needs of the other actors. Hayes (2017:49) further states that incrementalism is also a realistic trial and error experiment that allows political systems to try different new policies without using enormous time and indulging in complex intelligence and analysis of the suitability of the different policy alternatives to the identified existing problem.

However, Lindblom's (1959) incremental theory, as cited in Atkinson (2011:9), has been criticised hindering the emergence of more innovative ideas on policy formulation and implementation can be undertaken. Especially in crisis situations, Adam (2017:8) points out that incrementalism prevents the emergence of new innovative ideas on how such a crisis can be identified and addressed once and for all by adopting a more comprehensive policy.

At the end of the implementation of incremental policies, certain drawbacks may also emerge from the views of the other actors who had hitherto supported them. By that time, Adam (2017:8) argues that it will be too late to reverse the policy. Therefore, the comprehensive implementation of a policy at once is critical for its likely unintended negative consequences to be identified and addressed before it is too late. Nonetheless, besides Lindblom's (1959) incremental theory, rational-choice theory also offers interesting insights on the complexly interactive process of policy decisions in the contemporary public administration and management.

3.6.5 Down's Rational-choice Theory

In a book titled "Economic Theory of Democracy", Anthony Downs (1957), as cited in Deegan (2018:15), states that rational-choice theory connotes the policy-making decision-making process through which actors use rational calculations and assessments to reach rational choices to achieve outcomes consonant with their self-interests and preferences. Outcomes of the reached rational choice are aimed at maximising an individual or group of actors' self-interests.

Downs (1957), as cited in Deegan (2018:15), revealed that the objective of the application of rational-choice theory is often to induce outcomes that offer the greatest benefits and satisfaction to individuals or groups of actors within the limited available options. Also known as social-choice, public-choice, or formal theory, Deegan (2018:15) indicates that Downs' (1957) rational-choice theory was extracted from Adam Smith's rational economic thinking as well as other economic theories.

Such economic theories emphasised the use of certain micro-economic principles to evaluate and explain the rationale of certain political behaviours or non-market-decision making. Since then, Deegan (2018:15) notes that rational-choice theory has been widely adopted and used by political scientists and public administrators to make policy decisions. In a bid to reach logical and favourable decisions, Downs (1957) explains that political parties as well as voters tend to behave as rational decision makers that seek to maximise the achievement of the outcomes that best respond to their interests and preferences.

While using such an approach, Downs (1957), as cited in Deegan (2018:15) states that political parties tend to adopt and implement policies that can attract more votes and voters. This enables

such political parties to achieve outcomes that would respond to their needs through governmental actions. To achieve such outcomes, Downs (1957), as cited in Deegan (2018:15) revealed that political parties tend to adopt and present attractive policy ideologies in their manifestos in order to attract the largest number of voters, which would enable them win elections and form a government.

At the same time, voters also tend to engage in rational decision-making by evaluating and electing only the political party that would respond to their needs and preferences. Deegan (2018:15) highlights that rational-choice theory is based on the economic principles of cost-benefit analysis, where one evaluates all the available value preferences, allocates weight to each value, and assesses available policy alternatives as well as each alternative's associated value. Subsequently, such a person analyses the opportunity costs arising from foregoing the other policy alternatives and selects the alternative offering the best outcomes that meet his or her preferences.

In selecting public policies, Deegan (2018:15) emphasises that politicians and public administrators must ensure that such a policy integrates the mechanisms for responding to the needs and preferences of different stakeholders and actors. This would leverage the policy's acceptability among actors and, subsequently, its successful formulation and implementation. Dowding (2011:36) highlights that rational-choice theory stresses the importance of the development and implementation of policies that bolster better public policy and the overall wellbeing of the population. It aims to spawn the improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of public policy decision-making.

However, Adam (2017:8) argues that practical application of rational choice theory is impossible, which thereby explains why most politicians and public administrators only use its simple version of ensuring that a policy benefits the majority. Difficulties in the practical application of rational-choice theory are reflected in the fact that it accurately and objectively evaluates policy alternatives and that a similarity of values and preferences exist during the outlining of the expected outcomes.

According to Adam (2017:8), rational-choice theory also assumes policy decision-makers consider the greatest good for the greatest number and that policy alternatives are quantifiable and comparable in monetary terms. Rational-choice theory also assumes that the circumstances and parameters of policy decision-making are static.

Certainly, as Adam (2017:8) argues, these assumptions are unrealistic in real-practical situations on the basis that, in most instances, the required data for analysis of the values of different policy alternatives is unavailable or incomplete. At the same time, Ebenezer (2019:3) reveals that the circumstances of policy formulation and implementation are also dynamic, with the effect that policies that may be of value today may not be of value in the future. Policy values are not easily quantifiable in monetary terms and therefore render the analysis and identification of their actual values relatively difficult.

Ebenezer (2019:3) argues that rational-choice theory also assumes that the political system will always take cognisant of the views of all the other actors in the country. In the actual case, which is often not the case, as policy decisions are often largely influenced by the needs and preferences of the ruling political system. Ebenezer (2019:3) further argues that rational-choice theory is also biased through its application of rigid and narrow assumptions and mathematical equations, which are abstract and remote from reality.

In effect, Ebenezer (2019:3) notes that rational-choice theory appears to be far removed from the realities that government, politicians, administrators, bureaucrats and different interest groups go through when making policy decisions. However, despite such limitations, rational-choice theory still highlights the importance of paying attention to all the needs and preferences of different groups of actors to ensure that public policy achieves the greatest good for the largest segment of the population.

Certainly, group theory, elite theory, institutionalism theory, incremental theory and rational-choice theory offer accurate insights into the complex intricacies of the networks of different actors that politicians and public administrators, as well as other actors, go through during policy formulation and implementation. Such analysis also elicits critical insights that reinforce the fundamental argument in this research that with government organisations being systems that are analogous to organisms, they constitute different interactive actors that either constrain their effectiveness if not managed well or leverage their performance if well managed.

Such complexities also affect the effective governance and management of the complex relationships between the politicians and public administrators vis-a-vis other critical actors in contemporary public administration and management. To respond to such complexities in the

increasingly polycentric local governance as a system, a combination of models have been extracted from the general body of systems theories and literature to coherently manage all actors that prevail in governance networks as systems.

3.7 MODELS IN SYSTEMS THEORY FOR MANAGING COMPLEXITIES OF POLYCENTRIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Empirical evidence on the pragmatic approaches undertaken by modern public administrators and managers implies a combination of certain models has been extracted from the general body of systems theories and literature (Ghalayini, 2017:6; Hughes, 2012:6; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2013:157; Meek, 2010:2). These systems theory models aid effective and coherent management of all actors that prevail in modern polycentric local governance systems. Such models encompass complexity theory, managing the "unmanageable" and governance network theory (Ghalayini, 2017:6; Hughes, 2012:6; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2013:157; Meek, 2010:2).

3.7.1 COMPLEXITY THEORY

Complexity theory is one of the theories that offer critical insights on how to manage the complexities of the relationship between political and administrative interface as well as other networks of actors in the contemporary government organisations and governance systems. As Figure 3.6 illustrates, Meek (2010:2) reveals that complexity theory posits that the interaction of a combination of different but also inter-related systems and subsystems as well as other agents within government and governance systems either influences or inhibits policy decisions and implementation as well as effective governmental performance.

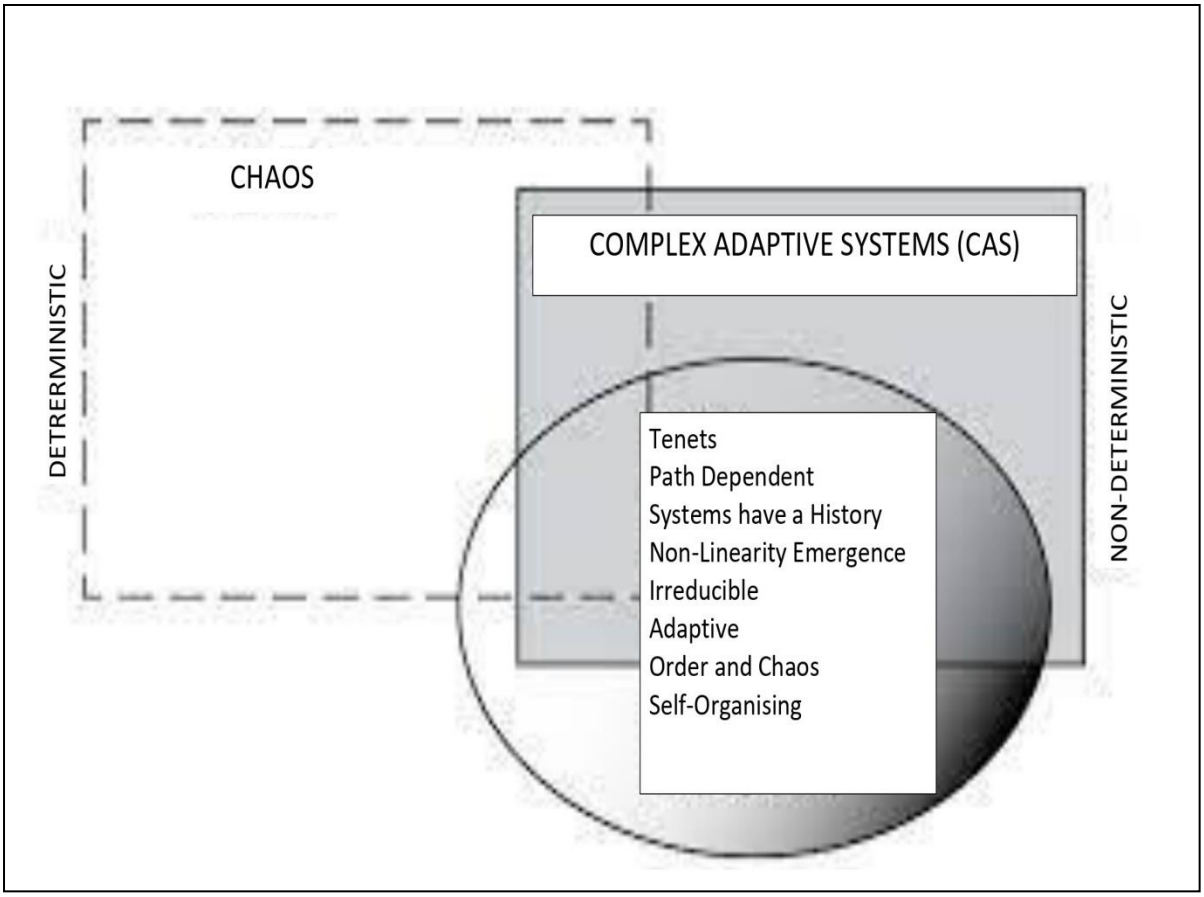

Figure 3.6: Complexity Theory

Source: Turner and Baker (2019:13)

Complexity Theory seeks to analyse, elucidate and influence the understanding of how the outcomes of the interface between different systems and subsystems in a governance network edify or constrain the overall effectiveness of public administration and management. In a study titled *"Complexity Theory for Public Administration and Policy",* Meek (2010:2) explains that originally, complexity theory emerged from research on systems theory in natural and biological sciences. However, since then, it has evolved to influence the emergence and evolution of different theories in social sciences, organisational behaviour, management and public administration. In effect, Meek (2010:2) notes that what is construed as complexity theory certainly connotes what emerged out of a convolution of different theories. As cited in Meek (2010:2), some of the theories that combine to constitute complexity theory encompass Kaufman's (1993) complex adaptive theory, Prigogine and Stengers' (1984) dissipative structures, and Veld, Schaap, Termeer and van

Twist's (1991) autopoiesis and configuration theory. In social sciences, such theories include Luhman's (1990) chaos theory and Arthur's (1994) increasing returns and path dependency theory in economics. Certainly, these theories offer different perspectives on complexities in organisations.

However, Ghalayini (2017:6) highlights that they still provide a common insight that the whole system does not only constitute a combination of different subsystems or individual agents, but also that the development of the whole system emerges from the coherent interface between all those different subsystems or individual agents. Ghalayini (2017:6) argues that it is such common insights that combine to explain the fundamental argument in complexity theory that while relying on a combination of certain feedback mechanisms, systems theory often emerges from non-linear activities as well as by self-organisation and co-evolution with other systems.

Since its extraction from natural and biological sciences, Klijn (2008:299) explains that complexity theory has been enriched and used to analyse and understand the complex nature of the interactive relationships between agents and processes in government and governance. However, previously, Klijn (2008:299) points out that complexity theory was not considered relevant in public administration and management. This is because most previous academic studies and academic disciplines on public administration have hitherto operated on the assumption that government organisations were not only unified and stable, but also rational bureaucratic actors.

This implied that the conceptualisation and application of more complex theories were not critical for understanding and improving the overall effectiveness of public administration and management. With time, Klijn (2008:299) noted that it, however, emerged among researchers and academics that such assumptions were not valid in regard to the actual complex nature of public administration and management.

Public administration and management were found to exhibit complex multi-layered systems and processes involving a combination of multi-actors in policy formulation and implementation. Such complex networks of multi-layered systems and processes, as well as multi-actors, were found to induce certain outcomes that either edify or constrain the overall effectiveness of public administration and management.

In a study titled *"Complexity Theory and Public Management",* Teisman and Klijn (2008:287) note that it was discovered that policy formulation and implementation is also daunting and a complex task requiring the application of a combination of certain coherent multi-actor approaches. It also emerged that the more interactive and dynamic nature of policy formulation and implementation also require the application of concepts such as games' theory, garbage cans, or mutual partisan adjustment approaches.

Due to these complexities, Teisman and Klijn (2008:287) highlight that complexity theory was extracted from natural and biological sciences as well as social sciences, organisational behaviour and management theories. The motive of its extraction and application in public administration and management was to aid the analysis and understanding of the dynamics of the complexities and facets of a combination of different but inter-related systems and multi-subsystems and actors that operate to leverage or constrain the overall effectiveness of the governance system in government. To accomplish this objective, Teisman and Klijn (2008:287) argue that complexity theory elaborates that dynamic complex systems are explained and influenced by certain systems, feedback and emergent properties.

In terms of systems, complexity theory indicates that systems constitute certain interactive agents, each of which behaves in accordance with its local context as well as regulations, laws, norms and forces in its local context. As each complex agent reacts to their local conditions, Lartey (2020:44) reveals that it induces the whole system to develop certain emergent patterns or properties even in the absence of deliberate coordination and communication among agents. Emergent properties refer to a collection of things that the whole system has but individual agents do not possess.

In effect, systems tend to be self-organising to influence the emergence of certain emergent properties that cannot easily be attributed to the acts of each of the individual agents. Such emergent properties and each agent's autonomous acts induce unpredictable and complex dynamics in systems. Thus, Lartey (2020:44) explains that the rather more stable organisational equilibrium may unexpectedly get distorted by the emergence of certain unpredictable incidents. Complexity theory attributes such reasoning to the fact that organisational equilibriums are usually influenced by certain complex feedback mechanisms.

Complex feedback mechanisms connote situations where a change in one variable induces either amplification (positive feedback) or a dampening (negative feedback) of that change. In such complex feedback mechanisms, Lartey (2020:44) argues that positive feedback tends to influence the need for change, while negative feedback, which involves balancing and moderating, causes the maintenance of the stability of the system. Considering the multiple actors' interactions and reactions in a system, Lartey (2020:44) states that such feedback mechanisms can, in certain cases, turn out to be more complex and cause a system's overall stagnation or deadlocked situation.

Quite often, Klijn (2008:299) reveals that this is evident in public administration and management where policy decision-making is frustrated by multiple agents or groups acting in their local context and against each other causes a deadlock or stagnant situation. In turn, Klijn (2008:299) argues that this deadlock or stagnant situation causes a system to experience an equilibrium in which the opposing or influencing forces are balanced. Such critical insights on how complexity theory leverages public administration and management are also echoed in the application of three critical concepts in complexity theory.

3.7.1.1 Concepts in Complexity Theory

Empirical evidence implies the three critical concepts for analysing and understanding the complexity of governance networks in government and their impact on service delivery to the population to encompass dynamics' complexities, self-organisation and co-evolution (Klijn, 2008:299; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2014:61; Lartey, 2020:44; Meek, 2010:2).

3.7.1.1.1 Dynamics' Complexities

Meek (2010:2) explains that dynamics' concept of complexity theory offers critical insights into the often-complex decision-making processes in the context of the equally complex interactive patterns in governance networks. It also provides perspectives on how more complex integrated service delivery processes and networks can be managed. Dynamics concept also elucidates how the emergence of unstable equilibrium influences government to explore more incremental changes that can be adopted. In a study titled *"Complexity Theory and Public Administration",* Klijn (2008:299) explains how the application of the dynamics concept can aid the government

deal with the equilibrium and deadlock or stagnation issues that can arise from the variance in the governance networks.

While using the dynamics concept, Klijn (2008:299) cites the Amsterdam-Hague-Voorburg Highway case in which the deadlock induced by the disagreement between the Netherlands Ministry of Transport and Voorburg Municipality rendered the highway project stagnant. In that case, the Netherlands government, through the Ministry of Transport, had initiated, prior to World 11 in 1938, the construction of a highway that would link Amsterdam to The Hague and subsequently pass through the territory of Voorburg Municipality.

However, the project was not implemented due to the opposition of the project by Voorburg Municipality. Authorities of Voorburg Municipality argued that the highway project would induce noise, accidents, and other negative effects associated with the highway that would affect dwelling houses and offices. This caused a deadlock on the implementation of the project.

Even when the Netherlands government tried to coerce the Voorburg Municipality to agree in the 1980s, it was still not possible to end the deadlock, until a private developer intervened in November1994. To respond to the concerns of the Voorburg Municipality, the private developer emerged with an integrated project plan that provided a tunnel that would reduce noise pollution and other negative effects of the highway that would affect the quality of dwelling houses and offices. The proposal by the private developer, which was accepted by the Voorburg Municipality, served to end the deadlock between the government and the Netherlands government.

As Klijn (2008:299) explains, the emergence of a deadlock can induce actors in a governance system to explore incremental improvement options to enable them to meet their goals. This is reflected in the fact that the period between the 1980s and 1994 represented a simple deadlock period or a stable equilibrium with undesirable outcomes.

However, Klijn (2008:299) notes that as the deadlock was unfolding, it created the opportunities for both actors, as well as other actors, to explore and identify the strategies through which they could accomplish their mission. The end result was the emergence of a dynamic equilibrium when the rate of the forward reaction equals the state of the reverse reaction to maintain the equilibrium as it was.

In other words, as David (2013:43) notes, dynamics complexity theory espouses non-linear dynamics in complexity theory. Non-linear dynamics in complexity theory holds that systems are not characterised by linear dynamics in which the rise in one incentive causes an increase in another or by any stable state of equilibrium. Instead, David (2013:43) argues that non-linear dynamics in complexity theory stresses that dynamics in systems are often uncertain.

Even though such dynamics may tend to exhibit a stable position which is held by negative and positive feedback mechanisms, such positions are often just temporary and tend to be subsequently disrupted by sudden later events. Due to changes in environmental variables, David (2013:43) highlights that it is also argued in non-linear dynamics that an increase in one incentive may cause varying results. The implication is that new effects may tend to arise when certain time thresholds are exceeded.

However, in a study conducted on dynamics complexity, Klijn and Koppenjan (2014:61) explain that both temporarily stable equilibriums and the related non-linear dynamics are often conceptualised and explained in different ways.

In Prigogine and Stengers' (1984) dissipative structures, it is argued that with time, new structures tend to arise as systems transition from stability to chaos. Such consequences tend to relate to non-linear dynamics, equilibrium and emergent patterns. It also echoes the views in the notion of the edge of chaos and bounded instability theory, which are used in the complex adaptive systems theory.

As Klijn and Koppenjan (2014:61) note, complex adaptive systems theory reiterates that systems or organisations are often adaptive and self-organising in the period between order and chaos. This is attributable to the fact that systems or organisations tend to be more creative and innovative in such circumstances as compared to situations reflecting stable equilibrium. In stable equilibrium, systems tend to be held in a state of bounded instability due to the equalisation of positive with negative feedback.

During such situations, Klijn and Koppenjan (2014:61) point out that systems tend to be held in a particular state as compared with if positive or negative feedback was more prevalent. This implies the relative dynamics of the nature of equilibriums tend to vary with the feedback mechanisms, amplifying or dampening a particular change.

Klijn's (2008:299) application of the dynamics complexity theory in public administration, is also reflected in the emergence of Easton's (1953) systems theory and Lindblom's (1959) incrementalism theory. Easton's (1953) systems theory argues that a political system starts functioning as a result of the inputs reflecting the demands and support of the public received from its external environment. These inputs are subsequently converted into outputs highlighting the regulations, laws and policies to be implemented to respond to the needs and demands of the population.

The process of converting inputs into outputs is subject to a multitude of actors who function as gatekeepers that can reject or accept some of the inputs that must be converted into deliverable outputs. However, as indicated in Sanger and Giddings (2012:369), Easton's (1953) systems theory has been criticised as being too simplistic to explain the dynamics and complexities of contemporary government organisations.

On the other hand, Lindblom's (1959) incrementalism theory, as indicated in Sanger and Giddings (2012:369), emphasises that instead of making major changes at once, government bureaucrats must adopt a system for making step-by-step gradual small incremental changes as a strategy of transitioning away from the undesirable situation. Incrementalism theory adds that it is more rational to be modest and pragmatic by making step-by-step small incremental changes that, in the end, would result into significant changes than perish in unrealizable ambitions.

Although Lindblom's (1959) incrementalism theory, as indicated in Sanger and Giddings (2012:369), was a criticism against rational decision-making processes used by government bureaucrats, it was subsequently criticised by later complexity theories. In the complexity theories, Klijn (2008:299) notes that it is argued that although incrementalism may not be felt initially, with time, it could induce results that cause the system to lose its stable position as negative feedbacks set in.

At the same time, the application of the dynamic complexity theories is also reflected in the emergence of the next generation of public administration theories. In a study titled *"Complexity Theory in Political Science and Public Policy",*

Cairney (2012;346) explains that such theories focus on evaluating the inter-relatedness of a combination of several actors as well as the perception that their strategies moderate the behaviours

of each other. Some such theories emphasise the need for the consideration of complexity, dependency, unpredictability and inter-relatedness of actors in the complex decision-making processes. As cited in Cairney (2012;346), some of such theories encompass Cohen, March and Olsen's (1972) garbage can model, Lindblom and Cohen's (1979) mutual partisan adjustment theory and Allison's (1971) model 11 (a partisan model) in the multiple perspective approach.

Cohen, March and Olsen's (1972) garbage can model describes the chaotic reality of organisational decision-making in an organised anarchy. Lindblom and Cohen's (1979) mutual partisan adjustment theory states that while working in a defined system, people can coordinate themselves without anybody coordinating them, without a dominant common purpose, and without rules that fully prescribe their relations to each other.

Cairney (2012;346) notes that Allison's (1971) model 11 (a partisan model) in the multiple perspective posits that in a decision-making process, the government is the rational primary actor. As the rational primary actor, the government examines a set of goals, evaluates them according to certain set utilities and then selects the best that has the highest payoff. Cairney (2012;346) states that dynamics complexity theory also aids the understanding of the often-complex process of policy and strategy formulation and implementation.

In such an analysis, policy and strategy formulation and implementation are construed as the direct consequences of a combination of the strategies and policies being conceptualised and used by other different actors. While subscribing to such a view, Mintzberg (1979), as cited in Cairney (2012;346), elaborates in his book titled *"The Structure of Organisations"* on the often-complex nature of policy and strategy formulation and implementation.

Mintzberg argues that whereas some policies and strategic patterns of policy formulation and implementation are intended, most of the policies and strategies are emergent. Such emergent policies and strategies tend to arise from organisation's response to either sudden and unexpected changes in its external environment or as a result of the policies and strategies adopted by other actors. Thus, emergent policies tend to arise not only as a result of effective policy-making and management, but also as positive consequences of a learning process that the organisation goes through. Such reasoning is consonant with the views in the game theory.

Meek (2010:2) highlights that Scharpf (1997) notes in a book titled *"Games Real Actors Play"*, it is argued in the game theory that although policy and strategy decisions are often based on the actors' own evaluation, such policies and strategies often still influence other actors' actions in series of ways. The application of dynamics complexity theory that highlights complexities as emerging from different actors' actions and their choices is also evident in governance theories. Dependence between government and the various types of societal organisations often arise in the process of the accomplishment of different government programmes and projects.

For such programmes and projects to be effective in achieving the desired outcomes, Meek (2010:2) suggests that dynamic complexity theory becomes critical for managing the governance networks. Dynamic complexity theory aids in the effective management of complex interactions among governance networks and actors to influence the achievement of desired outcomes.

However, despite the enormous values that it offers, the concept of dynamic complexity theory is not widely used in contemporary public administration systems. This is also coupled with the limited research that has been undertaken to explore the applicability of dynamic complexity theory in publication and management systems.

Nonetheless, in lieu of such limitations, Meek (2010:2) argues that dynamic complexity theory is still critical for analysing and managing the often more complex networks of actors in contemporary public administration and management systems. Yet, as public administrators and bureaucrats apply dynamic complexity theory, Meek (2010:2) emphasises that it is also critical that it is accompanied by the use of self-organisation as one of the critical three concepts in complexity theory.

3.7.1.1.2 Self-Organisation

According to Meek (2010:2), the self-organisation concept posits that organisations and the associated networks are often self-organising in the context of the unfolding actors' actions in a given system. It states that organisations and networks are capable of reviewing themselves and re-organising themselves in the context of their actors' actions. In terms of the New Public Management's point of view, this implies that government can shift its attention from micro-

management to remotely directing and influencing these organisations through the use of clearly specified indicators and incentives.

From a governance point of view, Klijn and Koppenjan (2014:61) emphasise that the focus should be directed on coherently integrating these self-organising units into a single system as well as leveraging their co-operation. This would spawn an improvement in the overall efficiency of the accomplishment of different government programmes. To highlight the practical application of the self-organising concept in public administration and management, Klijn (2008:299) cites how the concept was used to deal with the network challenges arising from the urban renewal in the city of Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

Klijn explains that since the 1970s, urban renewal in the city of Rotterdam was planned and implemented by critical networks of civil servants, politicians, housing associations and tenants. However, housing associations, which were in charge of the implementation of the policy were at a disadvantage. This was due to the fact that actors in the networks operated on the informal norm that "he who pays decides". This not only left the housing associations even less consulted but also induced the situation where subsidies from the central government were distributed by the city's housing department, instead of the housing associations.

In the 1980s, the situation shifted when subsidies from the central government ceased. Subsequently, housing associations strengthened their argument against the poor recognition in the overall network and avoided implementation of the plans. This refusal caused conflicts which threatened decision-making networks causing the emergence of a deadlock. Conflict was, however, overcome when the critical actors in the network reviewed and developed new rules and norms that provided more prominent roles for the housing associations as well as new modes of interactions.

In terms of the application of the self-organising concept, Klijn (2008:299) elaborates that this demonstrates how the interactions between different agents in a system can give rise to new sets of position and interaction rules. In other words, it implies systems tend to be self-regulating and organising even in the absence of external interventions. Lartey (2020:44) highlights that it is the fundamental argument in most complex systems theory that systems are managed and governed by certain self-organising spontaneous orders. Spontaneous orders connote the emergence of

various social orders out of a seemingly chaotic situation involving various self-interested agents who are not intentionally striving to create order through rational planning.

In effect, Lartey (2020:44) notes that systems' emergent properties tend to arise from the different agents' interactions. Thus, a system's macro-structure is significantly linked to its micro-structure, which reflects the different agents' interaction levels without requiring any active steering. Despite such reasoning, theories still reveal varying views on the spontaneity of this self-organisation in different areas of complexity theory. Kaufman's (1993) bounded instability theory, as cited in Lartey (2020:44), emphasises that spontaneity exists in self-organisation.

In dissipative structure theory, Klijn (2008:299) stresses that significant emphasis is often placed on certain deep latent structures of systems that, although not easily observable when more apparent structures collapse, still comprise the new order in a way that influences the self-referencing process. According to Klijn (2008:299), the self-referencing process is the cognitive process of relating information from the external environment to the self. A self-referencing process occurs in a situation where the prevailing rules and norms pre-structure the new and emergent properties of the system.

As Styre (2002:343) reveals, such a view also echoes the reasoning in the autopoiesis theory, in which it is argued that systems are continuously capable of regenerating and recreating themselves in the defined system's structure and forces. According to that view, systems are therefore self-generating enclosed structures constituting of inter-connected and mutually dependent mechanisms.

As Meek (2010:2) reveals, autopoiesis theory construes a system not to connote the kind of open systems often espoused in organisational theory, but a kind of system which is continuously interacting and adapting to the environment, but that the level of its interactions with the external environment is predicted by a system's organisationally closed system of production relationships.

Meek (2010:2) notes that this implies that as long as systems are responsive and adaptive to their environment, they often only do so within the context of the properties and characteristics that are created and sustained by the systems themselves. However, in the context of public administration and management, Teisman and Klijn (2008:287) point out that a system with self-containment and closure to the environment is often less governable and receptive to incentives. It is also evident

that the reasoning that systems are self-organising is identifiable in public administration and management behaviours.

While using rational game theory, prisoner's dilemma and chicken or assurance games, Sorenson and Torfing (2007), in a study titled *"Theories of Democratic Network Governance",* elaborate that co-operation can emerge between different actors in a governance system without any steering from the external forces. This spawns the overall effectiveness and efficiency of decision-making in a governance system.

According to Teisman and Klijn (2008:287), evidence of the application of emergent properties is also apparent in institutional theory and institutional perspectives on public policy. Institutional theories such as contractual, implementation and management theories have been widely applied in public administration and management. Certainly, there are varying views on institutional theory. However, Teisman and Klijn (2008:287) highlight that those views in institutional theories based on sociology posit that institutional structures often emerge from the interactive behaviours of the individual actors in a system.

As how agents interpret and use the existing institutional rules influence their behaviours and actions, Teisman and Klijn (2008:287) reveal that such interactive behaviours also tend to reshape the institutional structures. The end results of the aggregated behaviours of the individual actors, in the context of complexity theory are often reflected in the emergence of new features that solidify and form the structure of the social system.

For self-organising, self-referencing and self-regenerating, Meek (2010:2) argues that it implies that as much as government entities are inherently unique and have distinctive dynamics, they still respond to the environmental changes using their unique ways and approaches. Such a view also means that government entities are closed and are not easily susceptible to any external pressure unless they choose to react in their own ways. The view that organisations are closed and not easily susceptible to any external pressure is accentuated in Lartey's (2020:44) opinions on frames and perceptions, and accessibility and closure of networks.

Lartey (2020:44) explains that most actors possess frames of reference that they use to interpret and analyse the information, actions and developments unfolding internally or externally. Certainly, that suggests actors may share certain frames of reference to enhance their collaboration

and co-operation. However, Lartey (2020:44) points out that it has also often emerged that frames of reference can also vary among different groups of actors to thereby limit any interaction, collaboration and co-operation to influence the common goal's achievement.

Such a view echoes Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) advocacy coalitions' theory, as cited in Sanger and Giddings (2012:369) to state that different groups of actors tend to have different frames of reference to create competing ideas that create the overall organisational animosity. Sharing common frames of reference among decision-makers and communities may also influence successful policy formulation and implementation.

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) argue that a common frame of reference reinforces strong interaction ties, dependencies and common views among the decision-makers as well as the communities to eliminate conflicts and edify the overall successful policy formulation and implementation.

Despite the evidence of the applicability of self-organising systems in public administration and management, Sanger and Giddings (2012:369) note that it is still critical to highlight the fact that it emphasises closure; self-organising systems may tend to be less responsive to the stipulated guidelines or signals and incentives. This renders self-organising systems inherently difficult for most contemporary public administrators and managers to govern. Nevertheless, besides the concept of self-organising systems, Koehler, Kress and Miller (2014:111) point out that complexity theory is also explained by the concept of co-evolution as one of its inherent critical components.

3.7.1.1.3 Co-evolution

Co-evolution is the process of reciprocal evolutionary change that arises between agents or groups of agents as they naturally interact with each other in the accomplishment of different activities in a particular system. Quite often, Koehler et al. (2014:111) explain that co-evolution is often evident in public administration and governance networks where the interactive nature of different decision-making processes influences each other. Some such cases are latent in the often-contentious relations between locally bounded initiatives and projects and national government policy initiatives. Co-evolution has also been applied to understand how the often-complex

infrastructure policy decision-making processes create interactive situations through which agents reciprocally evolve with each other.

In most infrastructure development policy decisions, Koehler et al. (2014:111) reveal that contentions often arise from the need to balance the needs and demands of the local programmes and projects with the aspirations of the agents who are associated with such local infrastructure projects and programmes. Tensions also arise between infrastructure policy decision-making and the prevalence of more policy streams in which political ideas and policy initiatives flow and disappear.

In effect, Koehler et al. (2014:111) argue that successful completion of such infrastructure development programmes and projects would therefore require engaging the local agents by creating programmes and projects that respond to their needs and demands. This would motivate them to either invest in such projects or veto such programmes and projects.

However, Ghalayini (2017:6) highlights that the other strategy would require managers to link such programmes and projects to the general policy streams. By linking such projects and programmes to the existing policy initiatives of the national government, managers would be able to influence the central government to support and fund such projects. In effect, in such interactive relationships, there are two different networks and two different systems that have to co-evolve so as to be able to respond to their systems' missions and goals.

Ghalayini (2017:6) elaborates that co-evolution is illustrated in the fact that whereas local projects and programmes require central government's support and financial support, the policy streams and their component programmes espoused by central government also need concrete programmes and projects as well as good outcomes to enhance the achievement of their political missions.

According to Ghalayini (2017:6), this instigates actors in such a system to be creative and innovative to develop and apply new ideas that would render them able to accomplish such infrastructure development programmes and projects. In complexity theory, Ghalayini (2017:6) argues that co-evolution is a concept that espouses the connectivity and mutual influence that exist among elements in a single system as well as between systems. Co-evolution takes place not only between the interactive agents in a single system, but also among systems in a particular environment.

Co-evolution implies that agents in a particular system, as well as systems in a particular environment, are interactively related and connected to each other. In effect, Ghalayini (2017:6) notes that the change and adaptation of one agent or system to its environment instigates the change of the total environment in which other systems operate. Subsequently, this also influences other systems to change and adapt to the environment. Thus, illustrating how systems through rather more complex interactive processes co-evolve with each other as well as simultaneously in the context of the changes unfolding in systems' environment.

Cairney (2012:346) reveals that co-evolution often arises from the use of a combination of strategies conceptualised and deployed by actors or a collection of actors in a particular system. Such strategies are often just a one-sided reaction of the actor to the changing environment or to other actors' strategic actions, but rather adaptive strategies that also affect the initiators of such strategic actions as well as other actors in the system. However, Cairney (2012:346) argues that co-evolution between agents or systems may not necessarily occur at the same time, as it can take place either in the short or long run. It can also occur at all levels of the system.

In public administration and management, Cairney (2012:346) reveals that co-evolution has often been used to understand and influence the often complex decision-making processes in government organisations that involve several actors. This is reflected in the application of public choice theory. According to Cairney (2012:346), public choice theory emphasises the need for the evaluation and consideration of the behaviours and demands of self-interested groups such as voters, politicians and bureaucrats, as well as their interactions in decision-making. To accomplish this, it uses standard constrained utility maximisation, game theory and decision theory. Cairney (2012:346) further contends that public choice theory stresses consideration of individual agents as the decision-making unit. Through this approach, it is argued in public choice theory that no decision is made by an aggregate whole, but by a decision arising from the combined choices of the individual actors.

As Cairney (2012;346) indicates, it therefore illustrates how individual agents interactively co-evolve with each other by making trade-offs and sacrifices to reach a combined decision. Such co-evolution of agents in the decision-making process is also echoed in the application of network theory to decision-making. Network theory, according to Sanger and Giddings (2012:369), posits

that whereas decision-making arises from agents' networks, it is often still influenced by the decision-making in other networks.

Hence, a system's decision-making tends to co-evolve with the decision-making in other systems. Co-evolution's application is also evident in organisational theories and decision-making theories. In such theories, Cohen et al. (1972), as cited in Sanger and Giddings (2012:369), criticise the traditional notion that organisations are well-organised, rational systems and argue instead that organisations are often characterised by anarchies in which different streams of problems, solutions and events occur. To connect these activities and deal with this kind of garbage can status of organisations, Cohen et al. (1972) inspired Kingdon (1984), as cited in Koehler et al. (2014:111), to suggest a model for decision-making and agenda formulation.

Kingdon's (1984) model emphasises the need for tracing and identifying different streams where problems are constructed and refined as well as streams where solutions are conceptualised and developed in the context of the unfolding political events. As such a process is being used, he states that decisions can only be reached if couplings are attained to reflect a situation where problems are linked to the desired solutions and aided by the unfolding political events that support action. To demonstrate the impact of such a process of co-evolution, Klijn (2008:299) revealed that policy entrepreneurs tend to modify their actions and promote such situations to seize the associated opportunities that may arise.

Co-evolution aids effective understanding and dealing with the challenges that arise from the complex actors' interactive activities and relationships in decision-making and development in government organisations. According to Koehler et al. (2014:111), co-evolution also emphasises that as public administrators and managers make decisions, they should not only pay considerable attention to the outcomes of the complexity of the relationships between internal actors, but also the external actors' unfolding activities and decision-making. Nonetheless, theories imply that as complexity theory is being used, it must also be accompanied with the use of managing the "unmanageable" approach.

3.7.2 MANAGING THE "UNMANAGEABLE"

As Hughes (2012:6) notes, managing the "unmanageable" is one of the approaches in systems theory for managing the increasingly complex polycentric local governance system. The rationale for its increasing adoption is owed to the increasing deficiencies of New Public Management (NPM) as well as the new governance model to effectively identify and manage the complexities arising from the interactions of different actors in modern local government systems. Over the decades, Frederickson, Smith, Larimer and Licari (2015:19) highlight that two main approaches have emerged and evolved on how to isolate and deal with complexities in public administration and management. These two main approaches are reflected in the two perspectives of public administration and management that encompass NPM and governance perspectives.

Frederickson et al. (2015:19) reveal that New Public Management stresses the importance of dis-integrating the responsibilities and authority of policy formulation from policy implementation as well as political decision-making and their ultimate implementation and realisation. On the other hand, the governance perspective of public administration and management emphasises the need for leveraging inter-organisational coordination to spawn policy proposals and their implementation as well as attach essential actors to the policy process. This implies that NPM features five distinct, inter-related features that need not necessarily exist at the same time.

Pollit (1990) and Kickert (1997), as cited in Osborne, Radnor and Nasi (2013:135), highlight the five distinct interconnected features of NPM to include improving effectiveness and efficiency of government performance. Such features also encompass adopting value-adding mechanisms from the private sector, privatisation and contracting out certain government services to catalyse improvement of governmental effectiveness and efficiency.

Besides creating and using market and semi-market mechanisms to instigate competition for service provision to enhance the realisation of public policy, Osborne et al. (2013:135) also note that NPM also emphasises the need for utilising certain performance indicators to influence the achievement of the desired outcomes from privatised and separated entities of government.

In contrast or rather a complementary approach, the governance perspective emphasises the need for horizontal coordination as well as improvement of inter-organisational coordination and

management to deal with complex interdependencies in government structures. To accomplish this, Osborne et al. (2013:135) argue that it stresses the need for the application of a more horizontal approach to induce the cooperation of societal actors to minimise the risks of using their veto powers and leverage policy formulation and implementation.

According to Laegreid and Christensen (2013:19), the governance perspective further argues for the utilisation of knowledge and expertise from societal actors to enhance policy formulation and implementation influencing the achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes. It posits that given the level of knowledge and expertise of societal actors, they would certainly catalyse the level of creativity and innovations in government entities.

Laegreid and Christensen (2013:19) highlight that it is also the fundamental argument in the governance perspective of public administration and management that the involvement of private and societal actors is critical for leveraging governmental effectiveness and efficiency. As private actors tend to have a thorough understanding and knowledge of the markets, societal actors are more knowledgeable about the service users' and citizens' preferences as well as the understanding of the unfolding societal trends.

Laegreid and Christensen (2013:19) further state that governance perspectives require early involvement and engagement of societal actors to bolster decisions' legitimacy as well as introduce innovative democratic processes and establish a link between politics and the citizenry. In other words, as Hughes (2012:6) points out, the two perspectives of public administration and management tend to approach the management of complexity differently. NPM seems to accomplish this by creating clear responsibilities and authorities and by separating policymaking from policy implementation.

Although it avoids detailing the required governance system, it still uses governance-based output criteria as well as organises the ground using market and privatisation mechanisms to control governmental activities. Certainly, according to Hughes (2012:6), it is evident that in NPM, managers tend to maintain a certain distance from the complex interactions of the actors in the system itself. This undermines managers' capabilities to manage different actors and systems' activities to influence successful policy implementation.

In contrast, the governance perspective emphasises the need for the development and use of the appropriate coordination framework. It stresses the importance of managers moving with and connecting with the wave of complexities arising from different actors and systems' activities. This will create a degree of stability that can influence successful policy implementation. As Hughes (2012:6) notes, this enhances the control of the actors' and systems' activities to edify the achievement of the desired policy outcomes. Such a view certainly echoes the arguments in Flood's (1999) approach, to "managing the unmanageable" as cited in Lartey (2020:44). The "managing the unmanageable" approach suggests that, considering organisations are constantly involved in dynamics, self-organisation and co-evolution, one of the strategies is for managers to adjust and adapt to these changes.

As contrasted to the attempts to direct, control and subdue such changes, Flood (1999) suggests that managers must instead adjust and adapt in the context of such changes. However, in public administration and management, Lartey (2020:44) points out that the government may not adjust and adapt to all situations. The adoption of this approach may, in certain cases, distort policy implementation and achievement of the desired outcomes. Engagement in frequent adjustment and adaptation to changes may also not only affect managers' concentration and steadiness to manage organisational activities, but also turn out to be quite costly for the usual government constrained-resources.

According to Lartey (2020:44), managers who are unable to maintain their positions in the midst of instabilities are often considered incompetent. To deal with such situations and unintended consequences of adjusting and adapting to change, Sanger and Giddings (2012:369) reveal that the governance approach suggests that managers must use what is often referred to as "smart intervention".

Through "smart intervention", managers must link up with the wave of complexities and interact with the key actors. This would enable managers to understand their needs and preferences to craft strategies through which key actors can be influenced towards the manager's favoured direction that enhances achievement of the desired policy outcomes.

According to Sanger and Giddings (2012:369), "smart intervention" tends to be more cost-effective and less devastating as compared to either attempts to subdue complexities or respond to

changes by adjusting and adapting to such changes. In "smart intervention", managers are expected to play the coordinating and moderating roles by evaluating the contents of the proposal and highlighting how such a proposal responds to the preferences of different actors in the system. This approach is similar to Pascale's (1999:83) approach for *"Riding the Fitness Landscape*". As cited in Meek (2010:2), Pascale's (1999:83) paper titled *"Surfing the Edge of Chaos"* uses the approach for *"Riding the Fitness Landscape"* to explain how managers can manage the complex interaction between actors.

Pascale argues that if organisational events are emerging from the mutually influencing interactions of agents in which choices and events tend to shape new situations and actors' positions, then managers must identify and exploit the opportunities unfolding in that landscape. This must be accompanied with the identification and utilisation of interesting policy proposals and positions in actors' coalitions to influence and enable different actors who fit into that landscape.

Such an approach is typical in the policy entrepreneur approach that capitalises on evaluating, identifying and connecting different streams of problem solutions and choices to promote policy proposals. However, Klijn (2008:299) points out that the application of Pascale's (1999:83) approach to *"Riding the Fitness Landscape"* requires managers to have a detailed understanding of the organisation's complex situation and the emerging landscape in order to be able to respond appropriately. This leverages the diffusion of unfavourable situations reflecting coalitions and networks of actors that do not support policy formulation and implementation towards a particular desirable direction. Yet, as "managing the unmanageable" approach is being used, contemporary systems theory also suggests that it must be undertaken in conjunction with the application of governance network theory.

3.7.3 GOVERNANCE NETWORK THEORY

In this research, the fundamental argument is that systems theory is essential for managing the increasingly complex polycentric local governance system to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery. Just like complexity theory, governance network theory is also extracted from the general systems theory. Governance network theory, as Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) note,

offers a framework for analysing and identifying complexities arising from the networks of different actors in contemporary local governance systems.

As Figure 3.6 reflects, governance network theory evaluates the forms of interactions and collaborations between actors during problem solving and policy decision-making within a governance network setting. Governance networks often arise from relatively stable patterns of social relationships, interactions, cognitions and rules.

Such relationships often exist among inter-related public, semi-public and private actors engaged in the accomplishment of certain complex policy issues. It is posited in governance network theory that a governance network setting often exhibits three types of complexities: cognitive, strategic and institutional. In terms of cognitive complexity, Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) elaborate that it refers to certain technologically demanding problems that, although they represent certain values and dynamics, are often difficult to solve. As Figure 3.7 indicates, strategic complexity connotes the emergence of a situation where each of the various inter-related actors has their own perceptions and strategies that are difficult to reshape to fit governance policies and objectives.

Institutional complexity often arises from a more disintegrated institutional context reflecting various and even, in certain cases, conflicting structures and rules. Therefore, to deal with these complexities, Klijn, Steijn and Edelenbos (2010:1063) highlight that governance network theory proposes the use of certain network management or meta-governance strategies. Such network management or meta-governance strategies are often applied according to five specific stages that encompass decision-making, context, evaluation, explanations and management.

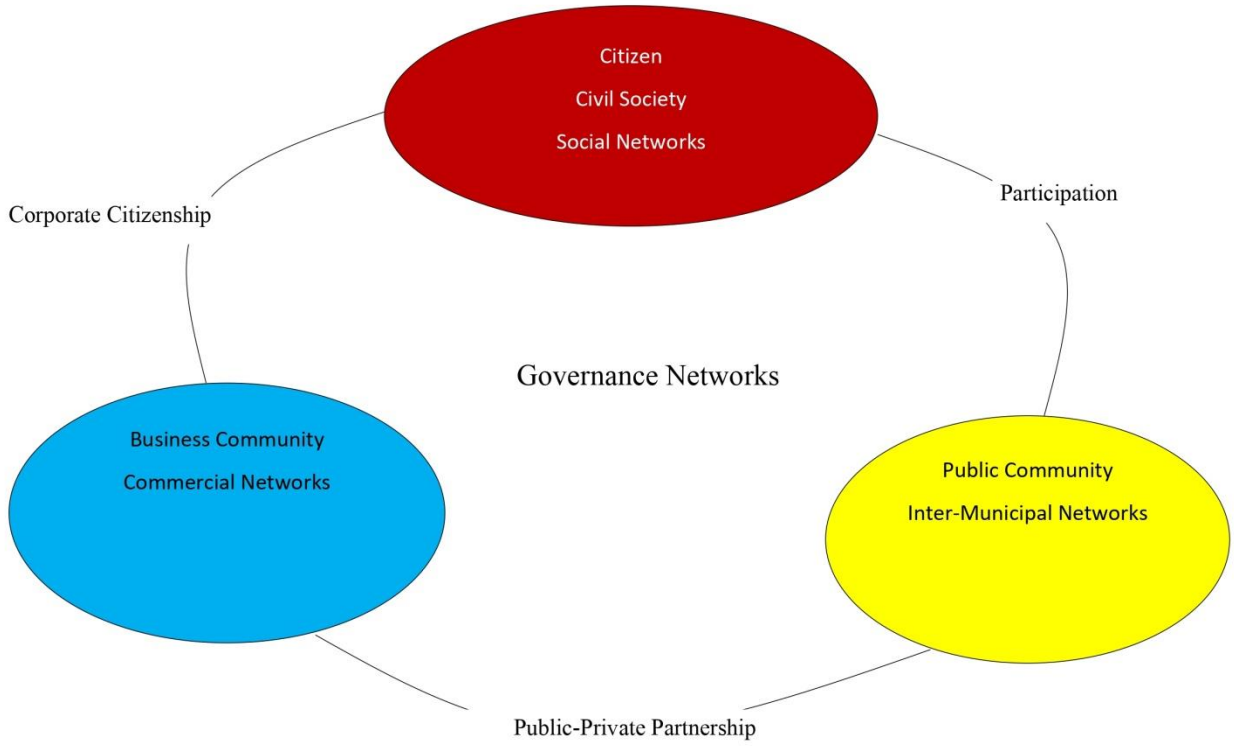

Figure 3.7: Governance Network Theory

Source: Klijn et al. (2010:1063)

At the decision-making stage, Klijn et al. (2010:1063) elaborate that governance network theory construes the different forms of interactions among different actors as actors' strategic games. As different actors engage in such games, their intent is usually to influence policy content as well as the process of policy decision-making. Quite often, conflicts and stagnation tend to arise from such games. However, using network management or meta-governance strategies, such conflicts and stagnation are often minimised through compromises, negotiated package deals and innovative trade-offs among the gaming groups of actors. As Klijn et al. (2010:1063) note, governance network systems tend to be more complex and dynamic. Such complexities and dynamics often arise from the prevalence of a variety and variability of perceptions and strategies adopted by actors in the interaction processes. Further complexities and dynamics often emerge from the fact

that such interactions and gaming among different actors occur in different areas of the governance arena.

For context, Klijn et al. (2010:1063) reveal that the context of decision-making often arises from the actors' interactions in the context of the prevailing rules and available resources. Although such rules and resources structure their interactions, different actors often still engage in interactive behaviours that recreate such structures to their advantage. If such interactive behaviours were consonant with the network's informal rules, they may retain such structures. Yet, as actors alter the existing structure, they also tend to re-interpret the existing rules to gradually change such rules to their advantage.

At the same time, Klijn et al. (2010:1063) highlight that as actors interact across different arenas, decision-making in certain governance arenas may also spill across different governance network arenas. This subsequently influences the entire network to change and shift in favour or against that decision. The context of decision-making is also influenced by the fact that actors in various networks are often directed by various and even conflicting rules to thereby induce institutional fragmentation and complexity.

In such situations, Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) suggest that one of the network management or meta-governance strategies is often for managers to infiltrate actors' interaction networks and reshape their patterns of interactions and behaviours for recreating the existing rules and structures.

This enhances the avoidance of certain undesirable outcomes that may arise from the recreation of the existing rules and structures. The other strategy is to ensure that common rules are used across the governance networks to harmonise institutional rules and avoid conflicts. Regarding the evaluation stage, Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) explain that it entails assessment of outcomes of actors' interactions.

In such situations, if actors have different goals and perceptions, they may tend to evaluate outcomes differently. It also applies in situations where goals and perceptions change with time, thus implying that certain ex ante goals cannot be used to assess success or failure. However, Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) point out that in such situations, network management or meta-governance approaches would consider that success has been attained if actors arrive at win-win solutions in the midst of circumstances where transaction costs also remain limited.

The other condition for success is that the costs of outcomes are not transferrable to exogenous actors who are not engaged in decision-making. In terms of explanations, Klijn et al. (2010:1063) reveal that governance network theory emphasises the need for explanations at different levels. These levels encompass the process level, network level and management level.

At process level, explanations tend to be reflected in different actors' acceptance of their inter-relatedness and, subsequently, the transformation of their individual strategies into interactive, collaborative strategies with other actors. Explanations at the process level are also characterised by the evaluation of the extent to which actors succeed in coordinating and influencing interactions in other networks as a measure of success.

At the network level, explanations imply that the existence or non-existence of certain institutional variables like relations, joint rules and trust may leverage or constrain collaborative actions.

At management level, Gerrits (2012:5) indicates that deliberate efforts to facilitate and moderate various actors' interactive games and networks offer an accurate explanation for a governance network's success or failure. At the management stage, network management or meta-government systems may require the use of process management or institutional design. Process management is a set of strategies undertaken to enhance actors' interactions in policy-making games.

Institutional design, on the other hand, seeks to change the institutional genre of the network by altering actors' positions, entry rules, and use of other aggressive strategies to intervene in network structures. These certainly enhance the control of the unwanted actors' interactions and behaviours to leverage effective governance network control and management. Views on governance networks are echoed in the policy networks theory. In policy networks theory, Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer (1995:437), as cited in Klijn, Edelenbos and Steijn (2010:193), state that policy networks' effective analysis and management aid successful policy formulation and implementation.

In a study titled *"Managing Networks in the Public Sector",* Klijn et al. (1995:437) use a similar approach in governance network theory to analyse and explain the behaviours of actors in a policy network. They also elucidate on how to identify and manage the undesirable forms of actors' interactions and behaviours. In such an analysis, Klijn et al. (1995:437) reveal that interactive

actors in a policy network constitute those who are part of its formulation and implementation as well as those who will benefit or be affected by it.

Despite the different actors' capabilities to engage in policy games and influence the outcomes in their favour they are often dependent on the cooperation of other actors. Thus, Klijn et al. (1995:437) indicate that groups of actors that are capable of influencing the game to their advantage are often unlikely to engage in seeking the cooperation of other actors. It is on that basis that actors interact with each other in a policy network as well as in a governance network.

With time, such series of interactions and games tend to create a pattern of relationships and cooperation among actors within a network. Subsequently, Klijn et al. (1995:437) further contend that all these influence the distribution of resources like power, status, legitimacy, knowledge, information and finances within the network. As much as the distribution of resources may affect future games in a network, the patterns of the distribution of resources may also be easily changed by such games.

Klijn et al. (2010:193) point out that governance and policy networks feature not only patterns of resource distribution and actors' interactions, but also of rules. Such rules define acceptable and unacceptable behaviours as well as the rules of policy games. Such formal rules are often complemented by certain informal rules that emerge from the interactions and gaming of actors in a governance system. Klijn et al. (1995:437), as cited in Klijn et al. (2010:193), also reiterate that such rules are often subject to re-interpretation and change by actors as they interact over time.

Policy networks as well as governance networks also exhibit certain features of specific configurations of actors' perceptions shaped by the history and nature of the network. This configuration of perceptions also determines whether or not actors are able to engage in interactions and gaming with other groups of actors to influence policy outcomes in a particular direction. To therefore ensure that policy formulation and implementation achieve the desired service delivery outcomes, Klijn et al. (1995:437), as cited in Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157), propose for public managers to apply certain game management strategies.

Game management is a strategy process of assimilating or de-activating actors, resources and perceptions in consideration of the existing rules and resource distribution. These game management strategies encompass selective activation, resource mobilisation, utilisation of

interactive rules and managing perceptions. Selective activation is accomplished by encouraging interaction and gaming of desired groups of actors while at the same time also discouraging and blocking the emergence of undesirable groups of actors.

As Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) point out, the success of selective activation, however, depends on a critical analysis of the extent to which the blocked groups of actors are unlikely to retaliate by forming counteractive interactive groups or by using their veto powers. In terms of resource mobilisation, the number of available resources is critical for leveraging the quality and success of the game.

Klijn et al. (1995:437), as cited in Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157), state that this implies only actors with potential resources reflected in their official positions, skills, experience, expertise, financial capabilities and commitment to certain policy outcomes should be invited to join the game. As resource mobilisation strategy is being used, it is also critical that public managers use interaction rules. Interaction rules can be used to promote the interactions of certain favoured groups of actors. This would require public managers to understand both the formal and informal rules of actors' interactions so as to determine which kinds of actors' interactions to terminate.

Besides the use of interaction rules, Klijn et al. (1995:437), as cited in Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) suggest that public managers must also manage the perceptions of different actors. Although different groups of actors may have divergent perceptions about a particular problem or situation, public managers must seek ways of harmonising the perceptions of the actors. Some of the strategies may entail the exchange of objectives, executing package deals, agreeing to disagree, consensus building, or redefining the motives of the game. Even though the outcome of such game management strategies may influence successful policy formulation and implementation to achieve desired service delivery outcomes, the conclusions of Fischer et al.'s (2017:62) studies still imply that such initiatives must be accompanied by the use of certain network restructuring strategies.

Network restructuring strategies connote sets of critical actions aimed at recreating new features of the network system to create new situations that enhance achievement of the desired policy outcomes. As Fischer et al. (2017:62) highlight, some of the network restructuring strategies encompass altering actors' relations, changing patterns of resource distribution, changing

interaction rules, and altering the existing norms, values and perceptions. Altering actors' relations can be accomplished by introducing new actors while also excluding other actors to create new relationships and forms of interaction. Such an approach breaks any existing deadlock to create avenues for new ideas as well as coalitions that favour a particular policy direction to emerge.

However, Fischer et al. (2017:62) point out that the risks of such a strategy are often latent in the fact that some of the excluded actors may react by forming counteracting coalitions. It may also not be easy to exclude some of the actors who are of importance for a particular policy due to the official positions that they hold or the resources that they possess.

Nonetheless, altering actors' relations may also require changing historical organisational arrangements to disorganise some of the actors' games. This can be accompanied by the establishment of stakeholders' consultation mechanisms, advisory bodies and contracting with certain private entities to create new coalitions and new games that favour a particular policy formulation and implementation.

For changing resource distribution patterns, Fischer et al. (2017:62) suggest that public managers must change the positions of the actors in the policy network. This would aid the change of the resources like funds, official positions, manpower, information, expertise and legitimacy that certain actors have at their disposal.

Such initiatives must be undertaken in conjunction with changing interaction rules to create the emergence of coalitions of actors that support policy formulation and implementation towards a particular direction. Finally, Fischer et al. (2017:62) emphasise that the existing norms, values and perceptions must also be altered if they do not favour a specific way of policy formulation and implementation.

To alter the existing norms, values and perceptions towards a particular direction, public managers use persuasion, open debates, or reframing aspects of the policy. In other words, governance network theory appears to offer accurate insights on how to identify and mitigate unfavourable outcomes of actors' interactions while also encouraging the favourable ones to bolster successful policy formulation and implementation in the contemporary meta-local governance system.

However, Koppenjan and Klijn (2013:157) caution that since governance network theory tends to be less effective in more complex situations, it should be applied in conjunction with complexity theory. Nonetheless, despite such criticism, governance network theory still echoes the fundamental argument in this research that the use of systems theory is critical for effective management of the increasingly complex polycentric local governance system to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In a nutshell, theories and the literature on managing complex local governance systems seem to echo the fundamental argument in this research. It is the fundamental argument in this research that the use of systems theory leverages effective management of the increasingly complex polycentric local governance system to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes. As analysis of systems theory indicates, it is evident that approaches for diagnosing and managing the complexities arising from the interface between politicians and administrators as well as other actors in the contemporary meta-local governance organisations are inherently ingrained in systems theory.

Systems theory, according to Poole (2014:49), posits organisations as being analogous to systems that constitute different internal interactive subsystems and actors that also influence or are instead influenced by certain external actors. Interactive relationships between these subsystems and actors influence the emergence of certain emergent properties reflecting an organisation's critical features and characteristics.

In effect, just like in a system, Lai and Lin (2017:9) argue that effective diagnosis and management of the interactive relationships between politicians and administrators and other actors such as service delivery activists, political activists, citizens' advocacy groups and partners in public-private partnerships are critical for enhancing successful policy formulation and implementation.

All these theories echo the fundamental argument in this research that the use of systems theory is critical for effective management of the increasingly complex political-administrative interface in polycentric local governance systems to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes. However, to discern how key insights and concepts from these theories and literature can be combined with

key insights from primary findings to extract and develop a systems model that can be emulated by the South African local governance system, the discussions in the next chapter provide critical descriptions of the research design and methodology used in the primary research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on systems theory, this chapter provides a critical evaluation of the research paradigm, design and methodology used in primary research. The methodology highlights that primary research was undertaken in the context of the overriding research aim, which is indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis to entail the use of systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality.

Through such analysis, the study aimed to extract a systems model that could be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities in the UThukela District Municipality and the entire South African local governance system.

In line with the overriding research aim, this chapter indicates that the study used systems thinking, creative methodology and phenomenological ontology as the research philosophy to elicit practical views from the actual actors or participants in the political-administrative interface's complexities in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

To aid thorough diagnosis and identification of the points of conflict and antagonism in such complexities, it is reiterated that primary research was based on a case study research design. These were accompanied by qualitative research methods. As such methods and techniques were being used, the chapter also elucidates on the sampling method as well as data collection and analysis techniques that were used.

Subsequently, the chapter highlights the limitations of the study and the measures that were used for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations of the research. In line with such reasoning, the rationale for using systems thinking as well as the details of the empirical methodology are as elucidated below:

4.2 RATIONALE FOR USING SYSTEMS THINKING

This empirical study used systems thinking because it involved interviews with a multitude of actors to address the complexity of political and administrative interfaces in the UThukela District Municipality. This study involved sets of different actors that included the municipal administrators at different levels of the management structure in the UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

The other sets of actors were the politicians or the elected councillors that occupy most of the political leadership positions like mayor and speaker positions in the UThukela District Municipality and its local municipalities. This also included the councillors that constituted the council committee members and exco members, as well as ordinary councillors.

Usage of systems thinking was found to be critical for extracting and analysing the views of all the actors. In this way logical conclusions can be reached on how the complexities of political/administrative interface in UThukela can be addressed. Systems thinking is important for the study to extract all the views of all the actors to diagnose the points of convergence that minimise political/administrative conflicts as well as the points of divergence that must be mitigated to ameliorate the complexities of political/administrative interface that undermine service delivery in UThukela.

To identify such points of convergence and divergence, the study used systems thinking as based on Checkland's soft systems diagnostic tools. It applied seven main steps and the first step entailed a thorough analysis of the views of politicians and municipal administrators to identify and evaluate problematic situations that give rise to the complexities of political/administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. The second step isolated and described the problem in terms of the points of convergence and divergence that instigate the complexities of political/administrative interfaces in the UThukela District Municipality.

This was followed by the application of the third step that sought to establish root definitions of relevant systems of purposive behaviour among politicians and municipal administrators that explain the complexities of political/administrative interface that the UThukela District

Municipality is presently experiencing. In the fourth step, the application of Checkland's soft systems diagnostic tools led to the building of a conceptual model of human activity systems that illustrates the kinds of political and administrative networks that interact to either instigate conflicts or minimise the complexities of political/administrative interface.

Subsequently, in step five, such a model was compared with the real-world situations as elicited from the narratives reflecting the experiences of the politicians and municipal administrators in the UThukela District Municipality. This was followed by the analysis in step six to define the kinds of changes which are considered desirable and feasible for ameliorating the complexities of political/administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

Finally, in step seven, the application of Checkland's soft systems diagnostic tools discerned the improvement actions that can be adopted to ameliorate the problems and complexities of the political/administrative interface in UThukela. In other words, these imply that the rationale for the application of systems thinking is that usage of Checkland's soft systems diagnostic tools enabled the study to achieve its fundamental research aim, which is to diagnose the complexities of the political/administrative interface in UThukela using systems thinking so as to identify the remedial measures that can be adopted. To accomplish this step, systems thinking was integrated with creative methodology and phenomenological ontology.

4.3 CREATIVE METHODOLGY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

Creative methodology is an epistemological process and method of empirical investigation that uses methods and techniques that go beyond the traditional parameters of qualitative data collection and analysis to use empathetic, artistic, narrative and aesthetic expression to understand and convey information about the phenomenon being investigated. To explore and extract all the dimensions of the facets of factors explaining the complexities of political/administrative interface in uThukela, this research used the techniques in creative methodology.

The study used creative methodology techniques like empathetic, artistic, narrative and aesthetic expression to understand and elicit critical in-depth information as the basis for investigating, intervening, creating knowledge and sharing information about the complexities of political-administrative interface in the South African local governance system; the actual research was

limited to the UThukela District Municipality. Such in-depth insights evoked deeper thinking and more nuanced interpretations of the points of convergence and divergence that instigate complexities of political/administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality as well as in other municipalities across South Africa.

In addition to such techniques, the study also used creative methodologies like lateral and metaphorical thinking, arts-based and aesthetic approaches, and storytelling and affective narrative to provide all the political and administrative actors with the platforms for voicing what they think, from their experiences causes the complexities of political administrative interface to evoke disruptive thinking and mental models on how such complexities can be mitigated going into the future.

To effectively accomplish that, the application of such creative methodologies and techniques was integrated with Sartre's phenomenological ontology as a research philosophy to elicit views from the actual actors in the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

Phenomenological ontology research philosophy was critical for identification of the actual points of conflict and complexities. The use of phenomenological ontology is in line with the definition that posits a research philosophy to connote the general paradigm or epistemological thinking or belief that influences and guides the investigation and research into a particular phenomenon (Niraula, 2019:2). It also influences views on the conclusions emerging from such investigations and research.

Adopted epistemological thinking often drives decisions on the selection of the research design, methods and techniques for accomplishing primary research. Ontologically, research philosophy is often classified as either positivist or phenomenological ontology. Ontology is the branch of philosophy that studies concepts such as existence, being, and reality (Niraula, 2019:2). It integrates the analysis of questions as to how entities are grouped into basic categories and as to which such categories exist on the most fundamental level (Niraula, 2019:2). In line with such ontological thinking, positivist ontology construes reality as detached from humans, and not moderated by human senses, but rather by certain immutable laws.

Positivism seeks to evaluate and understand the social world from a natural world perspective. It construes scientific thinking is the solution to analysing and resolving the challenges that the social world faces (Gill, Johnson & Clark, 2016:19). In the application of such scientific thinking, positivist ontology construes that in a natural world, there is often a cause-effect association of phenomena, which once established, can be predicted with certainty in the future.

In the social world, positivists also tend to apply the same scientific thinking. In such situations, positivists reason that since reality is context free, different studies undertaken in different times and places by different researchers will usually arrive at the same conclusions about a certain phenomenon (Gill et al. 2016:19). Epistemologically, positivism subscribes to objectivism in which it posits that researchers are independent, objective observers who accomplish research without interfering in what its outcomes ought to be or not to be. In effect, positivist researchers are understood to use certain language or symbols to describe the phenomena in their real form (Gill et al. 2016:19).

Positivism assumes the social world is static and the future can easily be predicted using the past and present of data. Unfortunately, in this study, it was interpreted that the application of scientific thinking in positivist ontology would not be suitable. Positivism would not aid effective diagnosis and identification of points of certain social dynamic complexities that emerge from rather more dynamic and complex networks of political and administrative actors in the UThukela District Municipality and the larger South African local governance system. Understanding and identification of such points of complexity can only be accomplished by eliciting real perspectives and views from the actual actors or participants in such complex social networks.

In other words, positivism is suitable for evaluating straight forward cause-effect situations rather than more socially dynamic and complex situations. In effect, as contrasted to positivist ontology, this research opted for the use of phenomenological ontology. Phenomenological ontology, also known as realism or interpretivism, emphasises that social phenomena should be analysed and understood from the perspectives and views of the participants in such social phenomena rather than the researcher (Gill et al. 2016:19). This aids effective understanding of such phenomena in their social and natural contexts. To accomplish this, phenomenological ontology stresses the

importance of utilising methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, field notes and observation to elicit rich in-depth detailed insights about the actual participants' experiences, approaches and perspectives in dealing with such phenomena (Kabir, 2016:42).

This edifies extraction of real insights and experiences on how such similar phenomena should be dealt with in the future. It is in that context that this research used phenomenological ontology based on systems theory to evaluate the real insights from the actual actors in different networks of political officials and municipal administrators in the UThukela District Municipality.

Phenomenological ontology aided in the identification of the points of conflict and complexity to extract a systems model that can be adopted for dealing with such complexities. Such reasoning is consonant with the thinking and reasoning in phenomenological ontology that subscribes to the thinking and reasoning in the inductive research approach. In inductive research approach, researchers seek to understand patterns in data obtained from real world experience by identifying explanatory themes, subthemes and associated narratives on the phenomena being researched to extract a theory to respond to such phenomena. That contrasts with the reasoning in deductive research approach that subscribes to positivist ontology where researchers start by stating hypothesis reflecting certain pre-identified themes and then collects and tests data to assess the veracity of such hypothesis.

In phenomenological ontology, theory is data collected from real world situations unlike in positivist ontology where research and theory development are hypothesis driven. Using phenomenological ontology as based on systems theory, this research sought to understand and identify the points of complexity from the perspectives and views of the actual political, administrative and other actors engaged in more complex networks in the UThukela District Municipality. Attributable to such a view is the fact that problematic situations in human interaction emanate from the fact that different people, in this case, the administrative personnel and the elected councillors, have different assumptions about the world, thus causing them to see it in diverse ways (Reynolds and Holwell, 2010:9).

One party views municipal operations from a political perspective, and the other party views them from a professional perspective. In tackling the problematic situations, the parties have to accept that their worldviews are different, and the analysis must allow these different worldviews to surface and be examined, and ultimately to find ways of improving the problematic situation (Reynolds and Holwell, 2010:9). In contrast to phenomenological ontology, positivism cannot effectively handle such complexities.

Deriving from the research objectives and questions outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the use of phenomenological ontology as based on systems theory entailed evaluation and identification of the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. This was accompanied by an analysis and identification of the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality.

Subsequently, the research examined and identified the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. Such analysis created the foundation for the research to identify points of conflict and complexity that arise from such a complex political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts in the UThukela District Municipality. This was undertaken in conjunction with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the approaches that are so far been used by the UThukela District Municipality's management to manage such complexities.

Basing on such clear insights from the actual experiences of the actors themselves, the study combined and contrasted key insights from such findings with theories to extract a systems model for diagnosing and managing such complexities. In other words, all these phenomenological ontology processes led to the extraction and development of a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities in the UThukela District Municipality as well as in the entire South African local governance system. However, as the research strived to achieve such critical research objectives and questions, the use of phenomenological ontology was also accompanied by the application of a case study and exploratory research designs.

4.4 CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used in this study encompasses the use of case study research design. As the study was based on a case study analysis of the UThukela District Municipality, it aided in-depth analysis to explore, discover and identify points of conflict and complexity of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

This approach was consonant with the notion that a research design is the overall strategy used for integrating different components of the study in a coherent and logical way to enhance the addressing of the research problem (Niraula, 2019:006). It is a blueprint constituting different techniques and methods that are used in the collection, measurement and analysis of the data.

Since a research design must address the research problem, the choice of the research design often depends on the research problem (Niraula, 2019:006). The purpose of the research design is to facilitate the gathering and analysis of evidence to enable an effective response to the research problem in a way that is as unambiguous as possible.

Over the years, the types of research designs that have emerged from different pragmatic approaches encompass case study research design, causal research design, cohort research design, cross-sectional research design, descriptive research design, experimental research design, exploratory research design, historical research design and longitudinal research design (Kabir, 2016:49).

A case study research design is the research approach where the study is limited to a particular organisation or to only a few subjects in a particular geographical area (Kabir, 2016:49). A case study research approach is usually aimed at facilitating in-depth analysis of the situation in that particular organisation to enable necessary conclusions and generalisations to be drawn about the phenomenon being investigated. However, as contrasted to causal research design, cohort research design, cross-sectional research design, descriptive research design, experimental research design, historical research design and longitudinal research design, this research uses case study and exploratory research designs.

This view is attributable to the fact that as much as this research aims to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the South African local governance system; the actual

research was limited to the UThukela District Municipality. It is from the research on the UThukela District Municipality that conclusions and generalisations were made about the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the South African local governance system.

This enhanced extraction and development of a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system. However, the approach in the case study research design differs from the approach in the causal research design.

Causal research design refers to the research approach that seeks to aid the in-depth understanding of the impact of the variations in the independent variables on the dependent variables (Braun & Clarke, 2016:77). It seeks to examine how the change in the independent variables affects the change in the dependent variables. Such approach is consonant with the reasoning in positivist ontology, but contrasts with the thinking in phenomenological ontology, which is used in this research. Such contrasting ideologies explain why causal research design was not used in this research. At the same time, this research also does not use a cohort research design.

A cohort research design connotes the research approach where a study is conducted over a period of time on members of the population from which the subject or the representative member comes from, and who are united by some commonality or similarity (O'Connor & Gibson, 2019:49). However, such a method contrasts with the approach used in the cross-sectional research design. A cross-sectional research design refers to the research approach that seeks to provide a snapshot of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it at a given specific point in time (Braun & Clarke, 2016:78).

In this research, the application of a case study research design was opted for due to time and resource constraints. Time and resource constraints affect the utilisation of research designs such as the cohort research design that requires lengthy periods of study or the cross-sectional research design, which is more complex. Besides such limitations, the analytical approach adopted in this research also limited the application of the research design, such as the descriptive research design.

A descriptive research design is a research approach that seeks to provide answers and responses to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how associated with the phenomenon being investigated (Chenail, 2016:248). Descriptive research design is critical for gathering and

analysing information concerning the current status of the phenomena and describing "what exists" with regard to the variables or conditions in a situation.

Unlike the descriptive research design that focuses on describing a situation, the aim of this research was to use the analytical approach in systems theory to diagnose the complexities of the political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors in the UThukela District Municipality. Use of such an analytical approach renders the application of descriptive research design that only focuses on describing the situation less suitable for aiding this research's overriding aim and objectives.

At the same time, the experimental research design was not favourable for this research. Experimental research design is a research approach that offers techniques and methods that enable a researcher to control all factors that may affect the result of an experiment (O'Connor & Gibson, 2019:49). However, experimental research designs are mainly used in science and aligned to positivist ontology, which contrasts with the phenomenological ontology used in this research, which explains why experimental research was not used in this research. Yet, in contrast to such a view, exploratory research design was found suitable for aiding this research attain its overriding aim and objectives.

Exploratory research design refers to the research approach that emphasises thorough analysis of the research problem when there are few or no studies conducted in that area that can be referred to (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman & Pedersen, 2014:294). When undertaking such analysis, the motive is usually to gain in-depth, detailed insights that can be used as the basis for conducting later investigations. This is attributable to the fact that, as the study was based on a case study analysis of the UThukela District Municipality, exploratory research design was used to undertake in-depth analysis to discover and identify points of conflict and complexity in the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. This enabled the study to construct a general picture of the nature of such complexities as well as how they affect service delivery initiatives. Such a view is echoed in the fact that the goal of exploratory research design is usually to generate a well-grounded picture of the situation being developed. It also aims to generate new ideas and assumptions, which are critical for the development of tentative theories or hypotheses (Campbell et al. 2014:294).

In addition to aiding researchers assess whether the study is feasible in the future, it also enables issues to be refined for more systematic investigation and formulation of new research questions. All these differ from the approaches in historical research design and longitudinal research design. In a historical research design, the motive of the study is to collect, verify and synthesise evidence from the past to establish facts that defend or refute the stated hypothesis (Campbell et al. 2014:294).

The accomplishment of such analysis relies mainly on secondary sources and a variety of primary documentary evidence such as logs, diaries, official records, reports, archives, and non-textual information such as audio and visual recordings. In a longitudinal research design, samples are analysed over two or three consecutive intervals of periods of time to enable the analysis and identification of changes in variables (Taylor, 2007:119). However, given the time and resource constraints, such lengthy and complex processes in historical and longitudinal research designs have rendered such research designs unsuitable for aiding this research achieve its overriding aim and objective.

The motive of this research was to elicit the latest insights reflecting the latest experiences of the actors in the UThukela District Municipality's complex networks of political-administrative interface. Such a motive contrasts with the approach in historical and longitudinal research designs that focus on eliciting and analysing historical facts as contrasted with the latest facts about the phenomena being investigated. In other words, deficiencies in other research designs motivated the use of case studies and exploratory research designs in this study.

As the case study was limited to three UThukela District Municipalities that encompass Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities, an exploratory research design was used to evaluate and discover more about the questions of why, what, who, and how in the complexities of political-administrative interface. This aided exploration and identification of political, administrative, and other actors and their interactive activities and the impacts of such interactive activities on service delivery.

Subsequently, such analysis enhanced the identification of the points of conflict and complexity that arise from such complex networks as well as the effectiveness of the intervention measures that have so far been undertaken by the UThukela District Municipality's management. Through

such analysis, the study was able to reach logical conclusions on the discourses that can be extracted to offer a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system.

To extract detailed insights from the actual participants in such complexities, phenomenological ontology, case studies and an exploratory research design were used in combination with the qualitative research method, specifically interviews.

4.5 RESEARCH METHOD

Since this research is based on the thinking and reasoning in phenomenological ontology, the research method entailed the use of the qualitative research method, specifically interviews. This aided the extraction of the real insights and experiences of the actual actors in different complex political and administrative networks in the UThukela District Municipality. Certainly, a research method connotes an approach reflecting critical techniques that are used in the accomplishment of primary research. A research method can be either quantitative or qualitative or both (Creswell, 2013).

The quantitative research method is based on a positivist ontology that emphasises the application of scientific and statistical thinking in the research process. It connotes a research approach that utilises certain statistical-based techniques to extract mainly certain summarised numerical responses from the respondents.

To accomplish that, the quantitative research method uses techniques such as surveys, confirmatory factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis, or certain prescribed statistical formulas for statistical document analysis (Creswell, 2013). Since quantitative research is based on positivist ontology, it was considered that its emphasis on scientific and statistical thinking would not be accurate for eliciting critical real insights and experiences of the actual actors in different complex actors' networks in the UThukela District Municipality. In contrast, since this research is based on phenomenological ontology, the researcher opted for the utilisation of a qualitative research method, which is based on phenomenological ontology.

A qualitative research method refers to an approach reflecting certain techniques that are used for eliciting participants' detailed narratives reflecting in-depth rich insights about their actual experiences, shared meanings, cognitions and human behaviours about the phenomenon being investigated (Dawson, 2013). In such quests, qualitative research methods use techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions, observation and content analysis (Dawson, 2013).

However, since this research is based on phenomenological ontology, the epistemological process of inquiry in this research uses qualitative research, specifically interviews, as a techniques for data collection. This decision is in line with the aim of this research, which seeks to use a systems approach to elicit detailed insights about the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District municipality. Through the application of a qualitative interview method based on a systems approach, the study was able to elicit detailed participants' narratives and rich insights on the critical political and administrative actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality.

It was also able to elicit essential participants' narratives reflecting their experiences about the complexities of such actors' interactive activities and their impacts on service delivery in the UThukela District Municipality. Interviews also aided in the extraction of critical narratives and rich insights on the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces and other actors in the UThukela District Municipality.

Subsequently, the application of qualitative research aided in the identification of discourses with their accompanying narratives that can be extracted from such narratives to offer a systems model that can be adopted to identify and manage such complexities. All these aided achievement of the fundamental research objectives as well as attainment of the overriding research objective.

As highlighted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the overriding aim of this research is to use systems theory to evaluate the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. This type of analysis was considered critical for extracting a systems model that can be adopted for identifying and managing such complexities not only in the UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance.

Certainly, as indicated above, it is evident that through the use of phenomenological ontology as well as case study and exploratory research designs, accompanied by qualitative research methods

that entailed specifically the use of interviews, the study was able to attain its overriding aim. The sample participants from whom such critical qualitative interview narratives were elicited, analysed and extracted were drawn from the target population using a non-probability sampling approach from the study location described below.

The study location section should then justify why the study was conducted on the site concerned, give appropriate demographic, administrative, political as well as environmental and other unique characteristic features of the same that make it the best location for the study given the said problem, aim and objectives of the study.

4.6 STUDY LOCATION

The study location for this research was UThukela District Municipality. UThukela District Municipality is one of the Category C municipalities which is situated on the western part of Kwa-Zulu Natal Province (UThukela District Municipality, 2020:4). As reflected in the map in Figure 4.1, uThukela District Municipality consists of three local municipalities that include Alfred Duma, Okhahlamba and Inkosi Langalibalele.

UThukela which is one of the eleven districts of the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province borders Umgungundlovu District Municipality on the East, Amajuba District Municipality on the North, Drakensberg Mountains and Lesotho on the South-East, Thabo Mofutsanyane in the Free State Province on the West and Umzinyathi District Municipality on the South. UThukela District Municipality draws its name from UThukela River which flows from the Drakensberg Mountains to supply water to most parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Province. Its headquarters is the City of Ladysmith. As per the National Population Census of 2011, UThukela District Municipality is populated with 668,848 people who are mainly black Africans of Zulu speaking descent. Of this total population, 54.06% (355161) are females and 45.94% (301,825) are males (Statistics-South Africa, 2011:42).

Figure 4.1: Map of UThukela District Municipality

Source: KZNCOGTA (2017)

UThukela District Municipality which has 73 wards is one of the most rural District Municipalities of the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province with the effect that some of its major areas like Indaka and Imbabazane have no formal towns (KZNCOGTA, 2017:5). This implies that the establishment of a more well-functioning district municipality is critical for better planning and implementation of programmes that can instigate improved economic development of UThukela. Unfortunately, with political/administrative complexities causing frictions between politicians and administrators, this has often been a bit difficult to achieve.

In terms of political governance, UThukela is the ANC (African National Congress) led District Municipality. Out of the thirty-two councillors, ANC has fifteen, Inkatha Freedom Party-IFP (7

Councillors), Congress of the People (3 councillors), Democratic Alliance-DA (2 councillors), Economic Freedom Fighters-EFF (1 Councillor) and African Independent Congress (1 Councillor) (UThukela District Municipality, 2020:4).

Due to lack of appropriate infrastructure, economic activities and acute shortage of water though UThukela river is the main supplier of KZN with water, it is in that context that this study evaluates its nature of political/administrative interface so as to identify and mitigate complexities undermining the effective governance, administration and management to achieve the desired outcomes.

4.6.1 Target Population

Target population connotes the entire specified group of people that the researcher wishes to investigate and the subject on which the measurement is being taken (Flick, 2015). In terms of the target population, this research focuses on the local municipalities within the UThukela District. Three municipalities within this district, namely Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local municipalities were targeted.

In effect, the target population for the study was 296 that constituted of all the 176 elected politicians/councillors and 120 contracted administrative and management officials of the entire UThukela District Municipality and its local municipalities. From the political governance aspect of the municipality, the illustration in Table 4.1 indicates that the target population included 176 Councillors that also include the mayor and the speaker.

These 176 councillors included a total of 29 councillors from UThukela District Council, 72 councillors from Alfred Duma local council, 29 councillors from Okhahlamba local council and 46 councillors from Inkosi Langalibalele local council. These 176 councillors were the elected councillors from different political parties like African National Congress (ANC), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Congress of the People, Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and African Independent Congress.

POLITICAL PARTIES	UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY	ALFRED DUMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY	OKHAHLAMBA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY	INKOSI LANGALIBALELE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
African National Congress	15	46	15	23
Inkatha Freedom Party	7	16	7	18
Congress of the People	3	0	3	0
Democratic Alliance	2	4	2	2
Economic Freedom Fighters	1	4	1	1
African Independent Congress	1	0	1	0
Al Jama-ah	0	0	0	2
National Democratic Convention	0	1	0	0
National Peoples Ambassadors	0	1	0	0
TOTAL COUNCILLORS	**29 Councillors**	**72 Councillors**	**29 Councillors**	**46 Councillors**

Table 4.1: Political Parties and Number of Councillors in UThukela District Municipality

Source: Statistics-South Africa (2011:42) and KZNCOGTA (2017:5)

For the administrative aspects of the municipality, the 120 contracted administrative and management officials constituted of the municipal managers, chief financial officers, Section 56 managers and municipal personnel from the Department for Development, Planning and Human Settlements, Department of Community and Social Services, Department of Corporate Services, Department of Technical and Infrastructure Services and Department of Public Safety and Disaster Management.

4.6.2 Sampling

Sampling connotes the process of drawing the units of analysis from such a target population (Etikan & Kabiru, 2017:215). From the target population of 296 that constituted of all the 176 elected politicians/councillors and 120 contracted administrative and management officials of the entire UThukela District Municipality and its local municipalities, a total sample of 30 (thirty) participants were drawn and used in the study. Considering that this research is based on phenomenological ontology, the study used non-probability sampling as contrasted to probability

sampling, which is based on positivist ontology, to draw the necessary sample participants from the target population (Etikan & Kabiru, 2017:215).

From this target population of 296 people, the study used non-probability sampling, especially purposive sampling, as the main non-probability sampling technique to draw about 30 sample participants. Such a decision is in tandem with Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) postulation that a qualitative research sample is selected through a non-probability sampling strategy rather than probability sampling.

A non-probability sampling strategy does not give all the research participants equal chances to be included in the study and is not random in nature (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Non-probability sampling techniques include judgmental, convenience, quota, purposive and snowballing sampling. In contrast, probability sampling is based on randomness and chance as the criteria for drawing the respondents that must be included in the sample population. Probability sampling techniques encompass simple random sampling, systemic, cluster and stratified sampling.

However, this study utilised the purposive sampling technique to draw 30 sample participants from the target population of 296 people. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling refers to the technique that focuses on drawing only the sample participants who are considered knowledgeable, experienced and informed about the phenomenon being investigated.

While using such purposive sampling approach for the political aspect of the municipality, the research only drew about 15 participants that constituted of mayors, speakers and councillors who are members of the executive council committees and oversight committees. For the administrative aspect of the municipality, the study also used purposive sampling to draw 15 participants from the administrative officials that constituted of municipal managers, chief financial officers and all Section 54 and 56 managers who report directly to the municipal managers in Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. In total this led to the utilisation of a total of 30 (thirty) participants that were used in the study.

In the context of purposive sampling, it was only such categories of municipal elected politicians and administrative and management officials that were considered by virtue of their positions to possess in-depth insights, experience and knowledge about the nature of the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

In other words, purposive sampling aided selection of the actual participants with real insights and experience in different complex actors' networks in the UThukela District Municipality. The use of only such participants was critical for identifying points of conflict and non-alignment in such complexities. Following completion of sample selection, data collection was undertaken through interviews.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

Thinking and reasoning in the adopted research ontology also influenced the methods used for data collection (Chenail, 2016:248). Thus, whereas positivist ontology tends to use surveys and experiments, phenomenological ontology emphasises use of interviews, focus group discussions and observation as the critical data collection methods (Chenail, R. 2016:248). Since this research used phenomenological ontology, interviews were therefore opted for as the main data collection method in this research. Data collection is the systematic process of gathering and measuring information that seeks to provide answers to research questions (Niraula, 2019:001).

The objective of data collection is to gather and measure credible information that seeks to provide answers to the research questions. In effect, irrespective of whether the study is qualitative or quantitative, accurate data collection is critical for maintaining the integrity of the study (Niraula, 2019:001). The commonly used qualitative data collection methods encompass interviews, focus group discussions and observation (Kabir, 2016:46). A questionnaire is a standard research instrument which is used for gathering data from the participants (Kabir, 2016:46).

Interviews refer to the one-to-one approach in which the researcher asks questions and the participant is expected to respond. Interviews can be face-to-face or telephonic (Kabir, 2016:46). Interviews can also be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Alam, Kabir & Aktar, 2015:663). Structured interviews refer to the interviewing approach where pre-determined

questions are used, as contrasted to semi-structured interviews, which are often based partially on the pre-set questions and partially on the information emerging from the participant's responses (Alam et al. 2015:663).

Unstructured interviews connote an approach where the interview is not based on any pre-set questions, as instead questions are extracted from the participants' responses. This contrasts with the approach in the focus group discussions. In focus group discussions, a small, homogeneous group of about 5 to 12 people is brought together to discuss a common topic (Alam et al. 2015:663). It is from such discussions that the researcher gathers data.

Focus group discussions often require the use of eight specific main steps encompassing planning the entire focus group discussions, deciding what types of groups are needed, selecting a moderator and field team, developing the moderator's guide and format for recording responses, training field assistants and conducting a pilot test, preparing for the individual focus group discussions, conducting the focus group discussions, and analysing and interpreting the results of focus group discussions (Alam et al. 2015:663).

Despite its value as a data collection method, focus group discussions differ from observational methods. The observational method refers to the data collection approach that requires the researcher to apply all the six senses in studying the environment surrounding the area of the study (Niraula, 2019:006).

An observational method is applied in instances where the nature of the research question to be answered involves answering how and what type of questions. It is also applied in instances where the topic is relatively unexplored and little is known to explain the behaviour of people in a particular setting (Niraula, 2019:006). The observational method is also applied in situations where understanding the meaning of a setting in a detailed way is valuable or when the need to study the phenomenon in its natural setting is important (Niraula, 2019:006). Observation can be causal and scientific observation, natural observation, subjective and objective observation, direct and indirect observation, participant and non-participant observation, and structured and unstructured observation (Niraula, 2019:006).

Even if the observational method provides the best approach for data collection, it is still often expensive and a very slow method of data collection. That explains why this research opted for the use of interviews, and specifically semi-structured interviews. This is because semi-structured interviews are flexible and partially based on certain pre-set questions that permit deviations to ask additional questions that are drawn from new additional insights emerging from the participants' responses (Bryman, 2012). Denzin (1989), cited in Rahman (2017), states that one advantage of the qualitative research method is that it yields a detailed description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences and interprets the meanings of their actions. Rahman also argues that qualitative research is flexible. Since it is interactive, it allows the researcher to create the rapport necessary for the respondent to feel comfortable and bring out their inner feelings.

Qualitative research is therefore expected to explore the problem in detail for a systems thinking approach to be applicable. Thus, since this research used exploratory research design and case study research, the use of semi-structured interviews would therefore aid effective application of phenomenological ontology to extract additional real insights and experience from different complex political and administrative actors' networks in the UThukela District Municipality. While using semi-structured interviews, this study uses certain partially pre-set questions in the interview guide.

To elicit relevant information, the interview guide was structured on the six research objectives and questions as outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis. In effect, the interview guide contains five main sections. The first section examined the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. The second section diagnosed the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. The third section assessed the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

The fourth section analysed the complexities that arise from political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts in the UThukela District Municipality. The fifth section evaluated the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of

political-administrative interface and other actors in the UThukela District Municipality. During the design of the interview guide, initiatives were undertaken to ensure that statements and questions contained therein were unambiguous for the participants to respond to with relative ease.

A pilot study was conducted on three sample participants to ensure the effectiveness of the interview guide. This aided in the identification and correction of errors that were highlighted by the three sample participants. Subsequently, one-on-one and face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the thirty sample participants. The process used in such one-on-one and face-to-face semi-structured interviews is as described.

4.7.1 Interviews

To pave way for interviews to be conducted, consent from management for the study to be conducted was obtained during the proposal development from the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local municipalities in 2016. Thereafter in 2018, a letter requesting each of the 30 participants to participate in the interviews was sent to the UThukela District Municipality and its associated local municipalities that include Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

The letter explained the nature of the study as well as the value of participating in such a study. It elaborated that although the study is purely academic, it still concerned the areas that are critical for leveraging the effective performance of the concerned municipalities. Thus, the letter urged each of the thirty participants to participate in the interviews so as to access new insights on how the complexities of the political-administrative interface can be addressed. As a result of the letter, consent to participate in the interviews was obtained from each of the thirty participants, which encompassed mayors, speakers and councillors who are members of the executive council committees and oversight committees.

Consent to participate in the interviews was also received from the administrative officials such as municipal managers, chief financial officers and all Section 54 and 56 managers who report directly to the municipal managers in the UThukela District Municipality and its associated local municipalities that include Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Following their consent in 2018, each of the thirty selected participants was

required to recommend specific dates and places within the researcher's programme, in which interviews would take place.

The research preferred places that did not incur travelling expenses for the respondents incur travelling expenses. The respondents determined the place for the interviews, which ensured that they were free to open up to the interviewer. After the selection of the dates and places of the interviews, which were different areas in the UThukela District Municipality and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities, face-to-face semi-structured interviews commenced with each of the thirty participants.

During each face-to-face semi-structured interview, each question was read and the participant was required to respond, as such responses were written by the researcher. Using the interview research instrument as indicated above and in the appendix of this thesis, the first question sought views and experiences from each participant about the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality.

This was followed by asking questions about the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. Subsequently, further questions sought views and experiences from each participant about the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

Further questions were asked about each participant's insights about the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface and their impacts on the UThukela District Municipality. Finally, this was accompanied by asking question about each participant's views on the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface and other actors in the UThukela District Municipality.

Yet, as each of the participants was being asked to respond to each of these questions, further probing was undertaken using the semi-structured interview approach to ask new questions that arose from each of the participants' responses. This enabled the elicitation of additional new insights from each of the participants beyond the insights that had been anticipated. Upon completion of interviews with each of the thirty participants in 2019, the documented responses

from each participant were stored and locked in a secure cabin to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Subsequently, in 2020, the obtained qualitative data was thematically analysed.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in phenomenological ontology-based research is driven by inductive reasoning and thinking. In inductive reasoning, data analysis is driven by the quest to evaluate and extract themes, subthemes and associated narratives that offer critical insights into the phenomena being investigated (Braun & Clarke, 2016:77). This contrasts with the deductive reasoning and thinking, which is not only based on positivist ontology, but also primarily driven by certain pre-set hypothesis to test the validity of such hypothesis (Bazeley, 2014:5). Since this research is based on phenomenological ontology, it uses inductive reasoning and specifically, a thematic approach to accomplish data analysis.

Data analysis connotes the process of cleaning, transforming and modelling data to discover useful information for decision making (Bazeley, 2014:9). The purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from data and to take decisions based on that data analysis. In qualitative research, data analysis provides a cultural and contextual description and interpretation of social phenomena (Bazeley, 2014:9). While there are variations between these research approaches to data analysis and presentation of findings, they all contribute to both the description and interpretation of phenomena.

Over the years, five main approaches for data analysis have emerged within the qualitative research. These five approaches encompass thematic analysis, content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis and grounded theory (Bazeley, 2014:9). However, this research uses thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used for the analysis and interpretation of the meanings of the text in data. It provides a systematic process of analysing, interpreting and reporting information extracted from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2016:77).

Thematic analysis provides a rich and complex nuanced interpretation of data with themes and subthemes offering critical narratives on the phenomena being investigated. This enables the researcher to discern meanings of themes extracted from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2016:77).

Thematic analysis enables researchers to uncover meanings in data and reveal hidden complexities and provide illustrations of these complexities, which are recognised as a difficult task.

To accomplish this, thematic analysis often involves the application of four main steps that encompass organising and cleaning data, reading and reading to aid familiarisation, extraction of the main themes, extraction of the subthemes and sub-subthemes, and drawing a thematic framework to discern how the main themes coherently link up with the subthemes and sub-subthemes to explain the phenomenon being researched (O'Connor & Gibson, 2019:49).

Thematic analysis is advantageous on the basis that it offers a more logical and systematic process of data analysis. However, its risk is that it is daunting process. Nevertheless, besides thematic analysis, content analysis is the other method used in the qualitative data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2016:77). Content analysis is similar to thematic analysis on the basis that it also deploys a deductive approach that uses a predesigned coding framework. In the application of such an approach, the frequency of some theme or code appearing in one case versus another is compared.

O'Connor and Gibson (2019:49) explain that the five step-by-step approach used in content analysis encompasses organising the data, finding and organising ideas and concepts, building over-arching themes in the data, ensuring reliability and validity in the data analysis and in the findings, and finding a possible and plausible explanation of the findings. Although content analysis is commonly used in qualitative research, its drawback is that it tends to deploy a more quantitative approach by using codes and numbers.

Such approach differs from the approach in narrative analysis, which is the other method of data analysis (Chenail, 2016:248). The motive of narrative analysis is to undertake relevant analysis and interpretation to extract the stories that explain the phenomena being researched. Particular types of narrative analysis exist and various researchers may focus on different aspects that could be content, structure, form, organisation or linguistic features (Chenail, 2016:248). Narrative analysis mostly takes a strong constructionist approach, focusing on the co-construction between the speaker or researcher and the audience while taking into account the interpersonal, social and cultural space (Chenail, 2016:248).

Constructionist approach places responsibility on the researcher to analyse his/her personal, social, cultural and methodological positioning and be critical of how these impact the personal and cultural resources of both the narrator and the audience (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman & Pedersen, 2014:294). Although it is commonly used in qualitative research, narrative analysis can be more complex and difficult to use.

However, besides narrative analysis, the other method for data analysis is also discourse analysis (Campbell et al. 2014:294). There is a wide variety of approaches to discourse analysis, although all share a perception of language as being constructive and performativity (Campbell et al. 2014:294). The language has a particular purpose within a social context, constructing a particular version of events. Language empowers, prevents and constrains.

Discourse analysis thus has various tools to move beyond the face value of language, driven by a particular theory, making it a diverse interdisciplinary arena (Campbell et al. 2014:294). However, just like narrative analysis, discourse analysis is also more complex and difficult to use. Nevertheless, besides discourse analysis, grounded theory is also the other commonly used data analysis method (O'Connor & Gibson, 2019:49).

Grounded theory is a highly inductive approach that is usually deployed in instances where little or nothing is known about a particular field. It deploys a process of constant comparative analysis between theoretical codes, data, empirically generated codes and categories, and memos in order to generate a theory (O'Connor & Gibson, 2019:49).

However, it is not a theory-driven approach. Instead, it encourages rigour within flexible guidelines in order to construct new theories. The grounded theory method is a highly iterative approach with data collection and analysis taking place simultaneously and informing each other (O'Connor & Gibson, 2019:49). However, as compared to grounded analysis, this research opts for the use of thematic analysis since it offers a simpler and more understandable approach for data analysis.

In contrast to content analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and grounded theory, which are largely more complex, this research finds thematic analysis to offer a more logical and systematic process for data analysis. Thematic analysis seems to integrate all the approaches highlighted in content analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and grounded theory.

In effect, the obtained qualitative data will be thematically analysed. The thematic analysis method used in this study entailed the application of O'Connor and Gibson's (2019:49) *"Five Step-by-Step Approach to Qualitative Data Analysis"*. These five chronological steps encompass organising interview transcripts, reading and re-reading each interview transcripts, extraction of themes and subthemes from each interview transcripts, comparative analysis of themes and subthemes on common narratives emerging from different participants' responses and formulation of common narratives that chronologically explain the phenomenon being investigated.

While using these five steps, each set of the obtained interview data was organised and subsequently thoroughly read and re-read. Firstly, thematic analysis was undertaken to extract themes and subthemes as well as their accompanying narratives from each participant's response, which offered narratives on the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality. This was accompanied by the identification and extraction of themes and subthemes that explain the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the UThukela District Municipality.

Subsequently, further thematic analysis was undertaken to extract themes, subthemes and their associated narratives from each participant's response on the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface of the UThukela District Municipality. Further analysis entailed the evaluation and extraction of themes and subthemes and their associated narratives from each participant's insights about the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts on the District Municipality.

Such thematic analysis was accompanied by evaluation and extraction of themes, subthemes and their accompanying narratives from each participant's response on the effectiveness of the

approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. Finally, thematic analysis was undertaken to extract themes, subthemes and their associated narratives from each participant's propositions to determine the approach that can be adopted to identify and manage the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

Completion of such analysis was followed by comparing and combining themes from the thirty participants to identify and extract a coherent common set of themes, subthemes and their associated narratives that chronologically explain critical political actors, administrative actors and other actors as well as such actors' interactive activities, points of conflicts and antagonisms that induce complexities from such interactive activities, impacts of such complexities on service delivery and the effectiveness of the approach used so far for managing such complexities.

Such analysis was followed by further analysis and extraction of themes and subthemes that offer insights on the discourses that explain a systems model that can be extracted and developed in the context of such findings and different systems theories for it to be adopted for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. However, despite reaching such a conclusion, there are certain limitations that must still be considered.

4.9 LIMITATIONS

Some of the limitations arise from the fact that this study was specifically accomplished in the context of the UThukela District's situation regarding complexities of the political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts on service delivery. Thus, although there are similarities between the municipalities in the South African local governance systems, the study does not make any claims that it can be applicable everywhere or anywhere else in the local governance sphere. That implies the findings of the study may only be applied in other municipalities with modifications to suit their heterogeneous characteristics.

Aside from that, the researcher acknowledges the fact that some participants on both sides, namely, politicians and administration might not have been objective enough in their responses to the interviews. The fact that some questions might have a bearing on the political agenda of the

political office bearers is also taken into account. Some political mandates are covert in nature, which might lead to some political office bearers being extra cautious, which might then hinder honest responses to interview questions.

Besides such limitations, the entire research process was still accomplished in the context of certain ethical principles and considerations. Other limitations are latent in the fact that the suggested systems model was only extracted and developed in the context of this research's findings and different systems theories for it to be adopted for managing complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality.

As one of the limitations of phenomenological ontology-based research, such a model has not yet been scientifically tested using methods such as confirmatory or exploratory factor analysis to discern whether it really works. Unless the suggested systems model matches the situations that the municipality is facing, it should thus be used reservedly. Nonetheless, despite such limitations, measures were still undertaken to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness, as well as ethical considerations, of the entire research.

4.10 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

For phenomenological ontology-based research, measures for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness or the overall quality of the research entail use of criteria such as credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity) (Taherdoost, 2016:18). Such a view has also influenced the approach to enhancing validity and reliability in qualitative research, which is assessed by evaluating credibility and trustworthiness (Sandero, 2016). In turn, credibility and trustworthiness are enhanced by considering the study's credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In this research, all these measures for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness are considered. Credibility connotes the relativeness of the study to practical reality (Sandero, 2016). This study ensures credibility by investigating a practical problem being experienced by local South African municipalities.

To accomplish this, the sample used in the study is representative of the target population. The study also used the interview research instrument, which was designed in alignment with the

critical research objectives and questions. In the analysis of the findings, evaluation is also undertaken to assess the extent to which such findings are supported or disputed by previous studies. The credibility of the study was enhanced by the use of theory triangulation and methodological triangulation as well as consistent analysis and triangulation of the views of the participants with the existing theories. This was accompanied by comparing and contrasting the views of the different participants. As all these leveraged the credibility of the study, it also enhanced the transferability of the study.

Transferability means the rate at which the research findings are applicable to other case studies (Saunders, 2013). This study ensures transferability by using a systems approach that has been tested over time to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality. The application of a systems approach was based on facts explaining how such complexities constrain municipalities' effective activities' accomplishment. This implies that the output of this research in terms of the suggested systems model can easily be replicated and applied in other municipalities facing similar complexities.

In other words, transferability was examined by assessing whether the results of the study could be easily replicated to address similar challenges in other similar organisations. To accomplish this, the study was based only on the opinions of the elected councillors and managers that are actual actors in the investigated complexities of political-administrative interface. This not only improved the credibility and dependability of the study, but also the transferability of the study on the basis that if this study is undertaken again, similar findings will still be obtained.

Such measures for enhancing credibility and transferability also spawned improvement of the dependability of the study. Dependability is concerned with the degree stakeholders can rely on the findings (Vigour, 2015). Observing research ethics and conducting a standard professional work was used as an approach to promote dependability in this study. Dependability of the study was assessed by evaluating whether the study was to be conducted again, the same findings would still be obtained by such similar studies. This was accompanied with evaluation of confirmability. Confirmability refers to the extent which the findings are confirmed by other studies (Ragin, 2014).

To ensure confirmability, the research findings were triangulated with the findings of the other previous studies to assess the extent to which they support or dispute such findings. The other measures for improving credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the study entailed comparing and contrasting the opinions of different participants on the same concept to test and improve the overall veracity of the findings.

The findings were presented along with verbatim quotes from the participants to avoid distorting the opinions that the participants may have intended to communicate. Besides constant fact checking with relevant experts and audit trail, triangulation of the interview findings with the theories was also undertaken to discern whether interview findings are confirmed or disputed in different theories. All these steps enhanced the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the study. Nonetheless, such measures for enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study were also accompanied by initiatives for enhancing ethical considerations.

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics, according to Ragin (2014), refers to the appropriateness of behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subjects of research. In this study, compliance with all ethical standards and codes was abided with all the time. Ethical forms were also signed to ensure that all ethical practices would be adhered to throughout the study. In effect, it was ensured that the participants were given the necessary degree of independence during interviews.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic that involves analysing how politicians and top municipal administrators behave, the principle of avoidance of harm was highly prioritised to ensure that participation in the study did not induce any form of harm to the participants. This was accomplished by maintaining high levels of confidentiality and anonymity to ensure that the identities of the participants were not revealed to anyone.

Though some aspects of the interviews were recorded, the participants were advised and cautioned not to use their names or describe their positions. But even still the collected raw interview data has been stored in the safest place where it is only the researcher that has the key and the password. So far this has proved effective for preventing any harm occurring on the interviewed participants

and the researcher believes that it will continue to do so. In order to achieve this, the researcher maintained the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the study.

In addition, the researcher also guaranteed that integrity and cultural affiliations and any other forms of falsification were avoided during the process of this study. Ethical considerations have to do with the manner in which people are treated and respected during the conduct of research (Hamilton, 2014). This assumes that the people with the researcher interacts with for the purpose of accomplishing the research should not be treated as mere subjects but people with feelings and rights (Berg and Lune, 2012). It therefore becomes crucial that they are treated in a manner that recognises the limitations that exist on the researcher's scope of how he/she deals with people or information made available to him/her (Berg and Lune, 2012).

During this research, such ethical principles were considered by treating participants in the study with respect as well as taking initiatives to respect their rights. Bryman and Anis (2013) refer to research ethics as the human conduct that has to do with both what is morally acceptable and that which is not.

Creswell (2014) regards ethical consideration as being able to anticipate the repercussions of conducting research on certain groups of people and to take decisions that would protect participants from harm. With regard to these views, ethical considerations in this research observed informed consent, avoidance of harm or injury, confidentiality and anonymity, and sought the necessary permission for the study to be conducted.

Informed consent refers to the researcher asking participants for their willingness to participate in the study (Holmes, 2012). Participants in this study were informed in time of the nature and aims of the study and enough time was provided for them to prepare and make informed decisions on whether to participate or not to participate in the study.

Harm or injury is an ethical consideration that refers to participants being shielded from any form of harm or injury (Chambers, 2013). In this study, assurances were provided and precautions were taken to avoid any form of harm or injury to the participants. Regarding confidentiality and anonymity, Chambers (2013) states that it refers to the protection of the identity of the participants.

To promote confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in this research, raw and processed data were secured at all times, and the identity of the participants was not and will not be disclosed at any stage. Granting of permission refers to asking for permission from officials from the case study organisation (Dawson, 2013).

In this study, permission to conduct the study was sought way before the collection of data or conduct of interviews. In other words, the researcher upheld the necessary honesty and conscientiousness during the study to enhance the maximisation of the truthfulness of the research.

4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is evident that while based on systems theory, this chapter offers critical insights into the research design and methodology used in primary research. It is highlighted that the study uses phenomenological ontology as the research philosophy to elicit practical views from the actual actors or participants in the political-administrative interface's complexities in the UThukela District Municipality.

To aid thorough diagnosis and identification of the points of conflicts and antagonisms in such complexities, it is reiterated that primary research is based on case studies and exploratory research designs in its research design and qualitative research, especially interviews, as the principal technique in its research method.

Subsequently, the chapter highlights that measures that were used for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness or the overall quality of the research entailed the use of criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Against that backdrop, the chapter indicated that ethical considerations in this research observed informed consent, avoidance of harm or injury, confidentiality and anonymity and sought the necessary permission for the study to be conducted. In other words, all these enabled the successful accomplishment of primary research and the emerging findings are presented and evaluated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS' ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a critical analysis and presentation of the primary research findings. Such analysis and presentation are accomplished in line with the overriding aim of this research which is indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis to entail the use of systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in UThukela District Municipalities. Through such analysis, the study aims to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in UThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance.

In the context of such overriding research aim, analysis and presentation of the findings in this chapter are structured according to five sections aligned to the five sections in the Interview Research Instrument as well as the six research objectives and questions outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis. These five sections encompass Sections A, B, C, D and E.

Section A examines the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system. Section B evaluates the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system. Section C assesses the networks of the other critical actors that integrate with political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system.

Section D analyses the complexities that arise from political-administrative interface and their impacts in the increasingly polycentric UThukela District Municipality's system. Section E evaluates the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the UThukela District Municipality's system.

Below are the details of the analysis and presentation of the research findings.

5.2 SECTION A: CRITICAL POLITICAL ACTORS IN THE UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Analysis of the interview findings in this section is aligned to the first research objective and question. Such analysis is aimed at diagnosing, understanding and identifying critical political actors and their interactive activities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Such analysis created a preface for identification in the later sections of how such critical political actors' interactive activities link with administrative and other actors' interactive activities to leverage municipality's effective performance or create complexities that constrain the performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

In effect, thematic analysis of the interview findings in this section indicates such critical political actors and their interactive activities to encompass executive mayor that accomplishes dual political and administrative functions and municipal council as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles.

Further thematic analysis also highlight speaker as one of the critical political actors that acts as council speaker as well as an influential individual politician. Later analysis heralds councillors as critical individual political actors that either leverage municipality's effective performance or compound the already complex political and administrative interface at uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

5.2.1 EXECUTIVE MAYOR

Findings from themes extracted from interviews in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities reveal executive mayor not only as a central political actor in the municipality, but also as an actor that accomplishes dual functions reflecting a combination of certain political and administrative functions.

5.2.1.1 Political Functions

In the accomplishment of different municipal activities, the executive mayor emerged from the narratives of different participants as one of the critical political actors. In their narratives,

participants explained that the executive mayor is not only the political head of the municipality, but also the political and administrative link between the municipality and the communities. In addition to that, findings indicated that the executive mayor also links the municipal authorities with the provincial government.

Regarding the executive mayor's role as the political head of the municipality, different participants reiterated that the executive mayor who is elected by the majority of the councillors in the council meeting takes leadership of all the councillors upon election. As the executive mayor takes leadership and control of all the councillors, findings indicate that he/she also tends to by virtue of the office of the executive mayor to execute a combination of certain legislative and executive functions.

In the accomplishment of these dual executive and legislative functions, most of the interviewed participants cited Sections 73 and 73AA of the Local Government Act 1989 that mandate the executive mayor to take precedence over all municipal proceedings at the municipality. By virtue of such legislative provisions, participants also explained that the executive mayor as the political head of the municipality chairs all council meetings in which he or she is present. Such a finding corroborates the response of one of the managers to the question that probed the major roles of mayors in UThukela as senior councillors. In such narrative, she reiterated that:

> "Roles of senior councillors such as mayors are to oversee, administration, ensure services are delivered by the municipality and ensure no interference between the politicians and administrators as each must have their own lanes."

It also emerged from the findings that the executive mayor offers guidance and direction to councillors in regard to the roles that they are expected to accomplish. In the accomplishment of such roles, findings also indicate that executive mayor offers guidance to ensure councillors' compliance with Councillor Conduct Principals and Councillors' Code of Conduct as prescribed under Sections 76B, 76BA and 76C of the Local Government Act 1989. Executive mayor was also found to act as the principal spokesperson of the council. In a bid to ensure successful accomplishment of different municipal activities, most participants also cited Section 76C of the Local Government Act 1989 that mandates the executive mayor to initiate the working relationships between different councillors. Executive mayor accomplishes such activities in

conjunction with the execution of certain civic and ceremonial functions of the office of the executive mayor. Such a view is echoed in the opinions of one of the participants who reiterate that:

> "Executive mayor is the political head of the municipality and executes functions such as chairing council meetings, coordinating and ensuring coordination of different councillors' activities and initiating and taking leadership of all municipal activities. Executive mayor is the link between the political branch and the administrative branch of the municipality. He takes all the initiatives to ensure all activities are being implemented in accordance with Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). Executive mayor is the link between municipality and the communities as well as the mediator between the activities accomplished at the municipal level and the provincial local governance. He executes all the leadership and governance roles of the municipality."

Certainly, such a view implies executive mayor executes roles entailing providing good leadership, nurturing and promoting good relationship and good governance. In terms of leadership, most of the participants reiterated that the executive mayor is not only the political head of the municipality, but also the community leader. As a community leader, some of the participants pointed out that trends from UThukela District Municipalities indicate that when the communities are facing certain disasters or socio-economic issues, the executive mayor has often emerged as the spokesperson and leader of the communities to ensure that such issues are addressed. Such leadership roles exercised by the executive mayor enhance municipality's effective response to the needs and preferences of the communities.

However, some of the participants noted that despite having to require councillors to account, executive mayor as a leader elected by the majority of the councillors is also responsible and accountable to all the councillors irrespective of whether or not certain individuals may or may not have elected him. As they state, this implies the executive mayor's leadership style must also reflect that he is responsible and accountable to all the councillors. Some of the participants explained that such leadership style must also be reflected in how he chairs the council meeting by

upholding good governance standards as well as demonstration of good knowledge of council meetings' procedures in the context of the local laws and regulations.

In the attempt to uphold such good governance standards, participants elaborated that the executive mayor has often attempted to ensure that all councillors are offered opportunities to be heard during council meetings. Such approach was highlighted by participants to be critical for ensuring that all councillors participate and accept the outcomes of council decisions in all difficult issues that the council faces. However, some of the interviewed participants noted that trends from some of the local municipalities such as Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities imply that even in the midst of the use of such inclusive approach; that has often not been the case. They elaborated that some of the councillors have often failed to accept the outcomes of certain controversial and difficult council decisions.

In most of the cases, they stated that such situations arise in instances where certain councillors perceive the decisions reached by council are not consonant with the needs and preferences of the communities that such councillors represent. In certain cases, some of the participants revealed that executive mayor has often taken outright decision to take side and suppress certain minority views, thereby giving opportunities for such dissenting councillors to criticise or even interfere with the process of the implementation of such decisions. Such a finding is accentuated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who argued that:

> "Executive mayor is supposed to be neutral during council deliberations. However, that is not the case in some situations. In some situations, the executive mayor has often exhibited biasness by trying to promote his own views and suppressing the opposing views. Due to his influence, he is often able to get the majority of the councillors to his side and suppress the views of the minority councillors. This affects the acceptability of certain council decisions among the some of the councillors. It also affects the successful implementation of such decisions among the communities. In case of community projects or programmes, all councillors must agree for such projects and programmes to be implemented because it is the communities that offer resources and it is also the communities that monitor and assess whether such projects and programmes are being successfully implemented. Hence, since councillors are representatives of the communities, they are often

> capable of influencing ward committees and the communities to accept or frustrate the implementation of certain community programmes that they disagree with. Executive mayor should therefore permit all councillors to express their views even if he disagrees with such views".

However, in some of the local municipalities such as Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities, some of the participants revealed that some of the executive mayors often use certain group facilitation approach during certain controversial council meetings. In a probe and re-probe question of one of the participant's responses, one of the participants reiterated such group facilitation approaches to include participation, communication, engagement and involvement, consensus reaching, mutual respect and listening of both consenting and dissenting sides during council meetings. He elaborated that this leverages not only the executive mayor's leadership capabilities, but also the upholding of the principles of good municipal governance. However, some of the participants noted that a major hindrance of the mayor's commitment to leverage good governance and service delivery is often the staff's involvement in political issues. In such narratives, one of the participants explained that:

> "Staff are involved in political issues instead of doing what they are employed for. Yes, we have our senior managers who are more concerned with political arenas than dealing with issues. Some senior managers do not work hand in hand to affect service delivery. They don't work as a team because some managers are permanently appointed and others contractual. That causes a major gap between the managers. That was done by the previous council and not the current council. This affects service delivery. Yes, because our senior managers especially those that are contractual have now started dragging their feet. And reached a stage where they have given up".

Besides that, findings indicated that councillors are collaboratively interdependent on each other to accomplish municipal activities to achieve their individual goals as well as the overall municipal goals. Therefore, councillors recognise that good relationship, understanding and acceptance of each other's roles are critical for them to achieve their individual goals. In effect, as they explained, executive mayor's key role is often to influence and coordinate different councillors in the accomplishment of different activities to achieve desired outcomes. During the accomplishment

of such activities, participants further stated that most mayors in Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities tend to forge not only good relationship and collaboration between the executive mayor's office as an institution and councillors and council, but also with the municipal administration.

As findings revealed, executive mayor often executes such functions by initiating, modelling and managing good conduct among the municipal officials. Initiating, modelling and managing good conduct were reiterated during interviews to entail developing, establishing and managing good governance and ethical behaviours. In certain instances, some of the participants highlighted that executive mayor as the council leader and municipal political leader has often enforced such good conduct by encouraging certain desirable councillors' conducts while at the same time also discouraging the undesirable conducts. Findings imply that, combined with use of certain disciplinary measures, all these have often contributed towards shaping the behaviours of certain councillors towards the direction that aids achievement of desired municipal service delivery outcomes.

Participants explained that enhancement of good governance would require executive mayor to recognise and embrace principles of fairness and natural justice as well as recognition of the fact that he is the leader of all councillors and not just the leader of those who are supporters. To enhance collaboration and involvement of councillors in different activities as part of good governance, executive mayor is also noted to often delegate certain functions within the scope of the law and certain council resolutions to the mayoral committee members of the standing committees. However, as the executive mayor accomplishes such political functions, thematic analysis of the interview findings also indicates that such political functions are also inherently integrated with certain administrative functions. It is such dual functions that often either puts the executive mayor at antagonism with the municipal manager or leverages his cooperation with the municipal administration.

5.2.1.2 Administrative Functions

Findings imply that executive mayor as one of the critical political actors also tends to accomplish certain administrative functions. Such a view is reflected in the outcomes of thematic analysis of the interview findings from participants in UThukela District Municipality and its associated

Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. In such outcomes, most participants reveal that as the executive mayor accomplishes his political functions, he also tends to accomplish certainly inherently administrative activities. Such administrative activities encompass developing and implementing municipal strategies, programmes and services to respond to the needs of the communities.

Findings reveal other administrative functions accomplished by executive mayor to include influencing oversight and management of municipal fiscal and financial affairs, developing and implementing Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). These are accompanied with the development and implementation of initiatives for leveraging municipal budgetary control.

In response to a probe and re-probe question on whether or not such activities do not encroach on the roles of the municipal administrative officials, some of the participants acknowledged that such executive mayor's activities do encroach on municipal administrative activities. Such participants elaborated that despite being sanctioned under Section 56 of the Municipal Structures Act 1998 and Chapter 7 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 2003; the accomplishment of such activities still encroaches on the critical administrative functions of the municipal administrative officials.

In terms of developing and implementing municipal strategies, programmes and services to respond to the needs of the communities, participants state that as prescribed by such laws and certain cases with council resolutions mandating the executive mayor to accomplish certain activities, the executive mayor often engages in identification, evaluation and implementation of certain service delivery strategies and programmes. In the accomplishment of such activities, participants explained that executive mayor tends to in the context of the defined performance indicators evaluate progress of the implementation of such programmes. If need arises, findings imply that executive mayor often reviews the overall municipal performance to assess its economy, efficiency and effectiveness to implement different service delivery programmes to achieve desired outcomes.

Participants reveal that such activities are accomplished in conjunction with the evaluation of the efficiency of credit control and debt collection as the critical determinants of the municipal's

sources of revenues. Besides monitoring the management of municipal administration, executive mayor was also found to monitor sustainability of service delivery to the communities. As the executive mayor performs such functions, participants reiterated that he also reports annually to the council and other institutional political forums about the progress of the involvement and engagement of the communities in different community development programmes. In response to a further probe and re-probe question as to whether such activities do not infringe on municipal manager's roles, one of the participants, who is also a mayor, validated such approach by stating that:

> "Things such as identification, evaluation and implementation of certain service delivery strategies and programmes are delicate and we cannot leave it for the administrative officials to determine their trajectories. It is the need to provide service delivery to the communities that elected us into office. So, we cannot leave critical service delivery programmes to anybody. We have to be part of the process to ensure that programmes for the delivery of the required services are effectively conceptualised and implementation to meet the exact needs of our people. Otherwise, we can be in serious trouble with the population if we do not influence and control different municipal activities which are critical for successful implementation of such service delivery programmes. In terms of the engagement in municipal credit control and debt collection, let me say that credit control and debt collection is an important determinant of the amount of financial resources that the municipality is able to have at its disposal. Financial resources that we get from the equitable funds of the central government is not enough, so we have to supplement that by raising own financial resources. In certain instances, those charged with managing credit control and debt collection tend not to manage them well with effect that a lot of uncollected debts and revenues tend to remain outstanding. So, we frequently come in to evaluate and identify the limitations of credit control and debt collection that must be immediately addressed to enable us collect sufficient revenues to meet our day-to-day overheads. Therefore, we do not usurp on the roles of municipal administrators, but we try to work together to enable us work efficiently and effectively to achieve required service delivery outcomes."

Certainly, such a view implies that as the executive mayor accomplishes certain political functions, he also tends to collaborate with the municipal administrators to accomplish different administrative activities. As participants noted, this is reflected in the fact that as the executive mayor executes political functions by consulting communities on the progress for different service delivery initiatives and reporting to council, he also tends to exercise oversight and management of municipal fiscal and financial affairs. In the management and control of such activities, participants explained that executive mayor offers general political guidance and direction of the municipal fiscal and financial affairs. However, some of the participants noted that there is a thin line between political and administrative roles, and such a view is reflected in the narratives of one of the participants who stated that:

> "Not necessarily in this municipality, but across municipalities in South Africa. There is a thin line between management and political interface in regard to oversight. Councillors believe that whatever they say must be done and yet it is not correct in terms of management procedures".

Thus, executive mayor accomplishes the executive roles by not only directing, but also monitoring and controlling exercise of financial management activities by the Accounting Officer and the Chief Financial Officer. Although such activities are prescribed under Chapter 7 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 2003, some of the participants argued that such a provision offers the executive mayor lee way to influence and determine how municipal finances are utilised to finance different municipal activities. Participants noted that trends from UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate that in most cases this has caused financial mismanagement.

In most cases, some of the participants elaborated that such approach has caused the adoption, financing and implementation of certain politically motivated, but irrelevant projects that have only contributed to financial wastes. Participants attributed such situations to the fact that some of the executive mayors have the political influence, but not the expert judgment to assess the feasibility of certain municipal projects. Nonetheless, despite such undesirable situations, some of the participants further stated that executive mayor still performs functions requiring him to execute all reasonable measures to ensure municipality performs according to its Constitutional and Statutory functions and within the limits of the approved municipal budgets. Such a view is

echoed in the opinions of one of the participants who is a councillor who sits in the mayoral executive committee and stated that:

> "Of course, the executive mayor must work with the Accounting Officer and the Chief Financial Officer to determine how the municipal financial resources can be effectively utilised to implement different service delivery programmes. That is mandated in the law and policy on municipal operation. Thus, we as the elected representatives of the communities that know the kinds of service delivery programmes that the communities want must determine the critical priorities that must be accorded priorities in budget allocation. This enhances the extent to which our municipality is able to respond to the needs of the communities and diffuse threats of dissatisfactions from the communities. But all these comes with responsibilities and accountability as the executive mayor is required by law to report to council on budget implementation and overall municipal financial state of affairs within 30 days of the end of each quarter. This enhances accountability of the executive mayor as well as the Accounting Officer and the Chief Financial Officer on how the municipal financial resources are being utilised."

Even though such approach leverages optimisation of the meagre municipal financial resources, executive mayor was also found to engage in influencing and directing priorities that must be included in budget formulation and preparation. Quite often, findings indicated that such initiatives are accompanied with executive mayor's coordination of the annual review of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). Executive mayor tends to influence the review and integration of critical priorities in such SDBIP and IDP in the context of the proposed municipal budget. To enhance successful implementation of SDBIP and IDP and the proposed municipal budget plan, findings indicate executive mayor to exert his political influence over council to approve such plans and ensure their successful implementation. To accomplish this, participants further reiterated that executive mayor also accomplishes activities such as monitoring and evaluation and taking all initiatives to ensure that performance agreements of all Section 56 managers are aligned with the initiatives for successful implementation of such programmes.

However, some of the Section 56 managers who were interviewed in this study, pointed out that such evaluator activities of executive mayor are prescribed in Municipal Systems Act and Municipal Structures Act, they still tend to usurp the role of the municipal managers who is not only charged with monitoring and evaluating performance of Section 56 managers, but also require all such managers to report to him. Despite such insight, participants still revealed that the accomplishment of administratively related functions, executive mayor tends to link the municipal administration and the provincial government. In terms of budget, SDBIP and IDP implementation, this is accomplished through executive mayor's periodic report to the provincial MEC for Finance about the delay for the implementation of such plans as well as the signing of the annual performance agreement with Section 56 managers. Such a view is echoed in the opinions of one of the participants who is a municipal manager and stated that:

> "To ensure successful budget, SDBIP and IDP implementation, executive mayor tends to take the initiatives for ensuring that revenue and expenditure projects for each month and service delivery targets and performance indicators for each quarter as required by the law are availed to the public within 14 days after the approval of SDBIP. Such executive mayor's quests also entail ensuring that Section 56 managers' performance agreements are also availed to the public 14 days after the approval of SDBIP and are submitted to council and provincial MEC for local government."

Yet, as budget, SDBIP and IDP are being implemented; participants further revealed that executive mayor also tends to engage in budgetary control exercises. Findings imply this is accomplished by the initiatives of the executive mayor to ensure that accounting officer submit to him monthly budget statements, mid-year budget and performance assessment reports. Depending on the outcome of the report, findings suggest that this is critical for the executive mayor to ensure that budget implementation is in accord with SDBIP. Thus, participants highlight that executive mayor often directs accounting officer on the critical activities that must be accomplished to ensure SDBIP implementation.

Besides evaluating whether budget implementation is in accord with SDBIP, executive mayor also often reviews SDBIP in the context of the new defined service delivery targets and performance indicators. Yet, as the executive mayor evaluates accounting officer's activities, he also not only

reports to the public about SDBIP implementation, but also to council and provincial MEC for local government. Findings indicate such mid-year budget and performance assessment reports which are required by 31 January of every year to often reflect financial problems facing the municipality and remedial actions taken to address such problems. In otherwords, as one of the interviewed Section 56 managers indicate, this evaluator role explains not only how the executive mayor as a politician interferes in administrative activities, but also the extent to which politicians' supremacy seems to be over-emphasised over management supremacy.

He notes that this in one way or another demonstrates the extent to which the municipal manager or accounting officer is subordinate to the executive mayor and not the other way round. Such a view echoes opinions of other participants who highlighted that it is the executive mayor, and not the municipal manager as the accounting officer to ensure the municipality's overall compliance with MFMA, accountability and monitor, but not interfere with municipal operational activities to leverage its operational performance to achieve its mandates.

Certainly, it is evident that as executive mayor accomplishes the allocated political functions, he also tends to execute certain administrative functions. As thematic analysis of the interviews findings from uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate, such duality was also reflected in the legislative and executive functions accomplished by municipal council.

5.2.2 MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Just like executive mayor, municipal council also emerged from the findings as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles to influence both the political and administrative activities at the district and local municipal levels.

5.2.2.1 Legislative Functions

Findings imply municipal council to mainly execute certain legislative functions associated with the formulation and promulgation of different municipal by-laws and policies. Municipal council constitutes of different councillors from different political parties to thereby create more complexities of how municipal political and administrative activities are accomplished. In its legislative roles, one of the participants explains that it also supports councillors in:

> "Serving the communities in their wards by taking complaints and needs and bringing such needs and complaints to the municipality in the monthly consultation meetings. In that process, administration do not interact much with councillors unless in council meeting and strategic planning".

As they interact within their different structures, they tend to either edify or even constraint effective municipal activities' accomplishment. Participants explained that for UThukela District Municipality which is a district municipality, its council constitutes of both elected councillors and the councillors that represent local municipalities in its area. Elected councillors in the district council are noted by participants to constitute 40% of the district councillors and are elected using proportional representation ballot by all voters in the area.

For councillors who represent local municipalities in UThukela District Municipality, participants reiterated that they constitute 60% of district councillors and are usually appointed and sent by their local council to represent such local council at the district council. However, for Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities, participants explained that councillors are voted on the basis of the political party through proportional representation ballot by the voters in different wards. Thus, political parties are allocated seats in the local council depending on the overall percentage of votes attained in the area. In most instances, some of the councillors interviewed stated that although ward candidates can contest as party representatives, they can also opt to contest as independents with the effect that the candidate attaining the most percentage of votes is declared the winner in that ward.

As of the election of 3 August 2016, one of the participants who is also the head of an oversight committee revealed that the council at UThukela District Municipality came to comprise of certain six political parties. These political parties and their associated number of councillors encompass African National Congress-ANC (15 councillors), Inkatha Freedom Party-IFP (7 Councillors), Congress of the People (3 councillors), Democratic Alliance-DA (2 councillors), Economic Freedom Fighters-EFF (1 Councillor) and African Independent Congress (1 Councillor). Although ANC has the majority in the council, some of the participants highlighted that they still often to have juggle with the dynamics of different political parties and bring the majority to its advantage.

As they noted, this is attributed to the fact that despite belonging to the majority ANC, some of the ANC councillors still often concur with some of their councillor colleagues from opposition to create complexities of reaching certain controversial decisions. Nonetheless, findings reveal that with requisite number of councillors constituted at the council, such councillors elect the executive mayor. This leads to the creation of the structure of a council that constitutes of mayor, executive or mayoral committee, speaker, council meetings and committees. As the mayor heads the council, findings indicate that executive or mayoral committee tends to meet regularly to co-ordinate council's activities and to make recommendations to the council. It is the speaker who chairs council meetings, though the mayor does so in instances that he sits in council meetings.

Whereas council meetings refer to the process where all councillors meet to make critical decisions, committees are structures through selected few councillors meet to make critical decisions on certain specific issues. In the accomplishment of different tasks, participants stated that the executive mayor is assisted by the mayoral committee. As council elects the mayor, the mayor in turn appoints the mayoral committee that assists with making decisions, proposals and plans that council must approve. However, to ensure checks and balances, some of the interviewed participants indicate that mayoral committee is not required to have more than 10 people or 20% of the sitting councillors.

As much as council may delegate some of its executive powers to the executive mayor, one of the interviewed councillor emphasised the executive mayor is still like the president as the mayoral committee is like his cabinet the district and local municipal levels. Despite the existence of mayoral committee, participants further reiterated that the council still constitutes of different specific committees that deal with different specific issues. Such a view is accentuated in the opinions of one of the interviewed councillors who stated that:

> "In our local municipality, council has different committees that deal with different issues. Since, such committees are dedicated to specific issues, it enables councillors to specialise and become experts in such issues. This improves the quality of decision-making at the committee levels. Although committees engage in such different issues, they cannot make decisions that bind council. Instead, after accomplishing their work, they make recommendations to the council for debates

> and final decisions. Some council committees that we have include portfolio committees that deal with specific issues such as health, planning, finance and economic issues. Other forms of committees include issue related committees that deal with temporal specific issues emerging from the communities and are thereafter dissolved once the issue is solved."

However, despite such a view, some of the participants stated that some of those specific committees have strong influence over the council with the effect that most of their decisions are often rubber stamped and approved by council. This affects thorough analysis and evaluation of certain programmes that are usually adopted and implemented by the municipalities. Some of such poor policy evaluations were indicated by some of the participants to be reflected in Langalibalele local municipality where in 2018, enormous pressure on the municipality arising from council's decision to absorb 200 causal workers and appointment of 41 bodyguards, caused council to adopt a poorly conceptualised and analysed policy reflecting illegal and irregular huge salary bill quite above the requisite threshold.

Such a policy as the participants reiterated caused the increment of salary threshold to 54% which exceeds the prescribed norm of 25-40%. Subsequently, participants revealed that this subsequently caused the rise of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure of Langalibalele local municipality. Yet, besides the portfolio committees and issue related committees, further analysis of the findings indicates that some of the participants noted that council is also assisted by certain Sections 80 and 79 committees. They explained that Section 80 committees are permanent committees that are granted powers to make decisions over certain small and less contentious issues. Section 80 committees are also reiterated by participants to advise mayoral committee on policy matters and make recommendations to council.

On the other hand, findings revealed that Section 79 committees are temporarily established as a strategy for dealing with certain specific issues. It is also used a mechanism for getting in experts in certain fields as well as councillors from outside the municipality to aid the municipality address certain issues. However, once the issue is addressed, Section 79 committees are often disbanded. Certainly, councillors that sit in council are elected at the ward levels and therefore should be capable of informing council decisions about the policy needs and preferences of the local

communities. However, empirical findings from across UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities reveal that councils in the area tend to still use ward committees. Such a view is elaborated in the response of one of the interviewed mayors who revealed that:

> "We relay a lot on ward committees in our municipality for making relevant policy decisions. Yes, it is true that we councillors are elected by communities and therefore understand community needs better, but since time changes and new things happen, it is difficult to predict what the communities want. This is because what the communities needed yesterday may be different from what they require today. So the ward committees help in updating us about the new demands and trends from the communities. Ward committees are with the communities unlike us who after having been elected become so involved in municipal and council activities and detached relatively from the communities. Generally, that is the importance of ward committees anyway."

Such a view reflects the opinions of other participants who revealed that ward committees are important mechanisms for enhancing community participation in council decisions, leveraging effective communication and link between municipality and communities and a forum through which councillors report back to the communities. Yet, as municipal council becomes settled with all its constituent committees, most participants explained that it tends to accomplish certain legislative functions. Thematic analysis of the interview results indicated such legislative functions to encompass promulgation of by-laws, approving budgets and development plans, imposing rates and other taxes, charging service fees, imposing fees and decisions to borrow finances from financial institutions. In terms of by-laws, findings revealed that council can make any by-law as long as it does not contradict or over-rule any of the national laws.

Participants further stated that it is the role of council to approve the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) when presented by the mayor. In the context of IDP, council also ensures that all projects being developed and implemented are within the stipulations in IDP. In terms of imposing rates and other taxes, charging service fees and imposing fines, most of the participants explained that they entail

charging of taxes such as property tax, fees such as water, electricity and libraries' fees and for fines it refers traffic fines, littering or library fines. In otherwords, such a finding is consonant with the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who stated that:

> "The legislative role of the council is to debate and approve different plans and policy programmes presented by councillors, mayor or the committees or any member of the public. Such programmes can be Integrated Development Plan or Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan or any other initiated service delivery programmes. Council controls the budget implementation and financial resource utilisation at the municipality. Usually, this is achieved by monitoring and evaluating expenditure patterns of the municipality through any of its oversight committees. Council also ensures that the municipality is able to collect sufficient funds by imposing rates and other taxes and levies, charging service fees and imposing fees. This improves the capabilities of the municipality to collect sufficient funds. However, due to the low economic activities in uThukela as a rural district municipality, not much is often collected through taxes, levies and other fees or fines. That explains why sometimes council has always been engaged in decisions to borrow".

However, participants highlighted that to ensure order and harmony, all council deliberations are guided by certain rules contained in standing orders. As they stated, these standing orders reflect how meetings must be conducted, how proposing motions can be made, how resolutions are passed and how final decisions are reached. Thus, maintaining such standing orders is the responsibility of the speaker or any other person entrusted with the roles of chairperson. Views from participants who are mainly councillors indicated that council meeting are driven by what they refer to as "cycle of decision-making" in which agenda is highlighted before meetings and any committee reports, petitions or motions can be debated.

In the event that an issue emerges from council meeting without proper agenda, such interviewed councillors stated that such issues are referred to appropriate committees to be evaluated and report made to council to be debated. Subsequently, the council then votes on the matter whereby if the council votes by majority, a resolution is adopted. Yet, as council makes such resolution, findings

imply that they further make the follow-up to ensure that the contracted agencies are accomplishing the work within the defined policy framework. Certainly, this implies council does not only execute legislative functions, but also certain executive functions.

5.2.2.2 Executive Functions

As municipal council engages in deliberations that lead to the formulation and passing of different laws and policies, it was also found to execute certain executive functions. Participants reiterated council to engage in executive activities such as appointment of municipal manager and other senior managers. In this employment relationship, findings imply that municipal manager is expected to report to council as senior managers are required to report to the municipal manager. Participants, especially the interviewed councillors explained that council's accomplishment of such executive functions is critical for council to gain control of overall municipal activities. They reiterated that municipal manager and other senior managers are the ones charged with the management of administration of the municipality. Thus, as they noted, by appointing municipal manager and senior managers, council gains access to influencing municipal administration. Findings indicated that this is critical for council to also influence process of policy implementation as well as the overall operation of the municipality. Subsequently, some of the participants revealed that this aids council to achieve the desired outcomes.

Most of the politicians who participated in the interview construe that such approach influences the capabilities of the political system to influence municipalities to provide the desired services for the communities. Such politicians who participated in the interviews further elaborated that municipal council is the community political governance framework through the national and provincial political systems use to deliver the policy intents stipulated at the national level to the population. Thus, having a council that does not take control of the municipality may not influence the achievement of such desired outcomes. Such a finding is succinctly summarised in the responses of one of the interviewed mayors who stated that:

> "It is the role of the council to ensure that the overall municipal operation is effective for achieving the desired policy outcomes. Therefore, as we formulate and pass policies using expert inputs from the municipal administration and

> management, we subsequently follow-up to assess the overall effectiveness of the implementation of such policies. It defeats logic to formulate and pass policies and fail to follow-up with implementation. That is all that we do, we do not interfere with administrative activities, but just follow-up with policy implementation. We analyse, evaluate and review effectiveness of policy implementation to ensure that it is influencing the delivery of the desired services to the communities. In the event of failure, we intervene to assess what kinds of interventions need to be undertaken. At the same time, to ensure that the municipality is able to effectively implement all the adopted policies, we also ensure that the overall municipal operation is effective in terms of capacity, resources and efficiency to achieve the outlined service delivery outcomes".

Despite such reasoning, some of the participants noted that council's engagement in the recruitment of municipal managers and senior managers have caused serious ramification effects in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Participants, especially the interviewed participants from the administrative segment of these municipalities reiterated that by council determining who can or cannot be the municipal manager or senior managers, it has created leeway for politicians to interfere in administrative affairs of the municipalities. One of the participants attributed that to the fact that:

> "Interpretation of the laws is a challenge with the effect that some councillors do not understand it or their roles. As understanding their roles is a challenge, some councillors cross their lines that administration runs the municipality. Projects must follow certain policies, processes and procedures, and some councillors do not understand that. They interpret laws to require certain things to be done now, yet it is not possible to do so due to the required procedures. This affects service delivery since during the report back to the communities about the project implementation progress, some councillors put pressure on administration to deliver even if the resources are not available. Wards could be bigger where some areas are not receiving services as others are receiving. Hence, lines are crossed by councillors that require projects to be implemented in a different way from the prescribed

> policies. Councillors need training and awareness, induction on important policies and municipal functions and constant communication so that councillors are informed about the progress by administrators. It is also important to use caucuses of political parties to engage councillors of the political parties".

They explained that in most of the cases, council and politicians use such power to influence and control municipal managers' actions as well as the overall control of municipal administration. Unless politicians subscribe to certain views proposed by municipal administrators, they highlighted that such undue political control often suffocates municipal administrators. Participants elaborated that as municipal administrators suffocate, it tends to limit the effective utilisation and application of their skills, experience and expertise as the critical resources that the municipality has to discern how the overall performance of the municipality can be improved. Attributable to this, they stated that it is because council constitutes of councillors with only a few individuals that understand the daunting tasks and unique techniques required for policy implementation. Most of the councillors that sit in the municipal council were also noted not to effectively understand the overall skills and techniques for leveraging the overall organisational operation. In effect, some of the participants revealed that most of council's interventions in policy implementation processes or even municipal operations are often politically rather than technically motivated.

With such contradictions in political and administrative ideologies, some of the participants highlighted that it often becomes difficult for some of the municipal administrators to balance such political aspirations with the need to use technicalities that are critical for leveraging municipality's effective performance. However, despite such a view, other participants still reiterated that council still continues to play its primary role of exercising political oversight over the overall municipal administrative and political functions and operational programmes. They stated that council is the overall supreme institution of the municipality that not only formulates laws and policies, but also implements them. In this approach, they argue that municipal administration is only the technical branch of the municipality that offers critical expertise for policy implementation and management of the overall operational technicalities of the municipality. Through its portfolio committees like the technical services committee, one of the participants stated that council:

> "Play oversight on service delivery programmes road repairs, oversight on the finances of the municipality and that oversight must ensure service delivery to all wards. It also ensures avoidance of political interference in administration and that all residents get what they paid for. All councillors attend portfolio meetings and we do thorough investigations on every time. We ensure council resolutions are carried out because sometimes resolutions are made but not implemented and hence not assisting municipality or the community. Council also ensures harmony between employees and administrators, sticking to calendar, compliance issues are dealt with and submitted on time, and a strengthened communication line between the communities and municipality is established".

In the accomplishment of such functions, participants stated that council acts as the mediator between the national and provincial governments and communities by adopting and implementing policies articulated at the national level among the communities. As they noted, this bolster coherent national development. In a bid to achieve this coherent national development, some of the participants stated that while executing its dual legislative and executive functions, council often strives to operate in the context of the common framework outlined by the national government for all local governments and municipalities. They elaborated that such framework emphasises the need for council to offer democratic and accountable government for the local communities as well as ensure sustainable provision of services to the local communities. Participants further reiterated that council is also accomplishes activities that encourage socio-economic transformation and development of the local communities by involving the local communities in the local development programmes and initiatives. To accomplish these, one of the participants who is also a speaker in one of the local municipalities in uThukela stated:

> "It is not a matter of saying council executes dual legislative and executive functions. We operate using a common framework outlined at the national level for all local governments and municipalities in the country. Against that common framework, we seek to ensure that policy implementation processes as well as the overall operation of the municipality are the direction that facilitates the successful implementation of such common framework. The local situation is different with that of the national level. At the national level, policies are formulated and passed

> to us at the local level for implementation. Apart from asking us to account, authorities at national level never get involved in actual policy implementation. That is different with the situation at the local level where the municipality gets directly involved in actual policy implementation. Thus, you cannot expect council to just stand there as policy implementation deviates from the prescribed processes and outcomes. Council is driven not only by the common framework set by the local government, but also by the overall party manifesto. Thus, failure to deliver the required outcomes is not attributed to the local municipality, but to the party. It is in that context that a general policy was adopted that council constituting of elected councillors must drive policy implementation as well as the overall municipal operations at the local level."

In the context of such views, findings indicate councils in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities to have been involved in the accomplishment of different administrative activities. In the case of the newly established Inkosi Langalibalele local municipality, participants reiterated that such initiatives have been reflected in council's engagement in structuring and re-structuring of the municipal administration to leverage its efficiency. Participants also noted that council has been engaged in budgeting and planning formulation and implementation processes to respond to the critical priorities of the local communities.

Quite often, findings reveal that such initiatives are accompanied with frequent reviews of such budget and policy implementation to assess the improvements that can be undertaken by council to enable the municipality influence socio-economic transformation and development of the local communities. To accomplish this, some of the participants reveal that council tends to often use its audit committee which is established under Section 166 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 2003 to evaluate and control activities of the political office-bearers, municipal manager as the accounting officer, management and municipal staff. As participants noted, audit committee undertakes evaluation of all municipal activities and reports to council for actions. Such a view is elaborated in the responses of one of the interviewed participants who is also a Section 56 manager in one of uThukela local municipalities, and stated as:

> "Audit committee is used by council as an instrument for gaining control of municipal activities. It is charged with evaluation of activities such as financial management activities such as expenditure and budget utilisation. If one is not in favourable books with some of the influential politicians, audit committee is often used to assess and detect even the slightest error and used as the basis for one's services to be terminated. In such instances, audit committee does not serve the purpose for which it is intended to serve. Audit committee is not only involved in analysis and identification of incidents such as corruption and undesirable financial practices, but also risk analysis and evaluation of effectiveness of internal and external audit matters, financial reporting and compliance with requisite legal and ethical provisions. In otherwords, audit committee is an independent advisory institution of the council that council treats its recommendations quite seriously."

However, in contrast to such a view, some of the participants pointed out that audit committee has often not been effective. They stated that in most instances, audit committee has been used to fight political and administrative power battles. In the event of conflicts, participants explained that audit committees have often been used by influential municipal figures whether from the political or administrative branch of the municipality to get to those individual office-holders who are not towing the desired line of work relationship. As they noted, the implications of such situations are reflected in the fact that audit committees have been deviated from their actual functions.

Yet, as it deviates from its desired functions, participants revealed that it has ignored dealing with rising incidents of corruption in uThukela's procurement processes as well as many other incidents of undesirable financial practices leading to several incidents of irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditures that characterise most of the local municipalities in uThukela local municipalities. Certainly, as the participants noted, these imply audit committee as an independent advisory body of councils is not effective accomplishing its core functions of enhancing compliance with risk management, accounting policies and adequacy, reliability and accuracy of financial reporting.

Other core functions that audit committee is expected to accomplish were reiterated by participants to entail performance evaluation and management, enhancing effective governance and compliance with MFMA. Participants further revealed that in the municipal context, the Municipal

Public Accounts Committee (MPAC), is also expected to investigate incidents of financial irregularities and misconducts pointed out by the Auditor-General of South Africa and make reports to council for actions. Unfortunately, most of the participants revealed that even when reports are made by audit committee on any of these incidents, council has often been reluctant to take actions, especially if such reports implicate certain influential municipal figures.

In otherwords, some of the participants highlighted that some of the audit committees in some of uThukela local municipalities exist as a mere formality and fail to investigate and lure councils to take actions on certain incidents of syndicated corruption where various politicians and administrative bureaucrats connive to swindle municipal funds. Some of such incidents were highlighted by some of the participants to pertain to the 2018 incidents in Langalibalele local municipality where municipality failed to report unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure in the context of Section 32 of MFMA to the MEC of Local Government while the municipal public accounts committee also failed to effectively investigate the issue. Certainly, these illustrate the weaknesses in the executive functions accomplished by the municipal council.

Besides such limitations, participants further stated council also engages in accomplishment of executive functions such as enforcing employees and councillors' compliance with certain prescribed sets of codes of conduct. To enhance achievement of the desired outcomes, findings indicate that council also liaises with certain specified private sector entities, community organisations and non-governmental organisations to enhance successful policy implementation. At the same time, it also emerged from the findings that although in a bid to bolster its efficiency, council may delegate some of its executive powers to the executive mayor; it cannot do so in regard to its legislative powers. In otherwords, it is evident from these findings that as council accomplishes its legislative functions; it also tends to execute certain executive functions. Such complexities as interview narratives from UThukela and Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate are also evident with the speaker that acts not only as council speaker, but also outside the council speaker's role as an influential individual politician.

5.2.3 SPEAKER

Speaker of the council emerged from the findings as one of the critical political actors in the municipal political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors. Participants explained that speaker is ordinarily an elected councillor from the communities who is subsequently elected by the other councillors in the municipal council as the chairperson of the municipal council. By virtue of such political process, most participants argued that speaker is one of the powerful politicians in the municipal political structures. This is illustrated in the response to a probe and re-probe question that sought to evaluate the overall influence of the speaker in the municipal political and administrative structures. In responses to such questions, most of the participants highlighted that speaker is very influential not only among the communities that elected him, but also among the councillors that voted for him during council meeting. In such narratives, one of the participants explained that:

> "The roles of senior councillors like mayors and speaker are to oversee administration and ensure services are delivered by the municipality. They also ensure no interference between the politicians and administrators as each must have their own lanes".

As findings indicate, such influence among the communities as well as among councillors enables him to influence different municipal policy activities' accomplishment. However, some of the participants stated that speaker mainly tends to focus on legislative activities, as the executive mayor concentrates on accomplishing the executive functions of the council. Participants elaborated that principles governing the accomplishment of the speaker's legislative activities are mainly aimed at leveraging oversight, accountability, integrity, discipline and efficient running of council meetings. Despite having enormous political networks in the communities and among councillors, participants revealed that the speaker is expected to fairly and impartially chair council meetings.

As participants noted, that implies speaker has to distinguish his personal political activities and ambitions with the political party that he is affiliated to from his core functions and activities as the speaker. Participants reiterated that maintenance of such impartiality is critical for not only the

speaker and integrity of council meetings to be respected, but also for enhancing the collaborative respect and cooperation of councillors from different political spectrums of the outcomes of different council meetings.

However, besides such a view, some of the interviewed councillors, especially from the opposition noted that it is often not that case that the speaker is impartial. They stated that most behind-the-scenes policy formulation processes have often indicated that some of the speakers in the local municipalities in uThukela tend to influence and manipulate their individual networks in the communities and among councillors. Quite often, such participants explained that such manipulations are aimed to influence certain policy outcomes towards the direction that enhances the achievement of the aims of the political parties they are affiliated to. Such a view is corroborated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also an opposition political party councillor and stated that:

> "Speaker is also just like any other councillor and politician who are always ambitious and want to grow through the political structures of his or her political party. No councillor or politician wants to be speaker forever, but instead aim to grow and move from being just speaker to playing some very important political role in the upper echelons of the political party that he or she is affiliated to. To achieve such ambitions, some of the speakers will always tend to appear to be neutral during council meeting when in actual case some of the behind the scenes indicate that that is not the case. In most cases, behind the scenes manipulations are often undertaken by some of the speakers to influence certain controversial council decisions towards the views of the party. In that case, we can state that the speaker may be appearing to be neutral, but not neutral in all aspects. Speakers are usually influential politicians who are strategically placed by the majority of the ruling political councillors to steer council decisions to their favour."

Such a view certainly pokes the impartiality of the speaker. However, in response to a question that sought to examine participants' views about the impartiality of the speaker, most of the participants, especially councillors from the ruling African National Congress indicated that their speakers have always been neutral. They reiterated that the speaker has always been neutral to

uphold the integrity, privileges and integrity of the council. As the speaker upholds such principles, such participants also explained that speaker usually takes all the initiatives as the neutral guardian of councillors' privileges and interests to ensure that all councillors are provided with freedom of speech as well as other immunities attached to council deliberations. They also stated that speaker tends to ensure that all councillors are able to access council facilities, allowances and required support training and development to leverage their competencies and capabilities to effectively accomplish their roles as elected councillors. Such a view is corroborated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who explained that:

> "As an independent and autonomous political figure, the speaker often takes all initiatives to ensure that rights, interests and privileges of councillors are not abused. However, inspite being an independent political figure, the speaker also interacts and consults with the executive mayor, the municipal administration as represented by municipal manager, portfolio committees and representatives of the communities through ward committees during the formulation of certain agenda for council meeting. This enhances harmonisation of the positions of different and reaching of common points of view during agenda setting".

However, some of the participants pointed out that it is often such common points of views reached that are sold to other councillors to influence council debates and leave council only a rubber stamping institution. Since, some of the decisions are evaluated at the portfolio committee levels as well as during agenda setting, some of the participants argued that it affects thorough internalization of certain issues by council. In certain cases, such participants noted that the adoption of such approach has often caused the adoption of certain policy resolutions that have only emerged to fail.

Nonetheless, other participants elaborated that after agenda setting, speaker not only chairs council meetings, but also offers equal opportunities and freedom of speech for all the councillors in the council to debate and reach amicable resolutions. To ensure order during such debates, participants reiterated that the speaker and the council are guided by certain standing orders and codes of conduct during debates. Some of such standing orders and codes of conduct were noted to pertain to the rules prohibiting use of abusive, racist and divisive language. Other rules pertain the

expected quorum for a resolution to be considered as valid as well as rules regarding the time duration that each councillor can put across his views while addressing council. Such a view is echoed in one of the participants' responses that indicated that:

> "Yet, as the speaker goes about accomplishing his roles in the context of the defined rules and code of conduct, he also tends to liaise and interact with chairpersons of other council committees such as portfolio committees, mayoral committees and ad hoc committee on rules and code of conduct. Quite, such interactions are aimed at streamlining the process for the formulation of certain policies that are yet to be debated by council".

Despite chairing council meetings, some of the participants revealed that there also instances where speaker has been requested by council to oversee the establishment and functioning of certain ward committees. As they noted, these have often arisen in situations where a new ward committee has to be established or where a certain ward committee is not functioning effectively. In such situations, participants explained that speaker is often requested by council to oversee election of ward committee members, ensure ward committees meet regularly and ensure that ward committees report back to council on ward committee activities.

For participants in Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities, they also revealed that the speaker often facilitates the selection and representation of the local council councillors from such local municipalities to the district council. At the same time, the speaker also ensures the reporting of such local council representatives to the district council to the local. As findings indicated, this aids harmonisation of the processes of policy formulation within uThukela district municipality and its local municipalities that include Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

However, other participants highlighted that with speaker and executive mayor being the most powerful influential political figures, certain animosities have often arisen among them. They stated that such instances have often arisen where speaker expresses certain silent ambitions to contest in the next elections as the municipal mayor. Such incidents as the participants elaborated often causes the emergence of a rift between the speaker and the mayor. Yet, as such a rift emerges;

participants stated that it also causes the emergence of different contending centres of power with different antagonistic groups that affect effective accomplishment of municipal activities.

Considering the significant influence the speaker has over the council that elected him, participants explained that emergence of such antagonistic groups affect the effectiveness of the oversight roles executed by the municipal council over the executive mayor and other administrative entities of the municipality. In such situations, certain undesirable conducts of certain members may be overlooked as the undesirable behaviours of other members are seriously acted against. This further creates hostilities and antagonisms that undermine municipal activities' effective accomplishment. Such a view is accentuated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also a councillor and stated that:

> "Relationship between the speaker and mayor is always only good when elections are still far. But when elections draw nearer, tensions tend to set in especially if the speaker has become so influential among councillors. To the mayor, that influence is often interpreted as the speaker's likely threat to take his position. This often causes antagonisms and sabotage that affects the forging of the usually required amicable relationship between the speaker and the mayor."

In otherwords, this illustrates some of the complex networks that often arises among politicians not only affect effective accomplishment of municipal's political activities, but also its administrative activities. It also demonstrates the extent to which the speaker is one of the critical political actors that affect political-administrative interface. Yet, as some of the participants noted, complexities may not only be between the speaker and executive mayor, but also between speaker and municipal manager. Findings indicate that where municipal manager is found as uncooperative with other political structures, speaker has often used his influence among councillors in council to fight such municipal manager.

As the participants noted, this is reflected in instances where the speaker has often influenced council to use Section 74 of the Access to Information Act 2 of 2003 to access certain information from municipal manager not because certain essential information is required, bust just as a strategy of discovering any undesirable information that can be used to fight him.

Yet, as the speaker acts not only as council speaker, but also outside the council speaker's role as an influential individual politician, narratives from interviews in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities also indicate that some councillors are also critical influential political actors. As findings reveal, such influential individual councillors often link with administrative and other actors' interactive activities to either leverage municipality's effective performance or create complexities that constrain the performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

5.2.4 COUNCILLORS

Councillors emerged from the findings as some of the critical individual actors that either leverage municipality's effective performance or compound the already complex political and administrative interface at the district and local municipal levels. Certain individual councillors were found to influence activities in their political parties as well as in the district and local municipalities in which they operate. Participants attributed this to the fact that councillors are the actual representatives of the communities that have in-depth insights into the real communities' needs and preferences. With such critical information, participants explained that certain individual councillors often manage to influence policy decisions at the municipal levels.

Participants explained that such individual councillors often accomplish that by organising and inciting other councillors to take certain positions during council meetings. As participants revealed, such interactive engagements and cooperation between councillors tend to take place even irrespective of the political party differences. It emerged from the findings that besides political party differences, councillors are often united when it comes to developing policies and strategies to address certain community problems. Such unity and cooperation enable councillors to accomplish their roles in the municipality to communities in a way one of the participants substantiated that:

> "Councillors elected by the communities to assist with service delivery, assist destitute families and with other challenges affecting communities. They also exercise oversight on the municipality while also supporting the municipal administration."

Participants attributed reasons for such approach to the fact that since councillors are closer to the communities, it is often the communities that directly evaluate their activities to directly hold them accountable. In that regard, participants pointed out that the only form of the way to hold councillors accountable is not to elect certain councillors that perform badly. It is such fear of losing their council seats that was reiterated by participants to motivate councillors to often strive to be seen by the communities to be doing something about the challenges that communities are facing even if they are certainly doing nothing. In otherwords, the notion that individual councillors have to engage in gaming with each other to forge collaboration that push their individual agenda forward is substantiated in the views of one of the interviewed participants who noted that:

> "During the performance of their activities, councillors' opinions are shaped by both party dynamics and the individual councillor's dynamics. For party dynamics, each political party in a municipality wants its councillors to tow its line of thinking. However, outside party dynamics, councillors also have individual dynamics reflecting certain key objectives and intents that they aim to achieve for their communities as individual councillors. To realise such intents, it is often a complex process that requires navigation through all the party dynamics and individual councillors' dynamics. However, that is not the case in most of the cases for the reason that although ANC has the majority, other councillors come from different political parties. This is reflected in the fact that for UThukela District Municipality, African National Congress-ANC has 15 councillors, Inkatha Freedom Party-IFP (7 Councillors), Congress of the People (3 councillors), Democratic Alliance-DA (2 councillors), Economic Freedom Fighters-EFF (1 Councillor) and African Independent Congress (1 Councillor). In Alfred Duma Local Municipality, ANC has 46 councillors, IFP (16), DA (4), EFF (4), National Democratic Convention (1) and National Peoples Ambassadors (1). For Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality, ANC has 23 councillors, IFP (18), DA (2), Al Jama-ah (2) and EFF (1). In Okhahlamba Local Municipality, ANC has 15 councillors, IFP (7), Congress of the People (3), DA (2), EFF (1) and African Independent Congress (1). Although ANC has majority of councillors in Alfred Duma, in other municipalities such as

> Inkosi Langalibalele where ANC has 23 councillors and total opposition has 23 councillors and in Okhahlamba where ANC has 15 councillors and total opposition has 14 councillors, the number of ANC councillors to total number of opposition councillors tends to be equal. With such dynamics, it indicates that it is the individual charm and charisma of the councillors and not party ideologies that may get other councillors to buy-in into the views of their fellow councillors to support a particular policy position. This is because unless the communities pressurize, no councillor from another political party is usually willing to tow the lines being peddled by other political parties due to fear of breaching their individual political party positions".

Certainly, this implies that individual councillors are critical political actors in their own rights as representatives of the communities. As findings indicate, councillors tend to interact and create relationships and networks among themselves to influence certain policy decisions as well as other municipal activities to their favour. Such councillors' interactive networks can either constrain or leverage municipalities' effective performance. Participants explained that such situation has been reflected in the incidents where councillors mobilised to create the necessary majority that advocated for the implementation of certain community policies that the municipality did not have adequate funds to finance.

As the municipality turned to be unable to afford such a project, participants reiterated that it created bad relationships not only between the councillors and the municipal manager, but also between councillors and the Chief Financial Officer. Quite often, some of the participants revealed that if the municipality, especially through the mayor does not redress such situation, it can culminate to situations where some of the councillors, especially from opposition tend to bad mouth the municipality among the communities that the municipality is doing nothing to address their needs and preferences. As participants noted, such situations further cause animosity among the communities to even in certain cases instigate riots that affect municipality's smooth operations. It is such councillors' behaviours that prompted one of the participants to suggest that:

> "Councillors need to be trained immediately after elections prior to commencing any work with the municipality for them to remain professional and segregate

> political and administrative duties. Administrators must also remain professional while expecting that councillors must remain on their lane

Findings revealed that it is not only such situations that illustrate how councillors from different political parties can play games to reach certain unanimous decisions, but also the situation arising from Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' intervention in Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality. Following consistent poor performance and unsustainability of Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality, participants revealed that the provincial department sought intervention and councillors from across the political divide did not dispute such a decision. However, they pointed out that although DA, IFP and EFF suggested that the intervention should be made and prolonged until the term of the current municipal council ends, ANC accepted the intervention for as long as possible, but not until the end of the term of the current municipal council.

Despite such slight disagreement, participants still reiterated that there was unanimity in the decisions reached by the councillors. However, in addition to such findings, participants also revealed that councillors offer critical links between the municipalities and the communities. They explained that it is through councillors that municipalities get to understand and respond to the actual challenges facing the communities. Such a view is corroborated in the opinions of one of the participants who is also a mayor and stated that:

> "Individual councillors are our important source of information from the communities. They reside in different parts of the communities and interact with different groups in the communities, and as thus, are better positioned to understand the demands of the communities. It is through councillors that we get inputs reflecting real concerns of the communities that must be included in policy decisions, and it is through councillors, especially using their ward committees that we also get feedback from the communities about the successes or failures of certain implemented policies".

Such a view seems to echo the responses of some of the participants to the question which was posed by researcher as to whether councillors intermeddle in the municipal administrative

activities. In response to such a question, most of the participants explained that as much as councillors tend to operate within the policy formulation and implementation framework prescribed by the municipality, some of the individual councillors still tend to act individually. Such councillors that act individually were noted by participants to have enormous networks in the communities that not only inform policy decisions, but also continuously monitor and evaluate the process for the implementation of different municipal policies among the communities. Participants elaborated that due to the politicisation of service delivery issues, some of the councillors tend to act individually to assess the progress of the implementation of different policies. According to participants, such process often leads to accessing information that inform both the political and administrative branches on how the implementation of certain policies must be modified to influence achievement of the desired outcomes.

In otherwords, participants reiterated that most councillors reckon that they and the communities live together in the environments where different municipal programmes are implemented, as thus, they and the communities are better placed to monitor and evaluate such programmes. However, some of the participants, especially municipal administrators revealed that as certain individual councillors engage in such practices, it often tends to instigate over-inflated demands from the communities on how certain projects must be implemented. Yet, in certain cases, the municipalities in uThukela or even the provincial government may not afford to implement such projects. Subsequently, as participants noted, this tends to cause friction between the municipal administrators and such individual councillors and the communities. This prompted one of the participants to suggest that:

> "Educate councillors to stop interference in administrative issues. Each councillor needs to understand where the line stops. Councillors must understand the Systems and Structures Act and the policies. Senior managers must also do team building with politicians and low management structures. Bring in all forums that have been established-the business sector, sports forum to bridge gaps that can render service delivery to become number 1".

Besides such situations, participants further revealed that if certain councillors are not engaging in such behaviours, they tend to instead engage in certain self-serving behaviours. Most participants

highlighted such self-serving behaviours to often be reflected in certain individual councillor's behaviours that seek to influence tender decisions as a strategy for making quick money. They elaborated that some of the individual councillors often strike a deal with certain prospective service providers or tenderpreneurs where they agree with to influence tender decisions in exchange of certain amount of money if the deal goes through.

In other instances, some of the participants stated that some of the individual councillors have relatives or friends who are engaged in businesses as service providers to the municipalities in uThukela. In effect, as participants noted such individual councillors tend to seek to influence tender decisions in favour of the businesses owned by such relatives or friends. In some of the instances, some of the participants stated that some individual councillors tend to influence tender decisions in favour of certain influential party members or cadres in their constituencies. Quite often, as the findings revealed, such initiatives are undertaken as part of the quests to build and nurture political and social capital for further re-election. Such a view is further reiterated in the opinions of one of the participants who revealed that:

> "According to procurement regulations as well as Councillors' Code of Conduct, councillors are not permitted to interfere or seek to influence municipal administration activities, especially issues relating to procurement decisions. However, in most of the instances, certain councillors still attempt to use their influence and influence procurement decisions either directly or indirectly. Some of these incidents involve certain councillors either influencing procurement decisions in favour of the businesses owned by friends, relatives, influential persons in their communities or even just in exchange for cash at the end of the conclusion of tender decisions."

Yet, as certain individual councillors engage in such behaviours, some of the participants noted that it has often caused friction between such councillors and the municipal administrators and procurement officials, especially in cases where such councillors' influences are thwarted. However, some of the participants pointed out that although some of the municipal administrators and procurement officials often reject such individual councillor's attempts to influence tender decisions, in certain cases, some of the municipal administrators fall for such influence.

Yet, as they fall for such influence, it tends to instigate emergence of bad behaviours where municipal administrators as well as procurement officials connive with certain councillors to award tenders to certain businesses in exchange for bribes. This instigates emergence of bad practice that causes collusion between politicians and administrators to undermine effective political oversight of municipal administrators' activities. Besides that, findings revealed some councillors to also attempt to influence recruitment decisions by the municipal administrators. Such a view is corroborated in one of the participant's narratives that state that:

> "For recruitment, the code of conduct for councillors prevents nepotism. But some councillors bring their relatives that do not qualify, though we usually advise the councillors to comply".

As some of the participants highlighted, it is such incidents that have often explained why UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities have for a long time been receiving Auditor-General's unqualified audit reports. Participants reiterated that such unqualified audit reports often highlight issues of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure arising from corruption, poor governance, poor oversight and procurement related irregularities.

Certainly, as findings revealed, councillor's individual actions impact other councillors' actions as well as their abilities to effectively perform in council and its associated oversight committees. Most of the participants revealed that the implications of all these have been reflected in the inabilities of UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities to deliver the required services to the communities. Consequently, they elaborated that all these municipalities face service delivery backlogs reflecting projects and programmes that have been implemented either halfway or not implemented at all. Such a finding is echoed in the explanations of one of the participants that:

> "News from other municipalities indicates it is not only uThukela that experiences political interference in administration. Political interference impact on service delivery as a supplier brought by a political party affects the standard of the projects. Projects end up not getting done according to specifications. Thus, when

> heavy rains come, it affects bridges that also affect school going students, cars for passengers and movement of ambulances in case of a sick or a dead person to be collected. People who are supposed to benefit from tenders are not the ones that are supposed to benefit as councillors interfere in tender processes. Since councillors are not aware of legislations for councillors, I suggest it is important to conduct awareness to inform councillors. Councillors must take responsibility to adhere to their codes of conduct."

Some of the participants noted that as a result of such situations, UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities are unable to provide even mere water, electricity and refuse collection to their communities. Some of the participants attributed such situations not only to the fact that money is wasted, but also to the fact that as certain councillors influence award of tenders to businesses of friends, relatives, business associates and political cronies, it tends to affect monitoring and evaluation of such projects' implementation. In effect, they noted that service providers may implement their projects halfway or implement it with defects and not many questions are raised. In otherwords, all these undermine the capabilities UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities to achieve desired service delivery policy outcomes.

Certainly, themes emerging from interview findings indicate critical political actors and their interactive activities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities to encompass executive mayor that accomplishes dual political and administrative functions. Such themes also imply other critical political actors include municipal council as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles and speaker as council speaker and an individual influential politician. Further thematic analysis also reveals councillors to emerge as critical individual political actors that compound the already complex political and administrative interface at uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. However, how such critical political actors' interactive activities link with administrative and other actors' interactive activities to either leverage municipality's effective performance or create complexities that constrain the performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities can only be evaluated after

analysis and identification of critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in uThukela.

5.3 SECTION B: CRITICAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT ACTORS IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Having identified critical political actors and their interactive activities in the previous section, analysis of interview findings in this section is aligned to the second research objective and question. Such analysis is aimed to identify critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Such analysis created further preface for identification in the later sections of how such critical administrative and management actors' interactive activities link with political and other actors' interactive activities to leverage municipality's effective performance or create complexities that constrain the performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

As discussed below, thematic analysis of the interview findings from UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate certain critical municipal administrative and management actors as well as their interactive activities. Such critical municipal administrative and management actors were reiterated by participants to encompass municipal manager, chief financial officer and Section 56 managers that head Department for Development, Planning and Human Settlements and Department of Community and Social Services. Participants also noted such critical actors to include Section 56 managers that head Department of Corporate Services, Department of Technical and Infrastructure Services and Department of Public Safety and Disaster Management.

5.3.1 MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Findings from interview narratives in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities reveal municipal manager as a central municipal administration and management actor to accomplish interactive activities arising from municipal staff management as well as his roles as the municipal accounting officer.

5.3.1.1 Staff Management

As a central actor in municipal administration, findings from UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities revealed municipal manager to execute activities that would leverage staff management. In most of the cases, they explained that municipal manager in consultation with the municipal council and the executive mayor often reviews the existing municipal structures. Participants stated that the motive of such structural analysis is usually to evaluate how the existing structures as well as the existing staff can aid the municipality achieve its mission. Quite often, as they stated, this leads to the identification of vacancies or new positions that must be created to enhance the municipal's overall effective performance. Narratives from different interviewed participants reiterated that it is in that context that municipal manager engages with director corporate services to guide the recruitment and appointment of certain new staffs. As the municipal manager works with corporate services, one of the participants explained that:

> "The role of corporate services is to account to municipal manager in how sections like transformation, equity, development and staff discipline are being managed to ensure the municipality operates efficiently. Corporate services as guided by the municipal manager also manages human resource recruitment and training, labour relations, and occupational health and safety as well as administration and reporting to council committees. It also engages in public relation management issues to improve the image of the municipality as well as record management and information technology management. Corporate services are the central service provider of the municipality. It capacitates employees by providing learnership and academic programmes where bursaries are offered so as to develop and retain them in the municipality."

However, findings revealed that as municipal manager accomplishes such staff recruitment and appointment processes, he is often directed by policy framework and political directives issued by council. In most of the cases, they revealed that the ideologies in such recruitment policy framework and policy directives are initiated by the executive mayor as the agent that monitors municipal administration in the context of Sections 44 and 53 of the Municipal Structures Act.

In that regard, council or the executive mayor may exercise the prerogative to consult or even not to consult the municipal manager during decisions on such recruitment policy framework and policy directives. Whilst working within such policy directives, most of the participants in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities elaborated that municipal manager often takes responsibility of recruiting and appointing new staff in conjunction with the inputs from the municipal human resource manager. Subsequently, while liaising with the human resource department, narratives from interviews indicated that municipal manager often further evaluates and reviews staff establishment as well as job descriptions and remuneration.

To ensure that staff exhibit actions and behaviours that bolster the achievement of desired municipal service delivery outcomes, participants revealed that municipal manager acts in conjunction with human resource department to undertake certain disciplinary measures against certain non-compliant staff. Quite often, interviews revealed that municipal manager undertakes such initiatives in conjunction with frequent staff training and development programmes to improve their competencies and capabilities to perform.

As they noted, such staff training and development programmes are often either in-house where consultants are hired and used or external where external academic institutions or other human resource development institutions are engaged. Such a view is accentuated in the views of one of the interviewed Section 56 managers who stated that:

> "Municipal manager usually operates within the human resource framework provided by council as well as the executive mayor to appoint staff. In the event where the situation requires, he also undertakes training and development initiatives in conjunction with the human resource department. Such training and development programmes are either in-house or external. For in-house, municipal manager uses senior and experienced employees to train and develop new staff. External training and development programmes are undertaken by either academic institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Province or by some other entities such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). Municipal manager also manages, reviews and improves salary issues and the issues of how staff can be

> motivated to perform more effectively. In otherwords, municipal manager acts with human resource department to ensure that all staff's needs are meet and that staff are performing effectively."

Yet, as municipal manager engages in such activities, findings revealed that he also acts in conjunction with the human resource department to manage issues of labour relations to enhance fair employment and labour practices as envisaged in the legislations for labour relations and employment equity. However, findings indicate that besides the core administration staff, municipal manager also inducts new councillors. They elaborated that at the beginning of every council's five year term, it is the municipal manager that calls and chairs the first council meeting of new councillors. As they reiterated, it is that first council meeting that municipal manager chairs the election of the speaker. Participants explained that councillors are usually required to declare their financial interests as well as gifts exceeding a total value of R350 received from certain sources to the municipal manager within sixty days after the election as councillors. However, some of the interviewed participants pointed out that this is often just mere formality with the effect that there are often no actions against certain influential councillors that fail to declare such financial interests or gifts.

On the other hand, they also noted that some councillors tend to lie or even not disclose their financial interests or gifts received from certain sources. In the event of a by-election in certain wards, participants also revealed that it is usually the municipal manager that collaborates with Independent Electoral Commission to call and set the date that such by-election can be held. As they noted, mandate of the municipal manager to accomplish such activities is prescribed under Section 25 of the Municipal Structures Act. However, as municipal manager engages in such activities as well as in staff recruitment and appointments, interview findings indicated that municipal manager himself and other senior managers are appointed by council.

After municipal manager's appointment, they elaborated that it is the council that sets the terms in the five year performance contract and agreement offered to the municipal manager. Likewise, municipal manager as findings from UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate is also expected to consult

with council to set performance contracts and agreements with senior managers appointed by council, but report to him as the accounting officer.

As one of the managers noted, this enables council to influence such senior managers to enhance achievement of IDP goals whilst at the same time also permitting municipal manager to influence institutionalization of what is expected of him in his performance agreement. To further institutionalise the requisite culture and behaviours, findings revealed municipal manager to also have the prescribed Code of Conduct explained and enforced amongst staff. Such a finding is supported in the narratives of one of the interviewed managers from Okhahlamba Local Municipality who revealed that:

> "To ensure achievement of the desired IDP goals, our municipality just like any other municipality in uThukela has a Code of Conducts prescribing desirable and undesirable behaviours that staff can exhibit. This Code of Conduct is enforced by the municipal manager. During their induction, the Code of Conduct is explained to all the new staff so that they can know what is expected of them and have no excuse when caught exhibiting undesirable behaviours. We also have performance management framework that municipal manager uses to evaluate and identify contributions of each staff towards successful IDP implementation. All these enhance municipal manager's control of over staff activities"

However, even though municipal manager uses such performance management framework, interview findings from across uThukela indicated that performance management system is often developed by the executive mayor, executive committee or a special committee established for that purpose as required under Section 39 of the Municipal Structures Act. Unless such responsibilities are assigned to municipal manager by the executive mayor under the same Section 39, findings revealed that even the outlined of performance indicators in that performance management system is often accomplished by the executive mayor and executive committee.

Some of the participants revealed that due to the limited knowledge of the mayor and sometimes lack of the requisite expertise in the executive committee, such complex tasks are often assigned by the executive mayor to the municipal manager. Participants reiterated such performance

management system to apply not only to staff, but also to political office-holders. Thus, with a well-developed performance management system, participants elaborated that it is the municipal manager that conducts necessary performance management analysis of staff and political office-holders to report to council and advice on actions that can be undertaken to address performance shortfalls. However, in response to the question that sought to probe whether any conflict and confusion of responsibilities of the mayor and municipal manager arise from the implementation of performance management system, one of the interviewed the municipal managers indicated that there is a conflict and confusion. He revealed that UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities are struggling with fact that as municipal manager is charged with performance management evaluation and reporting to council, executive mayor is also charged with the accomplishment of the same activities. The municipal manager elaborated that this is reflected in Sections 44 and 56 of Municipal Structures that requires executive mayor to evaluate progress against specified indicators, review municipal performance and monitor municipal administration.

All these reports are required to be submitted by mayor to council. He further explained that although Section 39 of Municipal Structures Act mandates executive mayor to assign such tasks to municipal manager, trends from across UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities still indicate that confusion and conflicts still tend to arise. He argued that Section 39 of Municipal Structures Act implies that if executive mayor does not assign such tasks, then, it becomes legally impracticable for municipal manager to accomplish his required performance management and evaluation activities as the chief municipal administrator. Such a view is substantiated in the opinions of one of the interviewed Section 56 managers who stated that:

> "One of the challenges is the regulatory confusion and conflicts as to whether it is the executive mayor or the municipal manager that must be in charge of analysing, monitoring and evaluating municipal performance in the context of the defined performance management system issued by council. The law places the same sets of responsibilities to the executive mayor and municipal manager, with the effect that the executive mayor is entrusted with more dominant roles. This causes conflicts and misunderstanding. Since, such laws over-emphasise executive

> mayor's supremacy over municipal manager, it undermines the role of municipal manager as municipal administrator to undertake the necessary performance management analysis to leverage the overall efficient and effective municipal performance. Yet, at the same time, municipal managers are expected to leverage municipal performance in accordance with the terms set in their five year performance contract and agreement to enable the municipality to achieve its IDP goals".

Certainly, these reflect the kinds of complexities that often emerge from political-administrative interface in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Nevertheless, besides accomplishing activities related to staff appointment and performance management, findings indicate that municipal manager is also a central actor in municipal administration and management as the accounting officer.

5.3.1.2 Accounting Officer

As the accounting officer, interview narratives indicated that most of the municipal managers from across UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities engages in accomplishment of critical activities that spawn effective administration and management of municipal finances. Such narratives elaborated that such critical activities have encompassed ensuring that municipal resources are utilised effectively, efficiently and economically as well as ensuring of efficient management of municipal records. Such a view is further reflected in the explanations of one of the participants that:

> "Role of the Accounting Officer/Head of Municipality is to enhance compliance with the Structures Act to head and lead the municipal administration. That is a complex role, as he is also expected to manage the budget, revenue, expenditure, human resource, staff establishment, liaise with council, mayor/deputy mayor and members of the executive committee. He is also responsible for running the municipality by ensuring adherence of municipal processes to the relevant laws like MFMA and King 111 of Municipal Governance as well as compliance with Systems Act and Constitution of South Africa to guide our daily operations. These

> differ from the roles of councillors which are to assist communities with service delivery, assist with other socio-economic problems affecting the communities and provide oversight over municipal administration while also supporting administration".

As municipal manager accomplishes such tasks, they further stated that municipal manager also undertakes initiatives to ensure effective existence of effective, efficient and transparent financial and risk management as well as internal audit and control systems. Municipal manager was also reiterated by participants to ensure effective management of budget implementation and expenditure management to control unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure and other losses that municipality may be unreasonably exposed to incur. At the same time, subthemes arising from interview narratives obtained from across UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicated that municipal manager as the accounting officer also ensures effective implementation of municipal financial policies.

As they noted such policies often encompass tariffs, rates, credit control, debt collection and supply chain and procurement related policies. Besides managing municipal assets and liabilities, findings indicate municipal manager as the accounting officer has also been developing and applying practical strategies for aiding effective revenue collection and management as well as management of municipal expenditure. Such a view is accentuated in the narratives of one of the participants who is also the municipal manager who stated that:

> "Generally, the main role of municipal manager as the accounting officer is to ensure effective and efficient management of municipal resources. He is accountable to council for the management of municipal resources. To accomplish this, he works hand in hand with the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that effective system for revenue collection and management as well as an effective system for budget implementation and expenditure control is put in place. To succeed in this, he has often developed and used a system for recognizing revenue when it is earned as well as accounts for debtors and a system reflecting procedures for approving, authorizing, withdrawing and payment of municipal finances. He also ensures that

> all records on how municipal financial resources are utilised are well kept for internal and external audit purposes. Municipal manager also often ensures that all creditors and service providers are paid in time to avoid paying interests on impending payments. However, due to revenue constraints, meeting the prescribed creditor and service providers' payment norm as required by National Treasury is often a challenge. But we still try to ensure that we pay them on time."

Such findings imply that, municipal manager as the accounting officer must constantly ensure the overall wellbeing of the municipal financial affairs. Yet, as he accomplishes such activities, narratives from interview participants also revealed that municipal manager also often offers advice and direction to municipal political structures, political office-holders and administrative officials on how to comply with MFMA and other legal and regulatory provisions on municipal operations. While accomplishing such activities, some of the participants reiterated that municipal manager also seeks to uphold the necessary principles of honesty and integrity to ensure that all municipal activities are accomplished the way that aid achievement of greatest outcomes for the municipality.

However, some of participants noted that despite the existence of such principles, there are incidents in uThukela and its local municipalities where municipal manager has been involved in self-serving corrupt activities. As participants noted, such incidents have entailed municipal manager's activities that involve misappropriation of municipal funds, obtaining bribes and influencing tender decisions in favour of certain businesses in exchange of cash as bribes. Despite such undesired incidents, participants further revealed that when required and assigned by the mayor, municipal manager has also been working with the mayor on issues of the preparation of the municipal budget. They reiterated that municipal manager often accomplishes that by offering the necessary administrative support, resources and other information required by mayor to accomplish such functions. Following the approval of the annual budget by council, participants revealed that municipal manager often submits a draft of Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and draft of annual performance agreements for the municipal manager and all senior managers as required under Section 57 of Municipal Systems Act 2003.

But once the budget is prepared by mayor and adopted by council, participants revealed that municipal manager takes charge of the budget as well as SDBIP implementation. As they noted, he often accomplishes this by ensuring that budget implementation is within the prescribed plan to avoid either overspending or underspending of the municipal financial resources. Participants also elaborated that municipal manager also often takes all initiatives to minimise unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Despite such initiatives, some of the participants, especially councillors from across UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicted that effective budget implementation is still challenge.

Such councillors revealed that most processes of budget implementation are characterised by overspending rather than underspending and frequent unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure. They stated that such incidents suggest the poor oversight exercised by municipal manager as well as the mayor due to compromises that municipal manager find himself in during certain situations. Participants reiterated that such undesirable financial misconducts continue to occur even in situations where municipal manager prepares and submits mid-year budget and performance assessment to the mayor, National Treasury and Provincial Local Government.

In the submission of such mid-year reports, participants stated that in certain cases municipal manager as the accounting officer is required to make recommendations on whether adjustments are required and any revised projections of revenues and expenditure. They revealed that although initiatives are often undertaken to effect budget adjustments, no similar initiatives are undertaken to deal with improprieties causing overspending of the budget. Instead, they argued that such budget adjustments tend to worsen overspending. Such a view is corroborated in the narratives of one of the interviewed councillors who stated that:

> "Municipal manager as the accounting officer does not operate in isolation. He has to report to the authorities. For that reason, municipal manager often prepares monthly budget statements reflecting actual revenue per revenue source, actual borrowings, actual expenditure per vote and amount of any other allocations and presents to mayor and provincial treasury together with mid-year budget and

> performance assessment report. As part of accountability process, municipal manager also often reports on failure to adopt budget related policy or implement certain supply chain management policies to the Provincial Treasury. This enables the Provincial Treasury to discern how to intervene and recommend measures on how such situations can be addressed. At the same time, the municipal manager also usually prepares annual financial statements that are submitted to the Auditor-General for auditing. However, even in the midst of all these measures, financial improprieties and other corrupt related activities still continue to occur despite Auditor-General's reports indicating qualified reports that need to be addressed."

Certainly, such a finding implies that municipal manager as the accounting officer still faces the challenge of effectively and efficiently managing municipal activities. Some of the participants, especially the interviewed councillors attributed such cyclical financial challenges to the increasing tendencies of some municipal managers in uThukela to engage in corrupt activities. Yet, as municipal manager engages in such practices, they revealed that some of the mayors as well as certain influential councillors also become involved in such activities to thereby undermine effective accountability and responsibilities for such improprieties. Participants elaborated that such situations explain why despite such improprieties coming to mayor's attention as the political head of the municipality, no actions are often undertaken.

In otherwords, such a view seems to corroborate the previous views expressed by some of the participants that some of the influential councillors are corrupt. In addition to such reporting obligations, findings indicated that municipal manager also often develops and advises the council on certain contracts with budgetary implications for the provision of services water, sanitation, refuse collection and electricity. However, they pointed out that prior to submission of such contracts to council for approval in the context of Section 21 of Municipal Systems Act 2000, municipal managers are often required to make such contracts public. Municipal manager must also invite local communities to comment on such contracts and may include recommendations from the provincial treasury and views from provincial local government department and if necessary, the national department responsible for the provision of such services.

As the participants reiterated, this leverages consultation of all stakeholders and integration of different views in council decisions on how such contracts must be implemented. In otherwords, findings imply that in the process of accomplishing municipal administrative activities, municipal manager must also link the municipal administration with local communities. Participants elaborated that municipal manager often accomplishes this by engaging different local communities' groups such as youth, business, women and service delivery activities to participate in the formulation and implementation of different municipal programmes. However, some of the participants, especially the interviewed councillors noted that in most of cases, municipal manager tends to accomplish that as mere formality. They noted that this is often undertaken without the actual concerns to integrate such different local communities' views in Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) as well as in the implementation of other municipal policies. Yet, as municipal manager engages in the accomplishment of such activities, findings imply he is also assisted by Chief Financial Officer (CFO) as another one of the critical actors in the management of the municipal financial affairs.

5.3.2 THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Findings revealed the CFO to emerge as one of the critical actors in the management of municipal affairs that in turn affects the overall municipal performance. Participants reiterated that financials are pivotal resources that determine the overall effective municipal performance. They elaborated that it is through the available financial resources that municipalities are able to meet their day-to-day overheads as well as the general operational costs. Findings further revealed that it is through the availability of adequate financial resources that the municipality is also able to invest in long term policy formulation and implementation. In otherwords, participants construe that adequacy of municipal financial resources is critical for successful implementation of different municipal service delivery policy programmes and projects. Such a view corroborates the opinions of one of the participants who stated that it is the CFO that:

> "Prepares the budget in conjunction with the senior managers that offer the required inputs. The CFO also manages day-to-day financial issues of the municipality and expenditure management by guiding and controlling activities in three main sections that include expenditure/budgeting, revenue and reporting."

Thus, most of the interviewed participants from UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities noted that it is in that regard that the CFO emerges as one of the critical actors in the management of municipal affairs. They explained that as much as the CFO is aimed to work under the control of municipal manager and assist him in the management of municipal financial affairs, his decisions and advise often have far reaching effects. Most of the participants revealed that the CFO's decisions and inputs, in the form of advic,e often not only influence municipal manager's decisions, but also council decisions as well as decisions of the mayor. The CFO was highlighted by participants to always be at the centre of the policy decision-making because before any policy is adopted by council and implemented by municipal mayor and manager, thorough feasibility analysis is often conducted to assess the feasibility of the policy vis-à-vis the financial resources of the municipality.

Using his financial experience and expertise, the CFO is often brought in either directly or through the municipal manager to advise on the feasibility of such policy projects in the context of the available and anticipated financial resources of the municipality. Thus, participants reiterated that the CFO's input may often appear to be final because without adequate financial resources, there is often nothing that the municipality can do. Such a view is accentuated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also the CFO and stated that:

> "Chief Financial Officer is one of the essential municipal administrators that we have. It is the CFO that advises and assists municipal manager on issues to do with municipal financial affairs. In turn, the municipal manager advises municipal council as well as the mayor on the strategies that must be undertaken to leverage effective management of municipal financial affairs. Sometimes, he is brought directly to advise council and other instances, he operates through the municipal manager. During difficult policy decisions in the context of the usually limited municipal financial resources, the CFO is often brought in to advise on the best course of action. Some of the CFO's most valuable inputs in municipal affairs is his contribution to budgeting inputs. Generally, due to the complexities of the budgeting process, it is usually the CFO that does out budgeting with inputs from council's executives, mayor and other councillors. After the formulation of the budget, all that the council or mayor does is to fix a few things here and there and

> get the budget approved. However, as much as the CFO affects mayor and council's policy decisions, he is also affected by council decisions. This is because once council adopts such a budget, he is also expected to comply with it as the policy decision of the council. The CFO is also expected to comply with several other policy decisions of the council or by-laws on levies, fees, revenue collection and cash management".

Such a view certainly echoes the narratives of most interviewed participants who noted that while assisted by the staff in the municipal budget and treasury office, the CFO often accomplishes activities such as budget planning, monitoring and reporting, revenue management and expenditure management. Other subthemes from the narratives of the interviewed participants reiterated the CFO to engage in supply chain management, payroll administration and risk management. In terms of budget planning, participants elaborated that the CFO often works with the municipal manager during budget preparation and implementation. Since budget planning falls under the dock of the CFO, in most of the cases, accounting officer tends to delegate the process for all budget planning to the CFO, and only waits to present to council for approval.

Once the budget is approved and adopted by council, most of the interviewed participants explained that the CFO still tends to play significant roles in monitoring and reporting on budget implementation. The CFO, as the participants noted assists the municipal manager in ensuring that budget implementation is being accomplished within the prescribed framework. Findings revealed that such inputs by the CFO often aid identification and correction of areas of deviations during budget implementation. However, despite such initiatives, some of the participants still highlighted that there are often still incidents of either overspending or underspending the budget; a fact which is associated with wastes and incompetence of some of the CFOs in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

Even in the midst of such anomalies, participants revealed in the quests to ensure successful budget implementation as well as implementation of other municipal policies, the CFO tends to use certain expenditure management mechanism. Such mechanisms were reiterated by participants to entail adopting expenditure control system that streamlines procedures for approval, authorisation,

withdrawal and payment of municipal funds. They noted that other mechanism for expenditure control has often entailed the CFO's initiatives to ensure that procurement expenditures are undertaken in the context of Municipal Supply Chain Management Policy. As participants noted, this is attributable to the fact that Municipal Supply Chain Management Policy often requires embracement of equity, fairness, transparency, competitiveness and cost-effectiveness during procurement. Such a finding is further corroborated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also a CFO in one of the local municipalities in uThukela and stated that:

> "In a bid to ensure successful budget and policy implementation, the CFO has to effectively manage and control municipal expenditure. This has usually not only required managing of procurement processes and expenditure, but also ensuring that creditors or accounts payable are paid within the prescribed time. This enables avoidance of interests that can accrue to further erode the limited financial base that the municipality has. The CFO also undertakes monthly expenditure monitoring and reporting by contrasting actual expenditure against budgeted expenditure. This enables identification and correction of variances to bring budget implementation in line with the estimated budget. This contributes to eliminating wastes and unnecessary municipal expenditure. The CFO also uses National Treasury's prescribed norm for assessing Capital Expenditure to Total Expenditure which is specified at 10%-20%, Current Ratio of 1.5–2:1, Creditors Payment Period (Trade Creditors) which prescribed at 30 days, Irregular, Fruitless, and Wasteful and Unauthorised Expenditure / Total Operating Expenditure which is specified at 0%, Remuneration as % of Total Operating Expenditure which is constrained to 25-40%, Contracted Services % of Total Operating Expenditure which is constrained at 2%-5%, Capital Expenditure Budget Implementation Indicator which is prescribed at 95%-100% and Operating Expenditure Budget Implementation Indicator which is specified at 95%-100%. All these metrics enable the CFO to identify wastes and bring municipal expenditure within the estimated budget. Such analysis also informs policy implementation processes to identify the areas that must be corrected."

Yet, as the CFO uses such complex metrics to diagnose and manage municipal expenditure, narratives from some of the interviewed participant also indicated that the CFO also tends to develop and use appropriate revenue management. They reiterated that such strategies are not only used for leveraging effective management of the available municipal revenues, but also to aid collection of revenues from property taxes, levies, charges, fines, fees and revenues from municipal provided services like electricity, water and refuse collection. Quite often, some of the interviewed participants explained that such initiatives are accompanied with the CFO's liaising with municipal engineering department to develop and use effective billing system as well as collaboration with municipal public relation department to develop and maintain sound customer relationship management.

However, other participants noted that despite such effort there are still incidents in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities where billing system has been an issue. In such incidents, participants stated that billing has often been inaccurate and incorrect to thereby lead to enormous complaints from local communities in the midst of poor municipal public relation management. As they noted, this affected local communities' satisfaction with municipal services as well as the amount of the collected revenue. Besides such limitations, some of the interviewed participants further reiterated that the CFO tends to use such strategies in conjunction with effective debtors/accounts receivable control and management.

At the same time, participants revealed that the CFO also tends to collaborate and work with the other senior managers to ensure effective management of the overall municipal financial affairs. They explained that the CFO often accomplishes this by advising and monitoring and evaluation the progress of financial resources utilisation in the key municipal departments headed by such senior managers. Yet, as the CFO accomplishes such activities, narratives from the other interviewed participants indicated that the CFO also tends to collaborate with municipal manager to develop and apply a sound municipal risk management framework.

Such risk management framework as noted by participants often aid effective analysis of the nature and extent of risks associated with certain municipal operations. It was also highlighted to aid municipal decision's on the acceptable level of loss or degree of failure. Participants also stated

that such risk management framework enhances frequent monitoring, evaluation and reporting on different forms of risks. Yet, as some of the participants revealed, risk analysis and reporting accomplished by the CFO often informs council policy decisions through the CFO's advice to the the mayor. Findings further indicate the existence of effective risk management system to aid the CFO identify and deal with risks arising from certain financial misconducts and behaviours.

However, even in the midst of the utilisation of such risk management framework, it still emerged from the narratives of the interviewed participants that the CFO also often takes the initiative of ensuring effective municipal supply chain system. Participants reiterated that the CFO always accomplishes such activities by ensuring that procurement and the overall municipal supply chain system are undertaken in the way, which is equitable, fair, transparent and competitive. Such initiatives were also noted by participants to eliminate the rate of corruption in the municipal supply chain system as well as ensure selection of the best bidders.

However, as findings indicate, trends from UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities imply that that is often not the case. Participants highlighted that municipal procurement is often characterised with corruption and interference from influential politicians in that without payment of bribes, it is unimaginable for a business to win tenders even if such a business is the best. Such a view certainly corroborates the opinions of the participants who highlighted that certain influential councillors are increasingly interfering in tender decisions in UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Certainly, findings imply that the CFO is also a Section 56 manager. However, as it emerged from the narratives of different participants, there is also a network of certain Section 56 managers who are critical actors who determine how different municipal activities are accomplished.

5.3.3 SECTION 56 MANAGERS

Findings from across UThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicated a certain network of certain critical actors to exist in municipal administration. Participants explained that this network of critical municipal administrative actors reflect the core of municipal technical and bureaucratic system that determine the municipality's effective operation. This network of critical municipal

administrators was reiterated in the findings to comprise mainly of Section 56 managers. Despite not interacting formally, but rather informally with municipal political structures, participants explained that outcomes of the activities accomplished by Section 56 managers often indirectly or even directly influence policy formulation and implementation by the political and administrative systems, respectively. Irrespective of whether such outcomes reflect failure or success of Section 56 managers, findings imply that such outcomes still influence the future policy patterns adopted by the municipality. Certainly, as participants indicated, Section 56 managers are often appointed by the council, but instead upon assuming their responsibilities report to the municipal manager. It is also the municipal manager that designs and executes performance agreements with them. One of the municipal departments managed by Section 56 managers is the Technical Services Department in which one of the participants explained its fundamental to entail;

> "Technical Services Department supports the municipality by offering technical expertise for the maintenance of buildings and roads, provision of housing and infrastructure that it liaises with Eskom to make the necessary electricity connections. It also deals with waste management, and management of parks and cemetery and project management unit for capital projects handed by local government to the municipality. In that the role of the manager is to come up with a plan which is integrated with the service delivery plan to undertake repairs of roads and buildings, implementation of capital projects, facilitate human settlement unit to provide housing to local residents. In these projects we liaise with councillors because they know the communities better. So we implement the policies that they adopted in the council. Councillors come to communities to assess what they require and then inform us on the projects to implement and councillors report to the communities because we don't report to communities. Technical Services Department also assess funding for different projects and advises on project implementation."

Such a finding echoes the revelation of most participants that upon assuming their roles, Section 56 managers often become critical for aiding the entire municipal system implement its different policies as well as Integrated Development Plan (IDP), and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). Findings indicate that it is Section 56 managers that come face-to-

face with the realities of the implementation of different municipal programmes and service delivery policies. Consequently, as findings revealed, they often have in-depth insights about critical leveraging or hampering factors that either spawn or constrain successful implementation of different municipal service delivery policies. Most of the interviewed participants further reiterated that it is also these Section 56 managers that interact with different day-to-day municipal operational activities. Such opportunities as participants noted render Section 56 managers possess critical knowledge and experience that influence how they are to approach the process for the accomplishment of different municipal operational activities.

Thus, due to such experience, knowledge and expertise, most of the participants elaborated that through the reports provided by Section 56 managers to the municipal manager; such reports tend to not only influence municipal manager's approach to managing and administering municipal activities. Instead when such reports are availed by municipal manager to council by offering the required advice; such reports also tend to influence council's decisions on certain policies. That implies as council policy decisions directly influence Section 56 managers, in turn, section 56 managers tend to influence council decisions only indirectly. Such a finding is corroborated in the narratives of one of the interviewed participants who is also a Section 56 manager and stated that:

> "Section 56 managers are experts that manage and run the technical sections of the municipalities. Unlike the politicians who find that ways into the municipal structures due to the political support that they wield among communities, Section 56 managers are instead recruited into the municipal administrative system on the basis of their educational qualifications, skills, experience and expertise. This renders them very critical for determining not only the entire municipal operations, but also how its different policy activities are implemented. It is council constituting mainly of politicians that formulate policies, but once such policies are formulated, it is Section 56 managers that work in cohort with municipal manager to ensure the successful implementation of such policies. Section 56 managers conceptualise and devise technical strategies for accomplishment of different operational activities as well as policy implementation initiatives. Thus, Section 56 managers do not only participate in actual policy implementation, but also undertake concurrent monitoring and evaluation to document reports on the successes or failures of such

> policies as well as reasons explaining such a situation. Such reports are subsequently submitted to municipal manager who in turn may advise municipal council or mayor on the technical strategies that must be adopted while going forward".

As narratives from the interviewed participants indicated, such networks of Section 56 managers are reflected in certain networks of the municipal administration structures and their associated staff that work collaboratively and seamlessly to leverage municipality's overall effective performance. Such networks of Section 56 and their administrative structures encompass Department for Development, Planning and Human Settlements, Department of Community and Social Services, Department of Corporate Services, Department of Technical and Infrastructure Services and Department of Public Safety and Disaster Management. In addition to that, Section 56 managers also head the Supply Chain Management Department whose roles were reflected in the narratives of one of the participants who stated that:

> "Supply Chain Management deals with procurement of services as well as management quotation, tender and inventory units to procure tangible and intangible products that can aid a municipality achieve its service delivery goals."

Certainly, some of the local municipalities in UThukela District Municipality may have certainly modified their administrative structures. However, a comparative analysis of themes from interviews from across UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicated that most of the municipal administration systems are often structured along such five departments. Participants reiterated that the Department for Development, Planning and Human Settlements is headed by a Section 56 manager and constitutes of other technical experts who are in charge of accomplishing activities like town planning, human settlement and museums and tourism management. Participants explained that town planning deals with developing and applying strategies to bolster local economic development.

To accomplish this, participants elaborated that it outlines and implements strategies for leveraging business development and investment promotion, SMME development, poverty alleviation and general socio-economic transformation of the local communities in uThukela. Regarding human settlement, narratives from interviews revealed that Department for Development, Planning and

Human Settlements engages in offering housing opportunities to beneficiaries that qualify in conjunction with providing secure tenure and habitable living environment. For museums and tourism management, participants elaborated that it entails implementation of municipal policies for tourism development by availing the required facilities and marketing to boost tourism activities in uThukela. Such activities contrast with activities accomplished by Department of Community and Social Services that were highlighted by participants to encompass waste management and cleansing as well as managing community venues and libraries in conjunction with managing municipal parks and gardens.

On the other hand, Department of Corporate Services was revealed by participants to engage in managing human resource and legal issues that may affect the municipality. For Department of Technical and Infrastructure Services, interview narratives indicated that Section 56 manager devises and implements strategies for developing and extending infrastructure such as electricity, water and housing infrastructure as well as other technical municipal services to local communities in uThukela.

Regarding Department of Public Safety and Disaster Management, interviews elaborated that it deals with developing and implementing strategies for implementing municipal by-laws and policies on activities like illegal hawking, nuisance, vagaries, enforcement of traffic regulations and crime prevention. However, when asked how these activities interact to influence effective municipal performance, most of the participants reiterated that despite dividing such municipal activities according to five departments, they still interact to leverage municipality's effective performance. Such a view is elaborated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also the municipal manager and stated that:

> "Activities performed by Section 56 managers in their departments are related, but because they require different kinds of expertise, they are often divided into inter-related activities. However, they all interact to produce outcomes that influence effective performance of the municipality. I would like to point out for instance that the activities executed by Department of Community and Social Services as well as Department of Public Safety and Disaster Management create favourable local economic conditions and standards that attract tourism and improved business development that are also emphasised by the Department for Development,

> Planning and Human Settlements. Likewise, activities accomplished by Department of Technical and Infrastructure Services create favourable local economic conditions and standards that are stressed by Department for Development, Planning and Human Settlements as critical for local economic development, business development, human settlement and tourism development. As for the Department of Corporate Services, it interacts with all these departments as well as the overall municipal structures to identify and address any human resource or legal issues that may arise. You see, all these explain how all these structures interact with each other to enhance municipality's overall effective performance".

However, despite such a view, some of the other participants especially councillors from opposition political parties that were interviewed in this study revealed that performance of municipal technical branches is still a challenge. They explained that UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities do not have enough financial resources because it is located in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal that do not have much economic activities. Thus, as these local municipalities collect only limited revenues, they all tend to over rely on central government's grants and subsidies which are also usually insufficient. In fact, some participants noted that most of the good policies are formulated by council, but not implemented by municipal technical branches.

As the interviewed participants, especially councillors from opposition political parties noted, all these are further complicated by the increasing political interference in municipal administration. They explained that since all Section 56 managers that manage the municipal technical branches are recruited and appointed by council, politics has often found its way in the decisions reached by the council or who can or cannot be recruited and appointed as a Section 56 manager. Thus, they stated that it is often only politically ideologically aligned and oriented or connected candidates or relatives and friends of political cadres, or even worst those that can afford to bribe that are appointed as Section 56 managers in the municipal technical branches in uThukela. They further stated that such trends are not only reflected in the appointments of Section 56 managers, but also in the appointments of most of the staff that work under such Section 56 managers. Overall, they highlighted that this has contributed to the recruitment of relatively less competent

staff to thereby further worsen the already questionable capacity of most of the local municipalities in uThukela to implement the required municipal policies. On the other hand, some of the participants noted that there is a tendency of some of these senior technical managers to take advantage of their low education and experience levels to engage in activities that undermine effective service delivery. Such a view is reflected in the explanations of one of the participants who state that:

> "One is the experience challenge-officials that were there were more experienced than councillors. Contrary, councillors were trying to impose themselves with their little experience. Lack of experience of politicians happen to play a very important role in terms of destabilising the smooth flow of the municipality, interference in good governance and moreover one can never shy away from the fact that at some point even the officials having seen the inexperience of councillors wanted to use that to their advantage, and that is where I think the problem starts. From time to time, you find that the resistance is from council rather than officials. They don't take instructions as the politicians would love them to take and also the politicians would not take advise of officials given out to them. That is where the problem starts."

Yet, as all these undermine municipal technical capabilities, it has undermined UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities' capabilities to deliver the required services to the local communities. Certainly, findings imply that as municipal manager as the central municipal administrative and management actor interacts with municipal political structures, he also tends to interact directly with other key municipal administrative and management actors like chief financial officer and Section 56 managers that head different departments in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

Even if this implies municipal manager is the central municipal administrative and management actor, it was still found that the CFO and other Section 56 managers also tend to formally or informally interact with municipal political structures. As much as some of such interactions are often aimed at leveraging municipality's effective performance, it was still strikingly evident that in some of such interactions, especially the informal ones are often aimed at shaping behaviours

that in one way or another constrain municipality's effective performance. Yet, as municipal administration interacts with its political structures, both municipal political and administrative structures were also found to interact with certain other critical actors from the communities. However, how such interactions between political, administrative and other actors leverage municipality's effective performance or create complexities that constrain performance of UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities can only be evaluated after diagnosing and identifying other actors and their interactive activities.

5.4 SECTION C: OTHER CRITICAL ACTORS THAT INTEGRATE WITH POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Previous sections having examined political and administrative actors and their interactive activities, analysis of interview findings in this section is aligned to the third research objective and question. Such analysis is aimed to identify other critical actors and their interactive activities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Such analysis further created the preface and foundation for further identification in the later sections of how such other critical actors' interactive activities link with political and administrative actors' interactive activities to leverage municipality's effective performance or even create complexities that constrain the performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

Thus, thematic analysis of the interview findings in this section indicates that the other critical actors and their interactive activities that are operative in uThukela encompass certain community activists as well as business actors. Findings imply that it is such community activists and business actors' interactive activities that municipal political and administrative structures in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities often go through in the course of accomplishing different municipal political and administrative activities.

5.4.1 Community Activists

It emerged from the interview findings from UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities that different groups of community activists are increasingly emerging to put enormous pressure on municipal authorities. These different community pressure groups were found to put pressure and seek to influence certain influential councillors as well as mayors to urge them to take actions to ensure that their needs and preferences are met. Such groups were also reiterated to put pressure on the municipal manager to urge him to implement relevant service delivery programmes to the communities. In response to these different needs of the communities, some of the participants elaborated that the municipality has taken significant initiatives to implement different policies and deliver the required services to the population. Unfortunately, they pointed out that most of the municipalities in uThukela are constrained by meagre financial resources at the disposal of the local municipalities.

Some of the participants, especially the mayors pointed out that some of the policy implementation programmes require hundreds of millions of rands that contrast against the meagre municipal financial resources. Thus, some of the mayors noted that whereas some of the projects are implemented, others are only implemented halfway as others are yet to be implemented. Such views of the mayors were found to corroborate the opinions of some managers who noted that UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities do not have enough financial resources because it is located in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal that do not have much economic activities.

Thus, as these local municipalities collect only limited revenues, they all tend to over rely on central government's grants and subsidies which are also usually insufficient. Participants pointed out that the implications of all these have been reflected in the fact that most of the communities in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities have been characterised by poor service delivery issues. One of the participants highlighted Okhahlamba Local Municipality, especially in Maswazini where communities face the challenge of inadequate service delivery. He reiterated that just like the rest of the communities in uThukela, communities do not have access to water, electricity, good sanitation and housing infrastructure.

Such a view is corroborated in the opinions of one of the participants who is also a councillor from opposition political party and stated that:

> "We often try, but the challenges are enormous for municipalities to address with the limited resources that they have. Consequently, there is a challenge of service delivery by all the local municipalities in uThukela. There is problem of water, electricity, sanitation and infrastructure. Not all the households have water and electricity and also most of the housing infrastructure programmes have not been implemented because we did not receive funds for that. Municipalities are trying, but the communities feel that we are almost doing nothing to assist. Hence, there is a lot of dissatisfactions, discontent and animosities among the communities. Some of the activities have politicised everything to thereby worsening the already worse situations. Combined with high poverty and unemployment levels, participants revealed that such situation has created opportunities for some of the politicians to politicize issues of service delivery. Because of politicisation of service delivery issues, different groups tend to approach council and petition it to address their needs. Others approach the municipal manager and attempt to implore him to do something, but without adequate financial resources, there is nothing that we can do. So there is a standoff or a deadlock where communities are demanding for the services that we can't deliver due to lack of adequate financial resources."

In a view that echoes such opinions, one of the participants noted that such constraints of resources are attributable to the fact that some of the local municipalities in uThukela are only created recently. Thus, they have not gained the necessary capacity to collect sufficient revenues. He elaborated that Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality was only established in August 2016 after amalgamation of Imbabazane Local Municipality with uMtshezi Local Municipality, as Alfred Duma Local Municipality was also only established in August 2016 after the amalgamation of Emnambithi/Ladysmith Local Municipality with Indaka Local Municipality.

As such, the participants reiterated that these are infant local municipalities that have inherited the inefficiencies of the local municipalities from which they were drawn. In effect, he argues that with time, constant improvements will be undertaken by the new political and administrative

management to render such local municipalities responsive to the needs and demands of the communities. Since some community activists are incited by some councillors, one of the participants suggested that:

> "Politicians need to understand their roles by stating that ANC or IFP do not come to my ward and I don't understand such and such a programme. Instead they need to work together and follow protocols to minimize friction between administrators and politicians".

However, even in the midst of such optimisms, some of the participants still argued that turning around the performance of certain local municipalities such as Langalibalele Local Municipality is still a challenge. They explained as a result of the consistent failure to meet the needs and demands of different community pressure groups as well as following the demands of such pressure groups and activists, Kwa-Zulu Natal Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) intervened in Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality to turn around its performance. Even though such intervention was warranted, some of the participants stated that it was still perceived by some of the actors in the political opposition circles as politically motivated.

Participants explained that this is because since ANC has 23 councillors and total opposition has 23 councillors to create a deadlock, COGTA's intervention was interpreted to be more of politically motivated move aimed at getting at the politically contentious Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality rather than a genuine move to turnaround its performance. Despite such interventions, one of the participants noted that COGTA's intervention was still able to discover that Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality's inability to execute its constitutional mandates to the local communities arose from its inherent internal weaknesses. Such weaknesses were reiterated by the participants to relate to the challenges associated with key performance areas that encompass municipal transformation and institutional development.

Other challenges were identified to include poor governance and public participation to engage and involve different community groups in different municipal activities, financial incapabilities and poor management of community service delivery processes. Yet, as COGTA intervened in

Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality, some of the participants revealed that it also prompted the motivation of some of the community groups and activists to urge COGTA to intervene in Okhahlamba Local Municipality. As they noted, this is attributable to the fact that communities in Okhahlamba not only have to walk long distances to access water, but also have to face the challenges of living in darkness at night as only few houses are connected to electricity grids. While for the homeless residents, some of the participants highlighted that none of the communities has received any housing infrastructure despite the adoption of a comprehensive housing infrastructure for all by government.

Since UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities are at the forefront of delivering such services, participants revealed that UThukela and its local municipalities are facing pressure from different community activists. Whereas some activists are concerned about water shortage, others are agitating for housing or electricity to thereby create a myriad of different interest groups that politicians and administrators at UThukela and its local municipalities have to deal with on a daily basis. Yet, as UThukela and its local municipalities face such challenges, there are also increasing complexities from a combination of certain business actors that they have to contend with.

5.4.2 Business Actors

Findings from interviews across UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate that both municipal political and administration faces significant challenges of dealing with the increasing different forms of different business actors. They explained that as such business actors seek to make profits from these local municipalities, they tend to exhibit different forms of behaviours. As they noted some of such behaviours bolster municipality's effective performance, as others constrain municipality's effective performance. For behaviours that leverage municipality's effective performance, participants reiterated that some of the businesses that deal with local municipalities are concerned about the wellbeing and performance of such municipalities.

Considering the increasingly poor performance of the municipalities in uThukela, participants highlighted that some of such businesses often combined with certain community interest groups

to ensure that they exert pressure for the municipality to perform well. As participants noted, this often puts pressure on politicians as well as municipal administrators to take innovative initiatives to respond to such demands. Yet, as businesses engage in such activities, participants elaborated that such situations are also reflected in the recent COGTA's intervention in Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality where Business Forum supported such interventions for long as it is aimed at improving the performance of any local municipality in uThukela. To demonstrate good gestures, participants revealed that the local Business Chamber offered free technical assistance to aid such intervention turn around Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality's poor performance to a good status. Participants attributed such a finding to the fact that most businesses depend on the local municipalities in uThukela for business opportunities, as thus such businesses are often concerned about the performance of such local municipalities.

In event of consistent performance, some of the participants revealed that since some of such businesses are very influential, they often go as far as influencing provincial leadership to cause change of the management structures of such municipalities. As they noted, this has often caused remote control of the municipalities by provincial government. While in certain cases, direct intervention has been undertaken by the province to determine the municipal administration and management structures as well as who occupies such structures.

Yet, as they engage in such practices, some of the participants indicated that some of the municipal administration and management officials' services have often been unfairly terminated to thereby instigate costly litigations in labour courts or other legal structures. Participants explained that since the municipality is often on the wrong side, this has often operated to only worsen the already poor financial performance of the local municipalities in uThukela. Such a view is accentuated in the opinions of one of the participants who is a Section 56 manager and explained that:

> "From my experience, I have come to note that businesses are critical stakeholders of the municipality. They can initiate actions that can end your career. They are capable of inciting the communities against the municipality. This is because some of these businesses do not only possess enormous financial resources, but also have political connections and influence at the higher echelons such as the provincial government. Through these connections, they can influence actions that can

> frustrate your career. Imagine, the intervention in Inkosi Langalibalele was caused by some businesses in conjunction with the communities because they perceived that the opposition dominance of the council was undermining their business interests. At the same time, some businesses are owned by influential political cadres that have strong networks and connections with the communities. So if you cross their paths, they can use such connections and influence over community networks to cause hostilities between the communities and the municipality or some key municipal officials. Because of that even the mayor or municipal manager often tread carefully when dealing with certain businesses."

Such a view certainly corroborates the revelations of some participants who noted that following dissatisfaction with the existing municipal system, some of the businesses often sponsor the campaigns and election of certain councillors as well as key politicians such as mayor and speaker. Participants attributed such approach to the fact that some of the businesses perceive that once such key influential politicians win, they can be able to recoup such expenses by influencing such politicians to respect their businesses interests. As such business interests often exert pressure on some councillors to intermeddle in tender processes, one of the participants explained that:

> "Some councillors are not very educated to know their roles well. Some think SCM (Supply Chain Management) is deliberately delaying awarding tenders of their interests. Some call you aside to try and find out the inside information. But the situation is improving now as no more councillors are engaging in such practices. Lack of councillors training especially for new ones is a challenge. SCM is only based in the office and it is the role of councillors to engage with communities on service delivery issues, but councillors are sometimes concentrating on other things instead of service delivery."

In otherwords, they elaborated that such approach explains direct and indirect ways through which certain politicians gain to influence both the political and administrative structures of the municipality. Since key politicians such as the mayor and speaker are influential and charged with the overall management of the municipal political and administrative activities as per the law, participants reiterated that it also tends to affect tender activities. As participants noted this has

often caused informal interactions of the mayor or any influential politicians with the municipal manager and the CFO. Generally, they explained that the CFO is not directly accountable to the municipal mayor, but in most instances, he is influenced to make certain tender decisions in favour of certain businesses that are linked to the mayor or any of key politicians. Such a view is validated in the opinions of one of the participants who is also a CFO who stated that:

> "Due to political interference, tender activities are often characterised by manipulation and doctoring to ensure the businesses being favoured by certain key politicians are approved. Such manipulations and doctoring are often reflected in issuing short or inadequate notices so that not all prospective bidders respond, non-transparent bidding procedures, unfair disqualification of certain bidders and award of several tenders to one bidder. This affects our abilities as CFOs to exercise the necessary oversight to ensure that good tender decisions are made for the overall good of the municipality."

Yet, as some of the businesses engage in such practices, some of the participants indicated that some of the influential and financially well-resourced businesses also tend to directly buy certain influential politicians as well as municipal administrators to influence tender decisions to their favour. Consequently, as politically connected businesses interfere in tender processes, some of the participants reiterated that competent businesses that are excluded through unfair and on-transparent tender systems often resort to court for litigation. Participants explain that such litigations often tend to interfere with the accomplishment of the outsourced activities since activities are frozen during the usually lengthy litigation process. Yet, as some businesses fail to completely get tenders, some of the participants revealed that it has often induced relationship breakdown and risks of being assassinated. This is reflected in one of the participant's narratives that state that:

> "Some of the ongoing assassinations are related to councillors' disappointments from being given tenders. Once a councillor is disappointed, they construe that you are aligned to some political parties and not willing to give them bread. This leads to relationship breakage whereby some reports may not be supported by councillors

> when presented. Since you failed to comply with their demands, they do not want to support your report."

They stated that this tends to interfere with the efficient and smooth implementation of certain service delivery activities to thereby undermine capabilities of UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities to respond to the most pressuring needs of the communities. Besides such situation, some of the participants further revealed that since tender decisions are often unfair, most of the opposing businesses that pursue litigation route often emerge victors. Participants explained that such legal victories imply that the municipality must pay hefty damages and litigation costs to the legally victorious businesses. This further contributes to compounding the already worse financial position of UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

Besides such situations, some of the participants still highlighted that some of the business actors' interests in municipal activities often arise from the debts that municipality owes them. Such interests were noted by participants to cause some of the businesses to take initiatives to ensure that municipal authorities take care of all the activities necessary for them to be paid. Participants explained some of such initiatives have been reflected in instances where some businesses have sued the municipality in court to have their debts paid by the municipality. Such incidents were reiterated by participants to be reflected in Langalibalele where court Sheriff was threatening to attach its primary bank account after it faced ligation by 41 businesses for failure to pay about R38 million of debt.

Participants noted that other incidents in the same municipality was manifested in the threat of disconnection by ESKOM as a result of the failure by Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality to pay R26 722 owed by certain six councillors as well as corresponding failure of Municipal Council to take disciplinary actions against the six councillors. As findings reveal, all these tend to affect the future commitment of businesses to deliver the required services to the municipality. Yet, as UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities struggle to pay debt owed to such businesses, findings indicate that such municipalities have also been struggling to get businesses to pay the debts that they owe to the municipalities. As participants revealed, this further creates more complexities for the municipalities to get such

businesses to pay the owed debts vis-à-vis the initiatives of having to retain them for future service delivery contracts.

Certainly, all these illustrate the kinds of community activists as well as business actors' interactive activities that municipal political and administrative structures in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities often go through in the course of accomplishing different municipal political and administrative activities. As indicated in the next section, such community activists as well as business actors' interactive activities often intertwine with the already complex political-administrative interface to create more complexities that constrain performance of UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

5.5 SECTION D: COMPLEXITIES OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Following the identification of political, administrative and other actors and their interactive activities in the previous sections, analysis of interview findings in this section is aligned to the fourth research objective and question. Such analysis is aimed to identify points of complexities in such interactive actors' activities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Thus, thematic analysis of interview findings indicated complexities of political-administrative interface and their impacts in the increasingly Polycentric UThukela District Municipality's System to emerge from certain antagonistic activities reflecting mayor-municipal manager rifts and mayor-speaker rifts. Analysis of mayor-municipal manager rifts implies complexities arise not only from the antagonistic roles accomplished by political and administrative officials, but also from between politicians themselves.

Evaluation of mayor-speaker rifts indicates complexities of the working relationships between mayor and speaker to create hostilities and unfavourable working environment that affect municipal administrators' capabilities to effectively accomplish their administrative and management activities. Besides complexities of mayor-municipal manager and mayor-speaker rifts, findings also indicated complexities to arise from political and municipal administrators'

tendencies to collude to constrain municipality's effective performance. As on the other hand, complexities were also found to arise from the increasing political interference in the municipal administration and management areas that pertain to staff recruitment and appointment, tender management and certain financially related decisions.

5.5.1 Antagonistic Activities

Findings from interviews indicate complexities of political-administrative interface and their impacts in the increasingly Polycentric UThukela District Municipality's System to emerge from certain antagonistic activities reflecting mayor-municipal manager rifts and mayor-speaker rifts.

5.5.1.1 Mayor-Municipal Manager Antagonisms

Findings from interviews reiterated that complexities tend to arise from the antagonistic roles accomplished not only by political and administrative officials, but also between politicians themselves. In terms of the antagonistic roles accomplished by municipal politicians and administrators, participants highlighted the conflicting roles between the mayor and municipal manager. Participants explained that when, it comes to policy formulation, it is often the mayor that acts in consultation with municipal manager on technical advice that must be integrated in the draft policy submitted to committees and subsequently to council for approval. However, when it comes to implementation of such policies, participants stated that municipal mayor tends to clash with municipal manager.

Participants attributed such situation to the fact that mayor tends to accomplish similar roles with that of the municipal manager. It was found that as prescribed under Section 56 of the Municipal Structures Act 1998 and Chapter 7 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 2003, the executive mayor often engages in identification, evaluation and implementation of certain service delivery strategies and programmes. However, as some of the participants noted, this can sometimes lead to antagonisms as mayor and municipal manager attempt to cross their lanes. Such a view is echoed in one of the participant's narratives that revealed that:

> "There are at times where politicians will want to compete the territory for officials, especially at the level of municipal manager where they want to impose instructions. They want the municipal manager to do things the way that they want

> it. Also on the side of administration, sometimes officials want to play politics whereas that is not their space. It is always advisable that you allow politics to be played by politicians. You as an official remain as an official. Once you start doing both, that is when the challenge comes in. The politicians will say there is person who wants to compete with us. That is when officials become councillors and vice-versa. If politicians do not play oversight roles and want to be involved in processes, then it becomes a conflict of interest because they are not playing their part of playing oversight. There becomes a vacuum with no one doing oversight."

Just like the municipal manager, participants elaborated that in the accomplishment of such activities, executive mayor tends to in the context of the defined performance indicators evaluate progress of the implementation of such programmes. If need arises, findings imply that the mayor often reviews the overall municipal performance to assess its economy, efficiency and effectiveness to implement different service delivery programmes to achieve desired outcomes. Yet, as participants noted, those are the exact activities that municipal manager also accomplishes, though subsequently he is expected to report on the progress of policy implementation to the mayor.

Participants highlighted that it is such conflicting roles that often causes emergence of antagonisms and rift between the executive mayor and municipal manager. Participants attributed such rifts to the fact that as the mayor uses political logic and reasoning and in even in certain cases common sense to evaluate processes of policy implementation, municipal manager through his technical managers tend to use the technically defined indicators and judgment in such analysis. As they noted, this often leads to different outcomes where the mayor may find that not much has been achieved, whereas municipal manager on the other hand finds that significant progress is being made to achieve the desired policy outcomes.

Although when such situations occur once in a while, there are often no devastating effects, but when they become persistent, such situations tend to cause antagonisms and conflicts that in turn causes complexities in the relationships between the mayor and municipal manager. Such a view is corroborated in the views of one of the participants who is also a municipal manager who stated that:

> "Problem with the mayors is that they are drawn from the general body of councillors who are elected by local communities without significant regard to educational levels. This causes low understanding of municipal organisational dynamics to in turn cause conflicts when dealing with municipal organisational issues. Due to low education levels, they tend to use common sense and political judgment when even making certain complex decisions. This puts them at loggerheads with the municipal manager who is usually a trained expert. In most of the instances, during the implementation of certain service delivery programmes, executive mayor may raise issues that not much is being achieved. Yet, such a position contradicts the results of municipal manager's technical evaluation of such a programme. Technically, implementation of certain service delivery policies according to municipal manager may tend sometime, but gradually influence achievement of the desired outcomes at the end of the overall process. However, executive mayor is often in a hurry to realise results to justify his political ambitions that he is doing something. Mayors are politicians that depend on local communities to retain their council seats. This puts them under pressure to adopt and implement certain policies without vigorous thoughts. Yet, when such policies fail, they turn around to blame the municipal technocrats. This often upsets the municipal manager when he feels that he has taken all reasonable technical steps to enhance successful implementation of such policies. Combined with other factors such as competition for power and control over municipal resources, this often causes emergence of bad blood between executive mayor and municipal manager. Certainly, it is a mistake to entrust politicians that also have limited education with the management of important institutions such as municipalities".

Yet, as rifts between the mayor and the municipal manager become complex, some of the participants stated that executive mayor often exercises his prerogative to avoid assigning some of the responsibilities as required by law to the municipal manager. Due to required technicalities, participants stated that mayor often delegates activities such as drafting the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and other technical policy activities. Some participants attribute the mayor-municipal manager

antagonisms to the attitude and behaviour of the councillors from which the mayor is elected. In such believes, one of the participants elucidated that:

> "Councillors believe they own managers within the municipalities and managers must do what they are saying even if it is against the law. And on the other side, managers have the legal role to play in terms of guiding and managing the institution, of which sometimes it is based on the proximity of these two, the councillors and managers. Sometimes, there is a clash because others are pushing their wishes whereas others are doing what the law says. So it looks like the managers don't want to implement what councillors are saying and yet the councillors are forbidding by the law. They are only able to do what the law says. As I said earlier councillors believe they own managers so that is where the conflicts begin when councillors say managers don't want to do what they are saying whereas what they are saying is not in line with what the law says."

In the midst of the emergence of such rifts, participants revealed that the mayor tends to instead use the mayoral executive committee and other committees or other Section 56 managers aligned to him to accomplish such activities. In retaliation, they noted that municipal manager also tends to limit certain reporting responsibilities to the executive mayor, as instead he opts to report directly to council. Participants reiterated this to create complexities in which most of developed and implemented policies are often poorly drafted reflecting poorly defined outcomes and indicators. Likewise, the mayor also tends to lose track of the unfolding municipal policy implementation activities as municipal manager opts to brief council instead of the mayor or even in certain situations does not report at all.

As participants noted, such rifts subsequently affect effective accomplishment of different service delivery activities. Yet, as it becomes unbearable, some of the participants revealed that such rifts and conflicts between the mayor and municipal manager have often culminated into firing of municipal manager.

Participants attributed this to the fact that since the mayor often has dominant control over council, he is often able to influence council to terminate municipal manager's services. They highlighted that this causes power vacuum in municipal administration to undermine service delivery.

Participants explained that this is because even when a new municipal manager is appointed, it often takes time for such new municipal manager to gain the necessary experience and expertise to effectively accomplish and manage different municipal activities. Even if such new municipal manager is experienced, participants stated that he may still need to take time to acclimatize with the cultures, behaviours and practices existing in the prevailing political and administrative networks of the municipality.

Yet, as narratives from interview findings indicated, such complexities are also often manifested in the complex relationship between municipal council and the municipal manager. They iterated that such complexities arise in situations where council exercises its executive prerogatives to not only engage in policy formulation, but also to directly get involved in the implementation of certain policies. Such a view is substantiated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also a Section 56 manager and stated that:

> "Generally as the law states, council is not required to get involved in municipal administration. But at the same time, the law creates complexities by requiring council to ensure the effective wellbeing of municipal operations. In most of the cases, such provisions of the law have been politically misinterpreted where in certain instances; council has attempted to get involved in municipal administration and operational activities by trying to influence technical decisions here and there. However, attempts by some of the municipal administrators not to cooperate or act contrary as required by their technical judgments as well as in the context of the law have often instigated hostilities between council and certain municipal administrators. The worst thing is that council may tend to influence certain technical decisions, but when things go wrong, they tend to distance themselves from such failures and attach blame on certain municipal administrators. It is such incidents that influence certain administrators' future decisions to avoid working according to council's instructions. Yet, as they attempt to apply such future decisions, it tends to cause animosities and hostilities between certain administrators and councillors to undermine the creation of good working relationship which is required between council and administrators for the municipality to perform effectively."

In otherwords, most participants elaborated that there are certain policies and projects that council considers as critical for enhancing municipality's response to certain specific challenges facing the communities. Thus, to ensure successful implementation of such specific policies, council often feel motivated to directly engage in not only monitoring and evaluation, but also to directly influence policy implementation direction. Participants revealed that this often tantamount to council's direct interference in municipal administrative activities to thereby cause conflicts over certain decisions such as the number of resources that must be allocated to such programmes.

Yet, as some of the participants revealed that, such council's interventions in policy implementation processes or even municipal operations are often political rather than technically motivated. This causes further dissatisfactions and upsetting of municipal administration on the appropriate technical decisions that they can use to leverage successful implementation of such policies. In otherwords, participants reiterated that it causes dynamics and complexities that affect the separation of politics and administration. Even council does not engage in such activities, some of the participants stated that some of the individual councillors also often tend to attempt to influence policy implementation, especially policies that directly apply to the communities that elected them.

Just like the incidents with the mayor, participants elaborated that such individual council's interference in policy implementation has often instigated the raising of certain political questions rather than technical management questions that some of the municipal administrators feel as difficult and even in certain instances illogical to deal with. Participants noted, it is such municipal administration failures to respond to such questions that often causes animosities between certain councillors and municipal administrators.

As such councillors resort to inciting and mobilizing certain community actors against municipal administration, participants stated that further complexities tend to arise as municipal administrators must address the needs of councillors as well as the demands of such various community actors. Yet, as emergence of such situations undermine municipal performance; interview findings also indicated that a rift also often emerges between the mayor and speaker of the council.

5.5.1.2 Mayor-Speaker Rifts

Interviews reiterated that although mayor-speaker antagonism is between politicians, it has often still spilled to affect political-administrative interface in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Participants stated that both the mayor and speaker are influential politicians that attain their municipal roles after campaigning and influencing councillors of different political parties to vote for them. However, they noted that efforts to create good relationship between them are often thwarted by conflicts arising from who to or not to preside over council meetings.

Participants stated that this has contributed to creating different power bases and mistrusts in the municipal political structures. Due to the lucrativeness of the office of the mayor, in most instances the mayor does not trust the speaker as one of the most influential political figures. In such instances, they explained that speaker is often perceived by mayor as a future threat to thereby create animosity where even in certain cases, the mayor tends not to trust council that speaker presides over. In that regard, participants revealed that there are always attempts by the mayor to isolate the speaker.

Despite the legal emphasis that speaker presides over the legislative functions of the council, as the mayor focuses on the executive functions of the council, participants revealed that there are still instances where the mayor has attempted to dominate and preside even over typical legislative activities of the council. This often leaves speaker as a dissatisfied influential politician. Some of the politicians attribute such conflicts to the fact that the political landscape has been tilted for councillors to serve their individual interests as well as party objectives, thereby leading to lack of cooperation and conflicts not only between councillors themselves, but also with administrators. Such a view is accentuated in the narratives of one of the participants who highlighted that:

> "It is very simple, political parties must make sure that they educate their people before they become councillors. Right now, councillors only become councillors not because they have interest for servicing the people, but because the majority of our people are not employed. So they see this thing of being a councillor as a form of employment. It is a well-known fact that municipalities are among those institutions where corruption is very rampant. So, that is the reason why they see

municipalities as a vehicle to quick richness, and that is the reason they become councillors."

Yet as speaker engages in self-serving politicking, he/she tends to create antagonistic power bases both in the municipal political structures as well as in the administrative structures to undermine political oversight of municipal administration by executive mayor. As the speaker engages in such practice, participants revealed that mayor also tends to create counteracting groups in both the political and administrative structures of the municipality. Participants reiterated that this often causes emergence of antagonistic contending groups that seek to sabotage and undermine each other rather than engage in productive activities to leverage municipality's effective performance. Participants highlighted that it is in such ways that political conflicts often undermine effectiveness of municipal administrative activities. Such a view is accentuated in the opinions of one of the interviewed participants who is also a councillor that chairs one of the committees and revealed that:

"Relationship between the mayor and speaker is always not cordial. There is always of not explicit, then more silent battle that tends to occur between the mayor and speaker. This is because of power structure and the existence of competing power bases. This causes conflicts between the mayor and speaker. The mayor does not usually trust the speaker because of his dominant political influence over council decisions. Such speaker's influence often causes the passing of certain council decisions that do not favour the position of the mayor. In reaction to that, executive mayor usually also starts to engage some of the councillors in the council to recruit them into his camp. Such move is usually aimed at creating the majority of councillors that can be able to influence council decisions in favour of the mayor in the situations where such support is required. It is from that angle that competition tends to arise between the mayor and speaker. Such battle often spills into the municipal administration. This is because municipal council does not have a budget which is separated from that of administration. Hence, the municipal council relies on municipal executive and administration in regard to the amount that can be allocated to council. In the event of conflict between mayor and speaker, the mayor often sabotages decisions to allocate certain number of financial

> resources by administration to council. This subsequently causes a rift between council, municipal administration and executive mayor. However, if the municipal administration is also not in good working terms with the mayor, the mayor's attempts to influence such decisions are often thwarted. In turn, this causes further rift between the mayor and municipal administration, though municipal administration would remain in good books with the municipal council. Largely, the battle often arises from disagreements over control of municipal resources".

Certainly, as a result of such distrust of speaker by the mayor, some of the participants revealed that some of the executive mayors in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities often do not use Section 79 committees. Instead, they elaborated that such executive mayors tend to use Section 80 committees because as contrasted to Section 80 committees, Section 79 constitutes of all parties and report directly to council. This contrasts with Section 80 committees that are chaired by a member of the mayoral committee and report directly to municipal executive committee over which the mayor has significant control. Thus, participants reiterated that as contrasted to Section 79 committees, Section 80 committees often provide mayor with control and ability to avoid the speaker's controlled council.

Yet, as the mayor engages in such fights and power struggle, some of the participants revealed that speaker has often reacted by not only creating camps among councillors and administrators, but also resorted to inciting certain groups of activities from the communities. Participants reiterated that speaker tends to point out to the communities that the mayor is failing to deliver on his manifesto and promises that he made to the communities. Given that most of the municipalities in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities are not performing well in terms of service delivery, participants stated that this has often instigated emergence of different service delivery activists as well as different forms of actors. Such different service delivery activists and actors often put significant pressure not only the mayor, but also municipal administration to deliver. Yet, in the context of the meagre municipal financial resources, there is often not much that the mayor and municipal administrators can do. Certainly, as participants highlighted, this illustrates how conflicts between politicians can spill into administration and among certain community actors to undermine municipality's overall effective

performance. Such a view is accentuated in the narratives of one of the participants who noted that:

> "Always challenges between councillors and administrators arise where parties are contesting powers. In a space for councillors to do things, admin must not interfere. But politicians may try to push administrators to do certain things, and administrators may want to play politics in the space which is not theirs. When one tries to do both, councillors become administrators and administrators become councillors, thus creating room for conflicts. If politicians do not play their role and want to be involved in admin processes, conflicts arise."

Spiralling effects of such political fights on municipal administration are further reflected in the findings from interviews in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. In such interview findings, participants stated that as speaker and mayor build different camps to fight each other; even rules on maintaining councillors' code of conduct tend to be relaxed. Yet, it is the speaker that is required by law to ensure councillors' compliance with the established code of conducts. Unfortunately, such relaxation of rules on councillors' code of conduct was found to often pave way for certain individual councillors' encroachment in administrative activities by seeking to influence certain administrative activities.

As participants highlighted, such councillors' encroachments into administrative activities have often entailed attempts by certain councillors to influence certain policy implementation processes, tender decisions or even certain financial decisions made by the CFO in conjunction with municipal manager. Participants elaborated that this often causes further animosities between councillors and administrators because some of the municipal administrators often refuse to be subjected to such councillors' influence as required by law. Such a finding is substantiated in the opinions of one of the interviewed councillors from the opposition stated that:

> "Politically, the rift between the mayor and the speaker is normal because in politics there is need for competition and contestation so as to get the best ideas. Unfortunately, such fights are not always limited to situations where elections are approaching, but also tend to occur through their tenures of office. This affects commitments of different parties to ensure successful service delivery policy

> implementation to meet the different needs of the communities. Fights between mayor and speaker tend to create camps and relaxed approach to managing and controlling councillors from different political parties due to fear of losing political support. Thus, some of the councillors tend to do as they wish of which this often culminates into certain councillors' accomplishment of certain activities that are purely administrative without the intervention of council. Some of the councillors go as far as bypassing normal procedures to instruct the CFO on the number of financial resources that must be allocated for the implementation of certain policies. Others go as far as instructing the CFO and procurement officials to ensure certain businesses win certain tenders. Other chaos is reflected in the instances where some six councillors from a certain party that I will not mention went as far as consuming electricity from ESKOM on credit and accumulated credits that they later refused to pay to the municipality when demanded by municipal administrators. Unfortunately, due to the breakdown of the system, such councillors were not even called to account for such conducts. Generally, this demonstrates the kinds of chaos that municipal political and administrative officials go through in the process of accomplishing different municipal activities."

Certainly, findings imply that complexities of the working relationships between mayor and speaker tend to create hostilities and unfavourable working environment that affects municipal administrators' capabilities to effectively accomplish their administrative and management activities. Yet, as mayor and speaker engage in such politickings, findings imply that they also tend to undermine the political oversight exercised by council over municipal administrative activities. However, findings from interviews in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate that complexities tend not only to arise from mayor-municipal manager rifts and mayor-speaker conflicts, but also from the collusion arising from the municipal political-administrative interface.

5.5.2 Collusion

It emerged from the findings that if politicians are not fighting amongst themselves or with municipal administrators, then they tend to collude with them to leverage or constrain municipality's effective performance. However, most of the interviewed participants highlighted

that such collusions are often aimed at reshaping both municipal political and administrative actors' behaviours towards the direction that aid achievement of certain individuals' interests. Participants elaborated that some of the influential politicians such as the mayor and the speaker, tend to collude with certain key municipal administrators such as municipal manager, the CFO and certain Section 56 managers to aid accomplishment of certain corrupt activities. Such situations were reiterated by most participants to be reflected in the instances where the mayor and speaker has colluded with municipal manager and the CFO to inflate the costs for the implementation of certain projects. In most of the cases, participants revealed that the difference between the actual costs and the inflated costs of the project are shared among such key politicians and administrators. To accomplish this, they explained that mayor and municipal manager and the CFO prepares such projects whose costs are inflated.

The mayor and speaker exert influence over portfolio committees to evaluate and pass the decisions without many queries about the costs or any aspects of the project. Similarly influences of the mayor and speaker are subsequently also exerted over council when it deliberates over such a project. Once the project is approved by council and funds for the implementation of the project are submitted by the CFO, they then tend to share the difference between the actual costs and the inflated costs. As participants revealed, such collusions between politicians and municipal administrators affect the optimisation of the usually limited municipal financial resources to implement as an array of different service delivery programmes as possible. Such a view is succinctly articulated in the opinions of one of the interviewed Section 56 managers who stated that:

> "Controversies do not only arise from fights between politicians and municipal manages, but also from the collusion between them. In certain cases, some key politicians tend to collude with municipal managers to inflate costs of certain projects and manipulate council to approve such projects. Once the project is approved and money is disbursed for their implementation, they tend to pocket the difference. These are the realties that we live with. My view is that most politicians and municipal managers are preoccupied with making money for themselves because they only serve for a limited periods. Some of politicians such as the mayor, the speaker and some councillors only serve for a limited time of five years'

> period and then they are not re-elected and revert back to normal life in the communities. As on the other hand, municipal managers only serve for five years' term that can be or cannot be renewed. So in the limited period there is often a general consensus to make as much money as possible. For councillors, fear of reverting to normal life of poverty among the communities causes them to be more aggressive in seeking how they take all the opportunities to make money. It such common kind of thinking that causes politicians and municipal managers to collude and engage in certain corrupt activities."

Yet, as politicians and municipal managers engage in such corrupt practices, some of the participants revealed that there are instances where the total amount reflecting millions of rands for the implementation of certain projects have been directly pocketed by certain key politicians and municipal administrators. They explained that suck key politicians and municipal managers tend to use such funds for their individual gains even without implementing such projects at all. When it comes to accountability, participants elaborated that since such key politicians such as mayor and speaker often have influence over council and audit committees, they are often able to influence them to keep quiet about such financial improprieties. Participants pointed out that this is reflected in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities where council failed to prey on one of the local municipalities to submit its annual financial statements to Auditor-General and Provincial Treasury for auditing.

Even when auditing is undertaken by Auditor-General to highlight such improprieties, poor governance and poor oversight, participants reiterated that council has often not taken reasonable steps to ensure that actions are taken. In turn, most of the participants revealed that all these have created a culture where corruption tends to thrive not only among key politicians and municipal administrators, but also among the ordinary municipal managers and employees. Yet, as such culture, interview findings indicate that it has often affected effective utilisation of the allocated budgets to implement different service delivery programmes to respond to different demands and needs of the communities. Poor service delivery by municipalities was noted by participants to in turn cause dissatisfactions and discontent among the communities. Combined with incitements from dissatisfied politicians, participants revealed that all these too often instigate service delivery

protests by communities to put pressure on politicians and municipal administrators to respond to community demands.

Unfortunately, as participants indicated, politicians and municipal administrators are often unable to respond to such communities' demands and needs because the funds that could have been used to respond to such needs will have already been swindled through corrupt collusion. It is such collusion that participants highlighted to explain cyclical poor performance and service delivery issues that characterise UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

However, as some of the key politicians and municipal administrators engage in such corrupt collusions, some of the participants noted that some of the relatively ethical politicians and municipal managers tend to stay away from such practices. Participants attributed this to the fact that some politicians fear to engage in such scandals to undermine their future re-election, as some of the managers fear to jeopardize their careers. Such a view is corroborated in the opinions of one of the interviewed municipal managers who stated that:

> "Of course there are tendencies for some politicians and managers to collude, but there are also those that stay away from such practices. Some politicians aim to progress higher in the political structures of the party that they represent, so they fear to invoke scandals that can frustrate re-election and such progress. Some managers fear going to jail to affect their career progress. However, as they stay away, some of the politicians tend to make political capital from such corrupt incidents by exposing such corrupt syndicates. Yet, as they expose such corrupt syndicates, they tend to create a rift between the municipal politicians and managers that are involved in such syndicates and those that are not involved. Subsequently, mistrusts and antagonisms tend to arise to affect the good working relationships not only between politicians, but also between politicians and municipal managers and staff. In turn, this affects the required collaboration between all political and administrative actors to accomplish all required municipal operational and service delivery activities."

Certainly, all these demonstrate the kinds of complexities that can arise from political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors constrain effective accomplishment of municipal activities. However, interview findings revealed that in stances where collusion is not effective, some of the politicians have often dictated to directly interfere in municipal administration and management activities.

5.5.3 Political Interference

Findings from interviews in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities indicate that political interference characterise the process for accomplishing different municipal administration activities. Participants explained that in certain cases, such political interference in administrative activities have created complexities that undermine effective political-administrative interface. Such political interferences were reiterated by participants to occur in the municipal administration areas that pertain to staff recruitment and appointment, awarding of tenders and other financially related decisions.

Even though such situations contravene legal provisions that emphasise the separation of politics from municipal administration, participants stated most politicians still do so. Participants pointed out that it is council that should intervene to avoid such unnecessary political interference in administrative activities. Unfortunately, they revealed that it is council that often instead perpetrates the emergence of such situations. Participants highlighted that such interference is reflected in council tendencies to abuse the mandate allocated to it by law to recruit and appoint municipal manager and senior managers. Participants reiterated that council has often used the recruitment and appointment mandates it is entrusted with as the indirect route to intermeddle in municipal administrative activities. Such a finding is echoed in one of the participant's concerns that:

> "Do away with cadre deployment. You deploy a municipal manager in senior position like the municipal manager, politically he is your chairperson. When you give instructions as the mayor to chairperson, there will be resistance. If you can deal with that, the relationship will be much better. We need to understand that the roles are not the same in the institution. Some are senior than others, and respect will of course be demanded in one way or another. So the epidemic in the entire

> local government system is cadre deployment. If you can do away with cadre deployment and employ people on the basis of merit, I think the working relationship will be far better."

In the exercise of council functions, participants elaborated that council has often been influenced by mayor and other influential municipal politicians to focus on the political ideologies rather than competence, experience and expertise of candidates. Through such approach, participants revealed that it is often more preferable to recruit managers that agree with the prevailing political ideologies rather than someone who will antagonize the political system at the municipal levels. Thus, most of the participants reiterated that most recruitment exercises accomplished by council have often been directed towards recruiting managers who are politically aligned.

As they noted, most politicians construe that this would reduce tensions that can characterise political-administrative interface. Participants further revealed that the use of such approach has enabled council to fill municipal manager and other senior management positions with political cadres, friends or relatives of influential politicians from the communities. Participants explained that it is often such infiltration of politically affiliated managers in municipal administration structures that pave way for politicians to interfere in municipal administrative affairs. Such a finding is corroborated in the opinions of one the interviewed municipal managers who argued that:

> "Entrusting council with appointment of municipal managers and other senior managers was the worst mistake if government aimed to limit political interference in municipal administration activities. Council only tends to appoint managers that are politically aligned to them. With the council constituting of mainly ANC, which implies that most managers are also usually ANC cadres or staunch friends or relatives of ANC politicians. There is nothing like merit that emphasises the need for expertise in that exercise. Hence, when they have created municipal administration structures and management system which are politically aligned to them, they then begin to see how to infiltrate and influence municipal administration and operations. This creates complexities because it tends to appear that it is the same set of people that are in charge of policy formulation and implementation at the same time. If that is the case who then will evaluate their

> performances. No wonder, it is for such reasons that most municipalities in uThukela are performing quite poorly".

Yet, as politicians create such politically aligned municipal management structures, some of the participants revealed that such interference and biasness tend to cascade to the process of recruiting and appointing other lower managers and staffs. Due to such politically aligned municipal management system, participants elaborated that politicians tend to still follow them to influence recruitment and appointment decisions for certain managers, supervisors and staff. Certainly, some of the participants like mayor and speaker stated that the use of such approach is in good faith and it is aimed to minimise risks of conflicts between politicians and municipal administrators. They pointed out that this because people that share similar ideologies are mostly to agree on most policy issues.

As such, they reiterated that the appointment of politically aligned managers is critical for leveraging successful service delivery policy implementation. Unfortunately, some of the interviewed participants expressed contrary views. They explained that even though council attempts to appoint politically aligned managers, in most of the cases, they often emerged to exhibit different forms of management ideologies. In effect, some of the influential politicians' attempts to interfere and influence municipal administration have often been met with resistance from some managers. Such a view is well elaborated in the narratives of one of the participants that reads as:

> "Am representing my own organization that has a manifesto that speaks louder to service delivery. You only need the officials to fast-track or to deliver to the manifesto. So if there is no proper understanding, service delivery may be affected in one way or another. Politicians sometimes feel like they are not team players, they feel like the bosses. That is where the thing starts. You see in an institution like this that you sometimes deal with public money, you are supposed to be a team player. If you are not a team player, you are bound not to be part of the collective. So service delivery is affected in that fashion. If officials want permission to implement certain programmes, politicians may not approve it in the council. Whatever decision is reached, they require officials that are cooperative to implement them. This leads to pulling of ropes that affect service delivery."

Participants pointed out that most of the reasons for politicians' interference in municipal administration are often financially related. Thus, some of the municipal managers as well as senior managers often find some of such reasons to be contrary to the law and advocate for accomplishment of illegal activities whose outcomes can threaten their careers. Participants elaborated that it is such fears that often lure some managers to prevent some politicians from doing as they wish in municipal administration. All these subsequently cause conflicts and incompatibilities between certain politicians and municipal administrators. Such a view is further articulated in the opinions of one of the interviewed Section 56 managers who stated that:

> "Some influential councillors often think that since they are influential in council meetings, they can also influence municipal administration. That is not the cases in certain instances. Most of the municipal managers and senior managers usually change after being confirmed in the positions. Imagine someone convincing you to commit a crime that he or she will later distance himself or herself from it to just destroy your career. That is impossible. In the interactions of municipal managers with politicians, most managers tend to stick to the rules of how certain specific activities must be accomplished. Unfortunately, such approach has often instigated dissatisfactions and lack of cooperation from certain politicians. Hence, they start bad mouthing and tarnishing your image as incompetent and less effective. That is the kind of situation that we work in. But in some cases, some of the managers tend to retaliate to thereby just worsen the situation and affect how activities are accomplished. So in some cases, it is just better to keep quiet and do activities as required".

However, some of the participants noted that municipalities not only struggle with political interference from the internal politicians, but also from the external politicians such as the provincial political system. Participants reiterated that politicians from the provincial government often interfere to exert enormous pressure on municipal administration. Due to their influence on municipalities, some of the participants revealed that some of the municipal politicians often use such politicians to push their agenda forward.

Hence, due to the power the provincial political officials hold, most of the municipal managers are often swayed to comply with their directives even if they contradict the law. However, in the event

that municipal manager turns as persistently uncooperative, some of the participants stated that such influential provincial politicians often not only bad mouth, but also engineer how council can be influenced not to renew such managers' contracts after the expiry of existing five years' contracts. In other cases, participants reiterated that crossing the path of some provincial politicians have caused the firing of some managers. The influence of provincial administration on municipal political and administrative leadership was highlighted by one of the participants who stated that:

> "Hierarchy of service delivery is too long. There is national, provincial, district and local. Minimize the hierarchy by doing away with district municipality and send all duties to the local municipalities because councillors suffer most. Do away with provincial structures to remain only with national and local. Monies getting lost will be saved."

Yet, as both the provincial and municipal politicians engage in such practices, they explained that it tends to cause complexities, incompatibilities and conflicts that undermine municipal capacity to effectively accomplish the required activities. Participants reiterated that as most valuable managers are fired or even frustrated by politicians, it tends to affect such manager's commitment to perform effectively. Yet, as they noted, political interference that affect tender decisions often affect the allocation of tenders to competent and qualified businesses. All these were reiterated by participants to affect service delivery to the local communities that in turn fight back by mobilizing against local municipalities.

Participants revealed the unfolding of such situations to cause some politicians to seize the opportunities to build political capital by pointing out to the communities that the municipality is doing nothing for them. Such politicians' quests to prove relevant to local communities have often caused the emergence of different community activities and actors such as citizen advocacy groups, service delivery activists and political. Such actors were noted by participants to put pressure on municipal administration to deliver even in the midst of acute absence of the required financial resources. Yet, as politicians interfere in administrative activities, some participants noted that it affects service delivery. Such a view is substantiated in one of the participant's narratives that states:

> "It does have impact on service delivery. Let me make a practicable example if politician force you to appoint somebody that is not competent in whatever position, then the municipality has already compromised the service delivery. Remember the politician will tell you that we got our own person to be appointed in that particular position because they will say that they are strengthening or enhancing their position as the people who are in charge. In the process if that happens, it will definitely weaken service delivery because that is never about service delivery but enhancing their political position in the municipality. Yes, it does have a negative influence and a negative output."

Even though political interference induces such complex situations, some of the participants revealed that some of the politicians often indirectly interfere in municipal administration. They stated that this is often common in tender decisions, where some of the politicians front some of the businesses that they benefit from to exert pressure or even bribe municipal authorities to allocate tenders to them as they mount political pressure. Participants revealed, this has often caused the emergence of the situation and thinking in which some of the businesses perceive that it is only them that are entitled to all the tenders allocated by certain municipalities in UThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

Due to such thinking of entitlement, they often turn to litigation when they are not awarded such tenders. As such litigations unfold and frustrate the accomplishment of certain projects; such businesses tend to also incite certain councillors against certain municipal managers. Participants noted that all these often cause chaos and complexities that hamper municipality's capabilities to accomplish the required activities and achieve desired service delivery outcomes. Such a view is summed in one of the narratives that states that:

> "If managers have a programme time table with how he or she wants to deal with service delivery in the ward, the councillors can come and want to change based on their political views or perspectives where the plan that was depicted by the manager was based on pure service delivery having gone through the dynamics of the municipality in terms of equipment, capacity and finances, and then councillors just come with what they want to see happening not based on knowledge of the

administration. But just their wishes, so it has that negative impact on service delivery."

In otherwords, it is apparent that in Section A, findings indicated critical political actors and their interactive activities to encompass the mayor that accomplishes dual political and administrative functions and municipal council as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles. Further thematic analysis also highlights the speaker as one of the critical political actors that acts as council speaker as well as an influential individual politician. Findings also herald councillors as critical individual political actors that either leverage municipality's effective performance or compound the already complex political and administrative interface at uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

In Section B, interviews revealed certain critical municipal administrative and management actors as well as their interactive activities to encompass municipal manager, chief financial officer and Section 56 managers in different municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. For Section C, findings indicate the other critical actors and their interactive activities that are operative in uThukela to encompass certain community activists as well as business actors.

From the analysis of the findings, it is evident that the interactive political-administrative interface is critical for leveraging effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. However, as it emerged from the analysis of the findings in Section D, it was still evident that such actors' interactive activities also often induce certain complexities that constrain performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Findings indicated complexities of political-administrative interface and their impacts in the increasingly Polycentric UThukela District Municipality's System to emerge from certain antagonistic activities reflecting mayor-municipal manager rifts and mayor-speaker rifts. Analysis of mayor-municipal manager rifts implies complexities arise not only from the antagonistic roles accomplished by political and administrative officials, but also from between politicians themselves. Evaluation of mayor-speaker rifts indicates complexities of the working relationships between mayor and speaker to create hostilities and unfavourable working environment that affect municipal administrators' capabilities to effectively accomplish their administrative and management activities. Besides

complexities of mayor-municipal manager and mayor-speaker rifts, findings also indicated complexities to arise from political and municipal administrators' tendencies to collude to constrain municipality's effective performance.

As on the other hand, complexities were also reiterated to arise from the increasing political interference in the municipal administration and management areas that pertain to staff recruitment and appointment, tender management and certain financially related decisions. All these were found to integrate with the complexities created by certain community activists as well as business actors' interactive activities to constrain the already complex political-administrative interface in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. To deal with these complexities, findings imply that some remedial strategies have been adopted. However, the extent to which are or are not effective can only be understood after the evaluation of the findings in the next section.

5.6 SECTION E: APPROACHES FOR MANAGING COMPLEXITIES OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY'S SYSTEM

Given the complexities analysed in the previous sections, analysis in this section is aligned to the fifth research objective and questions. It is the final analysis and it is aimed at evaluating effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-a-vis other actors in the increasingly polycentric uThukela district municipality's system. Themes emerging from interview narratives indicate that municipalities in uThukela use a combination of certain approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative interface in conjunction with certain approaches managing complexities of other actors' interactive activities. Through the use of such approaches, findings imply that municipalities in uThukela are not only able to manage complexities of political-administrative, but also link political-administrative interface with other critical local communities' actors' interactive activities. All these were found to combine to induce outcomes that leverage the overall effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

5.6.1 Managing Complexities of Political-Administrative Interface

Findings indicated that some of the approaches that have been adopted for managing complexities of political-administrative interface in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities entail the use of a combination of certain measures. These measures were reiterated by participants to include prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices, enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct, abolition of speaker's office, streamlining relationship between the mayor and municipal manager and use of relevant laws to manage collusions leading to corruption.

Regarding prohibition of political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices, some of the participants elaborated that council is increasingly taking all the steps to ensure that existing political office-holders are not appointed as municipal managers in any municipality in uThukela. They revealed that this applies to all the potential candidates that are permanent, temporary or just acting political office-holders. But some participants noted that there are still frequencies of political deployments, as one of the participants explained that:

> "Deployees that occupy high positions in the political structure tend to report to the manager and also do outside reporting to the political structure that he/she heads. This causes confusion and conflicts that affect service delivery since deployees have different mindsets from the employees that came through valid CV's".

In the attempts to address such situations, some of the participants pointed out that municipalities are attempting to comply with the provision of Section 56A of Municipal Systems Act 2000. They explained that Section 56A emphasises the need for avoiding appointment of the existing political office-holders as municipal managers irrespective of whether they are permanent, temporary or just acting. Participants stated that the application of such legislative provision has enabled municipalities in uThukela avoid recruitment and appointment of political office-holders as municipal managers. To some extent, they revealed that it has limited political interference into municipal administration. Such a finding is reflected in one of the participant's views that:

> "New council have been given a booklet of laws and policies that prevent interference with administration work. But I suggest there must also be constant training so that councillors understand their roles to avoid interference".

However, some of the interviewed participants highlighted that such approach has not been effective because it does not limit staunch and influential political cadres from being appointed. Thus, they stated that council has often still used such loopholes to enable certain qualified political cadres find their way into municipal administrative and management positions. Such a view is echoed in the opinions of one of the interviewed councillors who stated that:

> "The application of Section 56A has been effective for limiting the appointment of existing political office-holders as municipal managers. Unlike in the past where existing political office-holders were appointed as municipal managers, the situation is now better as compared to the past. But the problem is that the law does not constrain previous political office holders from being appointed as municipal managers. Thus, most of the politicians after losing their official positions tend to search for jobs in municipalities and subsequently get appointed. This is just the same as appointing existing political office-holders because such previous political office-holders who are appointed as municipal managers come with the political influence and networks of their previous offices. This often causes them to accomplish municipal administrative activities politically rather than administratively to thereby cause the kinds of conflicts and complexities that were presently experiencing. At the same time, Section 56 A also does not deal with the issues of influential political cadres who are not political office-holders from being appointed as municipal managers. That also causes a problem."

Just like such participant's views, some of the participants also explained that such a law only applies to municipal managers and senior managers and not to lower level managers, supervisors and staff. Such participants argued that this reflected in the fact that since ward committee members more or less work on part-time basis, they tend to take such political jobs as well as certain municipal jobs. It is that kinds of staffs that were reiterated by some of the participants to be the main causers of the politicisation of municipal administration. Despite such views, some of the participants pointed out that prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal

administrative offices is strongly being accompanied with the enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct, abolition of speaker's office across uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Participants elaborated that this is due to the increasing councillors' interference in municipal administrative activities.

Thus, they stated that council is taking stronger steps to ensure that councillors' Code of Conduct is effectively enforced. However, some of the participants noted that there is still a challenge of enforcing councillors' Code of Conduct. They elaborated that the enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct is in certain cases selective. If the situation involves influential councillor, participants revealed that not much initiative is undertaken to apply councillors' Code of Conduct in such situations. At the same time, some of the participants revealed that since some councillors often act in cohort with influential political figures such as mayor or speaker, it is difficult to get council which is dominated by such influential political figures to hold them to account. Such a view is echoed in the opinions of one of the participants who is also a councillor from opposition political party who stated that:

> "Existence of councillors' Code of Conduct is just a formality. It is not applied in all situations. This is because influential councillors are not prevented and sanctioned for interfering with municipal administration as other less influential councillors are barred and sanctioned. Hence, if you assess it critically, you can find that it does not help deal with the complexities of political interference that certain uThukela municipalities face".

Meanwhile in addition to stronger enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct, some of the participants stated that it had sometimes in the past been suggested by some municipalities in uThukela that speaker's office should be abolished. Participants reiterated that such suggestions were common in local municipalities that were experiencing turbulence in the relationship of the speaker with executive mayor. They explained that such a move was interpreted to aid the creation of a more harmonious municipal working environment where the executive mayor is in charge of municipal executive and council.

However, some of the participants highlighted that due to the influence that the speaker has among councillors, such proposition provoked protests from some councillors. Thus, it was abandoned.

Other participants however pointed out that the adoption of such suggestion would leave the activities of the executive mayor unchecked. They reason that it is the council headed by speaker that can effectively hold mayor accountable as contrasted to the situation where executive mayor is the overall boss of the executive and head of council. As efforts are undertaken to minimise political interference in administration, some of the participants also suggested that measures must also be adopted to prevent administrators' intermeddling in political affairs. Such a view is reflected in one of the participant's statement that:

> "Refresher courses must be introduced for councillors not to cross the line and frequent training for councillors. But administrators must also be informed and trained frequently to avoid playing politics and be neutral, because if known to be a member of a particular party, it affects the ability of the councillors of other political parties to work with you. This can create chaos that affect the good working relationship".

Besides such a view, some of the participants highlighted that there have also been significant steps taken by some of the municipalities in uThukela to streamline relationship between the mayor and municipal manager. To enhance the creation of amicable working relationship between the mayor and municipal manager, they elaborated that such initiatives had emphasised that the executive mayor must focus on political oversight and avoid direct intervention in policy implementation.

As on the other hand, the same initiative stressed the need for municipal manager to focus on working in cohort with his senior managers to implement different policies and report to municipal mayor and council as required by the law. Some participants noted that such initiative enhanced minimisation of hostilities between the mayor and municipal manager. As some of the participants stated that improvement of the working relationship between politicians and administrators impact positively on better service delivery, one of them explained that:

> "In the event of conflicts between politicians and administrators, budgets not approved to induce a big impact that hinders service delivery. Policies are not approved and hence projects cannot take off because SDBIP is not approved. Lack

> of consensus affect the service delivery, and thus politicians must play their oversight roles and administrators must also do theirs".

However, other interviewed participants revealed that hostilities still continue to exist between the executive mayor and municipal manager as executive mayor still continues to interfere with municipal operations and certain policy implementation processes. Such a view is echoed in the opinions of one of the interviewed municipal managers who revealed that:

> "In certain instances, the municipal mayor and municipal manager have often reached a common understanding whereas, as required by law, the executive mayor focuses on policy formulation in consultation with municipal manager and municipal manager focuses on policy implementation and reports to council and executive mayor. But such common understanding was only temporary as the executive mayor intervened. I mean there are certain critical policy implementation processes that executive mayor cannot avoid intervening in and that is always the source of the problem. Then, you have instances where certain mayors have certain financial interests that municipal manager is not willing to pay attention to. All these combined with personality differences and differences in the management values cherished by the two actors often cause frictions and complexities between the executive mayor and municipal manager's activities".

Yet, as such approach fails to deal with the complexities between municipal mayor-municipal manager's interfaces; participants also revealed that there have been attempts to use relevant existing laws to manage collusions leading to corruption. Participants reiterated that due to pressure from the provincial government, there has been increasing attempts to avoid corrupt collusions and to apply the law to deal with corruption incidents arising from such collusions. However, some of the participants revealed that such initiatives are not effective because damage has already been done and some of the colluding culprits have already left the municipality. On the other hand, some of the participants highlighted that despite such initiatives, collusion still tend to occur quite quietly in some of the municipalities in uThukela. They explained that it is the failure of such initiative that explains why some of the municipalities in uThukela still continue to receive qualified audit reports and fail to optimise the limited financial resources to deal with increasing service delivery crisis in uThukela.

Nonetheless, findings imply that some of the approaches that have been for adopted for managing complexities of political-administrative interface in uThukela encompass prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices, enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct, abolition of speaker's office, streamlining relationship between the mayor and municipal manager and use of relevant laws to manage collusions leading to corruption.

However, as findings indicate, political-administrative interface in uThukela was still found to induce certain complexities that undermine effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. That implies such approaches have not been effective for managing the complexities that uThukela experiences. However, even in the midst of the ineffectiveness of such strategies, interview narratives still indicated that certain approaches have also been adopted for managing the complexities arising from other actors' interactive activities and their linkage to political-administrative interface in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities.

5.6.2 Managing Complexities of Other Actors' Interactive Activities

To ensure that different other actors seamlessly integrate with political-administrative interface in uThukela, thematic analysis of the interview findings indicate that measures that have been used encompass individual petitions, questions and requests to council as well as public meetings and forums, use of ward committees and community consultation and engagement. Participants reiterated that these measures are critical for minimising the risks of interference and protests from different actors from the communities.

They explained that through individual petitions, councillors or individual community members are permitted to petition municipal authorities that is councillors or even municipal manager about the policy areas with which they are dissatisfied. Participants elaborated that this enables council and municipal manager to identify and correct certain policy implementation issues. However, as contrasted to petitions that allow integration of the exact needs and preferences of the communities into council and municipal manager's decisions, participants revealed that questions to council are only used by individual councillors. They stated that questions to council are used by individual councillors to probe and explore clarifications from council about certain policy decisions.

Participants revealed that it allows individual councillors to raise issues with council about the issues affecting their individual communities, but it does not allow individual community actors to use such approach. Participants reiterated this to be attributable to the fact that it is only councillors not individual community members that have right of audience with council. Besides question to council, participants revealed that individual councillors also use requests to engage relevant municipal authority be it political or administrative official to take the initiative to address the challenge in a particular ward.

Participants stated that in the case of eventualities or disaster in a particular ward, the councillor of that ward can request the concerned municipal administration department to respond to such eventualities or disaster. That implies concerned community actors can only act through the councillor of their ward to get a particular problem addressed. However, some of the participants argued that petitions, questions and requests to council does not effectively enable different actors from the communities to directly deal with council and municipal administration. Apart from petitions to council that community actors can use directly to petition council, questions and requests to council were reiterated by council to be only limited to individual councillors.

Yet, at the same time participants noted that requests have often been abused by some councillors as such requests offer leeway for individual councillors to intervene and put pressure on municipal administration. They explained that this is attributable to the fact that in certain cases, individual councillors may make such a request to municipal administration, but municipal administration may lack the necessary resources to respond immediately.

In certain instances, participants revealed that municipal administration's effective response to such eventualities may require municipal administration to work with the province that often delays responding. It is such delays that participants highlighted to often cause anxiety, friction and complexities of the relationship between certain individual councillors and certain municipal administration departments. Such a view is accentuated in the opinions of one of the interviewed councillors who stated that:

> "Generally, individual community members or councillors can use petition to council, questions and requests to directly engage council or municipal administration. But petitions to council are usually used by individual community

> members or councillors, as questions and requests are only used by individual councillors. So for individual community members to get their questions and requests through to municipal council or administration, they can only go through the councillors of their wards. That limits some of the individual community members' abilities to directly deal with council or municipal administration. The problem especially with requests is the fact that some councillors have broadly interpreted its relevance to also broadly use requests in a wide range of situations even if such situations may not require immediate attention of municipal administration. Given the increasing political interference in administrative activities, some councillors usually broadly use such requests as mechanisms for getting to certain municipal administration departments to influence certain decisions. If in response such municipal administration department is not well receptive of such councillor's requests, it tends to cause friction that affect developing and nurturing of good relationships between politicians and senior managers."

To circumvent such limitations, some of the interviewed participants also revealed that some of the municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities also tend to use public meetings and forums. Participants explained that public meetings and forums are often used by a group of councillors, mayor and even the municipal manager to directly engage with the communities and understand their needs and preferences. Narratives from participants indicate that public meetings and forums are used in conjunction with ward committees to directly engage different community actors. Through such approach, some of the participants elaborated that politicians and municipal administration have often been able to deal with certain challenges that the local communities are facing. However, some of the participants highlighted that when it comes to certain perennial problems such as the ongoing perennial problems of water, electricity and housing issues that the local communities in uThukela are facing, most of the politicians and municipal administrators have often been reluctant to directly meet the local communities.

Participants attributed such approach to the fact that there are certain problems that the municipality cannot solve without the intervention of the national and provincial government.

Since local politicians and municipal administrators do not have solutions to such problems, they then tend to avoid directly meeting the communities on such issues. Such a view is substantiated in the opinions of one of the interviewed Section 56 managers who stated that:

> "Of course frequent public meetings and forums are held directly with the communities through their ward committees by politicians and municipal managers. But the problem is that municipal managers and local politicians are usually unable to solve some of the problems raised by the communities. We can solve certain problems, but not some of the problems like water and issues that has been there throughout the tenures of the several previous politicians and managers' tenures. This is because problems like water and housing issues are beyond our capacity and require the intervention of national or provincial governments".

Such a view certainly echoes the narratives of some of the participants who noted that some of public meetings and forums with the local communities are just undertaken by politicians and municipal managers as mere formalities. Participants also noted such formalities to apply in instances of community consultation and engagement which are often undertaken by politicians and municipal managers without the real intention or capacity to address some of the challenges that local communities are raising.

Since such approach has been going on for some time; participants revealed that it has caused a section of certain communities to avoid public meetings and forums as well as other community engagement programmes initiated by the municipality because they feel that such meetings and engagement will not induce any positive outcomes. As participants elaborated, all these subsequently cause cyclical dissatisfactions of the local communities with uThukela's municipalities service delivery commitments to thereby instigate hostilities and complexities in the relationships between the local municipalities and local communities.

Despite such challenges, findings still imply that to ensure that different other actors from the local communities seamlessly integrate with political-administrative interface in uThukela; measures that have been used encompass individual petitions, questions and requests to council. Findings also revealed politicians and municipal managers to use public meetings and forums, use of ward committees and community consultation and engagement. Even though to some extent, such

measures were found to aid integration of different community actors' interactive activities with political-administrative interface; it was still evident that some of such measures also have certain inherent limitations. Such inherent limitations were found to constrain effective mitigation of the complexities of other local communities' interactive activities vis-à-vis political-administrative interface in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. In situations of deployment without proper qualifications, one of the participants suggested that:

> "For deployment of people that do not have proper qualifications, councillors need to understand that this is an organization and exclude it from politicking. Councillors must focus on creating job opportunities for the communities instead of trying to coerce municipality to employ the community members".

Certainly, as findings indicated, these illustrate why politicians and municipal administrators still struggle to effectively respond to the needs and preferences of the local communities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. Generally, themes emerging from interview narratives in this section indicate that municipalities in uThukela use a combination of certain approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative interface in conjunction with certain approaches managing complexities of other actors' interactive activities. Through the use of such approaches, findings imply that municipalities in uThukela are not only able to manage complexities of political-administrative, but also link political-administrative interface with other critical local communities' actors' interactive activities. All these were found to combine to induce the desired outcomes that leverage the overall effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. For the approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative, interview narratives indicate that the measures used encompass prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices and enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct.

Other measures were reiterated to include abolition of speaker's office, streamlining relationship between the mayor and municipal manager and use of relevant laws to manage collusions leading to corruption. On the other hand, to ensure that different other actors seamlessly integrate with political-administrative interface in uThukela, thematic analysis of the interview findings indicate that the measures used to encompass individual petitions, questions and requests to council as well

as public meetings and forums, use of ward committees and community consultation and engagement. However, despite the use of such measures, findings still imply that such approaches are associated with certain inherent limitations that still constrain their effectiveness to manage the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors in uThukela.

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Findings imply that besides political-administrative interface, municipal systems constituting of its political and administrative systems also link with other critical actors to either leverage or even constrain municipality's overall effective performance. In political-administrative interface, findings indicated critical political actors and their interactive activities to encompass the mayor that accomplishes dual political and administrative functions and municipal council as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles. Further thematic analysis also highlight speaker as one of the critical political actors that acts as council speaker as well as an influential individual politician.

Findings also herald councillors as critical individual political actors that either leverage municipality's effective performance or compound the already complex political and administrative interface at uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. In their narratives, participants explained that the executive mayor is not only the political head of the municipality, but also the political and administrative link between the municipality and the communities. In addition to that, findings indicated that the mayor also links municipal authorities with the provincial government. Regarding the mayor's role as the political head of the municipality, different participants reiterated that the mayor who is elected by the majority of the councillors in the council meeting takes leadership of all the councillors as well as the governance of different municipal activities upon election.

As the mayor accomplishes his political functions, he also tends to accomplish certainly inherently administrative activities. Such administrative activities were reiterated to encompass developing and implementing municipal strategies, programmes and services to respond to the needs of the communities. During and after the accomplishment of such activities, the mayor liaises and interacts with municipal council. However, findings revealed that just like the mayor, the municipal council also emerged from the findings as an institutional actor that accomplishes both

legislative and executive roles to influence or even in certain cases constrain both the political and administrative activities at the district and local municipal levels.

To identify the more comprehensive systems model that can be extracted and adopted, the discussions in the next chapter compare these findings with the theories and literature on managing complex local governance systems in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS AND LINKING TO THEORIES AND LITERATURE IN CHAPTER 2 OF THIS THESIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Discussions in this chapter evaluate findings against theories and the literature on systems approaches for managing complex local governance systems discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Such discussions are in the context of the overriding aim of this research, which is indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis to entail the use of systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-a-vis other actors in the polycentric uThukela District Municipality.

Through such analysis, the study aims to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the uThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance. Thus, discussions in this chapter are structured according to three sections that encompass the uThukela District Municipality as a system, complexities in the UThukela District Municipality as a system and managing complexities in the uThukela District Municipality as a system.

The first section was aligned to the first, second and third research objectives and questions and was aimed at using systems theory to evaluate how different political and municipal administrators, vis-à-vis other actors, interact in the uThukela District Municipality as a system. The second section of the discussions was aligned to the fourth research objective and question and aimed to use systems theory to diagnose against theories the kinds of complexities that existed in the uThukela District Municipality as a system.

The third section was aligned to the fifth research objective and question and it aimed to use systems theory to evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches for managing the complexities in the uThukela District Municipality as a system. The study was able to respond to its critical research objectives and questions by evaluating and discussing these findings against theories and

the literature on systems approaches for managing complex local governance systems as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

6.2 UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY AS A SYSTEM

It was evident from the findings that, despite certain limitations, the uThukela District Municipality still tends to operate as a system constituting different interactive actors, rules and subsystems. Such a finding was certainly consonant with the notion of a "system" as defined in theories and literature. After extensive research on theories and literature specific to a definition of a system, Boulding (1956), in a study titled *"General Systems Theory: The Skeleton of Science",* defined a "system" as an "assemblage of objects or ideas unified in some form of regular interaction and interdependence forming a unified, organic and an organised whole" (Lai, She & Ye, 2015:49).

The findings imply that, besides political-administrative interface, the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" also constitutes other subsystems that are reflected in the form of Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. These subsystems, which are located in municipalities, interact with each other as well as the district municipality as the main system to determine the kinds of services that must be conceptualised and delivered to local communities in uThukela. The participants' narratives further reinforce this view that since the uThukela District Municipality is a district municipality; its council constitutes of both elected councillors and the councillors that represent local municipalities in its area.

Elected councillors in the district council are noted by participants to constitute 40% of the district councillors and are elected using proportional representation ballot by all voters in the area. Whereas councillors that represent local municipalities are expected to influence policies at the uThukela District Council, they are also, at the same time, required to report to their individual local municipalities. This exemplifies the interactive relationships between the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as subsystems. Yet, in the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and in each of these local municipalities as subsystems, it was also found that such a "system" and its "subsystems" constitute different other subsystems reflecting certain critical actors who influence how municipal activities are accomplished.

Such a finding seems to pair well with the approach in systems theory in which Poole (2014:49) posits organisations as being analogous to systems that constitute different internal interactive subsystems and actors that also influence or are instead influenced by certain external actors. Interactive relationships between these subsystems and actors influence the emergence of certain emergent properties reflecting an organisation's critical features and characteristics. Using such systems reasoning, the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as "subsystems" were found to comprise certain internal and administrative subsystems that also interact with certain external subsystems in the accomplishment of their activities. In other words, the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and each of these local municipalities as subsystems tend to exhibit certain political and administrative subsystems that also link with other external critical actors to instigate the emergence of certain emergent properties or features that either leverage or even constrain the municipality's overall effective performance.

In such political subsystems, findings indicated critical political actors and their interactive activities to include the mayor who accomplishes dual political and administrative functions and a municipal council as an institutional actor that performs both legislative and executive roles. Further thematic analysis also highlights the speaker as one of the critical political actors that acts as council speaker as well as an influential individual politician. The findings also herald councillors as critical individual political actors that either leverage a municipality's effective performance or compound the already complex political and administrative interface at uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

In contrast to such municipal political subsystems, uThukela and its constituent local municipalities were also found to have administrative subsystems that constitute critical municipal administrative and management actors as well as their interactive activities. It was reiterated that critical municipal administration and management actors include municipal managers, chief financial officers and Section 56 managers in different municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. These political and administrative actors in the municipality's political and administrative subsystems tend to interact with each other to influence the successful formulation and implementation of different service delivery policies. However, as actors in such political and administrative subsystems interact with

each other, they were also found to interact with certain other critical actors like certain community activists as well as business actors.

Compared with systems logic, such a view echoes Ice and Cooper's (2010:5) assertions that as an organisation as a "system" is influenced by the outcomes of its internal subsystems, it also tends to be affected by certain forces in the external systems. This enables management to respond by maintaining a stable dynamic state of homeostasis which is favourable for an organisation to successfully conceptualise and apply a combination of the required policies and strategies to achieve the desired outcomes (Brummans et al.,2014:173).

In uThukela and its local municipalities as subsystems, such external pressure was reflected in the increasing tendencies of different groups of community activists to increasingly emerge and put enormous pressure on municipal authorities to respond to their needs. Different community pressure groups of actors from external systems were reiterated to put pressure and seek to influence certain influential councillors as well as mayors and municipal administrators to urge them to take actions to ensure that their needs and preferences are met. To therefore maintain uThukela and its local municipalities' stable dynamic state of equilibrium and homeostasis, findings indicated the mayor should act in the context of such demands from the external communities' actors as well as in line with the national and provincial growth strategies and policies to craft the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP).

In the accomplishment of such activities, the mayor was noted in the interview narratives to either delegate them to the municipal manager or work collaboratively with the municipal manager as a central actor in the municipal administrative subsystem. After collaboration between the mayor and municipal manager, the mayor was noted to submit the policy plans and budgets to portfolio committees for evaluation and the necessary corrections. Subsequently, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) are submitted to the council as one of the critical actors in the municipal political subsystem for approval. The approved IDP and SDBIP, as well as other policies, are subsequently embraced and implemented by the municipal administrative subsystem to influence how its entire municipal system's activities must be accomplished to respond to the service delivery needs of the

communities. Thus, the municipal administrative subsystem is only expected to embrace and implement policies adopted by the municipal political administrative subsystem.

However, despite that, it was still evident from the findings that, as is typical in every "system", the municipal administrative subsystem was also found to interactively influence the municipal political subsystem through the offered technical advice. The municipal manager and his Section 56 managers as critical actors in the municipal political subsystem were consulted and found to offer different technical advice to the mayor and council as actors in the municipal political subsystem. The interactive approach was found to create technical paths for the municipal manager and his Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and other Section 56 managers to influence certain council's policy decisions. Most of the participants revealed that CFO's decisions and inputs in the form of advice often not only influenced the municipal manager's decisions, but also indirectly influenced the council's and the mayor's decisions.

Using his financial experience and expertise, the CFO is often brought in, either directly or indirectly, through the municipal manager to advise on the feasibility of certain service delivery policy projects in the context of the available and anticipated financial resources of the municipality. Besides the CFO, the municipal manager, as the central administrative actor, was assisted by a network of certain Section 56 managers, which was found to be a critical municipal administrative actor that reflects the core of the municipal technical and bureaucratic system that determines the municipality's effective operation.

It was reiterated that Section 56 managers not only accomplish the required technical municipal activities but also advise the municipal manager who, in turn advises the council and mayor. Thus, such Section 56 managers tend to indirectly influence policy formulation and implementation decisions. At the same time, in a more interactive approach by the uThukela District Municipality as a "system", the mayor, council and individual councillors were also found to engage in the monitoring and evaluation of the processes for the implementation of different service delivery policies to influence the technical policy implementation decisions undertaken by council as well as the municipal administrative subsystem. In the context of systems theory as Brummans et al. (2014:173) articulate, these actions illustrate the kinds of interactive interface that occurs between different actors in the Thukela District Municipality's political and administrative subsystems to deliver and achieve desired service delivery outcomes.

Certainly, it was clear that most politicians and municipal managers do not understand or even know what systems thinking connote. But it was also equally and implicitly evident from the behaviours and practices reflected in such political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other communities' demands in the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" that such behaviours and practices are also in tandem with the systems reasoning in Easton's (1953) "Political Systems Theory". Due to the interaction and inter-relatedness of the political system to its environment or external systems, Easton (1953), as cited in Lartey (2020:44), argues that policy inputs are drawn and processed by the political system into policy decisions that produce outputs that are reflected in the promulgation of different laws, rules, judicial decisions, policy implementation, positive policy outcomes and improved service delivery.

It is through such policy outputs that a political system is able to respond to the pressure and demands from its citizens (Fornasier & Franklin, 2019:327). Such thinking in Easton's (1953) "Political Systems Theory" is reflected in the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its local municipalities as subsystems. It was also evident using systems thinking that as political actors interact with administrative actors in the uThukela District as a "system", they also tend to draw the inputs for different policy decisions from the external actors that comprise local communities' actors as well as inputs from national and provincial governments as reflected in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Provincial Growth and Development Plan-PGDP.

Subsequently, such inputs are transformed through council decisions that reflect policies adopted and implemented by municipal administrative actors to provide the required services to the local communities that previously provided such policy inputs. For as long as they continue to exist as municipalities, it also appears uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its local municipalities as subsystems tend to engage in such cyclical processes. Such cyclical processes not only subscribe to Easton's (1953) "Political Systems Theory", but also reflect uThukela's process of getting policy inputs from local communities and processing such inputs into policies that are in turn provided through the required services to the local communities. These coherent political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other community actors were reiterated by interview narratives to have aided the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as "subsystems" to deliver the required services to the communities.

However, such coherency of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other community actors was only found to exist to a limited extent. Instead, the findings indicated the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its local municipalities as "subsystems" exhibit certain incompatibilities, conflicts and antagonisms that create complexities that threaten uThukela's performance as a "system". Some of these complexities were reiterated to emerge from a stronger emphasis on the political-administrative dichotomy in which the supremacy of politicians was emphasised above the value of municipal administrators and managers.

6.2.1 Over-Emphasised Political Supremacy

A thorough analysis of the findings implies that performance of uThukela as a "system" and its local municipalities as "subsystems" to leverage the achievement of certain desired service delivery outcomes is only effective to a limited extent. This is because it emerged from the findings that there is stronger emphasis on the political-administrative dichotomy in which the supremacy of municipal politicians is over-emphasised at the expense of the municipal administrators. In this stronger emphasis of the political-administrative dichotomy, the mayor and council as critical political actors in uThukela's political subsystem tend not only to engage in policy formulation decisions, but also in policy implementation decisions.

In this dichotomy, uThukela's political subsystems tend to over-dominate its administrative subsystems. Yet, in a typical systems-thinking-based organisation, Miller and Sydney (2017:5) emphasise that subsystems and their constituent parts or actors must coherently interact with each other in order to operate efficiently, economically and effectively to achieve desired outcomes. In other words, the use of political-administrative dichotomy distorts the capabilities of the uThukela District Municipality and its local municipalities to operate as a "system" and "subsystems" respectively. This is reflected in the findings that indicate the mayor and council tend to over-dominate not only municipal policy formulation but also its implementation.

These are often undertaken in conjunction with the accomplishment of certain purely municipal administrative activities. Regarding the mayor's role as the political head of the municipality's political subsystem, different participants reiterated that the mayor, who is elected by the majority of the councillors in the council meeting, takes leadership of all the councillors as well as the governance and administration of different municipal activities upon election. As the mayor

accomplishes his political functions, he also tends to accomplish inherently administrative activities. Such administrative activities were reiterated to encompass developing and implementing municipal strategies, programmes and services to respond to the needs of the communities.

During and after the accomplishment of such activities, the mayor liaises and interacts with the municipal council. However, the findings revealed that just like the mayor, the municipal council also emerged from the findings as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles to influence or even, in certain cases, constrain both the political and administrative activities at the district and local municipal levels. Participants also noted that the council has been engaged in budgeting and planning formulation and implementation processes to respond to the critical priorities of the local communities.

Despite infringing on municipal administration activities, the findings also reveal such initiatives should be accompanied with frequent reviews of such budget and policy implementation to assess the improvements that can be undertaken by council to enable the municipality influence socio-economic transformation and development of the local communities. Certainly, all these activities infringe on municipal administrative activities. The approach used by the mayor and council not only defies the logic in systems theory, but also the reasoning in the foundational theory of public administration.

In terms of the foundational theory of public administration, it is evident that municipalities in uThukela subscribe to the political-administrative dichotomy, but it is also evident at the same time that such municipalities over-emphasise politicians' influence as contrasted to administrators' influence. As cited in Sancino et al. (2018:5), Wilson's (1887) dichotomy theory emphasises the need for the separation of politics and administration. In the distinction between politics and administration, he proposes that politics must be limited to setting a vision and activities or tasks that must be executed by administration as the technical branch of public administration as a system to enhance the achievement of the desired outcomes. This implies that as politics is devoted to policy formulation and decisions, administration should be dedicated to the execution and implementation of such policies.

In the accomplishment of such activities, it is quite evident that Wilson's (1887) dichotomy theory did not anticipate at any point a situation where political systems would dominate and influence administrative systems. Instead, he seems to envisage a public administration system in which politicians and administrators exist collaboratively. Unfortunately, political authorities in the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as "subsystems" seem to be using a contrary approach. Yet, as cited in Sancino et al. (2018:5), Wilson's (1887) dichotomy theory seems to have been based on the fundamental reasoning that the delineation of the authorities and responsibilities between politics and administration would leverage the effectiveness and efficiency of government institutions to achieve the desired outcomes.

The separation of authorities and responsibilities aids checks and balances to leverage efficient, economical and effective completion of activities required to achieve desired outcomes. Thus, with politicians dominating uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities, it is not surprising that authors such as Ngamlana (2011:13) and Surty (2010:98) note that such situations have deprived effective collaboration between municipal politicians and administrators. In turn, this undermines effective utilisation of different skills and expertise offered by different municipal administrators.

Such negative outcomes of political infiltration into municipal administration are also noted by Surty (2010:98) to have affected the effectiveness of oversight committees. The emergence of such situations has undermined the effective utilisation of committees as mechanisms for vigorous engagement between councillors, municipal executives and administration. Such a failure of coherent interplay of political and administrative subsystems in the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" was also reiterated in interview narratives to have undermined its capabilities to respond to the increasing array of different needs and demands of its local communities. In other words, over-emphasis of political supremacy not only defies the logic in systems theory, but has also induced a number of complexities that constrain effective effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as "systems" and "subsystems" respectively.

6.3 COMPLEXITIES IN THE UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY AS A SYSTEM

Over-emphasis of political supremacy has influenced the emergence of new forms of interactions as well as new emergent properties reflecting certain complexities that constrain the effective performance of the uThukela District Municipality as a system. The findings indicated that some of the complexities to often emerge from the increasing emergence of certain antagonistic activities reflecting mayor-municipal manager rifts and mayor-speaker rifts. Regarding mayor-municipal manager rifts, participants explained that the mayor is mandated to engage and direct policy formulation decisions. However, when it comes to the implementation of such policies, participants stated that the municipal mayor also tends to clash with the municipal manager. Findings attributed such a situation to the fact that the mayor tends to fulfil similar roles to that of the municipal manager.

It was found that, as prescribed under Section 56 of the Municipal Structures Act 1998 and Chapter 7 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 2003, the executive mayor often engages in the identification, evaluation and implementation of certain service delivery strategies and programmes. Just like the municipal manager, participants elaborated that in the accomplishment of such activities, the mayor tends to, in the context of the defined performance indicators, evaluate the progress of the implementation of such programmes. As the findings highlight it is such conflicting roles that often cause the emergence of antagonisms and rifts between the mayor and municipal manager.

In the context of systems theory, as David (2013:43) articulates, such incompatibilities, conflicts and antagonisms between mayor and municipal manager render it difficult for uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities to operate efficiently and effectively as "systems" and "subsystems" respectively. Yet, in the midst of the emergence of such rifts, the findings indicated that the mayor should instead use the mayoral executive and other committees or other Section 56 managers aligned to him to accomplish certain policy activities. In retaliation, they noted that the municipal manager also tends to limit certain reporting responsibilities to the mayor, as he opts to report directly to the council. In other words, these illustrate the kinds of deadlocks, incompatibilities, conflicts, dynamics and complexities that often emerge from the relationship between politicians and administrators. Such deadlocks, conflicts,

dynamics and complexities seem to resonate well with the views in dynamics complexity theory dynamics. In a study titled *"Complexity Theory and Public Administration",* Klijn (2008:299) highlights that complexity theory posits that the interactions between different contending groups of actors can lead to disagreements that cause deadlocks and, subsequently, complexities that undermine effective activities' accomplishment.

However, Klijn (2008:299) explains that the application of the dynamics concept can aid the government to deal with the equilibrium and deadlock or stagnation issues that can arise from the variance in the governance networks. The findings indicate that the mayor and municipal manager to have adopted alternate innovative strategies for dealing with such situations in their respective ways, but it is still apparent that such an approach has not enhanced dealing with a deadlock. Yet, as conflicts continue to exist, the findings indicate that its negative impacts on service delivery in the municipality have been enormous. Certainly, what the mayor is supposed to accomplish is clear as per the established municipal practice, but it seems there is a deliberate tendency for the executive mayor to reconstruct rules in his favour.

As the findings revealed, it is such tendencies that cause him to interfere in administrative activities. Yet, it is not only the complexities of the mayor-municipal manager relationship that affect the capabilities of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities to operate as a "system" and "subsystems" respectively, but also complexities arising from mayor-speaker rifts. The mayor-speaker rifts imply that complexities arise not only from the antagonistic roles played by political and administrative officials, but also between politicians themselves.

Due to the dual political and executive roles of the mayor, findings imply that it has often caused interference in the speaker's roles as the speaker of the council. The findings indicate that a distrust exists between the mayor and the speaker due to their equal dominance in municipal political affairs. In such instances, interview narratives explain that the speaker was often perceived by the mayor as a future threat, thereby creating animosity where, even in certain cases, the executive mayor tended not to trust the council that the speaker presided over. With such influence, the findings highlight that, in retaliation, the speaker tended to engage in politicking to create antagonistic power bases both in the municipal political and administrative structures to undermine political oversight of municipal administration by the executive mayor.

Yet, as they engage in such fights and rifts, the findings indicate the complexities of the working relationships between the mayor and speaker to create hostilities and unfavourable working environments that affect municipal administrators' capabilities to effectively accomplish their administrative and management activities. These illustrate the incompatibilities that often arise not only between politicians and administrators, but also between politicians themselves to undermine the effective accomplishment of municipal activities.

Even in the midst of such fights, the law still emphasises that the speaker should preside over the legislative functions of the council, as the mayor focuses on the executive functions of the council. However, participants revealed that there are still instances where the mayor has attempted to dominate and preside even over typical legislative activities of the council as part of the initiative to undermine the speaker and curb his influence over the council. In the context of governance theory, as Klijn et al. (2010:193) indicate, such a situation reflects how different actors engage in reconstructing the existing rules and structures to create situations that favour them. Klijn et al. (1995:437), as cited in Klijn et al. (2010:193). reiterate that in such situations, both formal and informal rules are often subject to re-interpretation and change by actors as they interact over time.

Policy networks as well as governance networks also exhibit certain features of specific configurations of actors' perceptions shaped by the history and nature of the network. This configuration of perceptions also determines whether or not actors are able to engage in interactions and gaming with other groups of actors to influence policy outcomes in a particular direction. It is the reconstruction of rules and structures and configuration of perceptions that also explains why some politicians and municipal administrators collude to engage in different corrupt activities. Attributable to such a view is the fact that the findings reveal that besides the complexities of mayor-municipal manager and mayor-speaker rifts, complexities also tend to arise from political and municipal administrators' tendencies to collude to engage in certain corrupt activities that constrain the municipality's effective performance.

Yet, as politicians and municipal managers engage in such corrupt practices, some of the participants revealed that there are instances where the total amount reflecting millions of rands for the implementation of certain projects has been directly pocketed by certain key politicians and municipal administrators. This often causes complexities where uThukela and its local municipalities are unable to operate as a system to optimise the limited financial resources to

respond to the needs and preferences of their other actors, such as the communities in the external systems. Combined with incitements from dissatisfied politicians, participants revealed that all these often incite service delivery protests by communities to put pressure on politicians and municipal administrators to respond to community demands.

Unfortunately, findings revealed that while some key politicians and municipal administrators engage in such corrupt collusions, some participants noted that some of the relatively ethical politicians and municipal managers tend to stay away from such practices. This often causes further tension, conflicts and complexities between the politicians and municipal administrators who are considered ethical and not corrupt and those that subscribe to corrupt culture and beliefs. In line with systems theory as Klijn and Koppenjan (2014:61) note, the emergence of two contending groups undermines the capabilities of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities to operate efficiently and effectively as "systems" and "subsystems" respectively to achieve the desired service delivery outcomes.

Klijn and Koppenjan (2014:61) argue that subsystems and actors in a system are aimed at coherently collaborating and interacting with each other and not conflicting with each other. On the other hand, complexities were also found to arise from the increasing political interference in the municipal administration and management areas that pertain to staff recruitment and appointment, tender management and certain financially related decisions. The complexity of political interference was further found to be exacerbated by the increasing tendencies of some councillors to act in their individual political capacities to engage in the evaluation of policy implementation among the local communities that they represent.

As much as such an approach leverages policy implementation, some of the participants, especially municipal administrators, revealed that when individual councillors engage in such practices, it often leads to over-inflated demands from the communities regarding on how certain projects should be implemented. Yet, in certain cases, the municipalities in uThukela or even the provincial government may not be able to afford to implement such projects. Subsequently, as participants noted, this tends to cause friction between the municipal administrators, such as individual councillors and the communities. Even though such situations contravene legal provisions that emphasise the separation of politics from municipal administration, participants stated that most

politicians still often do so. Participants pointed out that the council should intervene to avoid such unnecessary political interference in administrative activities.

Unfortunately, they revealed that it is council that often perpetuates the emergence of such situations. Yet, as both the provincial and municipal politicians engage in such practices, they explained that it tended to cause complexities, incompatibilities and conflicts that undermine municipal capacity to effectively accomplish the required activities. Participants reiterated that most valuable managers are often fired or even frustrated by politicians, which tends to affect such managers' commitment to perform effectively. They noted that political interference that affects tender decisions often affects the allocation of tenders to competent and qualified businesses.

Such a finding certainly reflects the drawbacks of over-emphasising political supremacy. It also indicates how Wilson's (1887) theory on the distinction between politics and public administration, as cited in Sancino et al. (2018:5), is not working in uThukela. At the same time, such findings also illustrate how political interference creates complexities that undermine the effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as "systems" and "subsystems" respectively to achieve desired outcomes.

Yet, as such situations occur, findings reveal that it tends to affect service delivery to the local communities that in turn fight back by mobilising against local municipalities. These create complexities that were found to be further exacerbated by the increasing emergence of certain community activists and business actors who have different interests in different municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

Findings revealed that as communities put pressure on politicians and municipal administrators to accomplish relevant activities to respond to their needs and preferences, business actors, on the other hand, put pressure on politicians and municipal administrators to respond to their business interests and profitability quests. Using systems theory as Rottger and Preusse (2013:99) articulate, such a finding implies that in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities as a "system" must manage not only the complexities of the political-administrative interface, but also other actors' complex interactions with such political-administrative interface in order to perform efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, it was noted

that in certain cases, municipalities in uThukela have not been able to meet some of these communities and business actors' needs, thereby causing further complexities as they protest.

Findings indicate that such a situation often leads to situations where municipal administrators not only face complex relationships with politicians, but also with communities and business leaders. If contrasted against the theory of public administration and management, such a finding echoes Pollitt and Bouckaert's (2011:5) revelations that modern public administration is increasingly characterised by a complex web of vertical and horizontal multilevel governance systems that are analogous to systems constituting different actors that must be carefully managed to influence the achievement of the desired outcomes. Such a finding is also in tandem with Nalbandian et al.'s (2013:567) argument that local government constitutes different arenas where other actors are increasingly emerging to complicate the already complex relationships between politicians and administrators.

To address such complexities, Nalbandian et al. (2013:567) emphasise that unless a comprehensive system is adopted to manage the increasingly complex networks of new actors as well as the existing complexities of politicians-administrators' relationships in a polycentric local governance system, effective public administration and management will remain a daunting task far from reality. If examined in the context of systems theory, it is also evident that Nalbandian et al.'s (2013:567) views support Lai and Lin's (2017:19) reasoning in systems theory that signifies failure to manage the complex political-administrative interface as well as their interactions with other actors can constrain a public manager's ability to respond to the interests and preferences of the local citizens in their external environment.

Unfortunately, the findings revealed that such a comprehensive systems approach has not yet been anticipated to diagnose and manage the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors that uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities presently face.

6.4 MANAGING COMPLEXITIES IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY AS A SYSTEM

Most of the complexities reiterated in this study were found to emerge from the increasing over-emphasis of political supremacy at the expense of municipal administrators. To address such

complexities, findings indicate municipalities in uThukela to use a combination of certain approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative interfaces in conjunction with certain approaches managing complexities of other actors' interactive activities. For the approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative, interview narratives indicate that the measures used encompass prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices and enforcement of councillors' code of conduct to prevent their interference in municipal administration. Other measures were reiterated to include the abolition of speaker's office; streamlining the relationship between the mayor and municipal manager and using relevant laws to manage collusions leading to corruption.

Apart from the need to use relevant laws to prevent and manage collusions that lead to corruption, most of these measures instead emphasise the separation of politics from municipal administration and not how they can collaborate. When examined in the context of systems theory as articulated by Fornasier and Franklin (2019:327) such approach does not reflect a more comprehensive approach that can be adopted for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the modern uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

Yet, most of the recent studies on managing complex local governance systems are increasingly emphasising the need for enhancing politicians' cohesive collaboration with municipal administration. This is accentuated in Budd and Sancino's (2016:129) revelations that highlight one of the criticisms of the dichotomy model that separates politics from municipal administration is reflected in its polarisation of politics from administration. Instead of evaluating how politicians and administrators can coherently function together as critical inter-related actors in one system, the dichotomy model focuses on using polarisation mechanisms. This over-emphasised polarisation creates rifts between politicians and administrations to undermine the effective accomplishment of different public administration and management activities. In response to such criticism, Aberbach et al. (1981) highlighted four images reflecting the nuanced networks between politicians and public managers.

These four images encompass Image 1 (policy and administration), Image 2 (interests and facts), Image 3 (energy and equilibrium), and Image 4 (pure hybrid). In Image 1, which reflects policy

and administration, the nexus between politicians and public managers was found to be modelled along the dichotomy model in which politicians are separated from administrators. In Image 2, which deals with interests and facts, politicians and public managers were found to collaboratively engage in policy-making-decisions.

Yet, as they collaboratively engage in such practice, they were also found to use rational reasoning to reach logical conclusions about the interests presented by politicians vis-à-vis the facts put forward by public managers. In Image 3, which deals with energy and equilibrium, Aberbach et al. (1981) revealed that it equally considers politicians and public managers as energisers and equilibrators in the policy decision-making processes. Subsequently, Image 4, which reflects a pure hybrid, indicates the situation where politicians and public managers interactively engage in the accomplishment of rather more overlapping activities during policy decision-making and public management. Following this observation, Aberbach et al. (1981:87) concluded and suggested that instead of segregating politicians from administrators, the two groups of actors should be permitted to collaborate with each other during policy formulation and implementation.

If such a collaborative approach is contrasted with the findings from uThukela, it becomes evident that measures such as prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices and enforcing councillors' code of conduct to prevent their interference in municipal administration contribute to the polarisation of politicians from municipal administrators. Other measures were also reiterated to include the abolition of the speaker's office and streamlining the relationship between the mayor and municipal manager. Still, such measures are less effective at aiding collaboration of politicians and municipal administrators during the accomplishment of different municipal activities. In other words, most of the measures adopted by uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local municipalities only reflect Aberbach et al.'s (1981) Image 1, which reflects policy and administration, the nexus between politicians and public managers was found to be modelled along the dichotomy model in which politicians are separated from administrators.

Besides the polarisation of politicians from municipal administrators, findings still indicate that prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices has not been effective. Narratives from interviews reveal that such approach has not been effective because it does not limit staunch and influential political cadres from being appointed. Thus, they stated that

the council has often still used such loopholes to enable certain qualified political cadres to find their way into municipal administrative and management positions. The findings revealed that in certain cases the enforcement of councillors' code of conduct to prevent their interference in municipal administration is selective. If the situation involves an influential councillor, participants revealed that not much initiative is undertaken to apply councillors' code of conduct in such situations.

At the same time, some of the participants revealed that since some councillors often act in cohort with influential political figures such as the mayor or speaker, it is difficult to get council which is dominated by such influential political figures to hold them accountable. Interviews elaborated that to enhance the creation of an amicable working relationship between the mayor and municipal manager, such initiatives must emphasise that the executive mayor must focus on political oversight and avoid direct intervention in policy implementation. On the other hand, the same initiative stressed the need for municipal managers to focus on working in cohort with their senior managers to implement different policies and report to the municipal mayor and council as required by law. As a result of such an initiative some participants noted that hostilities between the mayor and municipal manager were minimised.

Even though such an approach would tow the systems line of thinking to aid collaboration between the mayor and municipal manager, interview narratives revealed that hostilities continue to exist between the mayor and municipal manager as the mayor continues to interfere with municipal operations and certain policy implementation processes. Even if such an approach were to be successful, leveraging collaboration between mayor and municipal manager would still not deal with all the complexities that uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities face. Instead, in such situations of multiple complexities, Svara (2001), in a study titled "*The Myth of the Dichotomy: Complementarity of Politics and Administration in the Past and Future of Public Administration",* suggests the need for encouraging political dominance in situations when it is required as well as municipal administrators' dominance where the situation requires it.

Such an approach would enable politicians to exercise their political oversights in situations, where it is required and also allow municipal administrators to apply their expertise and technical thinking in situations, when expertise and techniques are required. This would aid effective

collaboration and networking of politicians with municipal administrators. Such a view is echoed in Svara's (2001) analysis based on his new theory of typology on two interactive sets of actors. Interaction between these two sets of actors involves the level of control exerted by elected officials and the level of independence exerted by administrators.

From that analysis, four forms of combinations of interactions between politicians and administrators arose. The first combination indicated political dominance in situations of high political control and low administrative autonomy. The second combination revealed the emergence of bureaucratic autonomy in situations of low political control and high administrative autonomy. The third combination reflected a "laissez faire" situation where control as well as independence is low. The fourth combination indicated complementarity, in which control and independence are high.

However, even if uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities were to adopt Svara (2001) and Aberbach et al.'s (1981) models, they will still be ineffective. This is because Svara (2001) and Aberbach et al.'s (1981) models just like other complementary models only emphasise the need for seamless collaboration between politicians and municipal administrators, and not how such politicians and municipal administrators also interact with the other critical actors and stakeholders. Such a view is reflected in uThukela where findings indicate that the complexities of political-administrative interface were further found to be exacerbated by the increasing emergence of certain community activists and business actors that have different interests in different municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

Unfortunately, even in the midst of such complexities, it was not easily evident from interview narratives that uThukela has adopted a comprehensive systems model for dealing with such complexities that arise from political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other critical actors. Instead, uThukela was found to use measures that encompass individual petitions, questions and requests to the council, as well as public meetings and forums, the use of ward committees and community consultation and engagement.

As contrasted to petitions that allow integration of the exact needs and preferences of the communities into council and municipal manager's decisions, participants revealed that questions

to the council are only used by individual councillors. They stated that questions to council are used by individual councillors to probe and explore clarifications from the council about certain policy decisions.

Participants revealed that it allows individual councillors to raise issues with the council about the issues affecting their individual communities, but it does not allow individual community actors to use such an approach. Certainly, community consultation and engagement are critical for engaging other actors and stakeholders, but they remain less impracticable and comprehensive to deal with and manage all the complexities emerging from other critical actors that uThukela experiences.

Besides that, community consultation and engagement were also found to be undertaken by politicians and municipal managers as mere formalities without the real intention or capacity to address some of the challenges that local communities raise. In other words, the adopted measures are based on a systems approach that is less comprehensive and integral for diagnosing and managing the increasing complexity of political-administrative interface in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

The approach undertaken by uThukela contrasts with the views in Alford's (2013:75) theory for engaging citizens in co-producing service outcomes and Budd and Sancino's (2016:129) local governance stakeholder management model. To address issues of multiple actors in different local governance arenas, Alford's (2013:75) theory for engaging citizens in co-producing service outcomes emphasises the need for co-consultation, co-deliberation, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation.

A co-consultation arena is a framework through which external stakeholders are engaged to elicit relevant ideas, information and contributions from local community members on a specific government programme. Even though such external stakeholders are consulted, final decisions still often reside with the traditional democratic systems. A co-deliberation arena is a collaborative mechanism through which politicians and administrators act in cohort with relevant external stakeholders to make certain policy decisions as well as the accomplishment of other relevant community activities.

As Alford (2013:75) elaborates, such co-deliberation practices are often evident in the local government's participatory budgeting processes. The co-design arena offers a framework through which public managers collaboratively design certain public services with external stakeholders. The co-designing arena often manifests itself in focus group discussions where public managers solicit views from certain external stakeholders involved in community social welfare services to co-design certain social services.

For the co-delivery arena, Alford (2013:75) reveals that external stakeholders from the communities are directly involved in the practical implementation of different service delivery policies and programmes. Finally, the co-evaluation arena reflects a situation where external stakeholders are engaged in the co-evaluation of the process for the implementation of different public service delivery policies and programmes. The co-evaluation arena is often evident in the use of popular juries and community evaluation panels in different public service delivery.

However, Budd and Sancino (2016:129) point out that in addition to such activities, stakeholder management is also predicted by certain five chronologically interlocked and cyclical stages of activities. As indicated in Budd and Sancino (2016:129), such five stages of activities are reflected in Archer's (2003) *"Stakeholder Management Guidelines"* to encompass identifying, analysing, planning and scheduling, executing, and monitoring stakeholders' activities.

Unfortunately, as findings indicate, the use of a combination of such models that embrace systems thinking is not evident anywhere in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. It is from that context that this research seeks to extract and suggest a systems model for diagnosing and managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities.

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Despite certain limitations, uThukela District Municipality was still found to operate as a system constituting different interactive actors, rules and subsystems. Such a finding was certainly consonant with the notion of a "system" that construes a "system" as "assemblage of objects or

ideas unified in some form of regular interaction and interdependence forming a unified, organic and an organised whole" (Lai, She & Ye, 2015:49).

Findings imply that besides political-administrative interface, uThukela District Municipality as a "system" also constitutes of other subsystems that are reflected in the form of Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. These subsystems which are located in local municipalities interact with each other as well as the uThukela District Municipality as the main system to determine the kinds of services that must be conceptualised and delivered to local communities in uThukela.

Yet, in the uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and in each of the local municipalities as subsystems, it was also found that such a "system" and its "subsystems" constitute other subsystems reflecting certain critical actors who influence how municipal activities are accomplished. Such a finding seems to pair well with the approach in systems theory in which Poole (2014:49) posits organisations as being analogous to systems that constitute different internal interactive subsystems and actors that also influence or are instead influenced by certain external actors.

Interactive relationships between these subsystems and actors influence the emergence of certain emergent properties reflecting an organisation's critical features and characteristics. Using such systems reasoning, uThukela District Municipality as a "system" and in each of these local municipalities as subsystems were found to exhibit certain political and administrative subsystems that also link with other external critical actors to instigate the emergence of certain emergent properties or features that either leverage or even constrain the municipality's overall effective performance.

All these imply that this study has been able to respond to its critical research objectives and questions, which were to diagnose the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors as well as the effectiveness of the strategies for managing such complexities in the polycentric uThukela District Municipality.

However, to extract a systems model from such findings and the theories and literature in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the discussions in the next chapter evaluate the general conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter evaluates the general conclusions and recommendations of the study. Evaluation is undertaken in the context of the overriding research aim and research objectives and questions, which are indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis to entail the use of systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-a-vis other actors in the polycentric uThukela District Municipality. Through such analysis, it is highlighted that the study aimed to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in the uThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system.

To finally accomplish that, the evaluation of the entire theoretical and empirical findings of the study in this chapter is structured according to two sections that include conclusions and recommendations.

Against the emerging key theoretical and empirical findings of the study, the conclusions section points out that it is evident that the study has been able to respond to its overriding aim, which is to use systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface vis-a-vis other actors in the polycentric uThukela District Municipality. In effect, the conclusions highlight that the study has also been able to respond to its critical research objectives and questions that were to evaluate and identify the critical political actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric uThukela District Municipality. It is also noted in the conclusions section that the study was also able to examine and identify the critical administrative and management actors and their interactive activities in the increasingly polycentric uThukela District Municipality. The conclusions section also indicates that the study further achieved its objectives and questions of assessing and identifying the complex networks of the other critical actors that integrate with the political-administrative interface in the increasingly polycentric uThukela District Municipality.

The conclusions section further points out that it is also evident that the study was able to analyse the complexities that arise from political-administrative interfaces, other actors and their impacts, as well as the effectiveness of the approaches that are used for managing such complexities in the increasingly polycentric Thukela District Municipality.

Subsequently, it is noted in the conclusions section that the achievement of the final objective and question, which is to extract a systems model that can be adopted for diagnosing and managing such complexities not only in uThukela District Municipality, but also in the entire South African local governance system. is reflected in the systems model, extracted and discussed in the recommendations.

The recommendation section highlights Figure 7.2, which illustrates the systems model for diagnosing and managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the polycentric uThukela District Municipality as a system that has been extracted from the theoretical and empirical findings of this research. Subsequently, the recommendations section elucidates the six critical steps for applying such a model. Finally, the chapter examines the limitations of the study and suggests avenues for future research.

As these offered insights that enabled recommendations for smoothening political-administrative interfaces, the overall conclusions and recommendations of the study follows in the next section.

7.2 CONCLUSION

In line with the research objectives and questions, the conclusions as indicated in Figure 7.1 first reflect the highlights of the key research findings prior to drawing the general conclusion on how the study responded to its research objectives and questions.

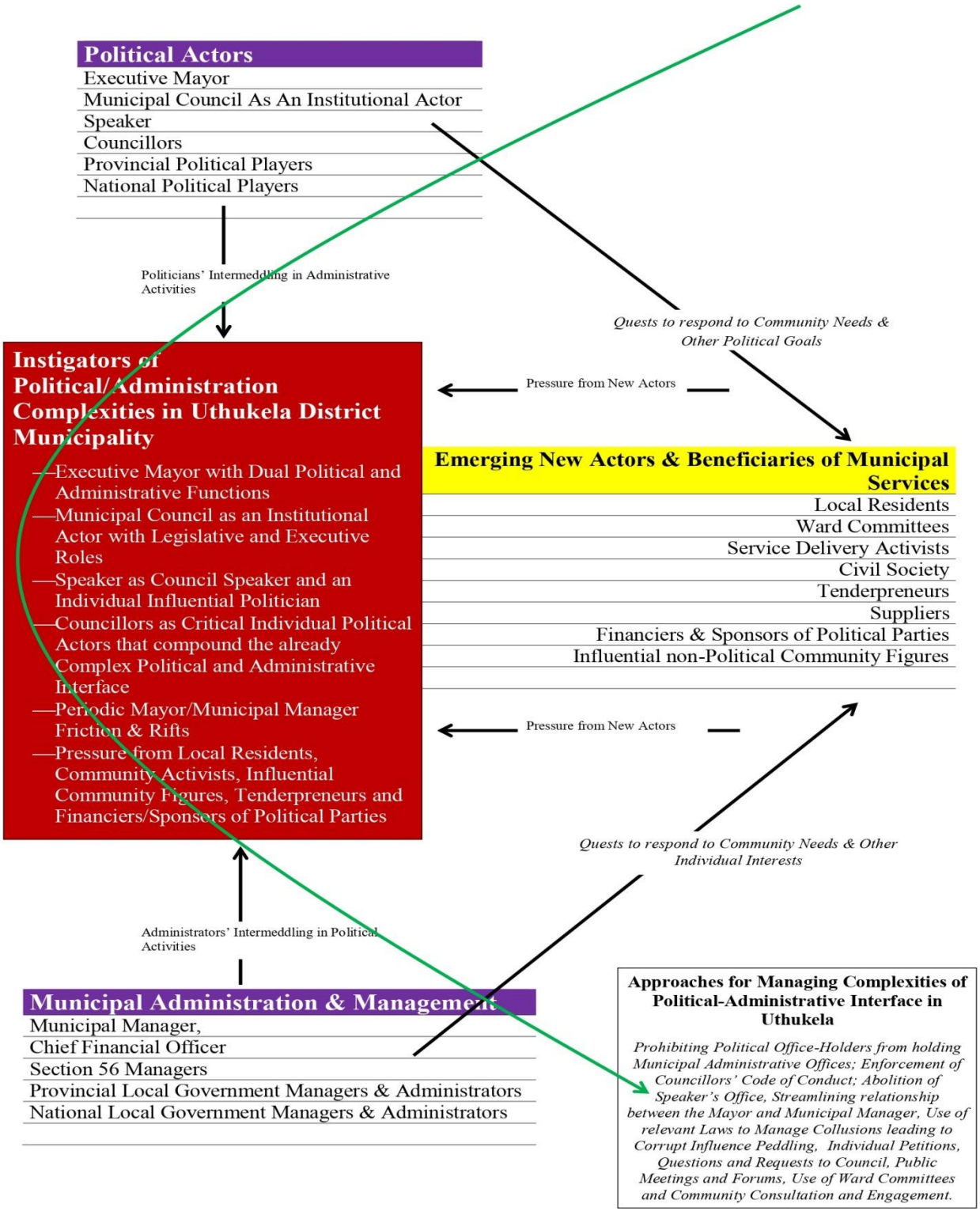

Figure 7.1: Highlights of the Key Research Findings

7.2.1 Complexities of Political-Administrative Interface in UThukela District Municipality as a System

Empirical findings indicated uThukela District Municipality to neatly fit into Poole's (2014:49) articulations that organisations to be analogous to systems that constitute of different internal interactive subsystems and actors that also influence or are instead influenced by certain external actors. Interactive relationships between these subsystems and actors influence the emergence of certain emergent properties reflecting an organisation's critical features and characteristics. In similar contexts, empirical findings imply that besides political-administrative interface, municipal systems constituting of its political and administrative systems also link with other critical actors to either leverage or even constrain municipality's overall effective performance.

In political-administrative interface, findings indicated critical political actors and their interactive activities to encompass the mayor that accomplishes dual political and administrative functions and municipal council as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles.

This implies the old political-administrative dichotomy that Wilson (1887) articulates to emphasise the separation of political functions from administrative ones may not necessarily apply in the contemporary public administration and governance settings. In the distinction of politics from administration, Wilson (1887) proposes that politics must be limited to setting vision and activities or tasks that must be accomplished or executed by administration as the technical branch of public administration as a system to enhance the achievement of the desired outcomes. This implies despite the need for separating politics from administration, politics and administration still interplay to enhance successful policy formulation and implementation.

Unfortunately, it is the difficulty to balance such seamless interface which is instigating complexities of political administrative interface in uThukela District Municipality. In their narratives, participants explained that the mayor is not only the political head of the municipality, but also the political and administrative link between the municipality and the communities.

However, as the mayor accomplishes his political functions, political-administrative complexities in uThukela District Municipality as a system, were found to arise from the mayor's tendency to

also accomplish certainly inherently administrative activities. Such administrative activities were reiterated to encompass developing and implementing municipal strategies, programmes and services to respond to the needs of the communities.

During and after the accomplishment of such activities, the mayor liaises and interacts with municipal council. However, findings revealed that just like the mayor, municipal council also emerged from the findings as an institutional actor that accomplishes both legislative and executive roles to influence or even in certain cases constrain both the political and administrative activities at the district and local municipal levels.

Such approach seems not to respond to the motive of the separation of powers and responsibilities of each of these branches of government which was indicated in theories in chapter 2 of this thesis to focus on eliminating conflicts among different government institutions and leverage a government's functioning as a holistic system (Frohnen & Carey, 2016:16). It was also aimed at reducing the concentration of power in a single government institution so as to leverage checks and balances among different government institutions. For legislative functions, findings imply municipal council to mainly execute certain legislative functions associated with the formulation and promulgation of different municipal by-laws and policies.

As municipal council engages in deliberations that lead to the formulation and passing of different by-laws and policies, it was also found to execute certain executive functions. Participants reiterated council to engage in executive activities such as appointment of municipal manager and other senior managers. Findings indicate councils in uThukela District Municipality and its associated Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities to have been involved in the accomplishment of different administrative activities. This places councillors as politicians with the municipal administrators to instigate animosities and hostilities that undermine effective accomplishment of municipal activities.

Such animosities arise from the fact that as council accomplishes such legislative and executive functions, it was also found to be presided over by the speaker that acts not only as council speaker, but also in certain cases outside the council speaker's role as an influential individual politician. The speaker acts not only as council speaker, but also as an influential political figure outside the council speaker's roles that also in certain cases interferes with the municipal administration roles.

Such a finding seems to accentuate politics-administration complementarity models that not only contradict the position in dichotomy model, but also emerged from the criticisms of dichotomy model. In such models, Budd and Sancino (2016:129) reveal that one of the criticisms of dichotomy model is reflected in its polarisation of politics from administration. Instead of evaluating how politicians and administrators can coherently function together as critical inter-related actors in one system, dichotomy model focuses on using polarisation mechanisms.

This over-emphasised polarisation creates rift between politicians and administrations to undermine effective accomplishment of different public administration and management activities. However, the complementarity theories as articulated by Svara (2001), Aberbach et al. (1981), Peters (1987:256) and Svara (1999:676), still appear to fall short of an effective systems' model that can comprehensively to deal with and manage the complex relationships between all political and non-political actors in the contemporary public administration and management. In uThukela District Municipality as a system, all these complexities were found to be exacerbated by certain emerging new community and business actors that further compound the complexities of political/administrative interface.

7.2.2 Emerging New Community and Business Actors Complicating Political/Administrative Interface in UThukela District Municipality as a System

In theoretical findings, Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) was found to reveal that the increasingly democratic local governance systems are not only characterised by a complex networks of political and administration actors. Instead, they also note that the contemporary local governance systems are also characterised by other critical actors that can either influence or constrain municipalities' effective performance. From the interview findings, such critical new actors were found to increasingly arise from different groups of community activists that are increasingly emerging to put enormous pressure on municipal authorities. These different community pressure groups were found to put pressure and seek to influence certain influential councillors as well as mayors and municipal administrators to urge them to take actions to ensure that their needs and preferences are met. Such a finding is at tandem with Lai and Lin's (2017:9) proposition that effective diagnosis and management of the interactive relationships between politicians, administrators and

other actors such as service delivery activists, political activists, citizens' advocacy groups and partners in the public-private partnerships, is critical for enhancing successful policy formulation and implementation.

However, empirical findings indicate that both municipal political and administration face significant challenges of dealing with the increasing different forms of different business actors. They explained that as such business actors seek to make profits from these local municipalities, they tend to exhibit different forms of behaviours. Some of such behaviours bolster municipality's effective performance, as others constrain municipality's effective performance. It is such a finding that seems synonymous with the theoretical findings that indicate Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) to posit that local government is the process through which politicians and administrators act in cohort with a combination of different formal and informal local community actors to set and implement policies that respond to the needs and preferences of the local communities. This creates a polycentric local governance system in which activities' accomplishment arise from collaborative interactions of politicians and administrators with other networks of local stakeholders.

Local governance is a mechanism through which the local communities are linked with the central government. Local government is a vehicle through which a political system ensures the successful implementation of its policies to achieve the desired outcomes. Besides the elected political officials and administrators, local government's activities are often influenced by a combination of certain different actors. Houtzager and Acharya (2010:39) highlight these actors to often encompass local community political activists, partners in the public-private partnerships, community pressure groups, local business communities, local environmental groups and local communities' service delivery activists.

Failure to effectively manage and govern a combination of these different groups of actors renders it difficult to effectively accomplish public administration and management at the local government level. In the context of uThukela District Municipality's System, this implies that as politicians and municipal administrators not only interact amongst themselves, but also in linkage to such community activists and business actors, it aids effective analysis and response to their needs. Even if these were noted in the interviews to leverage the overall effective performance of the municipality, findings still indicated certain complexities to arise from such actors' interactive

networks. Thematic analysis of interview findings indicated complexities of political-administrative interface and their impacts in the increasingly Polycentric uThukela District Municipality's System to emerge from certain antagonistic activities reflecting mayor-municipal manager rifts and mayor-speaker rifts.

Analysis of mayor-municipal manager rifts implies complexities arise not only from the antagonistic roles accomplished by political and administrative officials, but also from between politicians themselves. Such a finding reinforces the theoretical findings in chapter 2 of this thesis in which it was found that considering the increasing complex public administration and management systems, Nabatchi et al. (2017:766) pointed out that neither the bureaucratic approach, NPM nor new governance model have proved effective for dealing with such complexities. Such complexities in public administration arise from the increasing tendencies of certain authoritarian or politicised actors to pursue individual interests at the expense of common interests. Outcomes of these persistent complex interactions of different groups of actors with different interests affect public administrators and managers' capabilities to effectively and efficiently manage government organisations to achieve the desired outcomes.

Perhaps this is because the bureaucratic approach, NPM and the new governance model explicitly ignored the use of systems approach to deal with such complexities. In the empirical findings, evaluation of mayor-speaker rifts indicates complexities of the working relationships between mayor and speaker to create hostilities and unfavourable working environment that affect municipal administrators' capabilities to effectively accomplish their administrative and management activities. Besides complexities of mayor-municipal manager and mayor-speaker rifts, findings also indicated complexities to arise from political and municipal administrators' tendencies to collude to engage in certain corrupt activities that constrain municipality's effective performance.

As on the other hand, complexities were also found to arise from the increasing political interference in the municipal administration and management areas that pertain to staff recruitment and appointment, tender management and certain financially related decisions. These complexities were found to be further exacerbated by the increasing emergence of certain community activists and business actors that have different interests in different municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. To deal with these

complexities, theoretical findings imply there are certain strategies that can be adopted. But it seems there are also limitations with some remedial strategies adopted by uThukela District Municipality.

7.2.3 Limitations of Remedial Strategies for Mitigating Political/Administrative Complexities in uThukela District Municipality as a System

Besides Aberbach et al.'s (1981:87) politics-administration complementarity model, Peters (1987:256), as cited in Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:3), also suggests a model for leveraging the collaboration and complementarity of politicians and public administrators. To explain this, Peters (1987:256), in a study titled *"Politicians and Bureaucrats in the Politics of Policy-Making",* elaborates on certain five models illustrating the relationships between politicians and public managers. These five models integrate "formal model", "administrative state", "village of life", "functional village life" and "adversarial politics". Peters (1987:256) explains "formal model" and "administrative state" to concurrently reflect the continuum that the interactions between politicians and administrators go through.

Along that continuum, politicians and administrators engage in the behaviours entailing the use of "formal model" where public managers are subordinated to politicians. This continuum leads to the application of "administrative state" where public managers contribute significantly to successful policy making due to their unique skills and expertise. Unfortunately, it appears there is a limitation with the efficacy at which such approach is being used in uThukela District Municipality. In uThukela, findings indicate that municipalities use a combination of certain approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative interface in conjunction with certain approaches for managing complexities of other actors' interactive activities.

Through the use of such approaches, findings imply that municipalities in uThukela are not only able to manage complexities of political-administrative, but also link political-administrative interface with other critical local communities' actors' interactive activities. All these were found to combine to induce the desired outcomes that leverage the overall effective performance of uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local Municipalities. For the approaches for managing complexities of political-administrative, interview narratives indicate

that the measures used encompass prohibiting political office-holders from holding municipal administrative offices and enforcement of councillors' Code of Conduct. Other measures were reiterated to include abolition of speaker's office, streamlining relationship between the mayor and municipal manager and use of relevant laws to manage collusions leading to corruption. To ensure that different other actors seamlessly integrate with political-administrative interface in uThukela, thematic analysis of the interview findings indicate that the measures used to encompass individual petitions, questions and requests to council as well as public meetings and forums, use of ward committees and community consultation and engagement.

However, there is little evidence of the utilisation of local governance stakeholder management models suggested by Borgonovi and Sancino (2014:7:8) as well as Bryson (2004:21) and Archer (2003). In a way analogous to systems' thinking, these local governance stakeholder management models critically illustrate how politicians and administrators can effectively interact and integrate with different networks of actors and stakeholders to influence the overall effective performance of a polycentric local governance system. It also highlights how the use of such a comprehensive interactive and integral framework enhances successful implementation of different government programmes to achieve different desired outcomes.

In the context of the systems theory articulated in this research, Alford's (2013:75), Bryson (2004:21) and Archer's (2003) operational models for polycentric local governance systems certainly echo the fundamental argument in this research that local governance operates as a system. In such a system, it is argued that politicians and administrators interact with other actors to influence achievement of the desired service delivery outcomes.

However, such stakeholder management approach is not only lacking, but also there are limitations with the use of remedial measures like individual petitions, questions and requests to council as well as public meetings and forums, use of ward committees and community consultation and engagement. Even in the midst of the application of such approaches, interviewed participants revealed that hostilities still continue to exist between the mayor and municipal manager as the mayor still continues to interfere with municipal operations and certain policy implementation processes. Other participants noted that collusion still tend to occur quietly in some of the municipalities in uThukela. They explained that it is the failure of such initiatives that explains why some of the municipalities in uThukela still continue to receive qualified audit reports and

fail to optimise the limited financial resources to deal with increasing service delivery crisis in uThukela.

To respond to such complexities in the increasingly polycentric local governance as a system, complexity theory offers critical insights and techniques for diagnosing and managing the complexities of the relationship between political and administrative interface vis-à-vis other networks of actors in the contemporary local governance systems. To accomplish that, it uses certain three concepts that encompass dynamics' complexities, self-organisation and co-evolution (Klijn, 2008:299; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2014:61; Lartey, 2020:44; Meek, 2010:2). However, there was lack of evidence of the application of such concepts for managing the complexities of political/administrative interface in uThukela District Municipality.

Instead, as contrasted to petitions that allow integration of the exact needs and preferences of the communities into council and municipal manager's decisions, participants revealed that questions to council are only used by individual councillors. They stated that questions to council are used by individual councillors to probe and explore clarifications from council about certain policy decisions. Participants revealed that it allows individual councillors to raise issues with council about the issues affecting their individual communities, but it does not allow individual community actors to use such approach. In otherwords, the adopted measures are in the context of systems approach less comprehensive and integral for diagnosing and managing the increasing complexities of political-administrative interface in the Polycentric uThukela District Municipality's System. To address these dynamics, the recommendations below reflect the identification and outline of a more comprehensive systems model that can be extracted and adopted.

7.2.4 CONCLUSION

In the context of these theories and findings, it is evident that the study has been able to respond to its overriding aim, which is to use systems theory to evaluate the complexities of political-administrative interface in uThukela District Municipality. The study has also been able to respond to its critical research objectives and questions. In terms of the first research objective and question which was to understand the different roles of councillors and administrators within the local government environment, it was found that uThukela District Municipality as a "system"

constitutes of other subsystems reflecting certain critical political, administrative and other external actors that influence how municipal activities are accomplished. This enabled management to respond and maintain a stable dynamic state of equilibrium and homeostasis, which is favourable for an organisation to successfully conceptualise and apply a combination of the required policies and strategies to achieve the desired outcomes (Brummans, et al. 2014:173).

However, a stronger emphasis of a political-administrative dichotomy in which the supremacy of municipal politicians is over-emphasised at the expense of the municipal administrators was found to be a source of complexities. Such a finding responded to the other research objectives and questions which were to explore the problematic interface and challenges between the two (politics and administration) as well as to assess the impact of politics and administration relationships on service delivery.

In line with these research objectives and questions, it was found that over-emphasis of political supremacy was found to cause uThukela District Municipality as a system and its local municipalities as subsystems to exhibit certain incompatibilities, conflicts and antagonisms that create complexities that threaten uThukela's performance as a system.

Yet, in a typical systems-thinking-based organisation, Miller and Sydney (2017:5) emphasise that subsystems and their constituent parts or actors must coherently interact with each other in order to operate efficiently, economically and effectively to achieve desired outcomes. In other words, the use of the political-administrative dichotomy distorts the capabilities of the uThukela District Municipality and its local municipalities to operate as a system and subsystems, respectively. Combined with incitements from dissatisfied politicians, participants revealed that all these often instigate service delivery protests by communities to put pressure on politicians and municipal administrators to respond to community demands.

All these factors were found to integrate with the complexities created by certain community activists as well as business actors' interactive activities to constrain the already complex political-administrative interface in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. Such a finding responded to the fourth research objective and question which was to investigate how the negative impact of the interface can be minimised through the implementation of the systems theory, specifically the soft systems methodology. Even in the

midst of such complexities, evaluation of the measures adopted by uThukela against systems theory indicated such measures to be less comprehensively ineffective for addressing such complexities.

In the context of the fifth research objective and question which was to identify a systems model that can be extracted and adopted from theories and empirical findings to manage the complexities of political-administrative interface not only in the uThukela District Municipality but also in the entire South African local governance system, the recommendations below reflect the elaboration of the more plausible model that can be adopted. All these offered insights that enabled recommendations for smoothening political-administrative interface to be made. Thus, while using the modified version of Checkland's soft systems methodology, below are the general recommendations of the study.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from theoretical and empirical findings that indicate uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba Local municipalities face the challenge of diagnosing and managing the complexities of political-administrative interface, it is argued that management of such municipalities must adopt the systems model in Figure 7.2. The model in Figure 7.2 is extracted from the modification of Checkland's soft systems methodology in the conceptual model in Figure 1.1. Yet, as uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities adopt such a model, it is also suggested that it must also be adopted for diagnosing and managing the complexities of political-administrative interface in the increasingly complex modern South African local governance system. The adoption of such a systems model will also aid effective mitigation of the existing practical and theoretical deficiencies that undermine effective diagnosis and management of the increasingly complex networks of political-administrative interfaces in the contemporary South African local government.

7.3.1 A Systems Model for Diagnosing and Managing Complexities of Political-Administrative Interface in the Polycentric uThukela District Municipality as a System

As it is illustrated in Figure 7.2, the use of the systems model for diagnosing and managing the complexities of the political-administrative interface in uThukela District Municipality as a system will require the application of six critical steps. These six critical steps that the authorities at uThukela District Municipality must pay attention to encompass the diagnosis of political actors and their interactive activities, the diagnosis of administrative actors and their interactive activities and the diagnosis of other actors and their interactive activities.

Other steps entail diagnosis of formal and informal political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the external municipal system and identification of points of complexity political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the external municipal system. Subsequently, authorities at uThukela District Municipality must ensure that such steps are followed by the use of the appropriate approaches for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors. The chronological processes of how the authorities at uThukela District Municipality can go about using the six critical steps in Figure 7.2 are explained as follows:

7.3.1.1 Step 1: Diagnosis of Political Actors and their Interactive Activities

As indicated in Figure 7.2, the first step in the systems model will require the authorities at uThukela District Municipality to diagnose and identify the critical political actors and their interactive activities. The critical political actors that must be diagnosed and identified in the application of such a process, include the mayor, municipal council, speaker and councillors because findings revealed such political actors play critical roles in municipal political and administration activities.

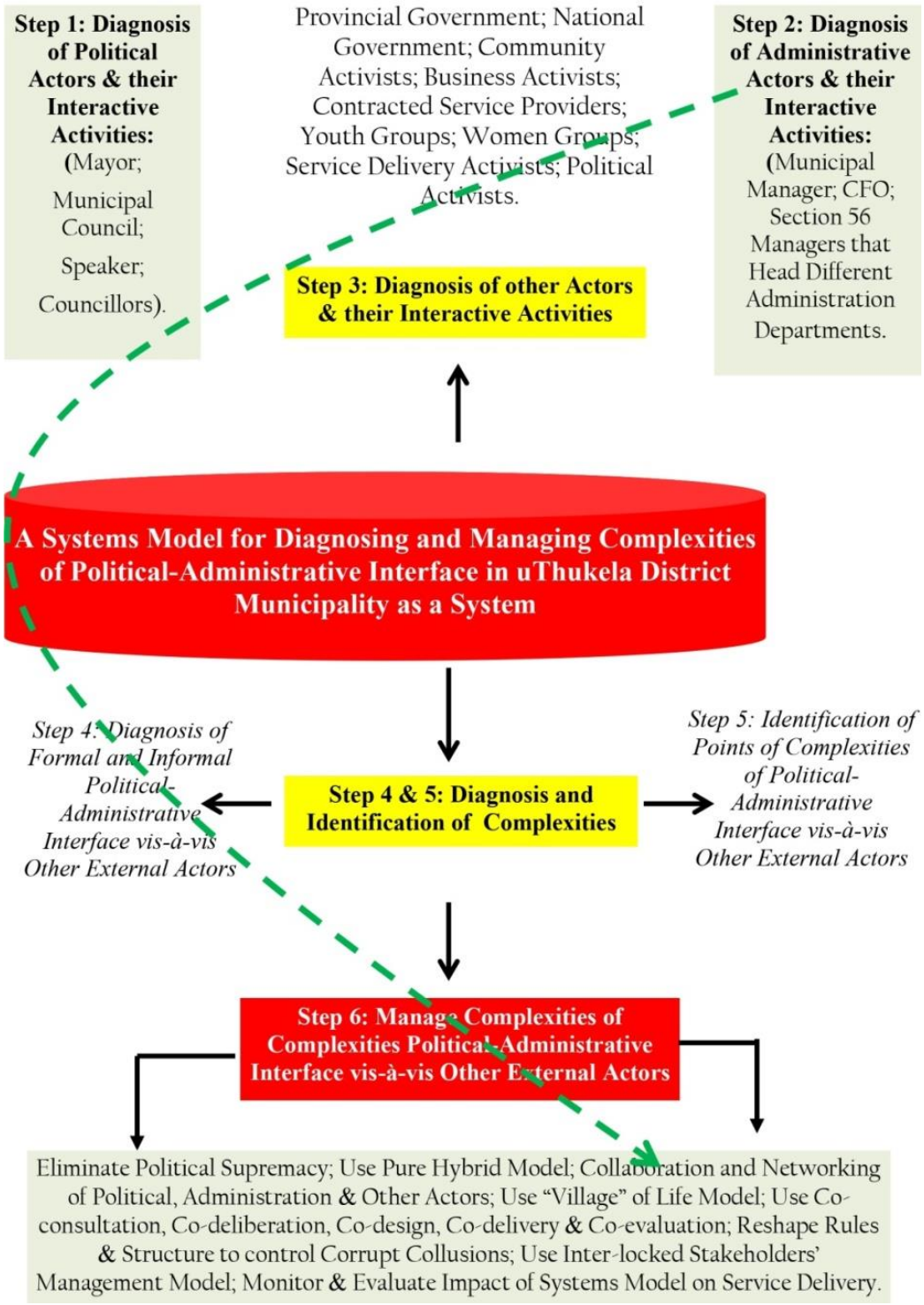

Figure 7.2: *A Systems Model for Diagnosing and Managing Complexities of Political-Administrative Interface in uThukela District Municipality as a System*

Source: As Extracted and Developed by Author from Triangulation of Theories with Empirical Findings

Thus, identifying such political actors is critical for understanding how their roles and interactive activities often create the ground and environment that instigate certain hostilities and complexities that constrain the effective performance of uThukela District Municipality as a system. It will also aid in filling the gaps in the previous studies that emerged from the tendencies of such studies to only focus on the limited political oversight roles exercised by the mayor and municipal council as a result of the dual political and administrative activities that the mayor and council execute. Thus, to analyse all the interactive activities of these political actors, it is critical to diagnose the mayor as one of the critical political actors.

The systems model for diagnosing and managing complexities of political-administrative interface in uThukela district municipality as a system must be accompanied by the evaluation of how certain interactive dual political and administrative functions accomplished by the mayor leveraging or constraining the uThukela District Municipality's administration as a subsystem. Concerned authorities must also analyse how limiting the effective performance of uThukela District Municipality's administration as a subsystem subsequently affects the effective performance of the entire uThukela District Municipality as a system.

Yet, as such analysis is being undertaken, authorities at uThukela District Municipality must also diagnose and identify the municipal council as a political institutional actor that also bolsters or constrains the effective performance of uThukela District Municipality and identify points of conflicts that must be eliminated. Such analysis must also diagnose the implications of the interactive dual legislative and executive roles accomplished by the council. Certainly, the findings revealed most of the previous studies to have concentrated only on analysing the complex dual functions of the mayor and municipal council.

However, in the application of the systems model in Figure 7.2, such analysis must be accompanied by a diagnosis of the speaker as one of the critical political actors in municipal political affairs. Such a view is accentuated by the fact that the findings revealed that the speaker was reiterated as one of the critical political actors that not only acts as a council speaker, but also as an influential individual politician. Thus, diagnosis of the speaker as one of the critical political actors is of significant essence for isolating and understanding how his interactive activities accomplished as the council speaker and as an individual influential political actor constrain or leverage uThukela District Municipality's effective performance.

Similar to the speaker, the findings also revealed that most of the previous studies ignored diagnosing and isolating councillors as critical individual political actors who determine the effectiveness or inabilities of municipal political affairs. Yet, findings in this study herald councillors as critical individual political actors that either leverage a municipality's effective performance or compound the already complex political and administrative interface at uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. In effect, the diagnosis of councillors is critical for understanding how their interactive activities, not only as members of council and heads of different oversight committees, but also as individual political actors in municipal affairs, undermine or leverage uThukela District Municipality's effective performance.

Diagnosis and isolating these critical political actors will create the foundation for understanding the points and sources of conflicts, antagonisms and incompatibilities that create complexities to undermine uThukela District Municipality's effective performance. However, for such points and sources of conflicts, antagonisms and incompatibilities to be identified, step 2 of the systems model in Figure 7.2 requires such diagnosis to be accompanied by the evaluation and identification of critical administrative actors and their interactive activities in uThukela District Municipality as a system.

7.3.1.2 Step 2: Diagnosis of Administrative Actors and their Interactive Activities

As a system, it is critical for authorities to note that the uThukela District Municipality does not only have political actors, but also administrative actors that aid uThukela in implementing its desired policies and achieving the desired outcomes. However, to assess how such political and administrative actors can coherently work together to influence the achievement of the desired outcomes, it is emphasised in Figure 7.2 that authorities at uThukela District Municipality must diagnose and identify certain administrative actors and their interactive activities. Such critical administrative actors who must be the focus of analysis include the municipal manager, chief financial officer and Section 56 managers that head different municipal administration's departments.

Such a reasoning is based on the findings of the study that indicated certain critical municipal administrative and management actors as well as their interactive activities to include the municipal manager, chief financial officer and Section 56 managers in different municipalities in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. The findings revealed that these administrative actors constitute the municipal technocrats and experts that determine not only the effective operation of uThukela District Municipality, but also the implementation of service delivery policies developed and passed by the political actors in the municipal council.

Thus, diagnosing and isolating such municipal administrative actors is critical for authorities at uThukela to understand how their interactive activities complicate or enhance uThukela District Municipality's effective performance. Even though previous studies as well as the approach used at uThukela indicate that other significant actors from the communities are often ignored, it is argued in the systems model in Figure 7.2 that authorities at uThukela must ensure that such analysis is accompanied by the evaluation of the other critical actors from the communities.

7.3.1.3 Step 3: Diagnosis of other Actors and their Interactive Activities

In Step 3, the systems model in Figure 7.2 also requires the authorities at uThukela to diagnose and identify other critical actors and their interactive activities that constrain or bolster the accomplishment of activities in uThukela District Municipality as a system. Such a proposal is derived from the findings of this study, which revealed that an increasing combinations of new actors are emerging from the local communities in uThukela to put pressure not only on politicians, but also on municipal administrators.

Yet, in the event that their interests and preferences are not met, such other actors were found to engage in activities that constrained the effective performance of uThukela District Municipality as a system. Thus, to operate effectively as a system, it is emphasised in the systems model in Figure 7.2 that the authorities at uThukela must not only integrate political and administrative activities, but also link municipal political and administrative subsystems to certain other critical actors from the local communities.

As indicated in Figure 7.2, such critical actors not only pertain to the critical actors from the local communities in uThukela, but also from the segments of the larger environment of uThukela District Municipality as a system. Such other critical actors from the local communities and other segments of uThukela's larger environment encompass provincial government, national government, community activists, business activists, contracted service providers, youth groups, women's groups, service delivery activists and political activists. Such a view is attributable to the findings of this research that indicated provincial and national governments not only influence policy formulation and implementation at uThukela District, but also to increasingly intervene in the actual uThukela District Municipality's operation.

On the other hand, community activists, business activists, contracted service providers, youth groups, women's groups, service delivery activists and political activists were also found to exert enormous pressure on politicians and municipal administrative actors at uThukela to meet their unique needs and preferences and, in certain cases, they attempted to influence actual operations of uThukela District Municipality as a system. Thus, for the uThukela District municipality to operate effectively as a system, the systems model in Figure 7.2 emphasises that authorities at uThukela must thoroughly diagnose and identify such other critical actors.

Such diagnosis is critical for understanding how the negative effects of such other actors' interactive activities can be mitigated as well as how their needs and preferences can be integrated into different municipal policy formulation and implementation of activities to render it possible for uThukela District Municipality to operate effectively as a system. Although the diagnosis and identification of critical political, administrative, and other actors in uThukela's larger environment would enable the identification of the points of conflict, it is further suggested in Step 4 of the systems model in Figure 7.2 that such analysis must be accompanied by diagnosis of formal and informal political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the external municipal system.

7.3.1.4 Step 4: Diagnosis of Formal and Informal Political-Administrative Interface vis-à-vis Other Actors in External Municipal System

The systems model in Figure 7.2 emphasises in Step 4 that the authorities at uThukela must also diagnose formal and informal political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the external municipal system. Such a view is attributable to the findings of this research that reiterated that if points of conflicts and incompatibilities are not arising from the formal interactions of politicians, administrators and other critical actors from the larger environment, then such conflicts and incompatibilities may arise from such actors' informal interactions. Thus, to enhance the identification of the points of conflicts and incompatibilities, Step 4 of the systems model stresses that authorities in uThukela must diagnose how political actors formally and informally interact amongst themselves because it has emerged from the findings that if politicians are not conflicting with municipal administrators, then they may tend to conflict amongst themselves. Yet, as such politicians contradict and conflict amongst themselves, it has tended to affect the administrative actors' capabilities to effectively accomplish uThukela District Municipality's administrative activities.

Hence, it is crucial for the authorities at uThukela District Municipality to diagnose how political actors formally and informally interact among themselves to identify, understand and mitigate political actors' interactive activities that lead to conflict and complexity that undermine uThukela District Municipality's effective performance as a system. To further leverage the effective operation of uThukela District Municipality as a system, authorities at uThukela must ensure that such a diagnosis is accompanied by an assessment of how political actors formally and informally interact with municipal administration actors. Such analysis is critical for authorities at uThukela to understand how the interactions between political and administrative actors are coherent and collaborative to aid the achievement of the desired outcomes.

Alternatively, such analysis is also essential for authorities at uThukela to identify the kinds of conflict, incompatibility and incoherency that arise from the interactions of political actors with municipal administrators and must be mitigated for uThukela District Municipality to operate and perform effectively as a system. However, interactions between political and administrative actors

are not only initiated by political actors but also, in certain cases, by the municipal administrative actors themselves. Therefore, such a diagnosis must also evaluate how municipal administration actors formally and informally interact with political actors.

Such analysis is critical for authorities at uThukela to assess the extent to which different political and administrative actors interact amongst themselves in the uThukela District Municipality as a system. Even if such analysis aids or does not aid the identification of points of conflicts and incompatibilities, authorities at uThukela must still ensure that it is accompanied by the assessment of how political actors formally and informally interact with other actors, as well as how municipal administration actors formally and informally interact with other actors. Such analysis is critical for authorities at uThukela to discern how political and administrative actors coherently interact with the other critical actors from the local communities as well as from the larger environment to aid the capabilities of uThukela District Municipality as a system to respond to their needs and preferences. This aids in the identification of the points of complexity that must be mitigated in order for needs and preferences of other critical actors to be integrated into relevant policy decisions and aid the uThukela District Municipality in performing effectively as a system that is responsive to its internal subsystems as well as the needs in its external supra-system.

Such a view is based on the theoretical findings of this research, which explains that a system is not only influenced by its internal subsystems or actors, but also by subsystems in its larger environment or supra-system. As it is indicated in the systems model in Figure 7.2, after the accomplishment of the analysis and diagnosis in all the previous steps and in this step, Step 5 will require authorities at uThukela to identify points of complexity in political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the external municipal system.

7.3.1.5 Step 5: Identification of Points of Complexity in Political-Administrative Interfaces vis-à-vis Other Actors in the External Municipal System

Based on the analysis in the previous steps, Step 5 in the systems model in Figure 7.2 requires the authorities at uThukela to focus on the identification of the points of complexity in political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the external municipal system. As the findings revealed, points of complexity are any situations arising from interactions of the actors, whether

political, administrative or other actors, that would affect the capabilities of uThukela District Municipality to effectively operate and perform as a system.

It is critical for authorities at uThukela to note that such situations may reflect points of conflict, antagonism, incompatibility, collusion, political interference and over-emphasised political supremacy that undermine the capabilities of the uThukela District Municipality to effectively operate and perform as a system. Authorities at uThukela must also note that such situations may arise not only between political and administrative actors as well as other actors from local communities, but also among political actors themselves. Depending on the kinds of complexities identified, Step 6 of the systems model in Figure 7.2 highlights some of the strategies that the authorities in uThukela can use for managing complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors.

7.3.1.6 Step 6: Managing Complexities of Political-Administrative Interfaces vis-à-vis Other Actors

Some of the strategies highlighted in Step 6 of the systems model in Figure 7.2 that the authorities in uThukela can use for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors include eliminating over-emphasised political supremacy, the use of a pure hybrid model, the collaboration and networking of political actors and municipal administrative actors in conjunction with other actors and the use of a "village" of life model. Other strategies encompass the use of co-consultation, co-deliberation, co-design, co-delivery, and co-evaluation, restructuring rules and structures to eliminate corrupt and undesired collusions, the use of inter-locked stakeholders' management model, and monitor and evaluate the impact of the systems model on service delivery.

Whereas some of the strategies, such as restructuring rules and structures to eliminate corrupt and undesirable collusion are reactive and only tend to be undertaken after the occurrence of complexities, others are mainly proactive and are aimed at proactively managing different situations before the occurrence of complexities. In terms of the elimination of over-emphasised political supremacy, the systems model in Figure 7.2 emphasises that the authorities in uThukela must take the initiative to eliminate the often over-emphasised political supremacy.

This is attributable to the findings that reiterated over-emphasised political supremacy to be the cause of all conflicts that create complexities to undermine the uThukela District Municipality's operation as a system. Instead of over-emphasising political supremacy, authorities must encourage political subsystems to co-exist with administrative subsystems in the uThukela District Municipality as a system.

To further encourage the co-existence of political and administrative subsystems, authorities in uThukela must use pure hybrid model to leverage the interactive engagements of both political and administrative actors in different policy formulation and implementation of decisions as well as the overall management of municipal operations. As theoretical findings revealed, such a proposition is in line with Aberbach et al.'s (1981:87) Image 4, which reflects a pure hybrid model where politicians and public managers interactively engage in the accomplishment of more overlapping activities during policy decision-making and public management.

Instead of segregating politicians from administrators, the pure hybrid model would enable the authorities in uThukela to encourage the two groups of actors to work collaboratively with each other during policy formulation and implementation. Yet, as such an approach is being used, the systems model in Figure 7.2 also emphasises that authorities in uThukela must also ensure that there is coherent and seamless collaboration and networking of political actors and municipal administration actors in conjunction with other actors.

The application of such an approach would require authorities in uThukela to encourage political dominance in situations that it requires as well as municipal administrators' dominance where the situation requires. Such an approach would enable politicians to exercise their political oversights in situations where it is required and also allow municipal administrators to apply their expertise and technical thinking in situations in which such expertise and techniques are required. This would aid effective collaboration and networking of politicians with municipal administrators.

Besides such collaboration and networking, the systems model in Figure 7.2 also stresses that authorities in uThukela must also use the "Village" of Life Model. In the "Village" of Life Model, the authorities in uThukela must ensure that political and municipal administrative actors exhibit a high level of collaboration and social cohesion.

Authorities in uThukela will have to ensure that political and municipal administrative actors share common objectives, goals, logistics and a reciprocal approach to ensure good governance to induce positive outcomes in their careers. This can be accomplished by involving and engaging municipal administrative actors in policy decisions to enhance their buy-in into such policy decisions.

To mitigate complexities arising from the local communities' dissatisfaction with service delivery issues, authorities in uThukela can also adopt co-consultation, co-deliberation, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation with actors from local communities during municipal service delivery policy formulation and implementation. However, to ensure that collaboration between political, administrative and other actors does not lead to collusion that induces outcomes such as corruption or any other incidents that undermine municipal performance, authorities in uThukela must also frequently identify such collusions and restructure rules and structures to eliminate corrupt and undesired collusions. As such strategies are being used, authorities in uThukela must also use the inter-locked stakeholders' management model. This would leverage the abilities of the authorities in uThukela to integrate different needs and preferences of different stakeholders into service delivery policy formulation and implementation of decisions.

However, for authorities in uThukela to use the inter-locked stakeholders' management model, it will require them to use certain five cyclical stages that encompass stakeholder identification, stakeholder mapping, stakeholder engagement design, stakeholder interaction and stakeholder evaluation. With all the stakeholders as well as political and municipal administrative actors integrated in the accomplishment of activities in uThukela District Municipality as a system, the systems model in Figure 7.2 further requires authorities in uThukela to monitor and evaluate the impact of the entire systems model on service delivery.

To accomplish this, authorities in uThukela must set clear indicators in areas that include the following: level of improved understanding and cooperation among different actors, level of conflicts, incompatibilities and complexities, level of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, efficiency and effectiveness of municipal activities' accomplishment, number of corrupt incidents, and community satisfaction with service delivery.

After specifying such indicators, authorities in uThukela can use quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation (M&E). As Okanga and Drotskie (2015:379) note, the quantitative

monitoring and evaluation method is statistically based and uses statistical methods such as surveys, KAP (knowledge, attitude and practices) surveys, case studies and analysis of the existing statistics. The application of these quantitative M&E data collection techniques will require authorities in uThukela to use the quantitative data analysis techniques such as parametric tests (t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis, correlation analysis, and regressive analysis) and non-parametric tests (sign-test and chi-squared (x^2) analysis).

However, quantitative monitoring and evaluation will only produce summarised numerical output that will not enable the authorities in uThukela to discern in-depth whether the use of the strategies for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors is successful or not. To deal with such limitations, authorities in uThukela will also be required to use qualitative monitoring and evaluation method like interviews, focus group discussions, rapid appraisals, performance management, benchmarking, letters, citizens' report cards and telephone hotlines. For qualitative M&E, authorities in uThukela can analyse their data by using qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis as well as content analysis. This will enable authorities in uThukela to identify constraints as well as improvement measures that can be adopted to enhance effective management of the complexities of the political-administrative interface vis-à-vis other actors in the uThukela District Municipality as a system.

7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Some of the limitations arise from the fact that this study is specifically accomplished in the context of uThukela District's situation regarding the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors and their impacts on service delivery. Thus, although there are similarities between the municipalities in the South African local governance systems, the study does not make any claims that it can be applicable everywhere or anywhere else in the local governance sphere. That implies the findings of the study may only be applied in other municipalities with modifications to suit their heterogeneous characteristics.

Besides that, the researcher also acknowledges the fact that some participants on both sides, namely, the politicians and administration, might not be objective enough in responding to the interviews. The fact that some questions might have a bearing on the political agenda of the political office bearers is also taken into account.

Some political mandates are covert in nature, which might lead to some political office bearers being extra cautious, which might then hinder honest responses to interview questions. Besides such limitations, the entire research process was still accomplished in the context of certain ethical principles and considerations.

Other limitations are latent in the fact that the suggested systems model was only extracted and developed in the context of this research's findings and different systems theories for it to be adopted to manage the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in uThukela District Municipality. Thus, as one of the limitations of phenomenological ontology-based research, such a model has not yet been scientifically tested using methods such as confirmatory or exploratory factor analysis to discern whether it really works. Unless the suggested systems model matches the situations that the municipality is facing, it should thus be used reservedly.

7.5 SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Generally, this research is based on the actual experiences and insights of the political and administrative actors in uThukela and its Alfred Duma, Inkosi Langalibalele and Okhahlamba local municipalities. That implies that although it can be used in the entire South African local governance system, future studies must further seek to assess the effectiveness of the approach for managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-a-vis other actors in the entire South African local governance system.

Since the systems model for diagnosing and managing the complexities of political-administrative interfaces vis-à-vis other actors in the polycentric uThukela District Municipality as a system in Figure 7.2 is extracted from the actual experiences of the participants in uThukela in conjunction with theories, such future studies must also assess how such a model can be scientifically tested using confirmatory factor analysis.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

SECTION A: CRITICAL POLITICAL ACTORS AND THEIR INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE INCREASINGLY POLYCENTRIC UTHUKELA DISTRICT

Explain in detail how the following political figures interact with each other as well as with municipal administrators and the local communities during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities:

Executive Mayor

Municipal Council

Speaker

Councillors

SECTION B: CRITICAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT ACTORS AND THEIR INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE INCREASINGLY POLYCENTRIC UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Explain in detail how the following municipal administrators interact with each other as well as with the elected politicians and the local communities during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities:

Municipal Manager

Chief Financial Officer

Section 56 Managers

SECTION C: OTHER CRITICAL ACTORS THAT INTEGRATE WITH POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE IN THE INCREASINGLY POLYCENTRIC UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Explain in detail how the following interact with politicians and municipal administrators during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities:

Provincial Government

Community Activists

Business Activists

Contracted Service Providers

Youth Groups

Women Groups

Service Delivery Activists

Political Activists

SECTION D: COMPLEXITIES OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE AND THEIR IMPACTS IN THE INCREASINGLY POLYCENTRIC UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY's SYSTEM

Briefly explain how the mayor interacts with municipal administrators during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities

Identify and briefly explain the problems that arise from mayor's interaction with municipal administrators during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities

Briefly explain how the mayor interacts with fellow politicians during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities

Identify and briefly explain the problems that arise from mayor's interaction with fellow politicians during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities

Does the mayor collaborate well with the council speaker? If yes or no, explain the reasons

Do the elected politicians collaborate well with municipal administrators during the process for the accomplishment of different municipal activities? If yes or no, provide detailed explanations of the reasons

Do politicians collaborate well with the different members of the local communities? If yes or no, provide detailed explanations of the reasons

Do municipal administrators collaborate well with the different members of the local communities? If yes or no, provide detailed explanations of the reasons

Identify and briefly explain the kinds of challenges that usually arise from the interaction of politicians and municipal administrators with the local communities and businesses

SECTION E: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE APPROACHES THAT ARE USED FOR MANAGING THE COMPLEXITIES OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE VIS-A-VIS OTHER ACTORS IN THE INCREASINGLY POLYCENTRIC UTHUKELA

Identify and explain in details the problems that are affecting the effectiveness of the strategies that have been adopted for managing the relationships between politicians and municipal administrators

Identify and explain in detail the problems that are affecting the effectiveness of the strategies that have been adopted for managing the relationships between politicians and municipal administrators with the local communities

Identify and explain in detail the problems that are affecting the effectiveness of the strategies that have been adopted for managing the relationships between politicians and municipal administrators with businesses

Identify and explain in detail the kinds of approach that you would suggest for managing the relationships between politicians and municipal administrators

Identify and explain in detail the kinds of approach that you would suggest for managing the relationships between politicians and municipal administrators with the local communities

Identify and explain in detail the kinds of approach that you would suggest for managing the relationships between politicians and municipal administrators with businesses

End of Questions