Christelle Auriacombe¹, Natanya Meyer²

Realising South Africa's National Development Plan goals: The need for change to a collaborative democracy to facilitate community participation

ABSTRACT: *A democratic government should adhere to firm public administration principles, legal instruments, structures and mechanisms. However, providing these elements is insufficient to guarantee integrated participative service delivery. This article aims to unravel the most important elements required to create a participative governance model that fuses horizontal intra-relationships between public officials and departments and vertical interactions between public and private networks. The research methodology entailed a critical desktop document analysis of books, articles, regulatory policy and strategy documents. Network governance was conceptually and contextually analysed through unobtrusive research methods. It served as a possible analytical model for democratic governance, where citizens take centre stage in participative decision-making. The findings provide both a description and a contextualisation of the themes that emerged from the research. The article highlights that the network governance model could help South Africa move forward from a dated, elitist democracy based on a dependency model, to a participative democracy model, where communities and government work together. The article concludes that South Africa can only realise the National Development Plans (NDPs) 2030 goals (to maximise people's development, strengthen governance networks and enhance state's capacity to provide adequate public services) by drawing on partnerships within a network governance framework.*

KEYWORDS: Community participation, National Development Plan, network governance, South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

A democratic government should adhere to public administration principles, legal instruments, structures and mechanisms. Democratic good governance demands broad-based civil society involvement and citizen participation in government structures. In this regard, an efficient public service plays a key role in realising the developmental potential and the welfare of its people. Since 1994, public service reform in South Africa has developed from a highly centralised to a decentralised government with national, provincial and local tiers. Whilst great strides have been made to develop government frameworks that co-operate on national, provincial and local levels, these elements have fallen short of facilitating integrated participative service delivery. On a practical level, the legislative, institutional and structural adjustments were challenging to implement (Muthien, 2013; Ståhl, Costa-Black & Loisel, 2018). Despite marginal changes in the well-being of disadvantaged people for the past 20 years, most live a life of disempowerment, characterised by poverty and inequality. As stated by the National Planning Commission (NPC), challenges relating to medical care (coupled with a high level of disease), infrastructure, municipal services, education system, low skills levels and a high unemployment rate further exacerbate the situation (NPC, 2011).

In this article, the authors aim to address the implementation of legislative, institutional and structural changes and principles to develop an enabling platform for socio-economic empowerment. First, the article explains democratic governance before it addresses efforts that the South African government has implemented to date in a bid to democratise the public sector. Hereafter, attention is shifted to developing an enabling environment for a collaborative democratic partnership. In summary, this article aims to unravel

¹ School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy, University of Johannesburg.

² DHET-NRF South Sarchi in Entrepreneurship Education, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg.

the most important elements required to create a participative governance model that fuses horizontal intra-relationships between public officials and departments and vertical interactions between public and private networks

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE EXPLAINED

A democratic government should adhere to public administration principles, legal instruments, structures and mechanisms (Auriacombe, 2014; Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2019). Democratic governance must include both horizontal intra-relationships between public officials and departments as well as vertical interactions between public and private networks. Notably, active citizen participation in governance structures is a prerequisite for democratic governance. However, because of a lack of citizen participation, local government is mostly blamed for public governance ills. Rising anger and frustration in communities has escalated into violent protests, where citizens take the need for change into their own hands. This clearly shows that freedom does not end at the ballot box (Esau, 2007; Botes, 2019). Although local government mostly carry the brunt of governmental incompetence, in reality, several factors influence the efficiency of public governance on every level of the South African public sector. Clearly visible problems include poor audit outcomes, lack of management skills, an inability to develop the required indicators to plan integrated service delivery and monitor legal instruments, policy and programmes (Public Service Commission (PSC), 2005). Other problems are more hidden and also important, such as the lack of inter-sectoral collaboration, more specifically, the lack of regulative, normative, ethical and cognitive principles and values of democracy (PSC, 2005).

The fundamental aim for any democratic government is to meet its public service targets in accordance with democratic principles. South Africa's public service delivery principles are built on the ethics contained in Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. According to the Constitution, 1996, local government is mandated to

- Provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities by ensuring that services are provided to communities in a sustainable manner;
- Promote local socio-economic development and a safe, healthy environment;
- Ensure that communities and community organisations are actively involved in local government matters.

Democratised service delivery can only take place when these fundamental principles are realised (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). By adhering to these principles, the government acknowledges the supremacy of the country's constitution and its aim to democratise both its government system and service delivery arm.

EFFORTS TO DEMOCRATISE THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

The South African government has devoted considerable time and effort to ensure quality service delivery that adheres to the country's constitutional requirements (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This includes drafting related legislation and policies as well as allocating an increasing amount of resources to local government.

Legislation and policies

The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) forms the cornerstone of this mandate, because it provides a comprehensive legislative and policy framework to direct the development of local government as a unified and interdependent sphere. As such, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations of 2001 and community participation by-laws all fall under this umbrella.

These legislative instruments focus on how local governments should function and provide the framework for interacting with communities. The Public Administration Management Act 11 of 2014 provides a set of norms and standards to promote the values and principles outlined in Section 195 of the Constitution, 1996, as well as for an Office of Standards and Compliance to promote and monitor adherence to these norms and standards.

People first

According to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998, all municipalities are mandated to develop an integrated development plan (IDP) in consultation with communities. Thus, all municipalities should ensure that stakeholders within local communities, including traditional leaders in governance structures, participate in these activities. The national government has recently taken more serious steps to help ensure that local governments function effectively. The *Batho Pele* 'People First' values and principles were developed to promote consultation between citizens and public officials on all public service levels. Importantly, *Batho Pele* is based on eight principles, namely, setting service standards, setting service delivery standards, ensuring that all citizens have equal access to services, being considerate when dealing with the public, being accountable to the public for services delivered and ensuring openness and transparency regarding budgets, expenses and responsibilities. As such, these principles provide predetermined standards and mechanisms to address customer complaints, allow citizens to evaluate public servants' performance and hold public servants accountable (PSC, 2017).

Financial transparency

With regard to transparency in terms of municipal budgets, expenses and responsibilities, the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 provides strategies to ensure the sound financial management of municipal finances. Moreover, the Auditor-General (AG) has developed and implemented quarterly reviews and tracking systems to enhance financial management, governance and leadership issues in municipalities (Greyling, 2014; Majid, Samad, Tazilah, Sudarmoyo, & Hanaysha, 2019).

Skills development

The National School of Government (NSG) was established to guide the necessary training and development of public servants. In this regard, partnerships were formed with private and public higher learning institutions, whilst training programmes were standardised according to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Senior Management Service (SMS) Performance Management and Development Systems (PMDS) were developed to measure performance on an annual basis against a performance agreement (PSC, 2014).

Developing key municipal structures

Various important municipal structures, systems and processes were developed to create more synchronicity on a local-government level (Maphunye, 2014; Gavkalova & Kolupaieva, 2018). The main purpose of all these programmes and initiatives are to enable government, especially local government, to improve their performance and service delivery to the public (Martin, 2014). Ward committees were established as the foundation of a democratic local government. When implemented correctly, these structures help mobilise communities to become active partners in local government activities and to help council become more responsive to community members' needs.

Siyahlola, a hands-on, on-site governmental service delivery monitoring programme, and the Presidential *Imbizo*, a high-level delegation meeting with communities to enhance service delivery, were established (Maphunye, 2014). In addition, *Operation Phakisa*, a radical job-creation action plan, was announced. This programme brings together many stakeholders from the public and private sector to plan major economic projects (The Presidency, 2018). The multi-purpose *Thusong* centres were developed to provide a range of services 'under one roof', whilst community development workers (CDWs) were deployed on a local government level (Maphunye, 2014; Meyer et al., 2016).

Challenges relating to decentralisation

For the past 25 years, the South African public service has transformed from a highly centralised state to a decentralised government with national, provincial and local governments. Unfortunately, the decentralisation of national government did not imply a transfer of authority, responsibilities, functions and financial resource management to local government (Hilhorst & Guijt, 2006; Fye, 2018). Subsequently, democracy failed to facilitate better service delivery, accurately identifying community building trusting relationships between communities, officials and politicians.

In this regard, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE, 2019) describes the South African public service sector as inefficient, unethical, corrupt and incompetent. The Office of the President ascribes this state of affairs to a lack of political will, inadequate leadership, management weaknesses, inappropriate design and misaligned decision rights (The Presidency, 2009). Furthermore, the Annual Auditor General reports identified a lack of financial control, mismanagement and the absence of firm governance principles as the key reasons why municipalities fail to deliver on their service delivery mandates (Greyling, 2014; Majid et al., 2019). Korma (2010) added political interference, policy incoherence, complex reporting systems, the institutional incapacity of many municipalities, inefficient municipal administration, a declining skills base and service delivery failures to the list of institutional challenges. The performance of numerous municipalities across the country clearly demonstrates enormous deficiencies in terms of fulfilling both their constitutional and legislative obligations (Koma, 2010; Stafa & Xhumari, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research approach because it was considered most suitable, considering it provides the opportunity to gain deeper insights and an understanding of the topic at hand. Document analysis was used to gather information regarding the realisation of South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) goals and the need for change to a collaborative democracy to facilitate community participation. This method allowed for a critical examination of content collected from trustworthy and reliable documents, in this case, mostly documents compiled and released by government and public management industry experts. As stated by Bowen (2009), using this approach allows for a systematic technique in which various documents are reviewed and evaluated to extract important themes emanating from the research question or problem. Furthermore, Corbin and Strauss (2008) opined that this method can help improve the understanding of the topic at hand. Document analysis is seen as a social research method and the rationale behind it is the triangulation of information. It is unobtrusive in nature and, therefore, eliminates the possible bias from interactions with the sample audience. It also promotes contextual and conceptual investigation (Huysamen, 1994; Webb et al., 1999; Babbie, 2001; Berryman, 2019). Corroborating findings and information from different sources can create a confluence of information, which could strengthen credibility (Bowen, 2009). The results obtained from document analysis allow for the verification with specific reference to the various documents (Swart, Swanepoel & Surujlal, 2014). Using this methodology has several advantages that include cost and time savings compared to other qualitative methods, documents included in analysis is easily available and includes limited to no human interaction and, finally, documents are considered reliable, accessible and non-reactive, which allows for it to be reviewed more than once (Bowen, 2009). Swart et al. (2014) further opined that the results obtained from this form of analysis allow for the verification specifically with reference to the various documents used.

This study made specific use of books, articles, regulatory policy and strategy documents. As recommended by Bowen (2009), these documents were selected because they contributed to the objective of the study; the documents could be deemed credible, authentic, complete and representative and the source of the documents were known. The qualitative description of the findings focused on the themes that emerged from the research and the manner in which they were conceptualised.

RESULTS

As stated, the aim of this article was to identify the most important elements required to create a participative governance model that fuses horizontal intra-relationships between public officials and departments and vertical interactions between public and private

networks. The next section provides the results from the in-depth desk top analysis and a discussion on the main themes emanating from the findings.

CREATING A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP DEMOCRACY

Whilst the public service serves as the executive arm of government, poor governance has become a major barrier to socio-economic development in Africa, including South Africa (Chirenje, Giliba, & Musamba, 2013; Molefe, Meyer & De Jongh, 2018). Undeniably, this vital sector needs to be strengthened if South Africa wants to operate as a democratic developmental government (PSC, 2017). Within this context, the active participation of citizens reinforces development, democracy and accountability. Furthermore, there needs to be a focus on collaboration between citizens and the state to develop a democratic developmental government (NPC, 2013).

In 2013, the South African government adopted a national vision to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 (NPC, 2013). The NDP 2030 was developed by the NPC as a governance framework to ensure that the needed strategic plans, IDPs and annual government performance plans were developed (NPC, 2013). According to White, Heyman, Favis and Hargovan (2000) and Haywood, Funke, Audouin, Musvoto and Nahman, (2019), the NDP 2030 functions as ‘... a “blueprint” for transforming social, economic and political structures in South Africa, in order to address past inequality and create a basis for growth and sustainability in the future’. Furthermore, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ENECA) opined that the debate on good governance and network governance has been reintroduced as a potential solution for Africa’s developmental challenges (ENECA, 2011). More recently, the focus has shifted to measuring network governance capacity against democratisation and development (Muthien, 2013; Solomon & Liebenberg, 2017). The concepts good governance, networking, democratisation and development have also been introduced to this debate (White *et al.*, 2000; Haywood *et al.*, 2019). Within the South African governance context, this link is best described in the NDP 2030. The aims and principles reflect the meaning of developmental democratisation within the South African context, as well as the core and implementation of the country’s legislative and policy instruments. It clearly emphasises the democratic principles of promoting partnerships between the public and private sectors. It is believed that development and equity could be enhanced if the private sector, such as business, labour, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), and the public sector could work together in a democratic developmental framework (PSC, 2016). The NDP 2030 emphasises the need to maximise human resource development and empowerment to accelerate transformation and service delivery to the benefit of all South Africans (NPC, 2013). This commitment is driven by the South African government’s belief that the country, and Africa in general, will not meet developmental challenges (e.g. reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment) without a democratic state that actively involves citizens in governance and economic decision-making (NPC, 2013).

The President’s Office (2018) recently recommended the establishment of a delivery unit within the presidency to help improve service delivery and create a participatory developmental democracy model. To reach these goals, the delivery unit prioritised the following areas related to key NDP goals (economic growth, poverty eradication, job creation, reduction of income inequality and service delivery):

- Addressing issues that may undermine the democratic state, such as weak local governance, environmental degradation, crime and corruption;
- Mobilising communities for self-development;
- Enhancing public’s ability to hold local government accountable for poor service delivery;
- Addressing poverty and inequality through investment and employment opportunities – especially for the youth;
- Monitoring and evaluating NDP’s objectives;
- Conducting research on critical issues that affect long-term development;
- Empowering poor communities, especially those with high levels of crime and violence;
- Redesigning government structures to become more responsive to citizens’ needs;
- Developing and maintaining a range of community institutions to bolster participatory democracy;
- Developing and enhancing the capacity of NGOs and CBOs to play an effective role in service delivery, community mobilisation, advocacy, planning, lobbying and financing community programmes;
- Ensuring gender equality and raising the standards of basic education, social services and healthcare (The Presidency, 2018).

Undeniably, democratisation and good governance form the cornerstones of development goals. In this regard, White *et al.* (2000) and Ascher, Brewer, Cheema and Heffron, (2016) argued that linking participatory, accountable and efficient governance to development, good governance and democracy could help both the government and citizens reach sustainable social and economic development objectives. Klijn and Koppenjan (2012) and Classen (2017) stated that inter-sectoral collaboration could enhance and provide guidelines for the integrative procedures and actions of a democratic governance system. Moreover, inter-sectoral collaboration forms the foundation of a viable network. Within this context, a network could be regarded as a relationship between a group of interdependent but operationally independent members who establish a meaningful connection within an institutionalised framework (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007; Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). Competence is based on the knowledge and experience of each interdependent member. The network partners bring strategic resources to the table that establish trust in a mutual relationship and establishing resolutions to shared problems (Marcussen & Torfing, 2007; Torfing & Sørensen, 2014; Oláh *et al.*, 2017; Oláh *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, network governance could be regarded as ‘... realising collective goals by means of collective action’ (Lange, Driessen, Sauer, Bornemann, & Burger, 2013:2; Albareda & Waddock, 2018). Internationally, an increasing number of countries turn to network governance as a viable solution, because it opens up more avenues to solve complicated contemporary problems (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Torfing & Sørensen, 2009; Peters, 2014; Albareda & Waddock, 2018). Fortunately, the South African public sector has come to realise that, within the modern governance structure, no single actor in the public or private sector has the infrastructure, knowledge or resources to solve complex societal problems. In this regard, the NDP 2030 states that ‘A developmental state builds the capabilities of people to improve their own lives, while intervening to correct historical inequalities. Neither government nor the market can develop the necessary capabilities on their own’ (NPC, 2013:17).

The challenge is to develop a network governance model that is responsive to the real needs of citizens, especially the poor. The South African government has committed itself to build a state that could guide encompassing economic and social development by mobilising and directing all available resources towards achieving the NDP goals. This helps ensure that the needs of the poor, as well as social issues, such as healthcare, housing, education and safety, are at the top of the national agenda (NPC, 2013).

The PSC (2014) highlights that democratic government should adhere to public administration principles, legal instruments and mechanisms. In this regard, the network governance model is built on visionary leadership, efficient structures, processes and values (Zurbriggen, 2014). Therefore, one way of achieving efficient and sustainable models for citizen participation is establishing structured and institutionalised frameworks to facilitate participatory governance (DPLG & GTZ, 2005). On the basis of the aforementioned discussion, a model for encouraging a collaborative democracy through the facilitation of community participation to aid in the realisation of South Africa’s NDP goals is suggested in Figure 1.

Leadership and political will

The first prerequisite for effective network governance is government’s commitment to transcend from needs based to a developmental approach, where communities are empowered to partake and monitor policies, processes and programmes (Patton, 2008; Considine, Nguyen & O’Sullivan, 2018). To monitor implementation, clear, measurable and deadline-based objectives need to be developed for all programmes and processes. In order to reach the NDP goals, the current state-centric view of power needs to be reshaped into that of a dynamic, equal power-sharing relationship between the public and private sectors (CGG, 1995; Meyer & Meyer, 2017). The aforementioned view is supported by the NPC (2011).

Network governance emphasises the importance of effective, accountable and visionary leaders who show integrity when performing their duties (Zurbriggen, 2014). Strong leadership unites the public sector, business, labour and civil society in a network environment. Within a network governance context, strong leadership and political will are needed to define mutual problems, mobilise communities to participate in solving the issues and direct resources towards shared programmes.

Network governance must nurture democracy

Network governance is more than elections, a judiciary and a Parliament. Key variables that influence network governance include human rights, equity, non-discriminatory laws, efficient, impartial judicial processes, transparency, accountable public officials,

Fig, 1: Framework for facilitation of community participation.

decentralisation of services and meaningful citizen participation in influencing local public policies and decision-making levels (Weiss, 2000). Democracy, therefore, plays an integral part of network governance (PSC, 2014). The effectiveness of the 'developmental state' is also influenced by whether officials are protected from direct political pressure. Among high-ranking officials, political pressure could lead them to place their own agendas first and undermine collective collaboration.

Educated, professional and skilled office bearers

A network governance model should have educated, professional and skilled office bearers who empower communities to collaborate with government. Recruitments and appointments must be based primarily on merit and public servants need to follow a clearly delineated career path (PSC, 2014).

Participation and interdependency

Most network researchers agree that interdependency is a key factor that initiates and sustains networks (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). In this regard, community stakeholders should be empowered to identify and address problems, as well as monitor actions taken in co-operation with the public service officials (Patton, 2008; NPC, 2013). According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and David (2018), citizen participation forms the cornerstone developmental democracy (CoGTA, 2009; David, 2018). Participation has several functions in a democratic developmental state. First, a learning function enhances citizens' civic skills, because they become more empowered and knowledgeable when participating in public decision-making processes. Second, a growing sense of belonging among community members, which contributes to a sense of responsibility and a vested interest personal development (Michels & De Graaf, 2010; Gilchrist, 2019). Third, it helps bolster accountability in the public sector. Thus, the term 'partnership' implies active participation and close involvement in a governance network. Participation in governance networks also has the potential to rebuild public trust in government (PSC, 2005).

Trust in governance networks

Trust stimulates the development of common ground in governance networks, because it enhances cooperation and coordination, as well as the effectiveness of network performance (Huang & Provan, 2007; Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2018). According to Edelenbos and Van Meerkerk (2017), the core indicators of trust are positive intentions and working towards a common good. Trust and trusting relationships in governance networks lead to co-operation (Torfing & Sørensen, 2009), insight and understanding (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). This ultimately paves the way to reaching common ground and making mutually beneficial decisions

Common ground

Common ground can be described as a dynamic process of developing and maintaining mutual understanding, interests and goals to facilitate interdependent actions and processes. The theory of ‘common ground’ explains how participants from diverse backgrounds can develop mutual relationships and collaborate to solve complex problems (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2017). Finding common ground is essential to consensus-building and conflict-resolution processes. In a trustworthy governance network relationship, it is easier to identify with the values and perspectives of co-members, as well as to compromise and reach consensus (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012).

Network management

Network management should ensure seamless services from the development of legal instruments to effective integrative structures and processes, programme design and monitoring, as well as financial control and accountability.

Spanning boundaries

‘Boundary spanners’ refer to network governance stakeholders to facilitate mutual understanding; help others to develop trust; reach common ground and common understanding of community problems, monitor and modify action; and facilitate interaction and mediate conflict among team members (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). In this regard, government-appointed CDWs could act as a direct link between government and communities. The development of CDWs is viewed as an important initiative to bring government closer to the people and to respond to community needs (Gray & Mubangizi, 2009; Wagner, 2018).

Ethical principles impacting on network governance within a developmental framework

Although of utmost importance, the above institutional arrangements and structures are not enough to successfully operate network governance. The following ethical variables play a key role in developmental democracy and the strengthening public capacity:

- **Cooperation** – The NDP is intended to be the main mechanism for coordination and collaboration between the public and private sectors. This platform for socio-economic development is the ideal setting for participatory development planning and budgeting, as well as service provision (PSC, 2014);
- **Accountability and integrity** – Accountability and integrity strengthen citizen’s trust and the co-operation between the public and the state (PSC, 2014). Conversely, the PSC (2014) underscores that weak accountability systems underlie the failure of effective service delivery;
- **Transparency** – Ordinary citizens should be able to follow and understand decision-making processes of public governance. To accomplish this, citizens should have reasonable access to information that will empower the public to participate in decision-making policies and programmes that have a direct bearing on their lives;

- **Rule of law** – The Constitutional Court was established in terms of Section 167 of the Constitution of 1996 as the highest court where decisions are made in accordance with relevant legislation, policy and regulations (PSC, 2014). Therefore, the principles of the South African democracy are institutionalised and entrenched by means of a comprehensive statutory and regulatory framework (White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997);
- **Impartial and inclusive service delivery** – The public sector should serve the interest of all citizens equally to the best of its ability. Especially, the most vulnerable segments of society should be empowered to become part of decision-making processes;
- **Indicators and the capability to monitor and evaluate** – A democratised development network should have the capacity to develop indicators to monitor and evaluate progress. This includes developing performance criteria and the use of innovations (e.g. new technology) to meet set targets (PSC, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Participative democracy is needed to empower community members to exercise their right to partake in municipal decisions and to hold public officials accountable (Batory & Svensson, 2019). Whilst there are remarkable examples of transformative public governance reform in South Africa, it is not enough to create an enabling environment for integrative collaboration on all governance levels. Ochrana, Plaček and Půček (2016) referred to the concept of strategic governance that extends from the notion of good governance and has the potential to impact the future of governance in a better manner. In the South African case, the structural elements are already in place to provide avenues for participation and collaboration. However, an environment shaped by empowerment, co-operation, accountability, transparency, trust, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness and procedures to monitor and evaluate progress is needed to realise a participative democracy in South Africa. Network governance does not only represent the principles of democracy, and solid leadership is also of participation of citizens in the development and governance processes (Edigheji, 2005; Lewis, Ricard & Klijn, 2018; Colebatch, 2017). Experience has shown that citizen and community collaboration in governance enhances effective accountable democratic governance (DPLG & GTZ, 2005). As stated by Edigheji (2005:9), ‘networking with civil society is based on close cooperation, coordination and partnerships. Effective partnerships consist of shared roles, responsibilities and decision-making powers’.

The research highlighted that the network governance model could help South Africa to evolve from an archaic, elitist democracy, where the dependency model was used to seek rational feedback from the government, to a participative democracy model, where communities and government work together. Notably, networking has created avenues to involve both social and political environments. Subsequently, more resources are available for development, information, perceptions and skills to solve problems. Also, network governance has the potential to restore the trust between the government and communities in South Africa.

Democratically, the current South African government system is still shackled to the dependency model of its elitist past. A shift needs to be made from the dependency model to a community participation model, where citizens and local government can work together to bring about change. If this is not done, anger and frustration in communities will escalate. Within this negative context, people will take the need for change into their own hands and possibly the violent protests characterised by the former apartheid days. However, the decentralisation of a government system does not automatically bring about public participation of previously marginalised people (Peters, 1997; Khosha, 2002). Most South Africans not only come from an oppressive background but also from a dependency culture. A mind-shift should, therefore, be made from the dependency model where the government is expected to serve every requirement within communities, to a model where communities are empowered do become involved in their own development (Hanberger, 2006). This clearly shows that democracy is not decided at the ballot box and that it entails a clear focus on creating an enabling environment that stimulates independence.

South Africa can only realise the NDP 2030 goals (to maximise people’s development, strengthen governance networks and enhance the state’s capacity to provide adequate public services) by drawing on partnerships within a network governance framework. Developing a network governance is not an easy task. The foundations for a capable state have been laid, but there are major concerns about the weaknesses in how these structures function, which concerns the state’s ability to pursue key development objectives (NPC, 2011). To reach the NDP 2030 goals, the South African government has committed itself to building a participative democracy that can guide socio-economic development within all tiers of governance by mobilising communities and directing available resources toward achieving NDP goals. This article aimed to unravel the most important elements required to create a participative governance

model that fuses horizontal intra-relationships between public officials and departments and vertical interactions between public and private networks using a qualitative methodological approach including a critical desktop document analysis. Although this was achieved, the article is not without its limitations. As this article mainly made use of secondary sources, which in this case was deemed appropriate considering the aim, one limitation could be the lack of quantitative empirical results. Furthermore, the current South African case was not compared to other developing countries. These limitations open the possibility for future research, which could include collecting primary data from government officials, businesses and community members to confirm and rank the most important elements required to create participative governance as identified in this study. Furthermore, country comparisons and case analysis from other developed and developing countries could be beneficial to future policy recommendations and development.

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