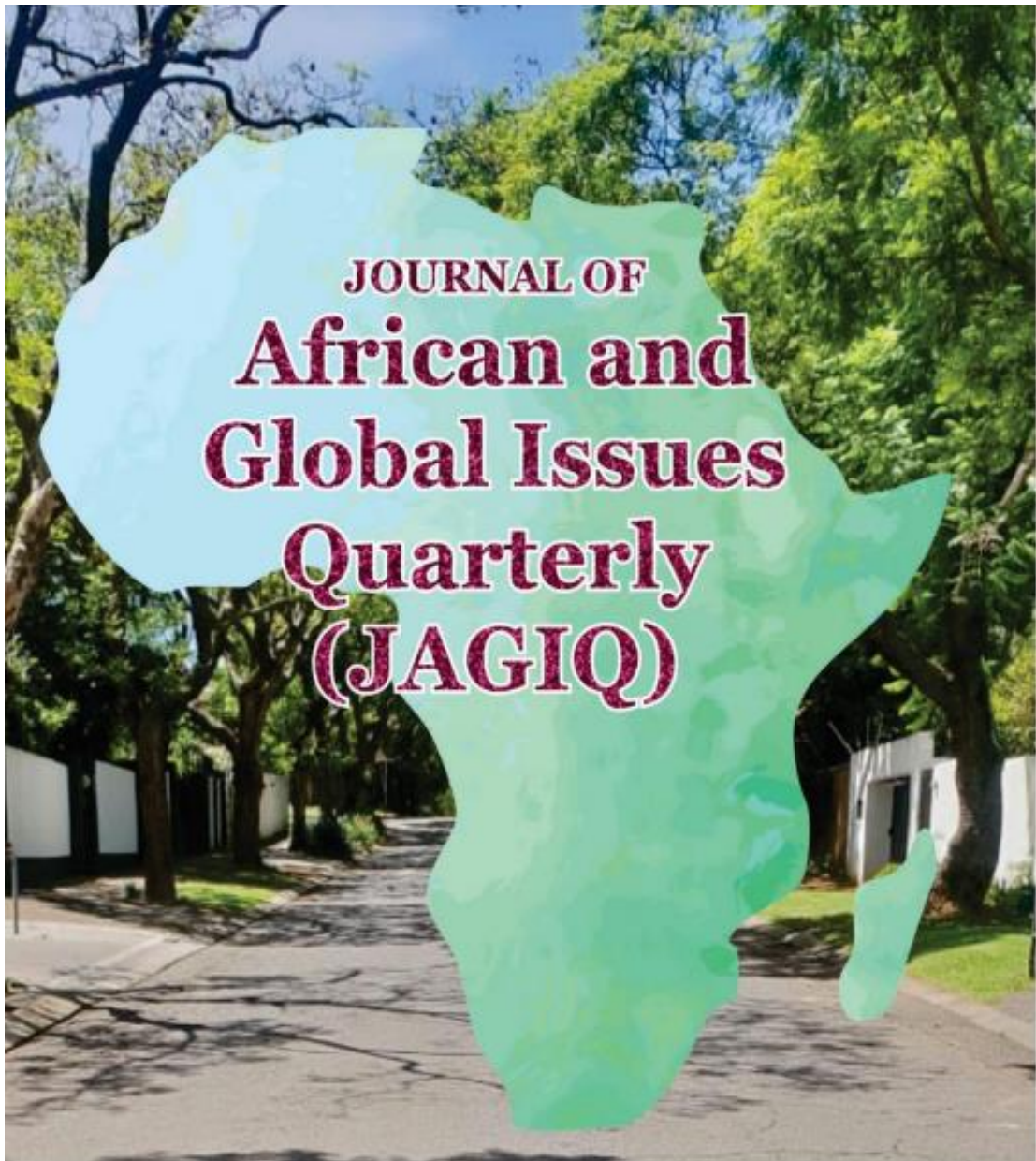




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Editorial Note:

Strengthening Accountability, Confronting Violence, and Reimagining Security in Africa

This Special Issue of African and Global Issues Quarterly arrives at a critical juncture. Across Africa, nations grapple with interconnected crises: the erosion of public trust in financial governance, the devastating rise of organised violence among youth, the persistent marginalisation of vulnerable populations, and the enduring legacy of colonial and neocolonial institutions that continue to shape contemporary realities. The thirteen papers presented here dissect these challenges with intellectual rigour and practical urgency.

We open with Nakabago and Hofisi's forensic examination of Uganda's Universal Primary Education capitation grant. For decades, UPE has been hailed as a pro-poor triumph. Yet, as the authors reveal, weak monitoring and evaluation of internal controls have turned a lifeline into a leaky vessel. Without real-time auditing and community-based oversight, financial accountability remains aspirational. This paper is a clarion call: education funding cannot be separated from forensic vigilance.

The crisis of youth violence, examined across two complementary studies by Somtochukwu, Muyideen, and colleagues, forces us to look where society often refuses to look: inside Ogun State's correctional facilities. Their first paper critically submits that socioeconomic indicators unemployment, broken kinship networks, and educational exclusion are causal pathways into cultism. The second adds a psychosocial layer, revealing how trauma, identity displacement, and the search for belonging drive young inmates deeper into violent collectives. Together, these studies argue that incarceration without therapeutic intervention is not rehabilitation but a factory for recidivism.

History matters. Daniel Oluwafemi John takes us into Igangan Town, Oyo State, between 1973 and 2021. The farmer-herder crisis is often framed as a contemporary emergency, but John demonstrates its long arc: decades of land tenure ambiguity, climate-induced migration, and state neglect. Understanding 1973 is essential for solving 2026. This is a sobering lesson in how unresolved grievances become inherited wars.

Joel Odaudu moves beyond Africa's borders with a multidimensional causal analysis of terrorism. Rejecting single-factor explanations, Odaudu insists on the confluence of political exclusion, economic inequality, and social fragmentation. His framework is a necessary tool for any government designing a counterterrorism policy that does not merely react but prevents.

The international justice system faces a necessary reckoning in Avitus A. Agbor's incisive critique of the International Criminal Court's racist image and agenda. Through comparative analysis of the situations in Ukraine and Palestine, Agbor exposes the selective application of international law a double standard that undermines the Court's legitimacy and perpetuates global hierarchies of victimhood.

Choma, Thobejane, and Rannditsheni's revisiting of human rights for people living with albinism foregrounds a community too often marginalised in both policy and scholarship. Their work reminds us that human rights discourse must move beyond abstract universality to address specific, lived vulnerabilities rooted in superstition, stigma, and systemic neglect.

Governance and accountability receive comprehensive treatment. Mohono, Gabanakgosi, and Shopola's Public Value Theory perspective on parliamentary oversight provides a fresh framework for understanding democratic governance in Southern Africa. Zweni and Mahlala extend this conversation to grassroots public participation in municipal budget development, demonstrating that budgets are political statements about whose needs are prioritised.

The spectre of fragmentation looms large in Kelechi Johnmary Ani's unravelling of secessionist movements in Ambazonia and Biafra. By examining governance failures, identity politics, and historical grievances, Ani illuminates the root causes of separatist aspirations rather than merely managing their symptoms.

The private sector's challenges in volatile environments are explored by Parsad and Chummun, whose study of operational excellence in VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) environments focuses on South Africa's insurance industry, offering practical insights for navigating uncertainty.

Academic rigour and methodological integrity come under the spotlight in Musaigwa, Nojiyeza, and Tabane's practical guide to writing strong conclusion chapters, addressing a perennial challenge in research dissemination and preempting reviewer criticism.

Nthambeleni Charles Netshisaulu's conceptual analysis of reversible metaphors in Tshivenda adds a rich linguistic dimension, demonstrating how language reflects and shapes cognition, culture, and social relations.

Taken together, these contributions remind us that accountability is not a bureaucratic checkbox. It is the thread linking school grants to classroom outcomes, correctional policies to safe communities, land history to peaceful coexistence, international law to genuine justice, and linguistic expression to cultural identity. The papers collectively argue that sustainable development in Africa demands simultaneous attention to financial probity, social inclusion, historical reckoning, and institutional reform.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all contributing authors for their intellectual rigour and commitment to advancing knowledge that serves African communities. In a world increasingly characterised by complexity and contestation, the role of critical scholarship has never been more vital. This Special Issue intervenes with rigour, compassion, and hope.

Editor

Dr. Nicholas Idris Erameh

Nigerian Institute of International Affairs

Lagos, Nigeria

Email. Eramehnickolas@gmail.com

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**THE CATALYST OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
MUNICIPAL BUDGETS IN CATEGORY B MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA:
A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE**

Abongile Zweni,
Department of Management Sciences
Sol Plaatje University
Abongile.zweni@spu.ac.za

&

Sandiso Mahlala
Department of Management Sciences
Sol Plaatje University
sandiso.mahlala@spu.ac.za

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to look into how constituents are involved in the creation of the municipal budget. The South African local government's budget preparation process revolves around public participation. As such, public participation is meant to increase the level of accountability in municipalities. Some municipalities have not met this constitutional requirement.

The study used a qualitative research approach to answer the research question. This was done by analysing secondary data in the form of government reports and policies, government statutes, and a systematic review of the literature. This study was limited to category B municipalities in the Northern Cape Province. The study found that in some municipalities residents are not consulted at all by municipal councillors as required by chapter five, section 23 the Municipal Finance Management Act no 56. 2003 and Municipal Systems Act No 32 of 2000. In some municipalities, there is constant political instability that affects the public participation process. This paper concludes that inadequate planning and a lack of legitimate institutional structures to coordinate, evaluate, and monitor public participation in budget development violate South Africa's constitutional provisions and various community engagement strategies. This paper recommends that municipalities continually consult and involve residents in the public participation process to inform the municipal budget development process. The study contributes to public administration scholarship by providing empirically grounded insights into the role of budget management in improving accountability and oversight in South African local government.

Keywords: *Public Participation; Integrated Development Plan; Municipalities; Budgets; Local government*

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The participatory decision-making process, mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, is one of the pillars of democracy. This is distinctly emphasized in Section 1 (Founding Provisions) of the Constitution, which establishes the democratic basis of the state on principles such as accountability, responsiveness, and transparency within a multi-party democratic system. This is further articulated in Chapter 4, particularly Sections 59(1)(a) and 72(1)(a), which refers to the facilitation of public involvement in the legislative process, ensuring that citizens have the political agency to influence law-making effectively. Furthermore, public participation hereafter referred to as (PP) with specific reference to Category B municipalities in South Africa is a constitutional imperative designed to deepen democratic governance and ensure that local development responds to community needs (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2020). These municipalities, which are local municipalities, that share executive and legislative authority with a district municipality, are the front line of service delivery. Consequently, their effectiveness depends on a strong and collaborative relationship with the communities it serves. In the same light, the White Paper on Local Government of 1998 [RSA, (1998a), p.8] instructs local government to be developmental in the provision of service delivery by being a government "that is committed to working with citizens, groups, and communities to create sustainable human settlements that provide

for a decent quality of life and meet the social, economic, and material needs of communities in a holistic way." Moreover, according to Sebola (2017), public participation refers to the involvement of people and groups affected or interested in a proposed project, program, plan, or policy during the decision-making process. According to Creighton (2005), public participation involves open and accountable communication and collaboration, including citizens' concerns, needs, and values into municipal decision-making. However, despite the legal and policy frameworks that exist to facilitate these engagements, such as the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998 (RSA, 1998b), and the Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003 (RSA, 2003). These legislations do prioritize stakeholder interests and citizens' voices in municipal operations however, the reality on the ground presents a complex picture.

This view is also shared by several scholars who have frequently revealed a disconnect between municipal plans and the actual needs and desires of residents, suggesting that public input is not always meaningfully incorporated into the final plans (Baloyi and Lubinga, 2017; Modise, 2017 Ncwana, Makiva, & Fagbadebo, 2025). The persistent low levels of public engagement in the budget development process are often attributed to a widespread lack of trust and disillusionment among citizens who feel their voices are not heard or that their participation is merely a procedural formality (Mamokhere, 2023). This sentiment often leads to service delivery protests that have become a

common feature of the South African political landscape. However, it is unclear how public engagement initiatives can be maintained while municipalities face challenges in service delivery and budget management. Thus, it is necessary to study how public participation in municipalities in the Northern Cape Province can lead to adequate budgeting to address the needs of marginalised people, since this is a large and poor province in South Africa. This paper is also of the view that municipalities in the Northern Cape must actively give the public the pertinent information they need to be seriously interested in meaningful involvement and to let them know how their opinions will affect the kind of services that are offered. Additionally, municipalities ought to take seriously the input of the public about the channels of involvement for meaningful engagement. The paper purports that, when the municipality develops platforms that will reach all citizens, it allows them to engage and guarantees that decisions made during such a process are converted into policy proposals or are put into effect, public participation becomes a reality.

Therefore, it is against this background, the following objective is advanced.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study seeks to evaluate the effect of public participation in budget development in category B municipalities in the Northern Cape Province.

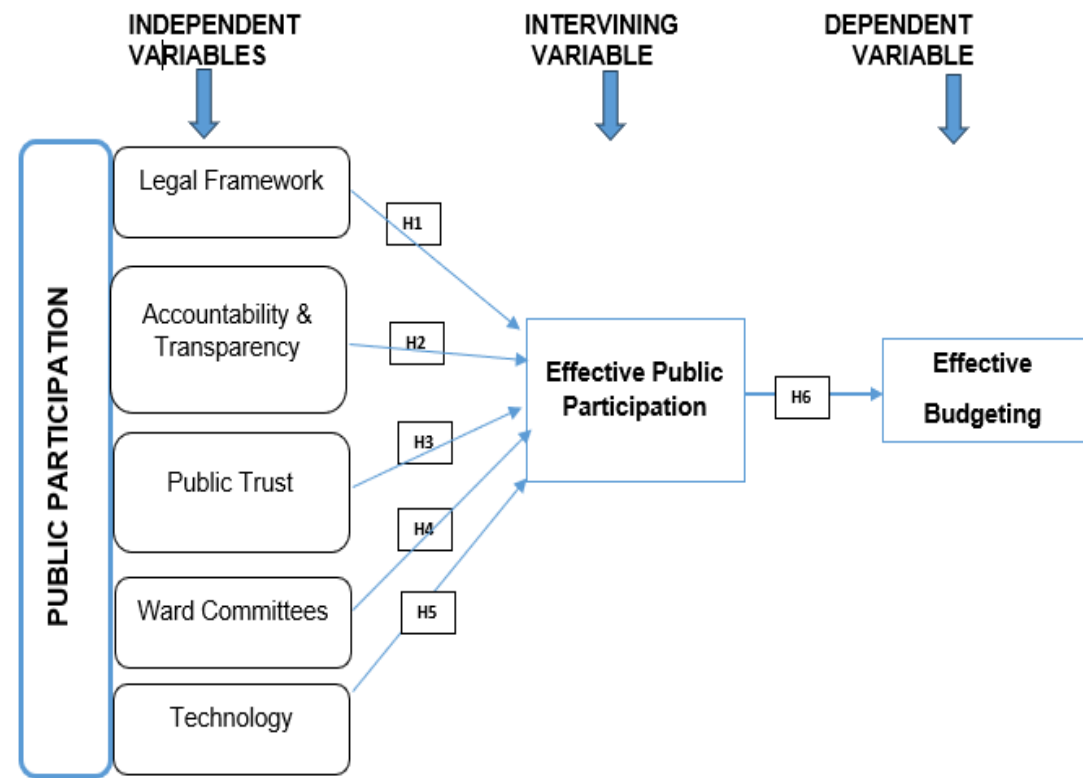
3. RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the effects of public participation in budget development in category B municipalities in the Northern Cape Province.

4. THE PROPOSED MODEL

According to Kivunja (2018); Varpio (2020), a conceptual framework is based on prior research and theories, and it is a textual or visual structure that illustrates the connections between important variables and concepts in a study. This article looked at literature that covers the legal framework on PP, accountability and responsibility, public trust, ward committees, and technology. The literature that was reviewed indicated that the proposed variables can lead to PP and effective budgeting in local government, particularly in category B municipalities which are the closest to the residents. Therefore, Figure 1 shows the model proposed for the study.

Figure 1: The Model



(Source: Authors)

4.1 Legal Framework

In South Africa, public participation is anchored in the Constitution of 1995, which requires the public sector, particularly municipalities, to consult the people before planning municipal activities. This mandate is clearly outlined in section 152 which advocates for the participation of the community in the affairs of the municipality. Furthermore, section 195 of the Constitution requires municipalities to respond in a timely manner to the needs of the community. In addition, section four of the Municipal Systems Act 32, of 2000 requires municipalities to develop and foster a culture of community involvement in the activities of municipalities. Although Municipal Structures Act 117, of 1998

requires municipalities to establish ward committees to encourage participation in their respective municipal wards. Against this background, the following hypotheses is advanced.

H1 There is a relationship between the legal framework and effective public participation.

4.2 Responsibility and accountability

Accountability and responsibility are fundamental components of successful community involvement in local government. As such, accountability is the duty placed on participating citizens and local government representatives to take responsibility for their choices and actions. However, responsibility describes the

obligation of both parties to act in the community's best interests. The importance of public participation in creating a responsible, transparent and collaborative government model. Thus, for municipalities to be transparent, accountable, and responsive, genuine public interaction is essential. Considering what is said above, the following hypotheses is advanced.

H2 There is a correlation between accountability, responsibility, and effective public participation.

4.3 Public Trust

In South Africa, public trust in Category B municipalities, or local municipalities, is currently declining, with the main causes growing governance failures, poor financial management, and insufficient service provision (Mamokhere, 2022). According to the constitution, this sphere of government, which is closest to the people, is required to support local social and economic development while giving priority to the basic needs of its communities, such as the supply of water, sanitation, electricity and garbage removal (COGTA, 2025). But after 2020, official reports and scholarly studies usually point to structural flaws that undermine the credibility of these organisations'. Perhaps the most obvious cause of the local decline in confidence is the inability to provide essential services properly and efficiently (Mulatu, Zerihun, & Mashigo, 2022). Citizens rationally lose faith in the institution meant to serve them when their most fundamental needs are not fulfilled, and this is a phenomenon observed in many localities (Mudzusi, 2024). As such, the following hypotheses is advanced.

H3 There is a correlation between accountability, responsibility, and effective public participation.

4.4 Ward Committees

Ward committees are crucial to the effectiveness of participation. Participation is more likely to be successful in well-structured ward committees than in poorly organised ones. This is related to the ability of the ward committee members' to efficiently plan their activities and focus on resolving their common issues. Therefore, disorganised districts' committees can negatively affect public participation. However, ward committees in South Africa have numerous challenges, including party politics, power struggles, and representation politics (Kgobe, Karriem, and Bayat, 2024).

H4 There is a correlation between the establishment of ward committees and effective public participation.

4.5 Technology

The digitisation of municipal services and processes in line with the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is of paramount importance to enhance municipal performance. As such, without a doubt, the 4IR can help local government to provide services, particularly in relation to Agenda 2030. Municipalities must therefore revise their frameworks, regulations, and other procedures to conform to the new normal. Municipalities must also assess the potential and difficulties posed by the digital economy and create suitable policies to bring about the advantages of digitalisation. With that being said, the following hypothesis is put forward.

H5 There is a relationship between digitisation and effective public participation.

5 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is essentially a thorough summary of earlier studies on a particular subject. In this article, literature on the overview of the sphere of local government, PP, the IDP, legal framework of PP, and budgeting in municipalities.

5.1 An overview of local government

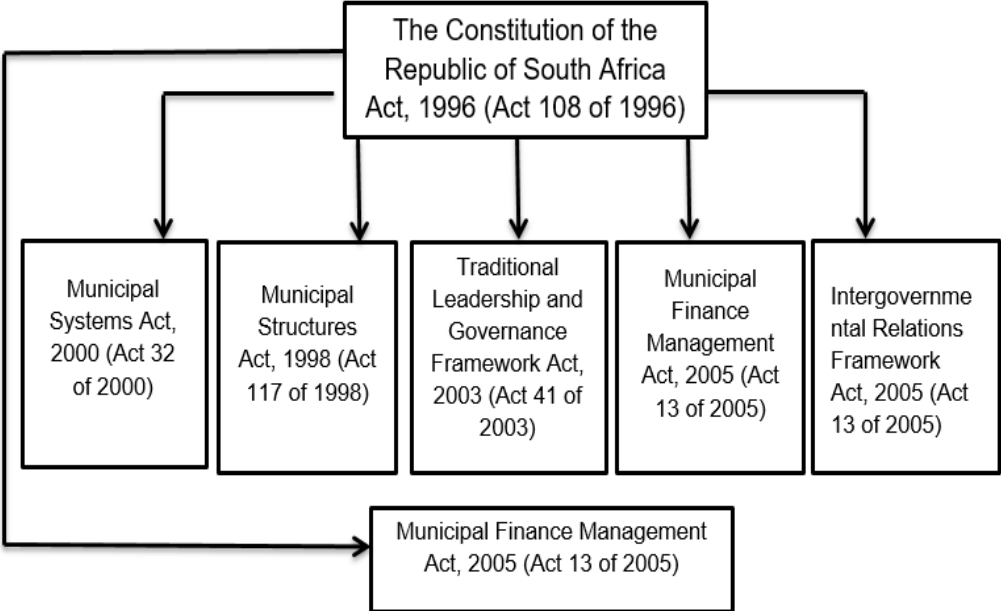
The objectives of the national government are highly dependent on the realm of the local government. Following the arrival of Dutch and British settlers in South Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries, local government was established for the first time (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2013).

According to the existing constitution, local government is responsible for making sure that social and economic growth is encouraged for the good of the community (RSA, 1996). Section 151 of the constitution explicitly outlines the local government's authority, as stated by academics cited in earlier portions of this chapter (Roux & Nyamukachi, 2005). By clearly defining its goals, mandate, and developmental responsibilities, the

Constitution positions local government as a significant sphere of government (Thornhill, 2008; Visser, 2009). To meet the needs of local communities, it is crucial that resources are available to this branch of government. However, South Africa's local government is structured around municipalities, which are responsible for delivering essential services and promoting local development. The system is divided into three main categories: metropolitan, district, and local municipalities, totaling 257 across the country (8 metropolitan, 44 districts, and 205 local).

Thus, on behalf of the national and provincial governments, the municipality has a role to play in reducing poverty, providing health services, adequate water and electrification, safety services, quality roads and infrastructure, fostering local economic growth and creating jobs. According to Figure 2, several acts of Parliament have described the constitutionally mandated duties of local government.

Figure 2: Acts of Parliament that govern local government



(Source: Authors)

5.2 Constitutional and legal framework

South Africa's constitutional and legal framework is based on a supreme Constitution, which establishes the country as a sovereign, democratic state with a clear separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary. The Constitution is the highest law, and all other laws and government actions must comply with it. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) section 152 and other legislative frameworks such as the White Paper on Local Government (1998), the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998), the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) government, the government's macroeconomic agenda, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and the Local Government: Municipal System Act (32 of 2000) provide a solid foundation for public participation in local government. These frameworks require municipalities to actively involve communities in municipal

affairs, specifically in the formulation of policies and decision-making for effective and efficient service delivery (Petunia and Selepe, 2020).

5.3 Public Participation

Category B municipalities are required by law and the constitution to incorporate public participation in the budget-making process. These municipalities must actively promote community involvement in their governance systems, especially in fiscal and budgeting decision-making processes. This process (PP) is one of the fundamentals of democratic and development local government (Masiya, Mazenda, & Gwabeni, 2021). Haklay, Jankowski, and Zwoliński (2018) add that public participation in Category B municipalities in South Africa remains a cornerstone of democratic governance, but its implementation faces significant challenges. Addressing PP implementation issues requires a concerted effort to

strengthen institutional capacity, improve communication strategies, and embrace innovative approaches to citizen engagement.

Abas et al. (2023) posits that the extent to which open, responsible, and participatory democratic governance is impacted, fostered, and strengthened by community participation. It is critical to consider how public involvement is always evolving within the modern democratic system (Plessing, 2017). According to Marais, Quayle, and Burns (2017) also postulate that it is crucial to investigate the guiding principles of community engagement and the limitations that come with it in the political arena. Jun and Bryer (2017) state that municipalities can ensure that PP is not merely a procedural requirement, but a transformative process that empowers communities and improves service delivery. In this section, the legal framework, public participation and IDP, budgeting in municipalities will be discussed. The following are principles and values of PP:

- Encouragement of representative and active engagement in order to give every person of the community a significant say in the choices that impact their lives.
- Members of the community should be actively involved in learning about and comprehending local issues as well as the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other related courses of action.
- Their varied interests and cultures should be taken into account during the development process.
- The public sector should refrain from supporting any endeavor that

could negatively impact the underprivileged members of a community.

- Incorporating the various interests and cultures of the community into the development process is crucial.
- Actively enhancing the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community is important.

All the above-mentioned values would lead to an effective IDP process.

5.4 The IDP Process

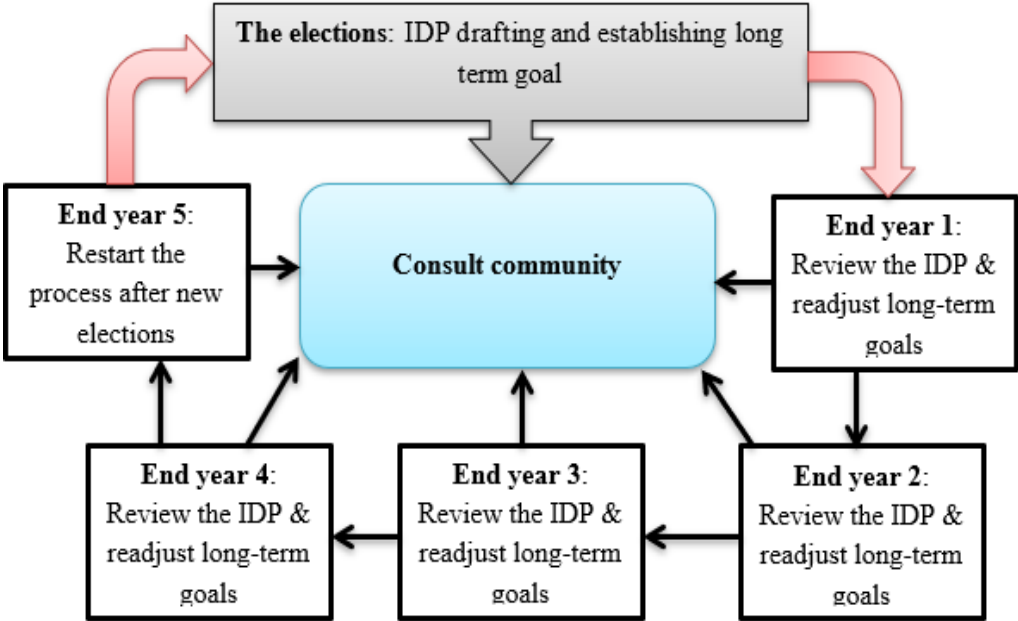
Since the budget is the main tool used to financially implement the strategic objectives and priorities outlined in the municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the process is intimately linked to the IDP's annual review and alignment. The IDP is one of the instruments that municipalities utilise to provide services (Mathebula, Nkuna, and Sebola, 2016). Poma et al., (2014) adds that IDP is a strategic document that serves as a foundation for establishing the municipality's budget, a management tool, and a means of operating a municipality. Municipal officials use IDP as a tool to implement service delivery, which helps them prioritise and provide services to communities (Sebola, Tsheola, Phago, and Balkaran, 2013).

Municipalities that execute the IDP poorly are usually failed to provide services to communities in an efficient manner, which results in service delivery protests when communities do not receive the services that the constitution requires. In 1996, South Africa developed the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as a of local government strategic planning tool. It is the

primary planning instrument that directs and counsels all municipal and decision-making planning throughout the nation (Department of Administration, Republic of South Africa, 1997). In South Africa, local governments are required to plan for future growth in their areas using an Integrated Development Plan.

One of the issues emerging nations like South Africa face is service delivery (Mathebula et al., 2016:70). The lack of service delivery by municipalities continues to dissatisfy communities that receive municipal services (Mathebula, 2014). Figure 3 below shows the IDP process in local government.

Figure 3: The IDP Process



(Source: Authors)

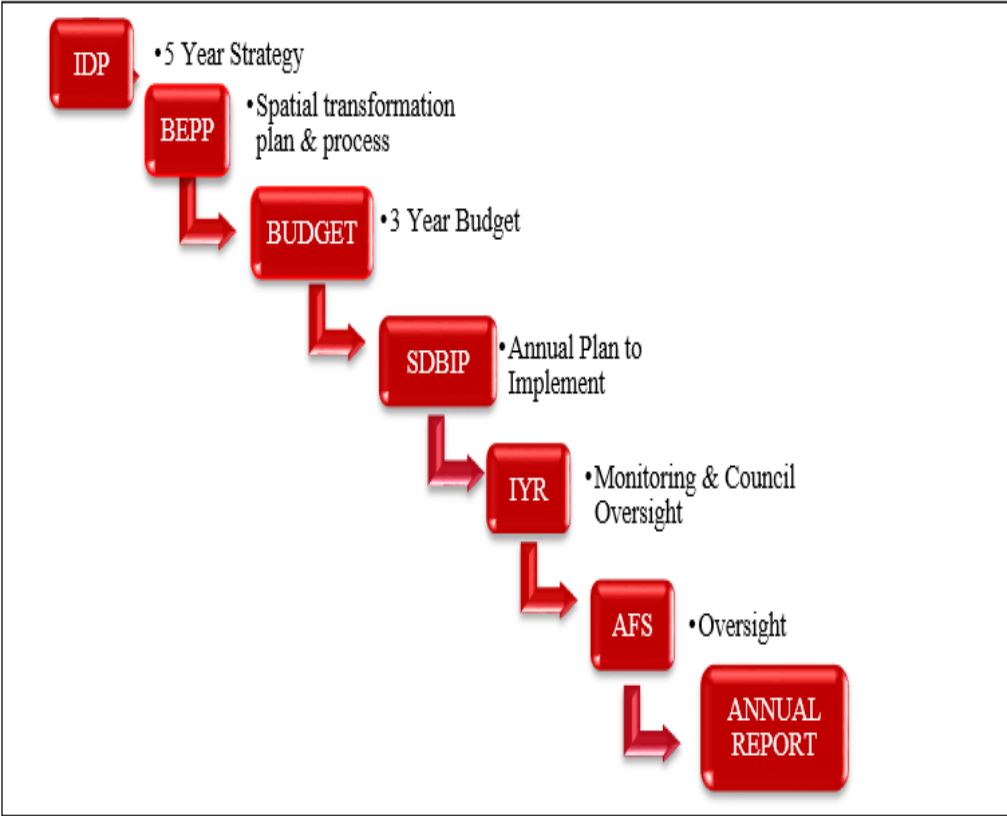
5.5 Budget Formulation Process

The budget formulation process in local government in South Africa is a structured, multi-phase process governed by the

Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) and involves strategic planning, consultation, drafting, and approval before the start of each financial year. A key discussion point in contemporary municipal finance literature revolves around the *efficacy* and *quality* of public participation rather than merely its existence (Patel & Singh, 2021). Academic discourse highlights persistent challenges, particularly in Category B municipalities. For example, studies indicate that despite legislative compliance, the level of meaningful participation by the general public often requires considerable improvement (Masiya et al., 2021). Issues such as low public awareness and a lack of

understanding of the complex budgetary processes by citizens can result in participation that is largely perfunctory, limiting its impact on resource prioritisation (Nguyen & Davidson, 2020). The following framework describes the municipal budgeting and monitoring process, the local government accountability cycle, and the documentation required for each of these processes. Therefore, Figure 4 shows the budgeting framework used by South African municipalities.

Figure 4: The budget process



(Source: National Treasury, 2004)

Municipal budgeting often includes five-year development programs for local communities. While some governments create long-term plans that span more than

30 years, others use centralised state planning agencies. Every five-year plan covers aspects of development including commodities, goods and services, health,

and so forth; local government is included in this stage. These five-year plans outline the tasks and goals that municipalities must complete. The five-year plan is known as the IDP process, which must be reviewed every year to re-plan municipal programmes. After the IDP process, the budget will be formulated based on the plans outlined in the IDP. The Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) will be formulated, where clear goals and targets are clearly recorded to ensure that the budget is properly implemented and evaluated. The evaluation and monitoring of the budget is done through a tool that is referred to as an In Year Monitoring (IYM) report that is compiled on monthly and quarterly basis focusing on CAPEX and OPEX budgets. Lastly, quarterly and annual financial statements will be compiled and audited to be included in the Annual Report of the municipality.

6. METHOLOGY

The study used a qualitative research approach by conducting a systematic investigation of literature. The foundation of a systematic literature review, according to Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, and Lim (2021), is the thorough and meticulous process used to locate relevant articles and expound on the work done in a specific subject, discipline, issue, or domain. According to Hiebl (2021), systematic reviews are already often used in management research; however, there is currently no standard procedure for setting up the sample technique. According to Polloc and Berge (2018), a systematic review must be structured, which means that it must be conducted deliberately and in a planned manner as opposed to at random. Table 1 shows the selection and exclusion criteria of the literature used in this study.

Table 1: Selection and Exclusion Criteria

SELECTION CRITERIA	
Year of Publication	2015-2024
Publication Type	Journal articles, conference proceedings, books, and book chapters
Language	English
EXCLUSION CRITERIA	
Year of Publication	Publications from 2015 and earlier
Publication Type	Unpublished articles, books, book chapters, dissertations, and conference proceedings.

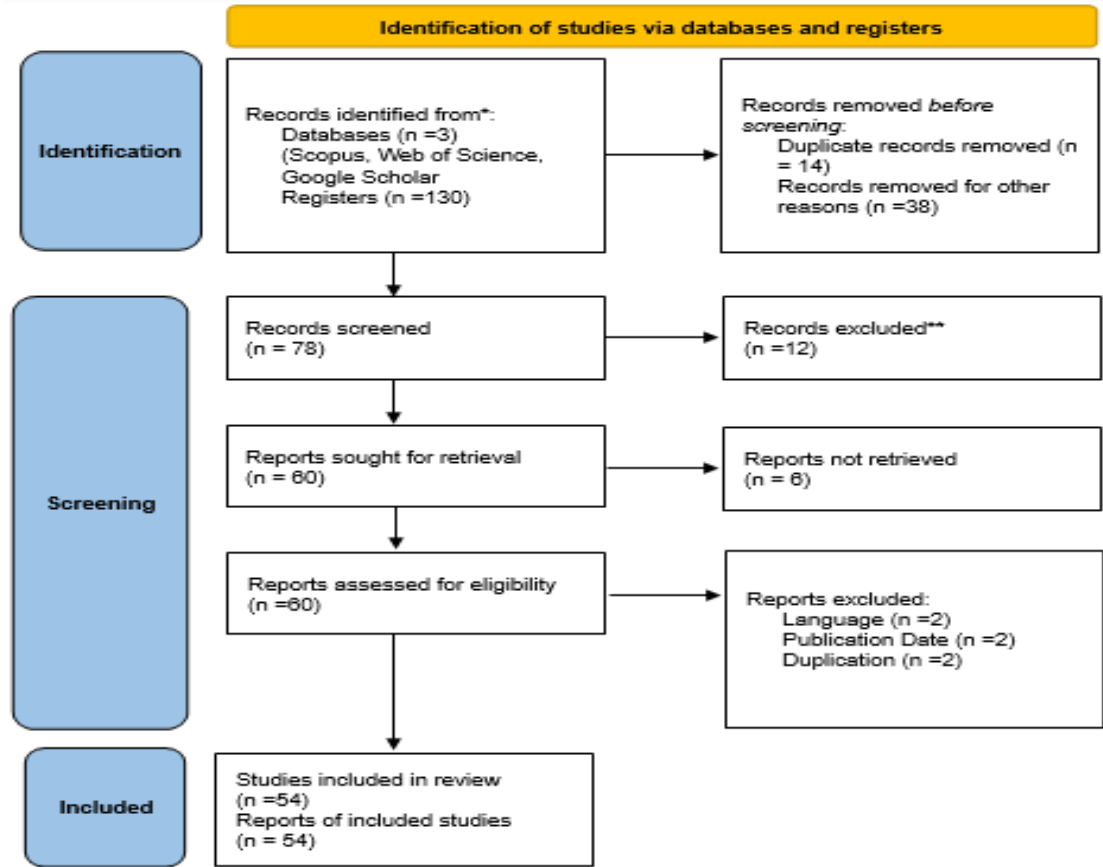
Language	Publications not written in English
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Source: Authors

The identification, inclusion, and exclusion of the literature from the study are further detailed in Figure 3 below. Figure 5 included a three-stage survey that was followed by the researcher. These stages included the identification stage of literature using databases such as Scopus,

Web of Science and Google Scholar, the second stage was the screening phase of the literature, and lastly the inclusion stage of the relevant literature. The literature that was reviewed was from international and local scholars. The years of publication were from 2015 to 2024.

Figure 5: PRISMA flow c



hart

(Source: Authors)

The study used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) criteria to target 130 articles in order to discover relevant studies (Figure 2). After a comprehensive analysis

using the phrase "public participation, IDP and budgeting" as the main search terms, 54 publications (54) addressing these topics were selected for further research. It is often faster and less expensive to review

prior research (SLR) than to begin a new investigation. A review that is conducted systematically reduces bias and increases its scientific value (Selçuk, 2019). Thus, a review that incorporates meta-analysis will elevate the article to the highest degree of evidence.

7. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement, published in 2009, was designed to help systematic reviewers transparently report why the review was done, what the authors did, and what they found (Page et al., 2021). As demonstrated by the literature evaluation of the tactics used to involve the community in the budget development process. According to Martin (2020), community engagement strategies in local government could be considered unorganised, unplanned, unstructured, and imbalanced. Ward committee meetings and municipal public meetings are held in the form of an IDP and budget outreach programme in addition to regular meetings.

In democratically governed countries, community engagement is an essential part of democracy and a vital instrument for good governance, which in turn results in effective service delivery to the people. Since 1994, when democratisation began in South Africa, interventions have been made to ensure that people from different communities are involved (Madumo, 2014). According to this perspective, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998's Section 72 has provisions for the creation of ward committees within municipalities, with the main goal being to foster the public and community engagement processes.

The mechanisms used for participation are subject to critical scrutiny. Traditional methods, such as public hearings and Izimbizo, are formal avenues, but their effectiveness is sometimes hampered by poor attendance, socio-economic disparities that limit access, and widespread public sentiment that citizens' opinions are not effectively incorporated into the final budget document (Kgobe, 2025). The findings of the research in selected local municipalities reveal a significant disconnect between municipal priorities, as reflected in the budget, and the actual service delivery needs articulated by the community (Patel & Singh, 2021). In response to these systemic challenges, the period from 2020 onwards has seen an increased academic focus on innovative approaches, such as the incorporation of digital technologies or e-participation to enhance the sustainability and reach of public engagement (Kgobe, 2025).

However, even the use of technology faces barriers, including socio-economic disparities that limit digital access and a lack of necessary internal skills within municipalities to fully leverage these platforms (Department of Science and Innovation, 2025). Ultimately, for Category B municipalities to successfully leverage public participation to develop effective budgeting practices, a concerted effort towards capacity building for both citizens and municipal officials is deemed necessary to strengthen civic involvement and foster a more accountable and transparent fiscal governance model (Zweni, Yan, & Mabugu, 2022).

Poor people still have difficulty getting basic services from towns, especially in rural regions, even with the help of statutes such as the Constitution, MSA, and MFMA. In addition, the citizen's quality of

life is impacted by inadequate infrastructure and service delivery (Helao, 2015:34). Managing and keeping an eye on the yearly municipal infrastructure grant in connection to operational plans and budgeting for efficient service delivery can help municipalities deal with capacity concerns (Mafunisa et al., 2012:221). Thus, the objective remains the realisation of citizen focused service delivery through a budget process that genuinely reflects a consultative democratic engagement (Masiya *et al.*, 2021).

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Public participation is a crucial process that encourages good governance in local government. This process guides how resources should be allocated and is driven by the municipality through consulting and engaging the citizens. One of the principles of the Constitution requires the public sector to respond to the needs of the people with diligence to improve the quality of life for all living in the republic. However, without consultation with the citizens, budgets might be misaligned with their needs, and as such, financial resources might not be adequately allocated. Some of the key challenges that were found in literature were included but not limited to:

- Poor performance of ward committees.
- Lack of political willingness to drive the processes.
- Lack of public trust in the PP process.
- Municipalities do not involve citizens during the PP process.
- Lack of application of PP guidelines.

The study recommends the following:

- There must be a guaranteed wide representation, particularly of the

underprivileged and historically marginalized groups, municipalities should employ a variety of techniques, such as ward committees, public hearings, and community forums.

- Municipalities must do capacity building through, Training and education for both municipal officials and citizens are essential to improve the quality and effectiveness of participation.
- Accountability and transparency should be pillars municipalities must provide accessible information about the budget process and outcomes and respond to public feedback in a transparent manner.
- Public participation should be integrated into both Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and budgeting processes to ensure alignment and coherence.

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