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Examining the role played by civil society organisations in the Amatole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province: opportunities and constraints

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Examining the role played by civil society organisations in the Amatole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province: opportunities and constraints

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Abstract: This paper is an assessment of challenges faced by civil society organisations (CSO) over time in Amathole District Municipality, which mostly deal with vulnerable groups. A significant amount of effort and money has been channelled by South African civil society to assist vulnerable groups in society to protect their interests, and to establish and implement programs and strategies to help them. The study investigated the role of civil society organisations in the delivery of services, with a particular reference to six civil society organisations. The study used a form of case study with data obtained from the six selected CSOs using semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher himself, as well as record analysis to complement methods of data collection. The study results showed that SCOs have a major role to play in public spaces as well as assisting the government in enforcing policy despite poor support.

Keywords: civil society organisations; CSO; intergovernmental organisations; partnerships; civil society; National Development Plan; NDP; municipality.

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Biographical notes: Xolisile G. Ngumbela is currently a senior researcher at the University of Johannesburg and Research Supervisor at the Department of Public Administration at University of Fort Hare. He is a reputable expert trainer and management consultant in public policy and governance programmes in the South African public sector and had facilitated training for both the public and private sectors. He has delivered numerous papers in both international and national conferences. He is a dynamic multidisciplinary researcher on issues that are on the public discourse which had a bearing on policy implementation. He had published articles on accredited journals, written opinion pieces and in-depth news analysis, reviewed articles in various academic journals and contributed book chapters in different books. He is very passionate about research, teaching and learning as a fulfilment towards human capital contribution. He also had more than 30 years of active public service as a government employee.

1 Background

Mamdani (1991, p.8) agrees that there is a relationship between the state and civil society, but that these two groups aim to exploit each other in order to advance their own goals. Both of these authors believe that civil society is quite popular in the community, and thus more popular than government. Civil society claims that it is qualified to demand good governance from the government based on this premise. The state, on the other hand, claims that the electorate has given it the authority to rule. This has tended to cause conflict, but civil society contends that it is its responsibility to demand from government good governance and participation in governance processes and policy creation. The context of this paper is drawn from a comment by Anan (2000), “We need to build a true development coalition in which all the actors play mutually supportive roles – government, public development agencies, the private sector, civil society organisations and labour unions” [Kofi Anan, the Former Seventh Secretary-General, UN (1997–2006)]. While several initiatives have been initiated over the past 27 years aimed at enhancing the well-being of vulnerable groups, less attempt has been made to assess the degree to which the provision of services has had an impact over time on the situation of these vulnerable groups. It is perhaps worth noting that the goal of the National Development Plan-2030 (NDP, 2012) is to meet the following objectives by 2030: to enable people to take an active role in their own development to enhance democracy and to keep their government accountable. The NDP further avers that, “Active citizenry and social activism are necessary for democracy and development to flourish, to raise the concerns of the voiceless and marginalised and hold government, business and all leaders in society accountable for their actions” (The NDP 2030).

This paper gives an overview look at civil society participation from a worldwide viewpoint. According to Bodin (1963, p.80), civil society elements include an ethical potential through which the society protects itself from official state policy aggression and hegemonies through its autonomous political ethics and moral and political ecology. The author goes on to say that the ethos of civil society is derived from citizens’ active potential, as well as that of their associations, as well as their readiness for political engagement, self-initiative, respect for the common good, and acceptance of political responsibility for a better future. However according to Kaldor (2003, p.21), civil society today includes social movements, associations, NGOs, and the non-profit sector. In response to the modern state’s tremendous expansion of power, it emphasises self-organisation and civic autonomy, as well as the establishment of independent places in which individuals can act according to their consciences in the face of powerful state influences on culture and ideology. Kaldor goes on to say that civil society constituencies, who are aware of how societal issues resonate in private life realms, distil and transfer these emotions to the public sphere (ibid).

In view of the reported socio-economic problems, the study will report on the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Amatole District Municipality’s poverty eradication strategies and will identify the challenges and barriers to poverty alleviation faced by state interventions. On the basis of the results, the third objective is to recommend remedial measures aimed at facilitating CSO activities in the municipality of Amatole. This research is an attempt to add to the debate about the important role that the interventions of CSOs play in the sense of local government in terms of improving services. CSOs appear to play an important role in contributing to changes in the general

well-being of citizens at community level, since their areas of action are driven by the need on the ground, not necessarily explicitly based on the decided policies of the government.

Figure 1 Map of Amathole District Municipality (see online version for colours)



2 Setting

The Amathole District Municipality is a category C municipality with an area of approximately 21,595 km² and a population of approximately 892,637 (cited as of 1 April 2019 by <http://www.municipalities.co.za>). It is located in the central part of the province of the Eastern Cape. It spreads from the Fish River Mouth along the Sunshine Coast to just south of Hole in the Wall on the Wild Coast along the Eastern Seaboard. In the North, the Amathole Mountain Range borders it. There are six local municipalities within the municipality: Mbhashe, Mngquma, Great Kei, Amahlathi, Ngqushwa and Raymond Mhlaba. Four heritage routes have been created named after Xhosa kings and heroes, namely the Maqoma Route, the Makana Route, the Sandile Route and the Phalo Route. These are interconnected within the district with other tourism routes. These are the Sunshine Coast Route, the Amathole Mountain Escape Route, the Wild Coast Route and the Friendly N6 Route. The municipality is divided into rural hinterlands and urban nodes, all of which still exhibit some of South Africa's apartheid characteristics, with poverty written all over them. The District is made up of some parts of both former Transkei, Ciskei and Old South Africa parts that forms the municipality. The district's main towns are Adelaide, Alice, Bedford, Butterworth, Cathcart, Dutywa, Elliotdale, Fort Beaufort, Hamburg, Hogsback, Kei Mouth, Kei Lane, Keiskammahoek, Kentani, Komga, Middeldrift, Morgan Bay, Ngqamakhwe, Peddie, Seymore, Willowvale and Stutterheim. With the main economic sectors being community services (44%), finance (19%), manufacturing (14%), trade (13%), transport (4%), agriculture (3%), construction (2%) as per the Integrated Development Plan of the Municipalities of 2018/2019.

3 Participation of civil society: a Southern African perspective

According to Mapuva (2017), several academics have also written extensively about civil society in Southern Africa. “The most important institutions of civil society appear to be universities, labor movements, and the church”, writes Sachikonye (1995, p.399), “Whereas the media is less prominent than one might think due to broad state control and state ownership.” The SADC has played the role that was anticipated of it as a regional entity and has been able to influence events within its constituency. It has developed SADC Guidelines on the Conduct of Democratic Elections, which have been adopted by all member states to facilitate a transparent electoral process in member states, in an effort to increase citizen participation in governance processes. The church has been another segment of civil society in Southern Africa that has made a significant contribution to the region’s democratic development. According to Sachikonye (1995, p.403), a description of the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa, as well as the peace negotiations and their successful conclusion in Mozambique, would be incomplete without acknowledging the church’s role. He goes on to say that the churches’ educational and social activities, which were bolstered by a humanitarian concern, helped to lessen the severity of suffering among underprivileged social groups to some measure. Similarly, Mamdani (2000, p.43) observes that post-independence human rights organisations in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland galvanised public opposition to official authoritarianism. As a result, civil society in the region has played a critical role in advocating for human rights, decent governance, and political pluralism.

Where do we start? Right from the onset I must declare that this research paper is guided by questions that will try to show both opportunities and challenges faced by the CSOs functioning within the complex nature of service delivery and closing gap in so far as government service delivery is concerned in the Amathole District Municipality. These questions are;

- How can civil society groups, in cooperation with national governments and intergovernmental organisations, better champion and enact cohesive strategies to assist people in need, given the complexity of actors, priorities and problems operating in the global system?
- How can government, inter-governmental organisations and civil society actor’s best cooperate to promote stability, quality service delivery and peace building up the agenda of political concern?

The Eastern Cape Province, however, remains stuck in systemic poverty, underdevelopment for more than two decades in democracy and face a multitude of service delivery problems that cannot be resolved on its own by the present government. The question is therefore, how can government departments and CSOs collaborate best without compromising, for example, the independence and versatility of CSOs, the distinctive strengths of each? All aspects of its demographic, health and socio-economic profiles contribute to this. Methods, measures and figures vary, but it can be calculated from different studies and datasets that between 20% and 60% of the population in the Eastern Cape lives in poverty (STATS SA, 2016). It has become increasingly apparent over the years that the number of CSOs and natural disasters, socio-political and economic problems are all on the rise. As the proprietor of the programs that aim to uplift

people from the everyday life difficulties that plague them, the results of the study are essential to the government. One of the goals of this study is to mobilise political support to tackle conflicts and their causes with positive action. In order to influence decision-making processes, NGOs play a crucial and ever growing role in contributing information, arguments and energy.

Securing protection is therefore no longer the exclusive preserve of those engaged in these activities, nor of an opaque administration or an under-capacitated and potentially inhibited law enforcement agency which cannot claim the number of successful convictions one would have expected despite clear evidence of historic degradation to our environment. The role of civil society in environmental decision-making is embedded in environmental laws, e.g., Chapter 7 of the National Water Act 36 of 1998 (1998) requires the Minister of Water and Sanitation to establish Catchment Management Agencies – “To involve local communities in the decision making process.” The ‘watchdog role’ which civil society plays in water governance is encouraged in the National Water Resources Strategy. It may be interesting to notice that recent court decisions acknowledge the vital role of NGOs in for example, affecting environmental decision-making. In *Uzani Environmental Advocacy CC v BP Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd. Gauteng Division* under case number CC 82/2017 Judge Spilg found: “NEMA not only requires transparent administration, but also recognises the contribution that a diligent and dedicated public that has most to lose can make to the protection of the environment.”

They will contact decision makers directly and address others that, in turn, impact them. What is evident from the above, however, is that there is a need for collaboration between well-meaning parties at all levels of civil society, both at the vertical and horizontal levels of government and regional organisations, and at the global level, in order to address the well-being of society in our lives. According to the performance results of the South African government, access to government services for the poorest rural districts in the world has not yet improved. To access service points in some of the more remote areas, many individuals will need to drive very long distances. Departments continue to appear to design silos for their service access enhancement programs, and spatial maps also reveal that relevant government facilities are often not located next to each other. In order to get services closer to citizens at all levels of the government spectrum, it is also necessary for the government to collaborate with CSOs, for one to complement the other. In addition, access to numerous facilities in the same region remains inconvenient for citizens.

The definition of civil society refers to a plurality of stakeholders created for a specific reason and a specific circumstance to be dealt with at that particular moment in time. As ratepayers association, farmers association, civic organisations, NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), etc. some examples of interest groups that quickly come to mind could be better explained [Craythorne (2003), who have one common purpose as quoted in Mavee and Cloete (2012, p.65)]. Emmanuel (2012, p.44) adds that civil society comprises multi-purpose community centres, development trusts, associations of residents, community associations, associations of tenants, and so on. The term civil society will be used interchangeably with CSOs for the purpose of this discussion, as interest groups are some types of organisations. Civic society can be seen as a space between the state and its citizens [Prestegard, (2005), p.24]. In other words, civil society symbolises the cooperation of intermediate groups between

- 1 the key units of society, individuals, families (nuclear and extended), clans, ethnic groups and village units
- 2 the government and its agencies within the social and political space [Mavee and Cloete, (2012), pp.68–69].

The consequence here is that CSOs organise cooperation between the government and the people. In the other hand, as long as they establish this collaboration, serving the needs of the people is their goal. Civic society groups have an enormous role to play in poverty alleviation projects. Their importance is that they unite people when battling poverty to engage in strategic plans and diverse government programs. Mavee and Cloete (2012, pp.68–69) suggest that CSOs mobilise people to form influential communities by being active participants in policy development and implementation as a way of shaping public policies. Instead of being monopolised by government officials, CSOs often organise individuals to make public resources available to individuals (especially the underprivileged). The contribution of CSOs is therefore essential to a nation's ordinary citizens. The findings foster a sense of support for a sense of accountability, openness and ultimately good governance by having them engage in public policy and other government activities. Civic culture has its own problems, however. First of all, CSOs tend to compete with each other in terms of donor funds. Those who have more organisational capital (e.g., large NGOs) [Prestegard, (2005), p.30] have a greater chance of developing connections with potential funders. The effect is the maximisation of their incentives to get support. Such a situation may lead to the creation of CSOs that have already been setup, while smaller ones remain underdeveloped. Apparently, the lack of funds and adequate resources to carry out their work in vulnerable communities on the basis of their mandate or supported purpose could make it difficult for underdeveloped CSOs to carry out their activities effectively and efficiently as exposed by the beneficiary communities, such that they are unable to achieve their objectives.

The unequal accessibility of CSOs to donor funds could generate a sense of injustice among them. The sense of inequality and funding rivalry could reduce their chances of fighting for a common cause. Despite these entities working in the same room (Mavee and Cloete, 2012), i.e., between the key units of society and government and government departments, this phenomenon (inequality and competition) surfaces. Secondly, Prestegard (2005) points out that debate on progress continues to romanticise the field of civil society. In reality, power relations and inequality characterise this sphere, but there is silence about the presence of such elements. Civic society members are presented as being in agreement with each other, although there is disagreement between them. This is a sign that a plurality of interest groups constitutes civil society. This diversity of interests prevents civil society from achieving its shared goal, which in some instances is, among other programs and service delivery, poverty alleviation for some of the CSOs. These are only a few points among a number of civil society critics. Clearly, as we are confronted with the 4th Industrial Revolution and other problems facing government worldwide, CSOs have a major role to play in service delivery innovation initiatives. This closes the divide between the government and society's ordinary members. It promotes the establishment of public participation and democratic governance on issues of mutual interest between government and citizens, and the issue of service delivery in the sense of this article.

3.1 Significance of the study

This study will enable policymakers to recognise and better understand the important roles played by CSOs in both the provision and enhancement of service delivery and thus assist them in designing policies that facilitate and promote the smooth implementation of the district's service delivery. This study will also greatly benefit the CSOs' strategic planners in aligning their services to the government's Apex priorities so as to avoid double dipping and unnecessary duplication of services into one single area. Discovering their important positions in the wellbeing of these populations and conducting their duties in a more user-friendly manner can also be of great benefit to provincial policy planners. If these measures are adopted, it can be anticipated that populations, in particular disadvantaged pockets, will have greater access to services that meet their everyday human needs, enabling them to lead better lives that will ultimately have a positive effect on their well-being. The study seeks, therefore to educate program stakeholders about the existence of the challenges to be expected and to allow empirically informed decisions to be taken on implementation strategies. In addition, the study will enrich the current theory and knowledge base with partnerships between government, intergovernmental organisations and civil society, and will contribute in particular to literature on the improvement of government partnerships in South Africa and the world as a whole.

There are several meanings of the word 'civil society', originating from various knowledge bodies and spanning multiple fields and ideological traditions. This discussion does not dig into these concepts, leaving for another study such an exercise. The history of political philosophy shows that there are multiple aspects of its norm-setting position and that if we focus on only one aspect of civil society, the empirical applications are wider (Harbeson et al., 1994; Nkwanchuku, 2003). This paper adopts the concept used by the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), based at the London School of Economics (2005) within the Department of Social Policy: Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around common interests, goals and values. Theoretically, its institutional structures are different from those of the state, the family and the market, but the distinctions between the state, civil society, the family and the market are frequently complicated, blurred and negotiated in practice. A plurality of spaces, actors and institutional structures is widely adopted by civil society, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and control. Organisations such as registered charities, developmental non-governmental organisations, community organisations, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, labour unions, self-help groups, social movements, corporate associations, coalitions and activist groups are also populated by civil societies, as Prestegard (2005) argued.

4 Theoretical perspective

Theory is a statement that shows a relationship between two or more theories, systematically generalised and logically reasoned. The hypothesis can best be defined as a generalised logical statement that demonstrates the relationship between two or more variables: components, characteristics, or variables that are liable to alter or differ. The theoretical structure followed by this research paper is mainly to anchor the problem statement and is also told primarily by the statement of the hypothesis. The theoretical framework serves as the framework and support for the study's reasoning, the problem

statement, the intent, the importance, and the questions of analysis. For the literature review, the methodology and analysis as revealed by Osanloo and Grant (2014), the theoretical structure offers a grounding basis, or an anchor. This analysis, however is rooted in the theory of public administration. Public administration theory is best captured by Fox and Meyer (1995) as the theory and practice that is aimed at understanding the state and its interaction with the wider social needs. This is a symbiotic relationship, i.e., where one allows the policies of the state to be propagated, such as those in service delivery spaces, to be stable and predictable management practices. The primary tenants of this theory are primarily to resolve structural issues at the level of the system as a whole in the manner in which government manages and provides services that as revealed by Metcalfe and Richards (1990), are considered reliable, productive and much more economical. According to Haynes (2003), the current challenges of public management regarding the responsiveness of goods distribution and public management are identified as dealing more with challenges related to the inability of political structures to establish rational leadership and strategic management of public policies and services. However a challenge alluded to by Haynes (2003) is the emergence of civil society movements related to demands for access to basic services, such as accommodation, water, education and the like. In the sense of the beneficiary of citizen service, this can be illustrated by demonstrations of service delivery based on frustration with the institutions' resources and the effect of services on them.

In addition, the theory of public administration mostly provides the framework for the implementation of public administration, through policies, structures, procedures and programs through which public goods and services are supplied for the public good and for which institutions are responsible. In order to allow the cohesive and effective operation of public systems to take place in an organised financial, productive and effective manner, public management needs the regulation of forms of economic and social activity by the workforce.

5 Research methodology

The main aim of this paper is to provide an evaluation of the role played by CSOs in the municipality of the Amathole District in the Eastern Cape Province. The study was performed in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province in the six local municipalities that make up Amathole District Municipality. The study sample is focused on six CSOs situated in six local municipalities that make up the District Municipality of the District Municipality of Amathole. Whilst Amahlathi (Ikhwezi Women Support Center), Mbhashe (Nyhwarra Home Base) and Mnquma (We Care Ministries) are the local municipalities that make up Amathole, Ngqushwa (Keiskamma Trust), Raymond Mhlaba (Alice Hospice), and Great Kei (Mpuma Kapa Multi-Purpose Education Center).

The case study approach is the methodology used in this study. The approach of the case study was chosen to allow a contemporary phenomenon to be explored in depth and within its real-life context, particularly as the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident [cf. Yin, (2009), p.18]. In addition, many sources of evidence depend on the essence of the case study investigation, with data having to converge in a triangulating manner. Key informants such as the mediation team, the Mayor, the fraternity families, community leaders, traditional leaders, traders, NGOs and

government officials collected primary data from the scope of the districts and villages where the study was carried out. Secondary data were collected by looking at files and records relating to the CSO involvement programs. Reviews by other researchers who were doing research on CSO were another resource from which useful knowledge could be collected.

According to Yin (1983), as quoted by Moikowa (2004), the case study approach is an empirical analysis method that explores a current phenomenon in its real-life context; it often discusses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not readily apparent; and uses several evidence sources. During analysis in the case study, the incorporation of the context as an integral part produces technically distinctive features that there will often be far more variables of interest than data points to be evaluated. This technical aspect of the case study makes statistical analysis difficult, if not irrelevant, since there would be no variation in the data points. Nevertheless, where applicable, case studies can and should also provide quantitative data (numerical measurement).

Case studies, as argued by Yin (1984) and Fekade (1994), and as quoted by Moikowa (2004), make analytical generalisations, unlike statistical inferences and generalisations, that assume the body of the theoretical framework (Uphoff, 1992; Fekade, 1994). Case studies, therefore, enable scientists to research 'peculiarities' and idiosyncrasies in detail that can shed light on the prominence of some, previously uncovered, complex events and processes – most of which can avoid statistical manipulations. Case studies, and not incidences and frequencies, tend to strongly 'manipulate' definitions or categories. The power of case studies is the testing of theory and the extrapolation of theory, says Brannen (2017). However being a scientific method of acquiring social knowledge, the case study method must and does adhere to existing scientific standards and procedures. In order to contribute to a useful body of information, i.e., to the solution of social and developmental problems, case study analysis must be subjected in its own way to tests such as validity (of constructs, of explanations of causalities, of generalisations) and reliability. Transparency is therefore, called for. There are a range of benefits to the case study approach, such as meeting the needs of assessments to track and analyse interventions and the implementation process. Case studies also have the ability for both qualitative and quantitative data to be relevant. By being able to analyse findings and to test theories, they also act as assessment needs. This implies that theoretical formulations of causal relationships be formulated beforehand. The basis for making generalisations from the results of the case study is these theoretical formulations (Yin, 1984, 1993a; Fekade, 1994).

5.1 Research design

In this analysis, for complementary purposes, the researcher adopted a mixed methodology research model as clearly articulated by Gay and Airasian (2000) and to better capture the various aspects of the study as per Sandelowski (2000).

5.2 Participants

The Eastern Cape Department of Health has sponsored all six CSO involved in this study through the European Union partnership with South African Government for the delivery of primary health services.

6 Ethical consideration

Ethical approval for this research was obtained in July 2015. Ethical clearance (REF-270710-028-RA Level 1) was obtained and granted by the University of Fort Hare's Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Committee. The Amathole District Municipality (Research Growth and Innovation Management Unit) also gave permission to perform the study in the Amathole District Municipality. Before data collection, all the participants signed the consent document, showing their willingness and agreement to take part in the study. The following ethical considerations relevant to the study were adhered to: informed consent; voluntary involvement; anonymity and the rights of participants to autonomy, self-determination, privacy, equal treatment and harm avoidance; as well as the duty of the researcher to seek advice.

7 Results

This research has clearly shown that all the challenges that society faces cannot be solved by the government alone. In most cases, underprivileged persons do not have the requisite support at the community level to provide solutions to their problems. That is why it is important that CSO make a contribution, as they bring meaningful change to people at the level of the group. The Health Ombudsman's findings in Gauteng showed that there are multiple types of initiatives that should be introduced by both government and CSOs, namely: gender-based violence interventions, community/home-based treatment, health awareness and education campaigns, and revenue generation. The state is forced to provide the 'constitutional legal, political and moral structure' in a partnership between the state and civil society. It is through this framework that the state provides an atmosphere in which civil society makes governance simpler and democracy stronger. In itself, civil society is becoming a democratic entity with the goal of limiting the actions of the state. Thus a thriving democratic society is a vital cornerstone of a modern state's ability to survive and a government to rule. Thus both civil society and modern states are critical of stable and efficient political institutions. In such an atmosphere, without the fear of retaliation by the state, civil society will keep the state accountable. Consequently, as depicted in the Life Esidimeni fiasco, civil society and the state cooperate to construct democracy and establish symbiotic relationships that are mutually dependent.

CSOs have a central role to play in society. For example, they build opportunities for self-employment, address local people's basic needs, ensure that people live in a cleaner and safer environment, develop expertise in human resources, to name a few. However, it must be said that the organisations were obviously never examined and were merely dumped with patients without being supported and trained for the job of caring for the down trodden and ill, without moving deeper through the Gauteng Department of Health misdemeanour for rapid wins by the state. Findings from different studies suggest that CSO, while being founded for the welfare of communities in crisis, have a direct contribution to make in creating job opportunities. Looking closely at the Gauteng Department of Health, it is obvious that the Department's Politburo caught off guard some, if not most of the organisations that were assigned the enormous task of taking care of psychiatric patients. It must be emphasised that in a variety of places here the

department has suffered. Among the shortcomings, the department has dismally neglected to conduct pre- and post-state readiness drills on the premises of organisations to assess their readiness status. Apart from the fact that certain CSOs have the intention of eradicating poverty in mind, the development of work opportunities takes place. Relevant examples are organisations which have food security programs. CSO therefore have an important role to play in mitigating the traumatic circumstances that are plaguing society at large. In other words, CSO symbolise the cooperation of intermediary groups between the key units of society, individuals, families (nuclear and extended), clans, ethnic groups and village units, and the government and its agencies, working within the social and political space. The cooperation between the government and people is organised by CSO. In the other hand, as long as they establish this collaboration, serving the needs of the people is their goal.

In the public policy space, CSO play an important role, that is, by being active participants in policy formulation and implementation. Instead of being monopolised by government officials, CSOs often organise citizens in order to make public resources available to people (especially the underprivileged). The contribution of CSOs is therefore essential to a nation's ordinary citizens. The findings foster a sense of 'accountability, openness and ultimately good governance' by having people engage in public policy and other government activities.

Secondly, the discourse of progress has the potential to romanticise the field of civil society. Currently, this domain is defined by power relations and inequality, but there is silence about the presence of such elements. Civil society participants are presented as being in agreement with each other, although there is disagreement between them. This is a sign that a plurality of interest groups constitutes civil society. This plurality of interests prevents civil society from fulfilling its shared purpose, which in the case alluded to in the fiasco of the Esidimeni Trust, was meant to take care of the mentally ill. Thus, among many criticisms of CSO, these are only a few points. Clearly, in initiatives to alleviate poverty, civil society has a significant role to play. This fills the divide between the state and ordinary members of society. It promotes the development of public participation and democratic governance, the alleviation of poverty in this context, on issues of mutual interest between government and citizens.

Civil society groups still face several obstacles. There is also a tendency for the discourse of progress to romanticise the realm of civil society. It is portrayed as if it is free from difficulties, although it is characterised by many difficulties. The power relations and inequalities that exist within CSO, for instance. Interestingly, there is silence about challenges like that. Instead the sphere of civil society is portrayed as if it is free of these obstacles.

The results of this analysis have indicated some difficulties with regard to CSOs. These include: inadequate funding as a required resource to carry out operational operations, and insufficient knowledge and expertise of the CSOs' human resources. It is therefore important for CSOs, instead of hiding them, to find ways of expressing the problems they face. Honesty about their struggles leads to opportunities to overcome these problems.

7.1 Civil society and state

The state is forced to provide the legislative, legal, political and moral structure in a partnership between the state and civil society. It is through this framework that the state

provides an atmosphere in which civil society makes governance simpler and democracy stronger. In itself, civil society is becoming a democratic entity with the goal of limiting the actions of the state. Thus a thriving democratic society is a vital cornerstone of a modern state's ability to survive and a government to rule. Thus both civil society and modern states are critical of stable and efficient political institutions. In such an atmosphere, without the fear of retaliation by the state, civil society will keep the state accountable. Consequently, as depicted in the Life Esidimeni fiasco, civil society and the state cooperate to construct democracy and establish symbiotic relationships that are mutually dependent.

These symbiotic connections are the product of the historical course taken by the idea of civil society within the political discourse in the west. When political elites are respectful of civil society, and there are formalised engagement structures, successful civil society-state ties emerge. It emphasises that civil society can be 'established, sponsored, abused or repressed' by any state, and thus interaction structures need to be formalised and civil society autonomy institutionalised and legally protected. The essence of these civil society-state relations, in turn, defines the political possibilities and limitations open to civil society and its agents. As a result, an independent and autonomous civil society is becoming a central institution of democratic governance. Within this essay, the topic of civil society-state relations offers a key theoretical viewpoint. Specific ties between civil society and the state have grown in various contexts. Given the rapid democratisation process, such relationships are likely to have developed and modified dramatically in certain contexts. Democratising environments, in particular, have fewer explicit cut-off limits between the state and civil society. This also includes the transfer of specific individuals between institutions of civil society and state structures in such contexts. However for the democratic functionality of civil society, clear boundaries and civil society-state ties, which preserve civil society's autonomy, are crucial.

As discussed above, state autonomy often guarantees the existence of a pluralistic life of association. Nevertheless, Ljubownikow (2011) cautions that too much independence could 'delegitimise the state'. In such situations, at the cost of the state, civil society is strengthened, sometimes failing to achieve democratic results, such as the pluralisation of the democratic sphere or the bridge between the state and the citizen. Therefore, in an atmosphere in which the state does not have enough power to implement the rules of the game, an independent democratic society that is good for democracy will not exist. However, where the state refuses to recognise it, neither can an independent civil society exist.

Near contact between civil society and the state is both desirable and inevitable within established democratic settings. Cooperation of the state with civil society enhances the life of organisations. Cooperation on an equitable basis, in essence, is the secret to strengthening policymaking. A democratic state is more likely to have "channels of control, interaction arenas and legal-administrative system facilitation." In these situations, the power exerted by civil society vis-à-vis the state comes from acting effectively alone because of on-the-spot contradictory problems, the state becomes more open to bottom-up impetus, and establishes cooperative ties with civil society agents, but not at the cost of civil society autonomy. Nonetheless, such agreements are very different from the paternalistic practices in Soviet Russia that regulated state-society agreements. These considerations presume that the state is able to share its power base, something that

the post-Soviet Russian state is fundamentally new to. Consequently, it is important for the examinations addressed in this paper to consider the extent of autonomy in Russian civil society arrangements. Clearly, civil society is unable to carry on these roles as a social space. On the other hand, its manifestations and agents, such as third sector organisations (TSOs), include the state and its institutions.

According to some respondents some government officials are not so supportive of the civil society and shows some elements of political interference. And according to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2017), in support of the above finding some non-state actors have targeted CSOs and activists in the EU, resulting in physical and verbal attacks, harassment, and intimidation. These occurrences occur both online and offline. Some state officials go so far as to make verbal attacks and create negative narratives about CSOs that stigmatise or discredit their work, harming both the public's support for CSOs and activists' morale and motivation. Attacks, especially verbal attacks, and unjustified attempts to discredit organisations that promote human rights and non-discrimination must be avoided by public leaders. At the EU and national levels, neither governmental authorities nor CSO are properly recording statistics on attacks and threats against CSOs.

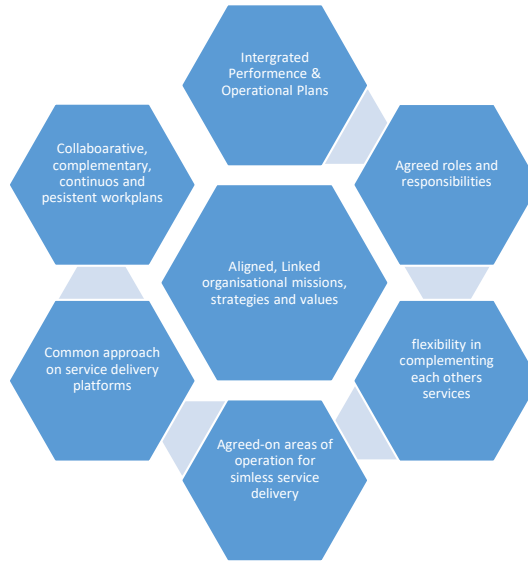
7.2 Management implications and practice

The results of this study showed that CSOs played an important role in improving the general well-being of citizens at the level of the group, but that their areas of action were not generally specifically based on strategies for poverty alleviation. The CSOs have worked in four fields: gender-based abuse, community/home-based care, education and health awareness programs, and revenue generation. Any programs implemented by these CSOs to reduce poverty were part of their ventures, such as integrating an HIV/AIDS project with a job-creation project to help people living with HIV/AIDS. The goals of the CSOs dealing with gender-based violence were to provide guidance and paralegal assistance to women and girls who have witnessed or lived with HIV/AIDS in this form of violence; to encourage organisations and community members to participate in interventions to discuss aspects of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS; and to advocate for policy reform on gender-based women's issues. A further aim was to ensure that adequate support from the police and court services was given to women and girls.

The goals of the home-based or community-based care programs were also to provide the ill with home-based care; to operate community-based support centres to benefit people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, orphans, people with social issues and people with TB and chronic diseases; and to locate and provide psychosocial support for families with infants, orphans and disadvantaged populations. The CSO health literacy and education programs were aimed at improving the health status of community members by encouraging them to adhere to HIV/AIDS and TB care and improving health awareness and awareness of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS issues. In order to address ignorance and prejudice in the wider community and the workplace, the CSOs partnered with government and private sector partners to promote ongoing education and awareness initiatives. The ultimate goal was to work in collaboration with groups active in community-based HIV/AIDS and advocacy programs and to support them. The goals of the income-generating projects of the CSOs were to setup income-generating projects to counter poverty for their intended beneficiaries, people living with HIV/AIDS and members of the community, and to create job opportunities for unemployed community

members. From the above, it is clear that some of the goals of the CSOs have addressed the basic living conditions of the intended beneficiaries, especially the underprivileged. Poverty alleviation programs need to address local people's fundamental needs in the South African context, create opportunities for self-employment, develop human resources and skills, and ensure that people live in a safe and secure environment [Ababio and Meyer, (2012), p.7]. In this way, CSOs can be said to contribute indirectly to poverty alleviation.

Figure 2 Proposed basic partnership guiding principles



The research results show that CSOs face various obstacles and uncertainties in implementation. In some cases, such difficulties occur as a result of rivalry (e.g., for donor funds) between CSO space participants. These participants may for example, be development professionals, stakeholders or beneficiaries of interventions. At the same time, there is a tendency to perceive the CSO space [according to some scholars, such as Mosse et al. (2002, p.16)] as if it were free of difficulties. Richards and Wilson (2006, pp.503–504) points out that it continues to be viewed as free from political conflicts in the CSO sphere, which has the effect of de-politicising it. The CSOs are disadvantaged by embracing this strategy because the political tensions that arise are not recognised or dealt with. In this context, a few suggestions arise from the results of the study:

- CSOs need to plan for such political tensions. In doing so, they will be in a better position to deal with both the challenges that come up, and with implementation complexities.
- CSOs need to use an approach that engages planning for unforeseen circumstances. Embracing this approach would help CSOs to cope better in dealing with the implementation complexities that often arise in the process.

- Silo mentality of both the government departments and the CSOs whilst servicing the same clientele and in some cases rendering the same services instead of uniting the efforts and resources and deal with the same challenges.
- It is undoubtedly that planning and budgeting together of government and civil society on areas of commonality can have huge impact to resource allocation. Furthermore, the inter-sphere and intra-sphere processes are vital in ensuring cascading of policies especial at local level.
- As much as the Eastern Cape is faced with a myriad of service delivery protests, the same CSOs can be used to encourage communities to fully participate in public participation processes like Izimbizo, Community Outreaches, Integrated Planning Forums where there will be improved political representatively and feedback sessions that will finally force the citizens to take an active participation in their affairs with government giving feedback timeously without delay.

Finally, this partnership between the government and CSO pushes and insists on an approach where there is a greater accountability as the monitoring, reporting and evaluation is still at its developmental approach where there is no carrot and stick management of public affairs.

7.3 Limitations of the study

The limited size of the sample limits both the generalisation and external validity of the results and the study scope. Due to the data collected in only one provincial district municipality with six district municipalities and two metros, the transferability of the findings is limited.

8 Conclusions

Civil society has made some strides in contributing to access to primary healthcare but community perception remains ruled by negative perceptions. The challenge and commitment are for government to substantially improve the professional image of these partnerships with civil society as caring and effective. In addition, there is a great need for the different role-players between government, civil society and private sector that need to complement each other for the common goal of creating a better life for all. In doing so, there must be sharing of information and instruments across sectors and government so as not to duplicate but to rather grow and accelerate service delivery. The government should be tasked to develop and grow this mechanism. The government has a further responsibility to include CSOs in planning sessions and urge these organisations to align their services with the state during such sessions so as to develop complimentary civil society-state services.

9 Recommendations

The study strongly recommends that government-wide policies be built to promote the use of the civil society sector as strategic partners in service rendering. Such strategies

include training of youth, women and community workers as service providers specifically on the envisaged integrated district development model which has been recently launched by the president of the republic. Active strengthening of intergovernmental relations not only between national, provincial and local governments but to also include civil societies who are worthwhile players who are at the community level more than the government at times especially during disasters. CSO's support on government programs through organising community sensitisation campaigns and government plans alignment with all the stakeholders involved in service delivery nodes to actively participate in addressing their own challenges and community needs in their order of priorities. These initiatives will help to deter, minimise and eliminate the difficulties of the provincial government's outcry against service delivery on a daily basis, which lacks the ability to reduce tensions in the delivery of community services.

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