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Changing Practices of the State: Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo Officials' Views on Opportunities and Challenges of Community Engagement

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND,
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND
PLANNING

A dissertation submitted to the School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science with Honours in Urban and Regional Planning.

Supervised by Professor Claire Bénit-Gbaffou

Changing Practices of the state;

Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo officials' views on opportunities and challenges of community engagement

PATIENCE BOSAKA
11/11/2015

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is being submitted for the BSc Honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.

Patience Bosaka

…… 2015

Abstract

South African cities are embedded in a paradigm of transformation, informed by post-apartheid aspirations, good governance principles, and the value of community engagement in a democratic context. The Parastatal Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo situated in this broader context thus also envisage transformation in their ways of urban governance. This research takes interest in the institutional reshuffling of JCPZ that has resulted in their move towards the promotion of community development in the management and development of urban parks. The reshuffling aims to respond to pressing issues such as mismanagement, crime, homelessness, unemployment, vandalism inter alia which manifest in public green spaces, showcasing inequalities and poverty in ways that are difficult to manage.

One of the strategies that are emphasized in responses to these issues is community engagement which is the arena that grounds this research investigation. The paper looks at JCPZ officials' practices, challenges and experiences in their mandate of community engagement and demonstrates the importance of structure (the institutional programmes and systems put in place for this task) and perceptions (what officials' feel and think about communities) as influential to the actual State practices. It also reviles the other side of the story (the officials' narratives) about community engagement which is hardly documented in community engagement discourses.

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List of Acronyms

CID- Capital Infrastructure Development

CIMS- Capital Infrastructure Management System

CLO- Community Liaison Officer

COJ- City of Johannesburg

CUBES- Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies

FoP- Friends of the Park

GDS -Growth and Development Strategy

IDP –Integrated Development Plan

JCPZ- Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo

JMPD- Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department

KNR- Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve

KPA- Key Performance Areas

KPI-Key Performance Indicators

MMC -Members of Mayoral Committee

NPM- New Public Management

NRF- National Research Foundation

OPM- Old Public Management

PSUG- Practices of the State in Urban Governance

RMs- Regional Managers

SMME-Small Medium Micro-size Enterprise

Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

1.1 Introduction

With the perpetuating financial constrains in cities across the globe, local government is bestowed the responsibility and pressure of driving urban governance. Elander (2002) defines urban governance as the practice associated with social welfare, environmental protection, education and physical planning inter alia, and the platform for innovation, regulation and management of public services and urban spaces through partnerships, co-production and cooperation of interested and affected parties. It is also the geopolitical arena where individuals, stakeholders, communities can participate, negotiate differences, voice out and express their interests and concerns and thus influence the urban morphology (Beall et al, 2013).

Urban governance can also be understood as a concept dispersing governing powers to other city sectors, through the logic which argues that a successful City is one which is dissected, interrogated and influenced by various dimensions and perspectives, what Stone (1989) would refer to as urban regimes . Urban regimes include the idea of lasting alliances to drive action in a specific direction such as Residents Associations, Friends of the Park, None Government Organizations to mention a few that are relevant to this argument.

Contemporary cities embedded in a context of democracy are grappling with the idea of governance through partnerships and community engagement (participatory governance), that is also mandated as co-governance/ co-operative governance in section 41 (h) (i) of the Constitution of South Africa, “All spheres of government and all organs of the State within each sphere must co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by- fostering friendly relations. (iii) Informing one another of and consulting one another on matters of common interest”. And section 154 (2) of the Constitution of South Africa: “Draft National or Provincial Legislation that affects institutions of Local Government must be published for public comment

before introduced in Parliament…in a manner that allows municipalities and other interested Persons an opportunity to make representations".

This nature of urban governance is also argued to encourage transformation through creating platforms for engagement, knowledge sharing (market orientations vs. social approaches) and joint management, as well as diffuse governance responsibilities to the hands of both City officials and non-officials for better accountability and transparency Elander (2002). It is thus through studying the nature of these engagements, the practices of the State in these engagements with communities, and the officials' relationship with communities (all of which are the focus of this research), where we can begin understanding the complexities, challenges and potentials of a participatory governance. As also emphasized by Elander (2002) we should not just grapple with this concept of participatory governance solely benchmarking what is said in policies because "words may sometimes function as triggers for efficient action, but they may, in other cases mask failing policies, i.e. they become words that succeed and policies that fail" (Edelman, 1977 cited in Elander, 2002 p.194).

The above argument is also carried by Forester (2012) when he highlights the importance of learning from practice stories. He maintains that narrating and understanding practice stories help us to see the micro-politics of planning, grapple with the power imbalances, to critically and insightfully analyse the participatory planning discourse to improve continuous community planning practices.

With Johannesburg as an aspiring World Class African City, a holistic approach is attempted in the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy and the City's Integrated Development Plan and Environmental Sector Plan, which the JCPZ ascribes to. For the relevance of this research, it is important to note that besides the aforementioned documents, the socio-economic conditions of many urban parks developed in Johannesburg thus far, have been inefficiency and mismanagement, resulting in Parks becoming crime hotspots and wasted facilities (Omar, 2012). For this reason JCPZ has attracted criticism for not managing to maintain parks across

the city, around issues of safety and security especially in a City marked by high levels of inequality and poverty (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2013).

What gives priority and importance to the notion of urban governance, is the arena in which it is translated which are the communities and neighbourhoods affected by the developments and policies implemented, impacting people's lives. It is common knowledge that the maintenance and success of public services requires both the State and community working together (Cornwall, 2008). Yet this only remains a theory in many government departments who remain challenged by implementing and driving effective participatory/ collaborative planning and meaningful leadership.

This research grapples with the concept of urban participatory governance and takes interest in a State institution, the Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo, a parastatal of the City of Johannesburg dealing with environmental matters such as Parks, Nature Reserves and the Zoo. The institution maintains that there has been recognition of the interconnectedness of socio-economic issues and environmental problems, such that social ills like unemployment causing crime and anti-social behaviours, homelessness and vandalism, play out and manifest themselves in urban public parks, exacerbating management challenges (in a context of already very limited resources) and excluding other users of the public facilities due to safety issues. This recognition has fostered an Institutional reshuffling to focus on what they refer as community development, to fundamentally "connect Parks with communities" (JCPZ Annual Report, 2011/12 p.9), in their environmental agendas and mandates. This paper thus aims to understand the official's practices, endeavours and opportunities in this proclaimed institutional shift to engage with communities, and possibly partner with them, in the development and management of Parks.

1.2 A Brief Background of the Institutional Reshuffling of Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo

In efforts to render Service Delivery more efficient, cost effective and sustainable the, City of Johannesburg conducted what is referred to as high-level Institutional review (JCPZ Strategic Corporate Plan, 2011) which resulted in the institutional reshuffling and adjustments that the JCPZ envisage. In summary as maintained in the 2011 Strategic Document which reports on the restructuring of JCPZ Institution, these adjustments aim to reaffirm JCPZ's alignment to the principles of the 2011 COJ GDS and the 2013-16 IDP. One of the emphases in this turn is on community development which has meant that the MoEs' responds to both their internal authority in terms of the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) and to the MMC for Community Development and Environment, Chris Vondo (JCPZ Business Plan, 2013).

Another key principle that the Strategic Document takes stock of is the relationship between socio- economic issues and environmental issues. As the growth of population increase annually by 1.3% (JCPZ Business Plan, 2013 p.6) which results in unemployment, food insecurity leading to poverty and crime, this then filters into environmental and urban issues as public open spaces become riddled with antisocial behaviour, homelessness and crime (JCPZBP, 2013) (Omar, 2012). The JCPZ is then faced with these socio- economic issues and the politics of public spaces (e.g. privatization debates). It has been mandated therefore to work towards mitigating these issues and promoting community development such as supporting the food economy through providing open spaces for community based Urban Agriculture, SMMEs food retailers and encourages volunteerism, to get youth off the streets. And most importantly to try balance the gabs and spatial inequalities between the north and south of the city in terms of parks.

In essence JCPZ is expected to "take the community along" (JCPZBP, 2013, p.11): drive participatory planning and community based monitoring of implemented projects, encourage social inclusivity and social cohesion through active engagement, meaningful community engagement in planning and decision making, create platforms for sharing experiences and bridging the cultural divides amongst communities of Johannesburg. It is in this background and

internal changes that officials in JCPZ are expected change their practices as to be more socially and people orientated in the management and development of Parks. I use the term Parks in this Paper to refer to all environmental assets of JCPZ, the Green Public Open Spaces, Nature Reserves, Birds' Centauries and the Zoo.

Bekker and Leildé (2003) highlight that local public participation has been encouraged as a means for local democracy and developmental local government in South Africa, to ensure that communities get to engage with officials on matters that impact them (such as developments and urban management). The terms community engagement and partnerships are used interchangeably in JCPZ to refer to their nature of participation. Community engagement is where communities are invited by the Councillor for consultation on preliminary park designs and concepts. Partnerships are used to refer to the more sustainable engagements between officials and Park Users Associations (Friends of the Park). The term community engagement will be used to refer to both these types of engagements in this report.

1.3 Research Rationale

Many literatures interrogating the Public Sector and Public Administration in South Africa, draw from various problematic events and circumstances in South Africa, that have polluted the image of the South African State, such as perpetuating inequalities, social and spatial divisions, police brutality; as was evident with the 2013 inner City Operation Clean Sweep (Mail and Guardian, 2013), the Marikina Massacre (The Guardian, 2013), the Red Ants Hilbrow and 2005 Marlboro evictions (Harrison, 2006). These have demonstrated what Von Holdt (2013) calls a "violent democracy" and have inspired the views that South Africa is a "failed State".

Von Holt (2010), Chipkin and Lipietz (2012), Berrisford (2013), Chipkin and Meny-Gibert (2013), and Bénit-Gbaffou (2013) maintain that these views also draws from the fact that many government institutions are troubled with low skills, corruption and incompetence. And even in its well-intentioned and developmental aspirations, the State seems unable to fix what is not

working correctly, as identification of issues is seldom followed by appropriate corrective measures.

Highlighted by the following authors;

> "Anthropology, history and literature have long seen Africans as fundamentally and even essentially rural creatures, while the African City itself has been perceived as an emblem of irresolvable crises" (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004a p.5)
>
> "For many analysts the defining feature of the contemporary African cities is the slum" (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004a p.5)
>
> "Democracy considered as a set of institutions and as a way of life, is a non-violent means of equally apportioning and publicly monitoring power within and among overlapping communities of people. To the extent that violence persists, it is regarded as symptomatic of the failure of democracy" (Keane, 2004 p.1) cited in (Von Holdt, 2013 p.590)
>
> "Watson (2002 p.46) ends with a fairly gloomy picture of Africa and argues that; it is not possible to think about planning in Africa outside the issue of development. It is a conclusion that reflects the commonly accepted failed modernity thesis" (Harrison, 2006 p.323).

Considering the above arguments it is of importance to thus attempt to understand the other side of the story, which is the challenges and opportunities encountered by officials in these State institutions, in their mandates of participatory governance, in their endeavour to transform South Africa for the better. It is in this understanding where we can avoid biased perceptions that are not grounded in specific contexts and real life politics.

Furthermore, Chipkin and Lipietz (2012) expose that some critiques ascribe State failures with the Old Public Management (OPM) structure of which is top-down, authoritarian, bureaucratic, wasteful, procedure driven and thus unresponsive to the diverse and dynamic needs of contemporary globalized societies and economies. Other authors stress that many State practices produce invented spaces, where the affected communities feel detached from what is actually provided for them (Cirrim, 2011).

New Public Management is a management concept that amongst other things aims to rectify the gaps of the OPM, by promoting a democratic ideal informed by market-led mechanisms and increased community engagement and stakeholder engagement, cutting costs and encouraging innovation, result-oriented and performance-related operating principles in Service Delivery. The NPM discourse argues that this type of management is relevant in contexts of limited resources and carries principles that can help States become efficient and effective (Harvey, 1989) (Hood, 1991)

Chipkin and Lipietz (2012) do not necessarily agree with this assertion, but do acknowledge that NPM is an ideology that has attracted many developing countries like South Africa towards the "good governance" orthodoxy (Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012 p.5) which is also supported by external forces such as the Work Bank and IMF in their promotion of structural reforms in Developing Countries. In the South African case, the paradigm shift was mostly influenced by the need and urges to transform and rectify the apartheid racist bureaucracy and public administration, and hence the NPM ideology is regarded as the best practice model, ridding bureaucracy, offering transformation and promoting some of the principles of a democratic developmental South Africa (Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012).

In the context of JCPZ and their challenges of park management where the provision of free parks intended for recreation, tranquillity and greenery have been used for criminal and illegal activities or as places to live by the homeless showcasing inequalities and poverty in ways that are difficult to manage (Beall et al, 2013) (Omar, 2012). As well as their institutional reality of limited resources, participatory governance and principles of NPM have seemed feasible (Joburg, 2015). This research is relevant in its attempt to interrogate the view that the South African State is a failed project by tracing efforts of transformation in a State institution the JCPZ, undergoing an institutional reshuffling to focus on community development and thus better urban governance practices.

1.4 Problem Statement and Research Aim

Cornwall (2008) maintains that community engagement is not a new notion, it is a developmental agenda that is traceable from the 1970s, and it came with the realization that in order to maintain the integrity and wellbeing of the environment and public services, this requires both the state and community working together, so that the provided facilities and amenities are not simply prescribed spaces but actually get to belong to the communities and the market which is meant to use them. However in many cases this has only remained a theory not effectively implemented. This might be partly explained by the challenges experienced by the authorities driving community engagement in the process of urban governance, such as political pressure, lack of resources, derailment of projects due to lack of willingness/ support from project team members, inter alia.

This context and complexities which State officials need to deal with is seldom documented, with community engagement literature tending to examine public engagement from the participants perspective, narrowly understanding the experiences of State officials in trying to manifest their mandates. This Paper thus adopts a State-centric perspective, trying to understand the challenges and opportunities of Park Management, engaging with communities and promotion of community development agendas envisaged by JCPZ. Grappling with officials' practices in their mandate to adopt and implement an efficient yet inclusive management approach to public parks in Johannesburg. Taking JCPZ as a case study, an organ of the State and thus a chain in the networks of urban governance in Johannesburg, understanding the dynamics, politics and modes of governance and leadership in this institution can tell part of the story about the bigger picture of the State in South Africa.

1.5 Research Question

- How do State officials understand their new mission to engage with communities in the management of urban parks?

Sub-Questions

- What are the structures and programmes within JCPZ dealing with community engagement in the broad sense, and how do these shape State officials practices?
- What are the opportunities or positive shifts experienced by State officials when engaging with communities?
- What are the challenges States officials experience in engaging with communities around park management and what are the responses?
- What perceptions do officials have about communities and community engagement drawing from their practical experiences?

1.6 Methodological Approach

The research methods of this paper will be discussed in detail, with the challenges thereof in Chapter 3. The research was enabled and supported as part of a broader NRF programme of studying the State and through an internship established in Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo through a partnership with CUBES. Fundamentally the research adopted a qualitative methodological approach focusing mainly on understanding practice and what is practically done in management and community engagement, as it was narrated by the officials engaging with communities in some form or the other. Creswell (2003) highlights that research methodologies indicate procedures that were followed in responding to a problem or theme that was investigated. The techniques, approaches and designs one uses to collect data, digest data and narrate findings.

The key elements identified for investigation in this research was, practical norms (what one believes in and practices), perceptions (how one views their job and the community) and discourse (what was said and not said and how one reacted to the questions). These elements helped me to direct the semi-structured conversations in a manner that gave relevant information.

1.7 Thesis Outline

This paper is organized in six chapters. The first has introduced and contextualised the research. The second chapter lays out the theoretical terrain of the research, engaging with literature on community engagement, urban public green space management and practices of the state though the lens of John Forester (what he refers to as the deliberative practitioner) as well as what Olivier de Sardan (2008) refer to as “practical norms”. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the research with acknowledgement of the context in which the research was able to take place, as an NRF programme on State practices, and JCPZ’s partnership with CUBES. The remainder of the paper presents and analyses the empirical evidence from field work in two sections, firstly looking at the perceptions and narratives of officials regarding community engagement. Followed by an examination of the institutional setting in which JCPZ officials are mandated to engage with communities. The sixth chapter concludes the Paper by drawing on the significance as well as difficulty of studying the State especially in the paradigm of transformation that South Africa currently endeavours. It ten highlights two main lessons, urban governance is the act of collaboration and that structure makes a difference.

Chapter 2: Drawing from Literature

2.1 Introduction

In an endeavour to theoretically dissect the research topic, this literature review will begin to grapple with the multidisciplinary aspects of the topic, looking at the changing practices of the JCPZ officials, what it takes for this nature of transformation to manifest, the challenges and opportunities encountered and also looking at how these state officials theoretically and practically understand community engagement, And how they carry this understanding in their decision making and the governance of city parks. This literature review draws on various articles that ponder on the complexities of driving change, the politics of open spaces, the ambiguities of community engagement as a notion and a normative as well as the experiences of this deliberative practice. I am going to discuss the following concepts more specifically, as emblematic of the debates in which I have situated my research topic

- Community engagement as a notion and a normative
- Public green space management
- Deliberative practice

2.2 Community engagement as a Notion and a Normative

Cornwall (2008) maintains that the 1970s marks a decade where the notion of community engagement became dominant in the development mainstream, but what this venture actually means can be quite ambiguously interpreted and also used to morally justify development processes with private intensions, what Jones (2002 p.306) refers to as “symbolic community engagement” (e.g. just ticking the box). In this article Cornwall (2008) presents various normative of community engagement and their typologies, examining community engagement from the facilitator’s and receiver’s perspective. What is worth noting is that each community engagement endeavour fundamentally has intentions and motives, power and wealth politics,

it is about who has the power to decide and to what degree the participating voices are considered.

The receiver wants to feel like he/she is not prescribed what he/she needs but he can also decide, benefit and be taken seriously, whilst the facilitator wants to make the participatory process as effective as possible. Fundamentally this implies that community engagement may mean different things for different stakeholders. Jones (2002) carries a similar argument and he maintains that in order for community engagement to be effective and meaningful in urban management schemes/ programmes, it should aim at empowering participants, this happens when institutional transformation is not only with the institutional structures but also includes local authorities' mind-sets and corporate culture. To ensure greater listening of communities, diffuse of power, pluralism and better engagement, this need to be embedded in culture, structure and processes "Effective local partnerships are fundamental to the success of the strategic role of local councils" (Jones, 2002 p.306)

This view is examinable in the case of JCPZ as they partake their newly established mandate to partner with communities and promote community development, it is of importance to grapple with how these officials understand this notion of community engagement, as in itself it is a very ambiguous normative and "may fail to match with citizens' expectations of the obligations that the state has to them" (Cornwall, 2008 p.272).

Cornwall (2008) maintains that the cost of community engagement includes time and efforts that communities (especially in societies riddled with poverty and inequalities), might only be willing to dedicate in exchange for benefits or some leverage in decision making .This indicates that effective community engagement entails more than just opening a platform for engagement, there needs to be supportive measures to ensure capacity building and opportunities for people to empower themselves. And this is where an understanding of what community engagement means to the institution matters, for example the difference between engaging in a project (short term, progress) and engaging in management which is long term.

This then shifts community engagement from just being invited spaces which always belong to those who structure it, to invented spaces which are spaces people create for themselves, marked less by the socio-economic differences between the participant and respondent, but marked more by a common goal and efforts in which the powerless or poor can gain confidence, skills, solidarity and benefits of being part of a group (Cornwall, 2008). As demonstrated by Jones (2002) It is through winning the community's trust that the government cares for their needs and involve them in decision making that a collaborated endeavour can be successfully carried out for the management of parks "Cities that use frequent information, community engagement, and reputation strategies experience less public cynicism" (Jones, 2002 p.19) and this begins shifting the culture of blaming the State for being inefficient to one of understanding what it takes, being part of the processes and taking part of the responsibility and thus it is an effort worth investing in.

In her co-authored paper about "States of Citizenship: Contexts and Cultures of Public Engagement and Citizen Action" Cornwall et al (2011) maintains that imaginaries that citizens have of the state (e.g. ineffective and thus protests) and those the state have of the people (e.g. poverty stricken, chaotic, must be prescribed what is good for them) shapes the meaning of citizenship and citizen community engagement. It is in understanding the citizen's experience and practices that are contextualized by a particular kind of state (e.g. Authoritative, democratic, welfare, laisser-faire etc.) that we can grapple with dilemmas of transformation, citizen's resentment and perceived inefficiencies.

Miraftab (2004) also alerts us to be wary of the rhetoric of participatory and developmental agendas in the context of neoliberal governance mandates. She adopts a Foucauldian perspective in grappling with the notions of social capital and empowerment/ community engagement methodologies in contemporary cities. Importantly she emphasizes how these discourses have been de-politized to serve neoliberal governance structures which use the discourse of 'transformation' to actually sustain the structures of subordination and existing power relations. She demonstrates this through narrating a case, where the discourse of community engagement was used to conceal the fact that the government was underpaying

the poor men and women from the township working in a waste collection program in Cape Town, South Africa.

She maintains that this is the disempowering work of empowerment. And in her article we get to see the fuzziness of the notion and normative of community engagement, how it may be documented as a progressive agenda yet have unintended and unexpected consequences of subordination.

This research hence investigates what community engagement means for JCPZ officials, and how this understanding is reshaped by actual participatory practices in the fields. Through observing practice one might also see the boundaries of what officials are able to invest in (e.g. community building or simply a launching of a process that might not continue because of various challenges) or how actual community engagement might begin to reshape visions and outcomes. As Forester (1999) maintains that the deliberative practitioner is able to learn by doing, reflect on practice and recognize or clarify theoretical problems in the field work, and thus facilitate the gradual remaking of theory, this research begins to ponder on that.

Noteworthy is that community engagement however cannot include every single person and this is also emphasized by Cornwall, it is about finding a balance between efforts to include and reach out and moving forward with those interested and willing to commit the time (Cornwall, 2008) and (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2015). There is a gap in literature which tends to reflect on community engagement taking the side of the participant; of civil society; of empowerment and taking power away from state officials or authorities, thus painting them as the enemy. There is very little on the state officials' side of the story, on what they do to open up decision making in trying to make community engagement more effective to people's inputs, which is the gap this research will try to feed.

For community engagement to result into measurable effective results, efforts needs to be enforced by the institutions running the projects and strategies and collective support from the

communities, which all takes time, investment and persistence (something officials' usually lack due to political pressures). There is a need for community engagement to have a clear mandate, about what the community engagement will involve, who will be involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring. Outlining on what bases people need to engage for example, outlining exactly which decisions the public will participate in and who in the public helps examine the integrity of the process (Cornwall, 2008). However through engagement this mandate is incrementally defined, reshaped and negotiated with participants.

2.3 Public Green Space Management

There are arguments that maintain that the politics and ambiguity of community engagement as a form of management of community parks, should be addressed (or not) by privatization of public spaces/ parks, for better management, use and security in the public realm (as exposed by Mitchell, 2014). Although Mitchell radically criticizes this privatization option, arguing that it leads to loss of public space, he does acknowledge that without effective governance "Parks have become haven for small-time drug dealers, street people and the homeless" (Mitchell, 1995 p.110) and hence some officials resort to privatizing. Although Mitchell (1995) refers of the conditions and debates of public spaces in Berkeley in the above quote, these conditions have also been evident in Johannesburg, "Its strategy focused on developing environmental and infrastructural programs targeting crime, grime, congestion, homelessness and deteriorating public sector services through public–private partnerships …facilitating private sector supplementation to local authority service provision" (Bremner, 2000 p.190)

The use of these public spaces by homeless people for rough sleeping has been problematized in cities of the North and South. The notion of the 'legitimate public' and legitimate public activities are very contested comprehensions; in his study of Freedom Park in Berkeley, San Francisco, Mitchell argues that "those who are intent on rationalizing public space in the post-industrial city have necessarily sought to remove the homeless to banish them to the interstices and margins of civic space in order to make room for legitimate public activities" (Mitchell,

1995 P.118). Others such as activists in Berkeley, believe that the public incorporates all human beings and a public space should not have mediated/ restricted access, if it is to be called a public space (Mitchell, 1995).Yet this view on its own may sometimes result in other users being excluded in the public parks by being scared of the crime and anti-social behaviours taking place.

These politics still shape public open spaces today, especially with the problem and terror of crime and security in public spaces, which in most cases has led to the walling and exclusionary access in public open spaces (Nemeth and Hollander, 2010). It is thus with this content that the community engagement buzzword needs to be examined in any institutional reshuffle. However it is worthy to also acknowledge the complexities of dealing with such debates, especially in a context of high socio-economic inequalities and a history of racial exclusion like South Africa, a normative understanding and manifestation of inclusion (e.g. accessible to all) is usually difficult and contested when management programmes are challenged and sometimes defeated by crime, homelessness, vagrancy and maintenance issues.

It is in this context that the NPM has been regarded as a best practice model. With its management rituals that are deemed to yield maximum outcomes with minimal resources; by cutting costs, emphasizing on outputs/ results over procedures, the use of indicators and measures (e.g. KPI) to asses performance and success of goals, the NPM doctrine has attracted many public sectors across the globe and in South Africa as a managerial tool for effective public administration (Hood, 1991).

In the above case study of Berkeley, partnership with the private sector for better management of the People's park resulted in extreme security measures, such that people would be arrested for 'trespassing' in the so called public space (Mitchell, 1995). In this example one sees the paradoxes that can come with transformation buzzwords/fuzz words, where officials' understanding and intensions for 'change' may or may not be in line with what the public expects, resulting in what Michelle borrowing from Lefebvre refers to as the two visions

of public space, “representational space (appropriated, lived space; space in use) and representations of space (planned, controlled, ordered space” (Michelle, 1995 p.115).

However the very same public is divided with some members aspiring to the privatization of parks, whilst others aspire to freedom and accessibility in parks.

It is this dual vision of the essence of public open spaces which may result in contradictory ideologies of what the state anticipates, and what the society does in these spaces and how the society in itself has different views about these spaces, which render their participatory management a challenging task. Furthermore Hook and Vrdoljak (2002), Nemeth and Hollander (2010), maintain that the terror of crime and the perceptions of the need for high profile security measures have led to both a commodification and death of public open spaces and parks, where a market is carefully filtered through the management and control measures adopted to keep the users homogeneous and ‘legitimate’, rationalizing this act as a need for the comfort of the ‘other’.

Jenkins et al (2010) contests this approach and argues that in contexts of rapid urbanization which contextualizes a diversity of urban space occupants, any urban management approach is only effective when it is socially constructed (negotiated between the state, residents and investors/business). The management model cannot be informed by scientific regulation as was evident with historical paradigms of urban control and authoritarianism “which still arguably deeply underpin attitudes to what is good in the ‘urban’” (Jenkins et al, 2010 p.114).

In trying to contextualize these debates to the relevance of JCPZ, it is of importance to firstly trace their theoretical and institutional aspirations which are guided by the goals set out in the Johannesburg growth and development strategy (2040) and the integrated development plan 2012/2016 (JCPZ corporate strategic plan, 2013). One of the priorities is to design for inclusion and insure that the “urban form becomes an expression of citizens cultural identity” (JCPZCSP, 2013 p.18). This notion is both problematic and challenging, as demonstrated in the aforementioned debates; citizen’s cultural identity is in itself diverse and complex, and may be exclusionary towards each other. Although establishing a common goal and balance of interest

is possible, political pressure, limited resources and capacity, willingness and commitment between departments (e.g. social services, housing, and pikitup) and within departments amplifies the difficulties of addressing the issues.

The City further envisages a green belt linkage system to promote integration of the inequality of resources and allow for the deprived areas to feed from the well-resourced areas "JCPZ needs to contribute to providing, a single window for services to the poor and vulnerable…Services such as libraries in parks, sports facilities in parks, WIFI facilities in open spaces, adventure parks, education centres and IT centres need to be pursued" (JCPZCSP, 2013 p.17).

Using Miraftab (2004) perspective, and also 'judging from outside the state' as Bénit-Gbaffou (2013) would put it, this neo-liberal mode of governance (the rhetoric of inclusion/ community engagement and also promoting profit making e.g. adventure parks, IT centres etc.) materializes contradictory outcomes, what Miraftab (2004) considers as displacement of traditional forms of power structures in a depoliticized manner, as in an exclusionary political endeavours portrayed and maneuvered as an a-political social concern. She emphasizes that with neo-liberal principles of governance (which affirm social empowerment, inclusion and integration) officials (directly or indirectly) manifest material exclusion and thus perpetuates an on-going struggle of inequalities. In the context of neoliberal governance principles again, some views propose privatization of parks and this becomes an appropriation by a single group excluding other users and causing conflicts, this also amplifies the challenges of managing and mitigating these conflicts for officials who may not necessarily believe in neoliberal principles or exclusionary views.

2.4 Seeing like a State; Deliberative Practice and Practical Norms

In reflecting on theories of State practices, Bénit-Gbaffou (2014) maintains that, it is the officials in the local government that carry the responsibility of both legislating and implementing polices that govern specified contexts/fields (e.g. Parks), and thus they are directly faced with

having to deal with the consequences of mismanagement and flawed interventions which they ultimately have to respond to. Olivier de Sardan then argues that the problem with social science in Africa is that this complexity and messiness of what he refers to as "real governance" (2008:4) is hardly documented but rather there is an obsession with the desires to instigate an occidental ideal governance (otherwise referred to as good governance principles) which in turn does not necessarily respond to the contextual issues faced by these State officials.

He then promotes the need to research and grapple with practical realities in the endeavours of governance. To aim to understand what State officials do in practice to respond to issues, what rules actually govern the practices of public actors and he terms these rules; practical norms, not grounded in the expectation of the Northern Development Partners, but "Practical norms signal the need for empirical research that is capable of capturing the complexity, variety, ambiguity and modernity of the behaviour of State agents in Africa" (Olivier de Sardan, 2008 p.3).

He centres this article on trying to find out what aspects of real governance (the messiness of real life politics and real life Service Delivery) can be learned from and taken to manifest pro-poor developmental outcomes. He makes an analogy of governance by stating that it is in understanding the wood-grain where one can make a strong sustainable wood. He maintains that the grains of real governance in African States may have characteristics of Neopatrimonial, Clientalism and Informality as also argued by various literatures (Olivier de Sardan, 2008 p.5) but the African States are not homogenous, this is not the only truth. In fact their differences lie in the micro dynamics and multi local, sectorial and individual elements that characterize certain governance dilemmas.

Olivier de Sardan (2008) most importantly states that, it is by studying the micro dynamics and pluralism of governance that we can gather empirical data to influence public policy changes. The significance of this study is emphasized by the reality that institutional norms and actual practices in any social institution tend to diverge but the scope and forms of the divergence depend on context. The flaw in how this is assessed is that it adopts West-centric benchmarks

in its critiques of African States and their nature. Thus documenting normative conceptualizations or value judgements (of African States), that tend to aspire to the Northern models of Democratic Governance but remain narrowly understanding the realities and progressive characters of the African States (Olivier de Sardan, 2008).

This research learns from Olivier de Sardan's arguments and borrows the manner in which he uses terms like real governance and practical norms in trying to grapple with the endeavours of effective urban governance and what it takes. Between policy intentions, legal requirements, institutional constraints and deadlines, power and staff issues, and own ability to make choices and how these are shaped and reshaped by both challenges and opportunities of driving change. In the broader context of Johannesburg (a city also troubled by inequalities and poverty) but specifically JCPZ as the narrow focus of the State institution of choice and supported accessibility.

Von Holdt (2013) reviews South Africa's political economy and he maintain that in its effort to transition into democracy, there is a persistence of exclusionary structures perpetuating extreme inequalities and poverty. The socioeconomic consequence of this has been an unstable social order characterized by "intra-elite conflict and violence" (Von Holdt, 2013 p.589), he terms this social order "Violent Democracy" (Von Holdt, 2013 p.589), whereby Coercion, Authoritarianism, Clientelism and Populism among other means are used by State institutions in governance and politics of ascendency.

One ostensible example of this violent democracy and its complexities is seen by how some members of the JCPZ Department (as highlighted in the quote below) have used Coercion to try and address maintenance issues in the Parks:

> "Since February this year the low life in the city's parks has disappeared… She confiscates the soccer balls of those playing in the parks where it is prohibited… "I have a zero tolerance approach. We manage the Parks on the broken pane principle - we fix damage within 48 hours (Van Blerk in Joburg, 2015)". And there's no doubt it's working, with surrounding communities starting to have a personal interest in their parks. Where months ago most city parks in the CBD

such as Joubert Park, Berea and Hillbrow, were no-go areas ruled by drug lords, vagrants and drunkards. Now the Parks are attractive places with Volunteers monitoring the movements of those using the parks and those not wanted in the Parks" (Joburg, 2015).

As highlighted by Von Holdt (2013) and exemplified in the above case exclusionary forms of governance and sometimes repression (seemingly easier form of governance compared to community engagement) have been used commonly by States as a measure of control both in South Africa and abroad, another example occurred in the 1991 street Skirmishes in Berkeley "Police were accused of beating bystanders, roughing-up homeless residents of the Park, and using wood and putty bullets needlessly" (Mitchell, 1995 p.114) in efforts to privatize People's Park.

Forester (1999) also theorizes practice, and he maintains that a Deliberative Practitioner that drives participatory planning face serious dilemmas in practicing participatory planning. Firstly because the nature of community engagement involves a shift of power, an inclusive mind-set that aspires to create spaces such Parks that can be meaningful to their users and also sustainable.

It is about working with others and learning from experience, the Planner or Practitioner needs to work in astute manner balance Architectural, cultural political, societal and bureaucratic concerns. He states that by asking about what ought to be valued, honoured, protected, sustained and developed and how will this practically be done, as well as facilitating multiparty inquires and relationship building, public community engagement can produce well-crafted strategies that address real needs.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In an endeavour to carry a reliable and valid approach to answering the research question (How do JCPZ officials understand their mission to engage with communities), this paper adopted Forester et al (2005) profiles of practitioners; practice stories from the field, as a benchmark for guidelines on how to effectively extract information from semi structured conservations and interviews with practicing officials. As they maintain "these practice stories offer intimate windows onto the richness, messiness, and complexity of work in the field" (Forester, 2005) hence the interest in a qualitative research methodology and strategy which is largely concerned with officials' experiences, challenges, perspectives and opportunities in their daily mandated activities of park management and community engagement in JCPZ.

This chapter is an important component of the paper as it not only outlines the manner in which the research was undertaken and means through which data was collected, but also highlights the context which allowed this type of research, the limitations, challenges and opportunities thereof. The chapter begins with the context through which this research has emerged, as this allowed a unique opportunity to study the State from within its Institution and also influenced the methodology adopted in this regard.

The chapter will then discuss initial assumptions or rather initial intended methodology and how this was shifted and altered by actual fieldwork and its challenges (e.g. the internship; and what it came to be, observation, interviews, ethnography). The manner in which data was collected and digested will be discussed followed by a reflection on the research challenges and what lies next.

3.2 Context in which this Research has emerged

The theme and focus of this research emerged firstly from an interest in State practices and their endeavour in urban governance and urban management in Johannesburg. Thus through

the channels of the Centre of Urbanism and Built environmental Studies (CUBES) in the University of the Witwatersrand and its relationship with Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo, the research was supported and sponsored through a research contract for JCPZ (which was a way of framing an internship). The research is also grounded in a National Research Foundation programme called “Practices of the state in urban governance”(PSUG) led by my supervisor Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, which grapples with some of the urban governance realities and arguments covered in this paper.

This context has allowed me a unique opportunity to participate in not only building the relationship of trust (e.g. as in intern having an office in CJPZ premises and a level of identification, if not recognition, in the institution), sharing of knowledge (in documenting a separate report and poster for the organization) and anticipation of transformation and progress through the general value of research. The context has also allowed me to attend meetings, conduct interviews and review some of the departments’ documents, reports, and minutes of the meeting, as well as converse with and get to know the officials.

3.3 Data Collection - Intended Methodology vs. Actual Methodology

Creswell (2003) defines a qualitative methodology as one which has the key elements of using constructivist knowledge claims, ethnography and empirical observations over a period of time, to establish meaning and analysis from the recorded phenomenon.

The dominant method I used to collect data from field work was qualitative, and this approach involved informal conversations, semi- structured interviews, participant observation as well as empirical data collection from the meetings attended.

A portion of the methodology was also the use of secondary data collection through reviewing the organization reports, Strategic and Business Plans and organograms. The secondary data collection method helped me acquire background information on JCPZ and what informed its institutional reshuffling, thus made me realise the misassumptions I had made in the research proposal. Such as assuming that there were already established or under construction Community Park Management Committees, which officials are to use as platforms to formally

partner with communities in the management of parks. Only to find out that by the institutional reshuffle they were referring to the fact that now JCPZ reports to the MMC of Community Development from previously reporting to MMC of Environmental Sector.

The correction of this initial assumption restructured my topic from **"JCPZ officials' views on opportunities and challenges in turning towards community management of Johannesburg parks**" to **"JCPZ officials' views on opportunities and challenges of community engagement**". The qualitative procedures (semi-structured interviews and participant observations) was beneficial in unpacking and feeding the research topic. Officials were asked questions which mainly related to their mandates, daily schedules, experiences, challenges and views around community engagement and the research paid much attention to the how of practice and the officials perspectives of engagement what Olivier de Sardan (2008) would call "practical norms". And what Forester argues as an important source of knowledge "profiles provide phenomenologically rich qualitative data that can be corroborated by existing literature from our field… Facilitate theory-building because these practice stories can help us clarify theoretical problems in our field" (Forester, 2005)

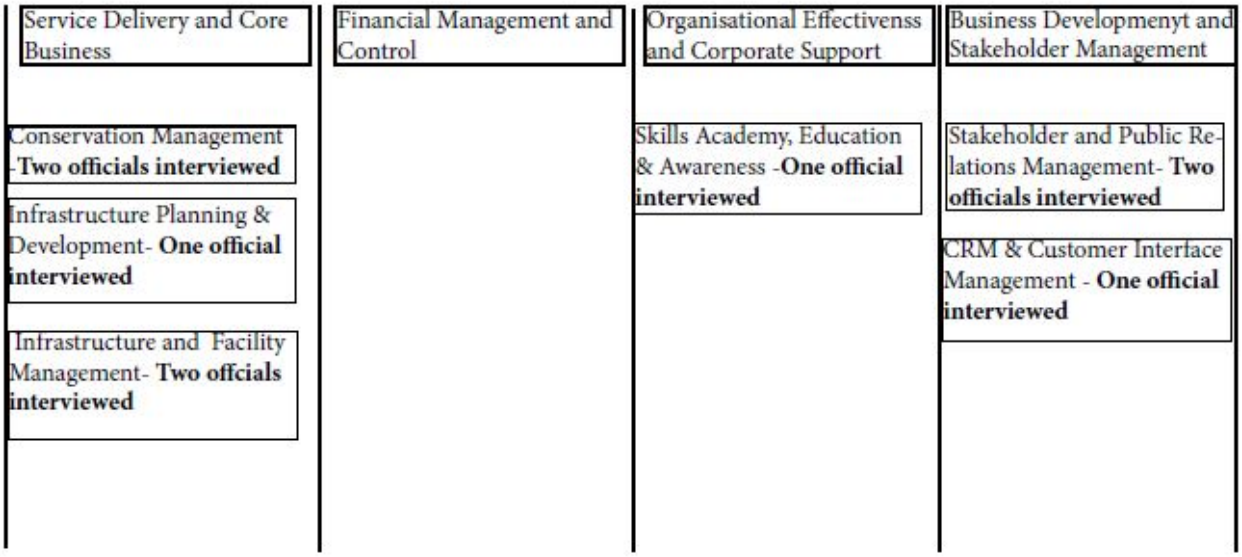
Lastly as Creswell's (2003) definition emphasizes I observed; behaviours, body language, comments, energies, reactions during interviews and meetings and could read matters that made officials uncomfortable. An example occurred during the Safety Strategy meeting held on the 30/09/2015 at JDA when an NGO activist said that a specific park from region F was mismanaged, she was just giving an example, but the senior horticulturalist for that region became so defensive saying that

> "No! Point of correction we manage the park, I work there the park is well managed. It's not a management problem. We have so many social ills and anti-social behaviours and perhaps that is what you observed. But we have JMPD evicting vagrants all the times, the issues are bigger than us" (Senior Horticulturalist, 2015).

It was clear that the Senior Horticulturalist was uncomfortable by the view that the Park was in a bad state because of mismanagement, or rather a management strategy that is not effective.

The following are officials interviewed from different internal Departments/ Units:

The following are officials that were interviewed, located in their respective departments in JCPZ organogram



Source: Sketched from JCPZ Corporate Strategic Plan, 2013 p. 83

In total, nine JCPZ officials were interviewed (some more than once), in the various units highlighted above. Some were at managerial level, others at lower levels – but the units are too small for these relevant indications to be mentioned in the report without jeopardizing anonymity. It is believed however that the loss of information pertaining to this anonymation is not too detrimental to the overall value of the findings.

The following are meetings that were attended:

1. Park safety: Deepening citizen engagement in the quality management and safety of parks (the pilot project)

I learned a lot in this meeting, which was also the first officials' meeting I attended. Multiple stakeholders attended all gathered to discuss the pilot project which is the development of End Street North Park. The aim was to discuss how citizen engagement could be strengthen for better management and safety of parks, taking the pilot project as an example and demonstration of the processes that would be required. This was the platform where I really

observed the difficulties of stakeholders engagement as people shared different views and principles on how and why should engagement occur and everyone was firm in their believes. However I saw and appreciated the value of an effective chair of the meeting as she drove the process in a manner that kept people constructive, creative and grappling with problem solving.

2. De Williams street public participation (regarding the linear park concept)

This was my first observation of how community engagement looks like in JCPZ and it was very interesting. People walked in and signed a register at the door, across the room were posters of the complete park design and people would walk around and encouraged to write down comments (there was assistance for those who can't write), mostly structured around adding or subtracting facilities and then they would have coffee. It was interesting how the process is so intelligently structured in a way that would make people feel involved and engaged however my observation was that the fundamental principles anticipated in that Park concept (e.g. It would be the first liner park concept in Africa with that design) and the image that the city wanted (e.g. pioneering such a concept) was already finalized and people were not given any leverage to challenge that.

3. KNR Forum meetings (Friends of the Park)

I attended two FoP meetings and here is where I really saw the messiness and challenges of community engagement. These kinds of meetings are established on a more sustainable basis with the Managers and different FoP Associations, others willing to invest money and contribute to the management and maintenance of the Park. There were various conflicts arising in this regard, the relationship between these groups and officials' does not have a working guiding memorandum of agreement, which made some officials' feel undermined in their work due to the pressures and demands of the groups (e.g. they would want to be part of the maintenance cycles and report that to media, they want to control the uses in the park etc.). It is challenging to engage with these FoPs and I reckoned that officials needed to be trained for this purpose as some of them were losing patience and letting their anger get the best of them.

4. Public dialogue: Rethinking the role of Parks

This was a dialogue organized by JCPZ in their attempt to gain knowledge from different intellectuals across different academic and practice related fields. It was very insightful in enlightening the audience of the values of green spaces way beyond their environmental essence, there was reflections on Parks as locales for social cohesion and how their mismanagement contributes to exclusion, segregation and displays social-ill such as poverty, unemployment, drug use etc. Attending this dialogue was very useful, to see the broader appreciation of research in ways to better manage parks not only as green spaces for sustainable climate conditions but importantly as ingredients of social wellbeing.

5. Ward Councillor Forum meeting

The officials I accompanied to this meeting did not stay long and thus my observations were cut short as we had to leave. But I picked up that officials do not communicate with councillors, as many of them were frustrated by officials not responding to their maintenance queries, some of the complaints logged by communities who pressurize the Councillors.

3.4 Responding to practical challenges and ethical issues

The research commenced with great enthusiasm and positive assumptions, such as thinking that people will freely share their experiences/ practices with me, which were quickly diluted by the reality of the fieldwork. The initial perception was that I was going to be assigned a mentor within JCPZ who would guide me through the organization departments/ units and advise me on which officials to talk to, as well as going to meetings with them, shadowing them in their multiple engagements with various communities in order to observe and diarise lessons.

1. **Overcoming officials' reluctance and unavailability**

The reality is officials are very busy (something I took their time for granted), and for the first week (06/07/2015) I set in Ayanda Roji's office (Manager of the Knowledge and Research

Department) hoping that this mentor will come, or anyone will come, as a couple of the officials collaborating with Ayanda in this project with CUBES already knew that I would be starting the internship at that time. Indeed, we had met (my supervisor, myself and two other fellow researchers) many of them prior to the start of my research, to present and inform, but also jointly conceptualize, frame and organise my research project in JCPZ.

I even had an appointment with a Regional Manager I had been introduced before, and that Ayanda Roji had allocated as my mentor to be: but this meeting never materialized because of locational constraints (I had no car and money for public transport at that time, and he was based in the South of Johannesburg, not in CJPZ head office in Braamfontein). I was hoping he would come to the office as I had availed myself to him and various other officials for any assistance they may need. After about two weeks of seating in that office I spoke to my supervisor with great frustration and she advised that I had to be more proactive and take leadership in my own data collection. She also mentioned my challenges to Ayanda Roji, the official in charge of the partnership with CUBES from JCPZ side. However, during the time spent in the office I had studied JCPZ organograms, Strategic and Business Plans and gained a better understanding on who I can talk to regarding my research and how to better phrase my topic to be able to get information

I contacted these individuals by email and Ayanda also helped in informing me about meetings. I met some of the people I wanted to talk to in meetings such as officials from the Stakeholder Relations Unit and other regional managers. There, I re-introduced myself, my research interests and intentions and from them I got to know who else I can talk to.

I initially thought the Stakeholder Relations Unit was the only site of actual community engagement - as I had firstly met these officials during the conceptualization of the internship/ project when they presented what they do. But after struggling to get a hold of them both for interviews, and difficulties of attending the meetings with stakeholders that they had informally mentioned to me (impossibility of getting information on the place and venue for the meeting due to officials not picking up my calls), I managed to speak to one of them and was made

aware of the multiple sites of community engagement from a project flow diagram. A second one then also later on, agreed to talk to me. These sites of community engagement are discussed in detail in chapter five. The strategy I adopted was to speak to at least one official in each unit engaging with communities since focusing solely and in depth on the Stakeholder Relations Unit was challenged by the inaccessibility of the officials there.

2. Dealing with lack of trust and suspicion: suspending normative judgement, trying to understand officials' perspectives

The support structures and grounds of the research (internship, CUBES relationship with JCPZ) came with various challenges. It firstly required a non-normative attitude in interacting with various officials who have different views, beliefs and understandings of what community engagement is and its value. This suspension of normative judgements was also necessitated by what already existed in literature which is a tendency to criticise park management and participatory practices without considering their challenges especially in a context of insecurity and inequalities. The aim was to understand the officials' side of the story.

Getting officials to agree to an interview was a challenge in itself, there was a lot of reluctance from officials to talk to me so I had to optimize as much information as possible from those that I managed to speak to. A strategy to achieve that, was for me to not be normative or reactive (e.g. to practices that were surprising to me or even that I would spontaneously criticise) but rather to remain non- judgemental and try to understand the official's perspective. Taking a lot of notes also made some of the officials uncomfortable (read from their body language) and short in their response to my questions, I thus resorted to writing less and listening more. Anonymation became an absolute necessity, even if sometimes it was at the detriment of depth or analysis (for instance attributing a quote to a specific position in the institution could have made it easy to identify the respondent; yet it was sometimes a relevant piece of information).

This approach really helped me a lot to be in the officials' shoes, to not focus too much on writing (which tends to distract me from being present) but to listen and understand. I found that I could imagine myself in their situations and related to their frustrations and limitations.

The decision to not be normative was also eye opening as I did not come with already conceptualized ideas of what is supposed to happen but I really tried to have an open mind and understand what is actually happening, in what ways and why.

The other challenge was that I had to make do with what I could access. My initial desire was to have an in-depth study of the Stakeholder Relations Unit as one of the sites where community engagement is explicitly and mandatorily led by officials. I targeted this Unit because its very foundation was established to negotiate, advocate and balance interests between the communities and JCPZ internal departments. I failed in this attempt as officials in this Unit were reluctant to speak, to invite me to accompany them in their meetings and often unable to spare time for me. I only managed to speak to two of them (out of four) and could not get a follow up interview with them because they simply ignored my emails and calls and I couldn't find them at their offices when I would go to check.

The alternative plan was thus to broaden my focus and speak to any official engaging with communities in any way within the internal JCPZ departments and narrate their experiences and perspectives of communities and this is discussed in chapter 4. I could say this turned out to be a good decision as it helped me map out the overall terrains of community engagement in JCPZ, how they relate to each other, the benefits and disadvantages of this structure and understand although not deeply, the officials' practices in a variety of Units .

3. Engaging in a conversation: feedback, anonymation, thorough editing process

There was a workshop for preliminary findings hosted by CUBES and JCPZ on the 25 of September 2015, where I and my fellow junior researchers presented our initial findings. The bulk of my initial findings somewhat painted a somehow negative image of officials' views and experience of community engagement - challenges thereof as well as scepticism of the official.

At first it was very uncomfortable for me to actually prepare to report what I had heard from officials on community engagement, which was mostly about the challenges of dealing with it, especially as the presentation would be in front of the people who shared that information with

me. I felt like I could be damaging reputations, even though all informants were anonymized. And because of this unease the presentation I had initially prepared was very general and descriptive, which my supervisor advised me that it would not be of any help to the officials if we are not constructively critical and analytical about the findings and so we reworked the presentation a lot of times. The drive was not to depict officials in a bad light but rather reflect on the challenges they were encountering as the consequence of limited institutional support and capacity, flawed processes that did not allow meaningful engagement to really take place, except in exceptional circumstances.

The workshop went well in my view. The reaction from the officials in the meeting was an acknowledgement of the flaws highlighted rather than a defence of them, which for me showed courage, willingness and a desire to change; requests for further recommendations on how to reform processes and institutions to make community engagement more successful. I thought the point of my research was understood and it was going somewhere.

It was ironic when one official stated after the workshop that he could actually tell who said what even when the people were anonymized, which may show that perhaps internally officials are familiar with each other's principles, professional ethics and ways of practice, or perhaps just wordings, expressions, type of language that are familiar to him. But this was also not that obvious, to the point one other official asked me "who was complaining" after the workshop (was it genuine curiosity, or was it to test my ability to maintain anonymity?). I maintained the secrecy and told him people will remain anonymized. I had planned a follow up interview with him, but post the workshop he stopped replying to my emails or answering my calls, which made me think that after all he was not very comfortable with officials' quotes becoming the object of scrutiny and analysis.

From then on, Ayanda helped me again organize appointments with some officials from other units (Environmental Education, Customer Relations, CID) who also engage with communities, even if less at the forefront of community engagement, for me to enhance and complement my findings.

A second workshop had been planned to continue to iron out these tensions or discomforts – but due to University disruption (during the Fees must Fall movement), it was not possible to have this workshop before handing-in of this report. However, such a workshop has been planned for early next year (January 2016), around the making of a report (based on this research) dedicated to JCPZ and presenting the main findings and recommendations. It is hoped that this workshop will further clarify the intention of the research – understand institutional constraints and opportunities through lived experience of officials tasked to drive community engagement.

This led me, for this specific paper, to give it an extra edit to further anonymise my data, and check with particular caution whether each quote was sufficiently anonymous to protect all officials from harm, whether real or perceived. My supervisor and Ayanda Roji from JCPZ also took the time to read the final version to give it a final edit, for this reason.

I trust the processes in place, although not perfect, are responding to the challenges and sensitivities of the matter. This process is still ongoing, and these questions will also frame the report I will be writing for JCPZ based on this thesis. For the relevance and applicability of the report to JCPZ, a focus shall be more on highlighting, what are the perceptions and practices, that currently exist in the Units studied and why these occur, as well as reflect on what officials think could work better. These reflections will however be anonymized as the point is not to point fingers and pass blame at who does what, but it is to identify and analyse the common problems, their causes and how the officials themselves begin to re-imagine new ways of acting and driving transformation.

Chapter 4: How do officials see and experience community engagement?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter largely presents the raw material from the field which are the perceptions and narratives of the officials about engaging with communities as it is part of their mandate. The chapter examines how community engagement is actually done in the arenas of the interviewed officials, the challenges and experiences of the officials' in driving this process. The following chapter (5) then examines the institutional setting and structures which are mapped to support this type of engagement, to dig deeper institutionally to see what structures may be contributing to how officials experience community engagement.

Williams (2004) maintain that participatory discourses dominate government and international development agencies, becoming part of officials' aims and objectives from the 1990s. He states that in the Southern governments community engagement is adopted as a method of delivery in social development projects and rarely as an intended outcome in itself. Meaning community engagement gets to be part of the boxes officials can tick as part of Service delivery and not necessarily invest time in growing the relationship with the communities. Miraftab (2004) adopts a similar point of view by arguing that community engagements in the contemporary context of neo-liberal governance is often just a symbolic rhetoric of inclusion, blurring the fundamental material exclusion.

Although the material exclusion of the subalterns may not necessarily be the reality in JCPZ, as they are mandated to redistribute resources to the less privileged communities as part of South Africa's bigger development strategies (e.g. GDS, IDP, and Corridors of Freedom). However what complexify these intentions (of redistribution) are issues of vandalism, crime and poverty which make the territory of the subalterns difficult to work with and to engage with. This view is informed by various officials who have stated that, although they try balancing the spatial inequalities evident between suburbs and townships they are discouraged by the rates of vandalism which waste the facilities they don't really have. For this, officials have also tended to

invest more of community engagement (especially in management through FoP) in mainly privileged communities. This chapter looks into this rhetoric of community engagement and attempts to examine its nature in JCPZ (genuine or symbolic?), although the answer is not a simplistic dichotomy.

Williams (2004) also highlights that community engagement theories rely on officials' personal transformation, officials as the drivers of this process endure high expectations to be radicals of social change. Although this is not necessarily the current reality, institutional change does need to begin with a change in the officials' practices and behaviours towards the new norm (e.g. community engagement) in order to ultimately influence social changes. It is thus important that officials have an opportunity to tell their story, share their experiences in order to demystify, the often biased critiques (e.g. taking communities as the victims) which maintains that State officials are inefficient.

Following are the narratives presented in the words of the officials themselves, categorized into different analytical perspectives which can help us understand their experiences and perceptions of communities, as the facilitators of engagement and potential agents of transformation. I have categorised these narratives into four main themes; sense of ownership, community expectations, transformation issues and formalization challenges. These correspond to the dominant views of officials on the challenges of community engagement from their perspectives.

4.2 Sense of ownership: there is a lack of community commitment, or over commitment

One of the dominant frustrations of officials' regarding communities was around the issue of co-governance/ co-management. Officials wish to receive helping hands from Park Users Associations in the management of the Nature Reserves and Parks, however one of the problems is that this relationship does not have an active memorandum of agreement, there is a draft version but according to Operations and Conservation Managers (2015), this is still in the pipeline and not yet enforced. Another issue is that the conditions of the agreement does

not indicate a sharing of power (as one would anticipate in a partnership) but rather ascribes the Park Users Associations as "Friends of the Park/Nature Reserve" to adhere to the codes of conduct of JCPZ and serve JCPZ as volunteers rather than partners. These conditions have manifested two main consequences, the first being an over commitment by those who do land a helping help, but then tend to want to control the activities that should happen in the Nature Reserve as well as the maintenance procedures in the Reserve, as they feel a sense of ownership due to their committed volunteerism. The second issue is a lack of commitment, where in other areas residents just complain without offering help or being constructive in their criticism.

> "Remember these guys (Friends of the Park) have been using these spaces for years and years and years so they feel like 'this is ours, we own this space and you cannot tell us what to do in this space' "(Manager, 2015)

> "There are users who prefer to jog in the reserves or perform rituals and these Friends (of the Park) don't want that, they want to select users and dictate what happens in that specific space, that's where the whole fighting is coming from" (Manager, 2015)

> "In areas where there are no facilities, we get endless demands. But then they get the facilities and they do not look after it, they get the facilities and shift responsibilities, they do not want to take ownership or have a sense of being part, saying its ours, it's always seen as a City Parks asset but when it's not there, they want it. They do not come handy to us, you know" (Stakeholder Relations, 2015)

> "We can't continue maintaining areas that are already developed, we can't take all the money and take it to Sandton, so us as officials we need to take money from Sandton and go develop Soweto. But then again you develop Soweto they vandalise, 'it's not in us to look after things' " (Manager, 2015)

There is certainly a challenge regarding a healthy balance between the commitment of the FoP in partnering with officials for the wellbeing and sustainability of the Nature Reserves. Whereby because of this volunteered partnership, the FoP feel like they have a say on what can and cannot happen in the Nature Reserves but in a way that has tended to exclude other users such

as the cultural rituals of the Sangomas/ traditional healers (Manager, 2015). This was also observed from attending the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve (KNR) Forum meetings, where the Friends of KNR want to monitor each and every activity happening in the Reserve, observe and be present during the maintenance procedures like game capturing where animals usually get hurt from running away from the helicopter (and sometimes dying). The Friends of KNR then sometimes take pictures of this and send to the media, (Manager, 2015).

On the other hand, in some communities there seems to be a lack of commitment/interest in partnering with officials, whereby some individuals only complain but are not constructive in their critiques and do not want to land a helping hand to officials (Stakeholder Relations, 2015). These circumstances have caused reluctance by other officials to engage and a negative picture of the community and volunteers in park management;

> "They employ their own labour in the Nature Reserve to spy on us and they run to the media, I tell them I don't need you, you need me, you are just a volunteer I can get other volunteers" (Manager, 2015).

This reluctance to engage and fear of being exposed to the media was also evident when no member of the Stakeholder Liaison Unit (a department which is mandated to be part of these community meetings) was present in the KNR Forum second and third meetings. This fear and reluctance is also evident when one examines their volunteer policy. The problem statement of this policy states: "There is no company policy to encourage and manage the volunteer environment thus resulting in exploitation and reputational damage" (JCPZ Volunteer Policy, 2015:1), this indicates that reputational protection and control of volunteers' information and conducts becomes one of the important principles underling the anticipated partnership with the volunteers, as ostensible below:

> " All Volunteers are prohibited from engaging with the media with regards to any JCPZ interests and are bound by a confidentiality agreement to not disclose any information which may become privy to due to their volunteer activities" (Volunteer Policy annexure F:9)

> "A volunteer must adhere to all JCPZ policies and procedures while undertaking tasks as a volunteer or at any other time when representing the JCPZ brand, e.g. in uniform" (Volunteer Policy annexure G: 12)
>
> "A volunteer must subscribe to all JCPZ generic policies" (Volunteer Policy annexure F: 10).

Volunteers are expected to sign a confidentiality agreement binding the following among others;

> "I further confirm that I am aware that I may not communicate with the media in respect of any JCPZ matter" (Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement annexure E: 7)
>
> "As a volunteer, I shall follow a code of conduct for volunteers and conduct myself in a professional manner at all times" (Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement annexure E: 7)

These quotes taken from the organization's Volunteer Policy indicate a lack of trust with members of the community hence the various binding codes of conduct. They also indicate that currently the relationship with the general public is tentative, thus the code that ensures that volunteers may not by any means exploit the department through media. The categorization of a volunteer in JCPZ's language can again tell us how community partnership is desired or imagined (with lots of duties but limited power transferred to the Friends of the Park). A volunteer is conceptualized under the category of Business Development and Stakeholder Relations indicating that, the anticipated relationship should be of a professional business nature, yet the volunteer receives no remuneration or leverage in decision making. Miraftab (2004) warns that this is the character of the neoliberal governance structures which prioritize the rhetoric of inclusion and community engagement whilst they blur the various forms of exclusion.

This may be one of the underlying issues that challenge the effectiveness of community engagement in JCPZ. The officials want the communities to help take charge and responsibility but are reluctant to give/ share some power (as evident in their community engagement policies), what are they giving? Community engagement is an exercise of compromise and sharing of power (Jones, 2002) and City Parks does not seem to be looking at it in this way. Jones encourages the partnership between Local Officials and Voluntary groups stating that it is

one of the most important forms of partnerships with a myriad of positive outcomes documented (Jones, 2002 p.306).

However the success of this partnership as a form of community engagement requires a two-way commitment from officials and volunteers as well as a change not only in structures, but also in the corporate mind-sets and cultures of the officials, to listen more to community groups and diffuse power (Stewart, 1986 cited in Jones, 2002). Thus JCPZ's attempt of co-management with Friends of the Park can be seen as positive first step that perhaps need reconsidering in how it is imagined so to result to a more balanced relationship.

4.3 Community expectations: there are unrealistic requests from communities and a lack of understanding of JCPZ constrains and processes

This section reflects on some of the pressures that officials receive from communities. With the previous section also speaking to how community engagement is desired in JCPZ, we get to see in the following quotes the consequences of this mind-set, and how it results to a fragmented interaction between officials and communities. The dominate views from officials were that there are various misunderstandings (of structures, budgets and process) on the side of communities which result to them demanding and requesting things that are beyond JCPZs capacity and control and thus leading to conflicts.

> **Misunderstanding of Government structures**
>
> "The challenge is that people don't know how we as local government operate, there are issues for different spheres of government, but for them government is government they see one thing. You explain to them whether they like it or not but you have explained to them" (Manager, 2015)
>
> **Misunderstanding of Government budgets**
>
> "It is not easy to tailor- make these developments with the community, there's planning, there are implications and budgets and they are always demanding" (Stakeholder Relations, 2015)

"And you find that most of these communities don't even contribute to rates and taxes of the City but they are busy vandalizing and demanding facilities, saying JCPZ is 'supposed to" (Stakeholder Relations, 2015)

"You find that now we making compromises of not maintaining the developed parks because people are making noise about sidewalks that need to be cut" (Manager, 2015)

"Every year the budget is cut and JCPZ is not a profit generating company so it becomes such a huge challenge. The money from fundraising and events goes into the bank and disappears, we get a lot of money but it doesn't come back to us" (Manager, 2015)

Misunderstanding of processes and time frames

"Community raise their issues in petitions, that's how they feel they can get attention and how are we supposed to stop crime?" (Stakeholder Relations, 2015)

"Some of these issues you just… you know, people are meant to understand but they tend not to, that's why they vandalize these facilities just as a way of saying we want attention but it doesn't work like that" (Stakeholder Relations, 2015)

The above frustrations from officials indicate both a miscommunication with the community regarding structures, procedures and financial constraints of the City and also the pressure to make things work that officials have to endure when engaging with the communities. JCPZ officials are expected to have the answers and solutions to all the social ills that the community raises, and part of this is because communities actually don't know who to talk to regarding various matters of their concern (the concerns being jobs opportunities, housing, crime, education, mentioned during the interviews). As this official also stated;

"The community gets frustrated by these issues; they don't know who to go to and how to go about reporting them. When we come to engage with them, it's a challenge, they see Johannesburg logo and they attack, for them the City is one thing, one department, even if the issue is for Joburg water for example, they see the City logo and they spit fire" (Environmental Education officer, 2015).

One of the causal factors to this lack of understanding by communities is the attitudes of the officials: there is impatience towards people who have little knowledge about how the City's

systems and procedures work and perhaps this is due to a lack of training or passion in dealing with people, this is drawn from comparing and observing different officials and how they interact with communities. The communities have thus resorted to raising issues through mobilization in the form of petitions, as a drastic measure to get the attention and ears of officials. The officials instead of taking this as a cry by communities for a sustainable reliable participatory platform, they respond by hosting one community meeting to discuss solutions and leave the management of the solution in the hands of the Councillor (Stakeholder Relations, 2015).

There were Friends of the Park meeting in KNR chaired by a Chief Operation Officer in JCPZ and she engaged successfully with these Friends, the very same Friends that the Manager prefers never to engage with.

Box 1- Analysis from KNR Forum meeting on 27/07/15

It is important to however acknowledge the fact that the Chief Operation Officer is in a higher position institutionally (perhaps more respected by the Friends of the Park), and during that meeting many officials from City Parks were deployed which indicated a respect and consideration of the frustrations of the Friends of KNR (thus perhaps also making the context favourable for better engagement/ effective meeting, as the people feel considered by the presence of the multiple and senior officials).

Drawing from my analysis as well, the COO was able to drive the process effectively because she portrayed leadership skills of patience, understanding, and respect and encouraged the audients to think and only speak constructively, strictly sticking to the agenda of the meeting, emphasizing my aforementioned view of the need for good training in dealing with people and a passion to make the relationship with community groups work.

Part of the problems again ascribes to the organizational/ institutional structures which assign minimal time, training and resources for officials to conduct community engagement successfully. And this may support Miraftab (2004)'s argument that the neo-liberal governance attempts to depoliticize or rationalize its means and agendas by using community engagement

only as a symbolic inclusion, as well as rationale for cheap labour. This is emphasized again when one examines the EPWP programmes:

> " EPWP is a programme we use to get funding from government to employ members of the community, they are our unskilled labour and cost- effective labour for daily maintenance issues" (Manager, 2015).

This strategy may also be adopted because of the limited funding and human capacity in JCPZ, where the employment of the EPWP offers a cost effective way to employ members of the community as Friends of the Park (another form of community engagement in Neoliberal governance) whilst also responding to the shortage of resources (cheap labour) replacing municipal positions that would be needed to maintain the Parks. This is not necessarily a bad thing given South Africa's status quo of high unemployment and poverty levels but sheds light in understanding Miraftab's ideas of institutional settings in neoliberal governance and the often fuzzy rhetoric of community engagement (perhaps as a PR exercise?).

However it should be acknowledged that community engagement is not an easy thing that can simply be mastered through training and passion like this official stated. "It takes a step by step, gentle, thoughtful, gradual process. It is not a quick fix" (WASSUP Sticky Situations, professional community facilitator, 2015). Conclusively Williams (2004:559) notes that there is a naïve expectation placed on development professionals to have the power and abilities to transform, without a consideration of their structural constrains and status quo of which challenges the reform minded individuals. Although most of the time we simply have to make a success out of what is accessible and possible for us, I would emphasize that structure makes a huge difference. If it is configured in a way that supports some of the officials' mandates then, not only does it create a platform which enables and supports the work to be done successfully, but it would also expose practitioners' personal ethics which are not in line with the institutional aspirations (e.g. valuing community engagement). When structure supports the aspirations and principles of transformation, then the practices that are not in line with this vision becomes evident.

4.4 Challenges of transformation

The notion of transformation can refer to different changes in an institution. For example it could mean a change in the corporate culture and norms, a change in the development strategies and developmental direction, a change in management structures or incorporate all these changes as evident in JCPZ. How transformation is understood and materialized through practice can also vary with different officials. We get to see in the following quotes how different officials (anonymized due to the issues being sensitive) view the Friends of the Park because of their understanding of conservatism, transformation and the essence of Nature Reserves and how this has sparked conflicts with the Friends of the Park as they hold the view that a Nature Reserve is to be left undeveloped, to be an arena where "people can come leave a footprint and take pictures in nature" (Park User Volunteer, 2015).

> "Remember these areas used to be predominantly white so when they want something they would get it, so now when they want something we ask why, and they don't want to be asked why" (Manager, 2015)

> "There would be new associates saying we want to do boot camp and those old Tanis users would say but boot camp here… And that is why there's always fighting. Because all these spaces evolve, like Kruger Park used to be for Nature, games; now there are hotels, golf courses, airports, so they don't want these areas to be developed. If you see this park bare as it is you would be scared to go in, but if it is nicely developed it becomes inviting" (Manager, 2015)

> "We have a mandate and part of it is to bring previously disadvantaged people into the Reserves and you find that the Friends (of the Park) are saying, bringing too many people here make people walk off the trails and them creating new trails, they are against this" (Manager, 2015)

> "We never agree on development, residents are always against development, but remember you can't stop development it is growth and going forward it show a country is going forward" (Manager, 2015)

"Then we have developmental challenges, you find that we want to build a new gate but they don't want that they want us to leave it as it is, but we do it anyway" (Manager, 2015)

"We must use these Nature Reserves, not have white elephants. So I have recently started with a camping programme in Kruger because without these programmes black people just come during the day to drink and braai but remember my Nature Reserve we don't allow bottles, If you drink you only drink wine, and that's how you also select your market, we don't want taxi drivers…You apply by-laws say no drinking no loud music and you know people that are not sophisticated they will not come so that's the by-laws we use. But if you book for a wedding we then allow this to happen, but I have noticed people who get married in Kloofendal Nature Reserve it's not your person who will want to go get married in Thokoza Park" (Manager, 2015)

"I am not in this position by default I studied this! I know what I am doing, so I am not scared of them reporting to the media" (Manager, 2015)

"We had a meeting previously and people started banging tables, I left the meeting I told them to go to hell… I told them I don't need you, you need me" (Manager, 2015)

" If your knowledge about what you do is not up to date, you will have people challenging what you do, sometime they just challenge you because they want to see if you know" (Manager, 2015)

"The Friends help us a lot; they are like our friends… And remember, rich white people you find that in that group there's engineers, town planners, lawyers. You find that next to the reserve they want to build something, these people will know first-hand, we don't read the notices of these developments but they do, and they would read and submit objections. I like them because of that. They are our whittle blowers. Whenever there's some development notice they will call and tell me to go there and see what's happening" (Manager, 2015)

One of the main lessons and realizations of this research is that community engagement is a continuous mutual effort; it is simply not good enough for officials to be the only ones willing to compromise and dedicate efforts to make the relationship work. Gathered from the informal conversations and interviews with officials who are mandated to engage with Friends of the Nature Reserves, the FoPs can be conservative and tend to reject development agendas in the

reserves, such as the apparent plan to host revenue generating activities such as boot camps, and upgrade the facilities such as the entrance to attract tourist (Manager, 2015).

However from my observations in attending some of the FoP meetings, one of the issues was that the Friends felt excluded in the development processes and master plans of the Nature Reserve which they have volunteered in for the longest time. There is a master plan which stipulates the anticipated developments and revenue generating activities that are to be hosted in the Klipriversberg Nature Reserve and the Friends of KNR have not been consulted or involved in the conceptualization of these developments.

The officials however omitted this information when they were sharing their frustrations with me regarding the FoP (the information I gathered from attending the meetings), making it seem like most of the FoP's complains are ungrounded and unnecessary whilst actually some of the complains that the FoP have voiced out are valid arguments and fundamental rights of partnerships (e.g. the right to be informed about future developments).

As Jones (2002: 310) argues "continuous commitment to the concept of community involvement is required before Friends groups can become a long-term success", and thus withholding information such as the master plan or development strategies from FoP simply because they are perceived as conservative (something that could possibly be negotiated in patience, perseverance and respect of opinions) is detrimental to the long term sustainability of the relationship which has potential to be effective and useful when one refers to the last quote. Perhaps the master plan is withheld due to its configuration of the revenue generating activities to attract tourist which fundamentally changes the character of the Reserve (something the FoP are against) into a commercial asset, with the defence that " we can't stop development, it is growth and going forward" (Manager, 2015).

This view is reaffirmed when one refers to what the official said about "selecting a market through implementing bylaws" in the aforementioned quote. There seems to be intensions to commercialize some of the Nature Reserves and the Friends of the Park are against these intentions. It needs to be acknowledged as Jones (2002) maintains, that partnerships with

voluntary groups require mutual respect and commitment, this emphasized on the side of the FoP referring to the first quote. One cannot simply expect to always get his/her ways because it has always been like that historically (e.g. during apartheid), in this paradigm of transformation and democracy such mind-sets should be unacceptable. Another issue being the prejudice against officials not being 'skilled' enough, as quoted above the FoP tend to 'test' officials purposefully to see if they know their job, this can be very undermining and disrespectful especially given the racial differences and a history of racial injustice, one simply needs to give respect in order to receive it.

4.5 Challenges of formalisation of partnerships in park management

Lastly the officials' perceptions indicated that there is a challenge with making use of the formal procedures for engaging volunteers (e.g. getting the volunteers to sign the Volunteer Policy) because the processes are long (a volunteer needs to write a proposal, go for an interview and then sign a contract as stated by an official) and people are reluctant to bind themselves in contracts. For this, officials have resorted to using informal means of partnering with some community members who help them in the management of the parks.

> "Partnerships with the private sector used to work so well e.g. giving some of the maintenance tasks to the businesses. But the politicians are against it… You know people want to be employed so they feel that the businesses are taking away their employment opportunities" (Manager, 2015)

> "There are some informal agreements that we do to get things going, for example the community would ask, if you do this and that for us, we will help with the clean-up. And it works … if I try and make these relationships formal, it takes forever. People always think someone wants to benefit something. They don't understand the pressure, people don't like writing proposals and committing themselves in contracts" (Manager, 2015)

Another issue that was picked up during the interviews is the difficulty and burden of management which lies on the hands of the Regional managers. One Regional manager maintained that they used to partner with the private sector and property owners who would be located around specific parks for management purposes, due to their insufficient resources. And this relationship helped them a lot in keeping the parks clean and attractive. However this kind of partnership is challenged by politicians and residents who feel threatened that the parks will lose their public accessibility and residents will lose employment opportunities which will be taken by the private sector (Manager, 2015)

The resolution of this matter may link to how the EPWP and Jozi@work which are programmes that officials' are mandated to use to employ members of the community during the development and sometimes management of Parks, to try bridge the employment gap as well as management challenges. However the issue with these programmes is that they are short-term temporary employments and the longer term partnership deals such as the Volunteer programmes do not appear attractive to potential Friends of the Park (too many duties no sense of power) and for low income communities they do not seem beneficial (unlike the informal deals where the officials offer a favour in return for the help).

Chapter 5: In which Institutional Settings are Officials to engage Communities

5.1 Introduction

Birke et al (2010), speaking of institutionalization of participatory approaches, maintained that it is a process which involves the introduction, acceptance and structuring of new ideas and practices so they become part of the institutional culture and norm. Institutionalization can therefore be understood as the formalization of changes and transformation in an institution, for example in the case of JCPZ it would be the solidifying and officialising of community development as a new turn so that it is part and parcel of their institutional culture and practical norms. In trying to understand this notion of community engagement in the context of JCPZ, it is important to trace the locales in which community engagement takes place/ the sites of community engagement or rather how community engagement is institutionalized.

There are multiple sites of stakeholder and community engagements (see organogram below). This has both advantages and disadvantages; such that advantageously it allows for different departments to engage with the community in different forms and thus grapple with the challenges or opportunities that may arise, the broader organization can thus relate and have an understanding of the difficulties of making this relation effective and sustainable. Disadvantageously the multiple sites of community engagement can accommodate a context of fuzzy accountability and reliability. Such that because different officials are mandated to engage with communities at certain stages in the processes they follow, there fails to be a more solid and continuous interaction between officials (whom the community can always rely on and thus develop trust) and the community, as different officials engage with them for different purposes (to be elaborated on later in the text).

This inconsistency is also seen in how communities complain to various departments (there is no one platform) regarding management and maintenance issues examples of these departments include Capital Infrastructure Development, Regional Maintenance, Stakeholder

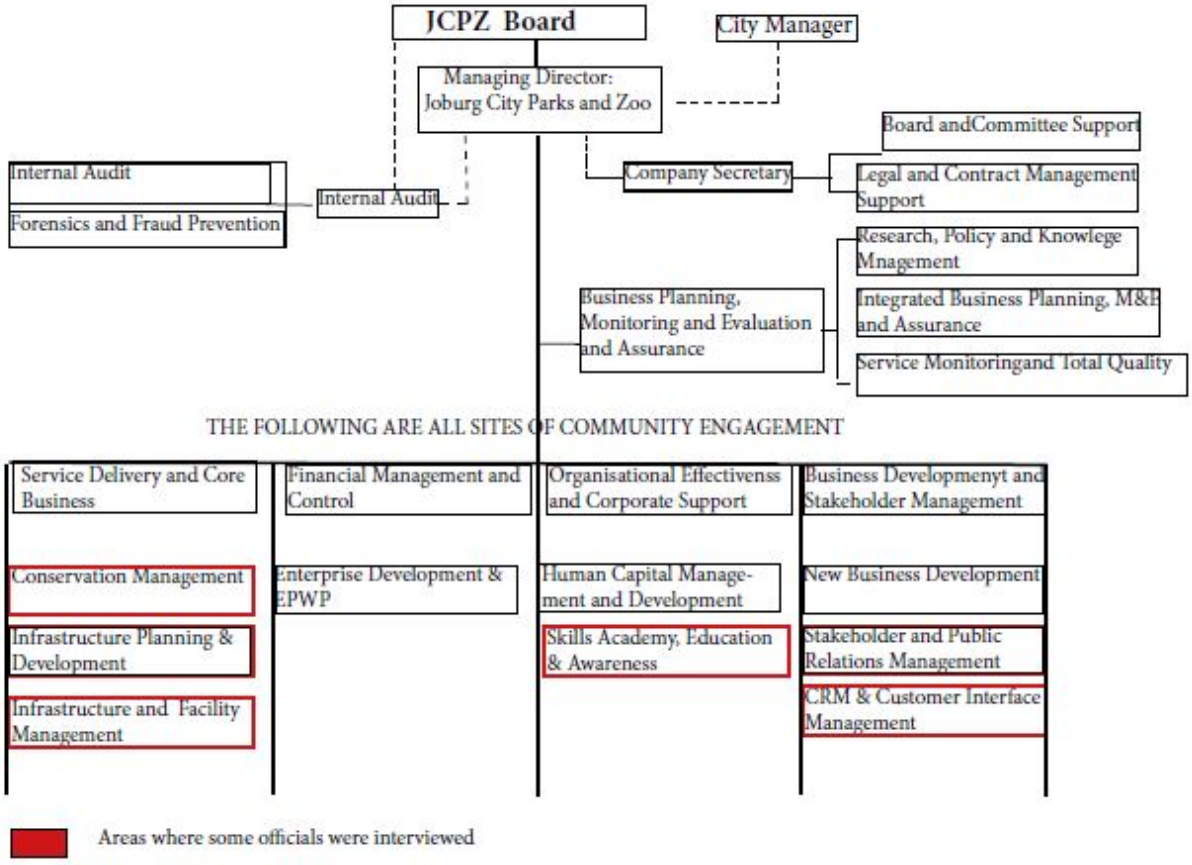
Relation Unit and Customer Relations Management. An official from Customer Relations Management maintained that other community members also complain to SAP system from COJ, which is a City of Johannesburg call centre for communities to log complains. A complainant (which he referred to as a customer during the interview) gets a reference number and the issue they raised gets redirected to the relevant department/institution (e.g. JCPZ) with a turnaround time of 30 days and they can always follow up the issue using their reference number.

From hearing the above process of logging complains one starts tracing problematic conditions. The turnaround time of 30 days does not really grapple with the actual ability and capacity (which differ according to various issues) that the departments might have to respond to the matters immediately. Depending on the issue, this kind of pressure may work out or gain because of the size of the issue this process may manifest one of two consequences, a low quality of the Service delivery requested due to a rushed deadline of 30 days, or an accumulation of issues that don't get addressed because of frustrations.

The above example indicates the kind of complexities that structure (probably unintentionally) may inflict on the officials' abilities to do their job in a supportive environment. There are two main processes where communities are directly engaged. The first is what is regarded as the development flow: this is a Capital Infrastructure Development (CID) process, an internal unit tasked with developing and upgrading parks. There is then the operational/management flow: this is the structural process of managing parks and it is led by the Regional Maintenance Unit.

Birke et al (2010) maintain that these organizational systems (e.g. processes of community engagement) define, influence and shape the organizational culture, norms and values that officials will adhere to, and that influence their behaviour as they are the support systems and resources assigned for the tasks. In this section, the paper discusses and analyse the park development and management structures and procedures, looking at where and how community engagement takes place.

5.2 Sites of Community engagement in JCPZ



Source: Sketched from JCPZ Corporate Strategic Plan (2013/14-2017/18): pp. 83

The above organogram indicates the bigger organizational terrain for community engagement, as evident this nature of engagement is largely associated with Service Delivery matters, Business and Stakeholder Management (see the lower hierarchy). From unfolding the meanings of these categories, one notices that the institutionalization of community engagement is associated with production and distribution of resources (e.g. Service Delivery and core business). Therefore, structurally community engagement is set up to be something officials have to 'deliver' and not necessarily continuously/sustainably engage with, to master it or partner with communities as the custodians of the spaces produced. This is again demonstrated by the second community engagement terrain which is under the Business Development and

Stakeholder Management: this indicates a perspective that takes community members as customers (e.g. to develop business like relations) rather than citizens to co-govern with. As indicated by Sharma (2008) Stakeholder management is a process that must be underlined and guided by certain principles, and thus its alignment with business development in the above organogram, as well as its association with Service Delivery, one can safely reckon that the Stakeholder Management principles in JCPZ are again about developing business like relationships and not co-governance when one references the organogram.

Perhaps this institutionalization of community engagement is motivated by the possible outputs of a business like relationship, as exposed by Ackerman (2003 p.447) "It suddenly appears to be 'practical' and attractive when governments can offload Service delivery to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups or convince local residents to donate volunteer labour or materials".

Co-governance in this paper is understood as a genuine community engagement and engagement of the community and civil society at large in the core activities and policy making processes of government. As Ackerman maintain, "Instead of sending sections of the state off to society it is often more fruitful to invite society into the inner chambers of the state" (Ackerman, 2004 p.448).

This is not necessarily the case in JCPZ, examining what the following official said, community engagement with the community in the Stakeholder Liaison Unit is only done when communities log a mass complain usually through petitions.

> "We are really just the communication channels between communities and our internal departments, communities raise issues through petitions or contact us directly and we send the relevant department or go and talk to them and try solving the matter the best way we can, after meeting with them, the councillor then follows up to ensure the community is satisfied with the way the matter was resolved" (Stakeholder Relation Officer, 2015)

This communication network (between the Stakeholder Liaison Unit and communities) has proven to be problematic in that it does not allow for a sustained interaction between the

officials and the community. The officials react to somewhat extinguish the fire of the petitions and leave the management and follow ups of the solution to councillors, the communities and the officials thus always remain strangers not really understanding each other's constrains and demands, as the seen in the previous chapter discussing the officials perceptions, this has not really helped the engagement processes.

Furthermore from interacting with various officials from the departments in the above organogram through interviews, it can be emphasized that there is surely a lack of trust, reluctance and uncertainty towards external people who may seem interested in the organization in any way. For instance this one official seemed very uncomfortable during the interview and would keep saying she needs to attend a meeting whenever the interview asked perhaps a challenging question.

Box 2- Discomforts with community engagement

Example 1

Official's statement: The community threatened to stop the development of Oliphant Place Cemetery due to the people employed were from a ward that did not qualify

Question: So how was the issue resolved?

Official's answer: We involve stakeholder liaison, we try to solve it however way but at the end of the day it must be resolved. I am really running late for my meeting, can we finish up?

Example 2

A regional manager was trying very hard to say only positive things about his job and experiences; perhaps it could be that his region doesn't really encounter the more challenging issues happening in other regions or perhaps he has mastered how to address the issues, but my observation and analysis of the conversation is that he was reluctant to be honest.

Question: What has been your experience with Friends of the Park?

Answer: The experience is good, remember it gives you a platform to explain to people how we as the City operate, the processes of how things are done in an organization

Question: So there are no challenges?

Answer: The challenge is when people can't differentiate between Capex budget and operational budget, when we say we don't have Capex budget to address this problem right now, that's where people will have a problem, they want things to be done instantly and it can't be I promise you."

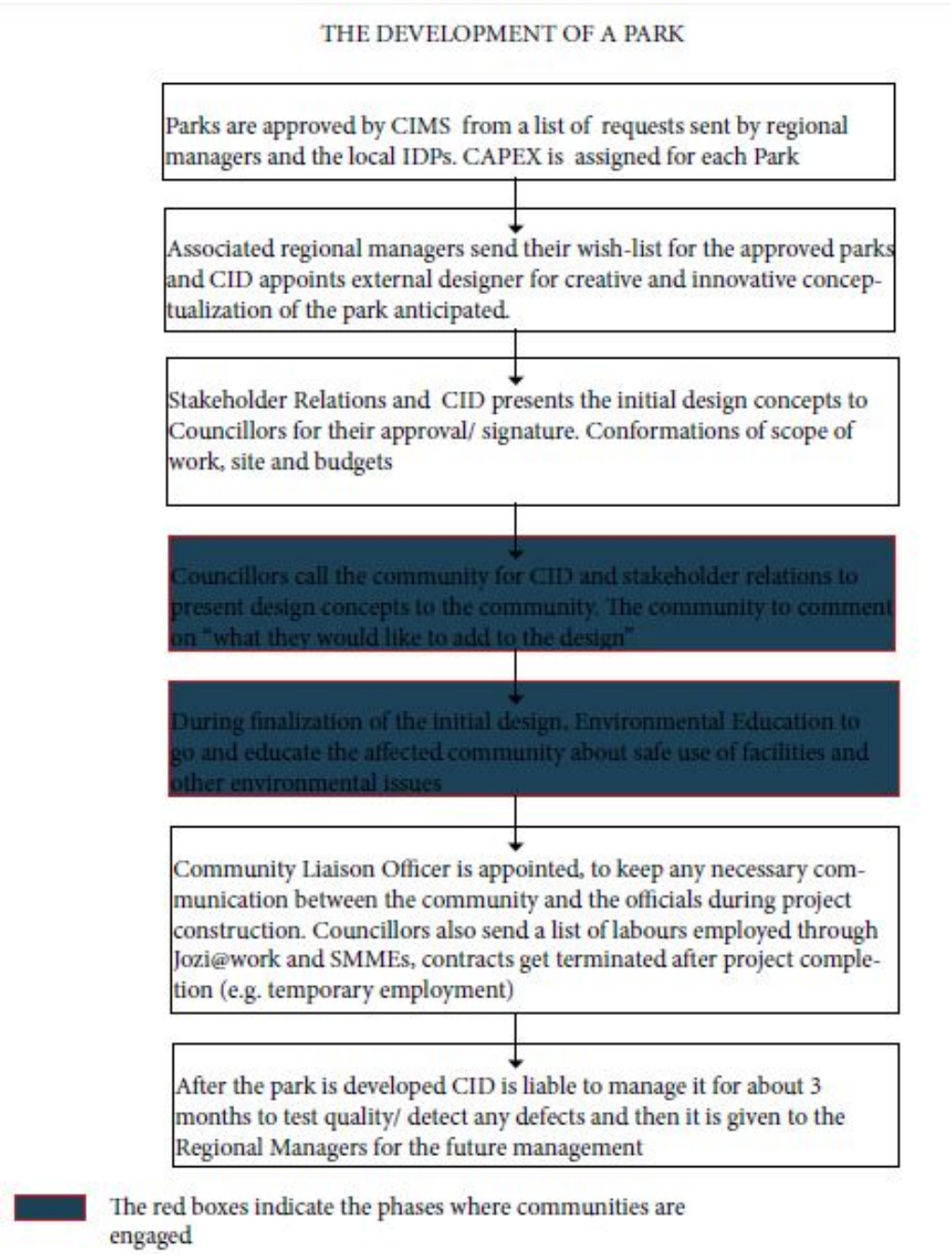
"People might say no, but when you explain to them how things work they will finally have to understand because we can't work without following the proper processes."… "Part of being a manager you need good communication skills, persuasion skills, conflict management skills, leadership skills and interpersonal skills, you need to be able to convince people, simple"…"I am not afraid to go and address the issue head on, that's what I prefer. It doesn't matter if they are coming with a difficult issue but I know what can be done and what cannot be done and I enjoy. After I have convinced them and they see that they are on my side, there is no reward like that"

In the views of Williams (2004) and Jones (2002), successful community engagement requires trust, consistency, mutual respect, consideration and partnership. The above officials thus came across as over simplifying what is actually a very complex and challenging endeavour, as Williams (2004 p.557) maintains "while community engagement may indeed be a form of 'subjection' (in a sense that it appears to be an inclusive means of governance but structurally there still exclusions in decision making), its consequences are not predetermined and its subjects are never completely controlled". This over simplification perhaps coming from a place of reluctance, distrust, and uncertainty about where the information might actually be headed even when the intention of the research was explained prior to the interview.

5.3 The development of a Park

-A process not conducive to community engagement?

The researcher conducted interviews with the Stakeholder Liaison Unit, Regional Managers and the Capital Infrastructure Development Unit (CID officer) in JCPZ to get an understanding of the emergence of a park from its inception as well as its upgrading processes. There are various contradictions in how this process was understood and presented, as well as continuities in this understanding. Fundamentally (e.g. as according to all the interviews) park development is sponsored by Capital expenditure (referred to as Capex), CID and follows CIMS from COJ regarding park selection and prioritization criteria.



Source: Bosaka, 2015- informed by interviews

However there were different views in what is the order of the phases that follow after these parks are selected/ identified for development, showing perhaps that the process lacks a degree of formalisation, clarity or institutionalisation. As one official did maintain that it is only till recently when they stated following the project flow chart (see annexure), something similar to the one I drafted above, but broader outlining each activity that is to happen in JCPZ and COJ departments.

5.3.1 The flaws of Park development structure

According to the CID official, CIMS approves a park (from a list of demands sent from different regions) (a Regional manager maintained that this demand is also identified from the local IDPs), in periods between April and May and every beginning of a new financial year is when constructions/ actual development take place e.g. from 1 July (CID officer, 2015). The CID informs the Regional Managers of the approval of park development requests in their regions and the RMs send a wish list (informed by site studies) to the CID Unit for design conceptualization which is done by an external/ outsourced designer. Structurally these site studies are supposed to be conducted by the Stakeholder Relations Unit, Ward councillors, CID project managers and the Regional managers but practically it is only the Regional managers or "I informally assign people to go study the behavioural trends in the park for the wish list" (Regional Manager, 2015)

The mere fact that CIMS (a system that is apparently used to select which parks will get funded for development informed by IDP targets), this system is thus a structure that responds more to the developmental visions of COJ and is not necessarily grounded or grappling with real life politics and social realities of each context. This used as a means to prioritize which and how many Parks gets upgraded and developed could have disadvantages, as one official maintained:

> "The reason why things don't work out sometimes is because of the pressure. The pressure that we have is too much. You find that in a year we have to develop about eighteen Parks, sometimes I don't even get information about a park that's being developed and I don't get to go and do education, because people are under a lot of stress.".. "And when these parks are not developed at the targeted time frame, the budget gets taken back" (Environmental Education Officer, 2015)".

As evident above the structure (CIMS) that is used to process these Parks seems to sometimes work against the capacity of the officials to meet the targets effectively and successfully. Post the initial design concept is the first meeting with the Stakeholder Liaison Unit and the

councillors, for presentation of the preliminary designs by the CID officials in which the councillors need to sign off the designs if they approve. The councillor is then mandated to invite his/her community, for community engagement process (CID official, 2015). However one Stakeholder Relation officer stated that his unit is the one that sends these invitations through posters in the community.

From this phase of the development one can spot problematic factors. The preliminary designs are signed off by the councillor before the community even knows about them making the next phase, which is structured to 'engage communities', as a consultation rather than genuine participatory process.

This is also evident in what these officials stated:

> "We then present to the community what is going to happen in that park, and Environmental education then later comes to teach them not to waste these facilities" (CID official, 2015).
>
> "You can't engage the community after you have created a design already for them. You need to engage them once you find out there's a budget, you go there and tell them we have 25 million for example, for site 21, what do you want to see for a park? And people will tell you; this park was used for 1, 2, 3; the taxis park here and so forth. And then you can get themes for a park development and direct the discussion accordingly… This is what I was taught at a workshop I attended. Not this thing of calling the community when the designs are already done signed off by the councillor, then presented to the community as what? This is your park? It's not my park; I wasn't part of designing it… You need to get people to buy in to the concept when it is still a concept, while it's still not there. By the time it comes up they will already know how it's going to look, they had input on how it looks, whose going to work there, and they will love it, they won't feel like visitors in their own space, they will feel like we own this space because we designed it" (Environmental Education Officer, 2015)
>
> "People would be more receiving of the City decisions if they would be informed in sufficient time and not rushed in once off meetings after designs are already done" (Environmental Education Officer, 2015).

It appears the community is not taken as a partner in the process but rather as consumers of the space and users who need education on how to use and appreciate the spaces created, led and produced by the City for the community, and not with the community for the community. However the community does comment on “what facilities they would like to add” and these comments are considered depending on how practical and feasible they are for the park (RM, CID, Stakeholder Relations, 2015).

Williams (2004) notes that participatory processes tend to desire quick consensus from members of the community which indicates a tactic of avoiding/down-playing the divisions amongst the community. From examining what the community gets to comment on (e.g. facilities they would like to add) it becomes evident that the community engagement process in JCPZ adopts a tactic that tries to avoid the politics of development. But it is not necessarily what all officials want, some had maintained that effective community engagement needs to involve communities from the inception and not just consult them with finalized decisions. These views again are influenced by the extend the officials engages with the community on a daily and the underlying passions/ personalities being in line with what they do, as one will see in the next section

5.3.2 Officials agency in the development process

The Environmental Education officer maintained that her job is entirely community based and she engages with the communities on a daily basis for various environmental educational purposes (e.g. environmental awareness, exhibitions, conservation of natural resources, safe use of facilities in the park, workshops etc.), whilst the CID officer only engages with communities directly when she presents the design concepts in a parks development process. From these two individuals and their mandates, it is evident that the one who is in a more sustained relationship with the community has a better understanding of what it takes to actually make community engagement work. Because of her daily exposure to the real life politics and frustrations of the community, not only is she more sympathetic and trusted by the community:

> "sometimes it's a matter of me having to go on Google with them and help them access information and you have to help even if it is not part of what you are there to do, because you are a member of the City, and after this some of them do comeback to thank me for helping them resolve their issues" (Environmental Education Officer, 2015).

She is also passionate and driven and this was evident in her enthusiasm and willingness during our interview. According to one JCPZ official, there are also various challenges that arise from the structural procedure which mandates the councillors to be the ones inviting the community regarding the participatory meetings:

> "Councillors are biased in terms of community engagement, they do not invite everyone to the meetings [e.g. those they don't get along with], then these groups who were not invited, challenge and fight against the developments because they never knew about them" (CID officer, 2015).

> "And this thing that the community doesn't come to the meeting doesn't help. The councillor would know that he has 30 people that will attend the meeting, others don't even bother, so they won't know what is happening in their community and they will say why did they develop a Park and not a Clinic?. And this draws us back" (Environmental Education officer, 2015).

Perhaps due to this mandate being their main source of power and influence (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008) for example in them choosing which members get to be invited to the meetings, they then use this context to their advantage in a sense of getting political support in exchange of information regarding community opportunities and knowledge about engagement. A Regional manager also emphasized this challenge of the biased nature of councillors during a safety strategy on multiple-stakeholder development process meeting:

> "Communities feel like community engagement is a political thing as in ANC vs. DA thing and those who do not support this character then feel like these meetings are not their business… Perhaps we should look into changing the approach, perhaps inform the community through posters or flyers so that everybody can feel included and not feel like they have to be politically driven to have a say in the developments" (Manager, 2015)

However, as maintained by the knowledge and research official, “we cannot change this procedure [as in change the fact that the councillor does the invites], but we can try and influence how it is actually done [perhaps by monitoring the councillors?]”. And because of this condition, in terms of being inclusive the agency of the officials is limited again by this structural requirement (they can only engage with who comes to the meetings).

With these examples, we see challenges inflicted by institutional structures and procedures which become difficult and constraining for officials to not only effectively and sustainably succeed in what they are mandated to do, but are also unable to add value to communities and the spaces they produce for them. Possibly there is some form of leverage in them being able to influence and change structures but the research did not reach that level of investigation, what appeared evident was that they seem constrained and limited by some of their own formal processes.

5.3.4 Consequences of the flawed development process

After the designs are finalized and construction begins, there is a Community Liaison Officer (CLO). One applies to an administration centre in the Regional Maintenance department to become a CLO they submit a CV, go for interviews and gets employed like a formal job process. Their responsibility is to keep any necessary communication between the officials and the community during the construction of the project/park (Stakeholder Relations, 2015). There seems to also be problematic procedures/ lack of transparency in this regard, as the interviewee maintained that there was an instance in ward 51 Zola 2, where the community challenged the appointment of the CLO in a wet land project and took the matter up in a petition against the development. The official’s defence was:

> “Communities are sometimes unnecessary. We have a formal procedure of recruiting CLOs, we post notices for people to apply, and then they apply like they would any job. We have basic requirements like a matric certificate. They come for interviews and that’s how one becomes a CLO. Just because they did not see the notices now they want to challenge the appointment of the CLO” (Stakeholder Relations officer, 2015)

The networks of sharing information between officials and the community is certainly one problematic aspect that adds to the officials' frustrations with community engagement and this is played out in the above example. However I do believe the official was being dismissive of an issue that is worth giving attention, I do not believe communities could go to an extend of protesting in petitions if the issue was petty, perhaps the means of communication and appointment of the CLO in the above case was indeed questionable and dodge. What adds another layer of complexity is that community engagement is also often seen as job distributions (CLOs, EPWP, Jozi@work etc.) of which the councillor is in control of (him and his/her committee are mandated to select the people who get to work in the Jozi@work programme), which means that it becomes that more challenging to make it a success when some people are employed and others are not, and wonder and question why they were not employed (due to general employment demands).

There is a certain percentage (which varies depending on the project budget and scope of work) that is dedicated towards Jozi at work programmes, EPWP and SMMEs. This are programmes designed to curb the unemployment rates in Johannesburg and so most State institutions are mandated to employ members of the communities when projects are constructed in their neighbourhoods (Stakeholder Liaison officer, 2015). The manner in which these programmes are employed is both contradictory and problematic. According to the CID officer the councillor is mandated to inform and choose from his community who gets employed through these programmes in the construction phase of the project. The Councillor and his committee are supposed to collect profiles and CV from the community, select who qualifies and send this information to the CID Unit, they send to this Unit for record keeping but the CID has no actual say in who gets employed. The rationale is that the Councillor is the one best suited to know 'his/her community' well, thus CID/ JCPZ is not allowed to select these candidates, the employment contracts are terminated after project completion.

> "We have no say on who gets the job that is just how things are done, but the complains about the legitimacy of this process are always directed to us" (CID officer, 2015)

According to the CID officer, they then manage the park for about 3 months (for assessment of any defects) before handing it over to the Regional Managers. This statement was however contradicted by an official in the Stakeholder Relation Unit who said that the short term management is 6 months before it goes to the Regional Managers. The authority of the ward councillors in the employment selection for Jozi@work, and SMMEs has resulted in various conflicts and sparked development challenges. Due to the councillor's authority to employ people through these programmes, the process has been politicized with the councillor employing people through patronage/ nepotism networks.

5.4 Officials assessment regarding community engagement

5.4.1 The score card

Officials structure their daily duties according to the requirements of what is referred to as a Score card. This is an assessment rubric that every employee needs to fill in monthly and abide; this is to ensure that the minimum work requirements as well as targets are met promptly. The researcher was only able to review the assessment criteria of officials in the Stakeholder Liaison Unit (the score cards differ) as officials from other departments were reluctant to share this information, the findings are as follows.

Key Performance Area (KPA)	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)
1. Internal Business Process	- Internal engagement with other JCPZ departments such as CAPEX, OPEX, operations etc. and number of meetings attended [They attach a signed attendance register] - Internal coordination and facilitation of departmental programmes such as environmental education, operations, and recruitments of community liaison officer (CLO) (32 per quarter) [they are measured according to the projects that are funded for development for that particular financial year] - Monthly reports and councillor queries (100 %)
2. External Stakeholder Perspective	- Number of councillor engagements (120) - Number of engagements and joint programmes and campaigns with COJ, provincial and national government (12) - Engagement with organs of civil society, concerned residents and political parties

	regarding Service Delivery challenges (100%) [they are measured through the number of attached signed attendance registers of these meetings] - Councillor forum and sessions (4/ 1 per quarter) - Regional service delivery , JOC or Section 79 meetings (24)
3. Learning and Development	- Training and development programmes including workshops, one per financial year

Source: Bosaka, 2015

The mandates of the Stakeholder Relation officials are rated using the Key Performance Indicators in the key areas stipulated above (KPA). The authority is that officials are to meet these targets (KPI) the best way they can in order to be rewarded a bonus for good performance. When one assesses these indicators it appears they rate and reward the quantity of work and not the quality of work which contributes to how officials will take on their duties (e.g. rushing to tick the box and not paying much attention to how well the job is done).

The KPA's also shapes what will get more attention from officials as these areas are the ones stipulated as worthy of assessment and thus matters that are not perceived as falling under key performance areas may be neglected. In my view this played out during the time I was conducting my field work, when members of the Stakeholder Liaison Unit would miss KNR Forum meetings when things got challenging, perhaps because the number of community meetings that they had to attend for that month could allow them to manoeuvre these meetings and only attend those that are not as challenging (they are frustrated by these challenges and the community, it is not farfetched to reckon that they would prefer to miss the meetings if they could).

5.5 The management of a Park

The essence of urban public parks goes beyond their environmental value and carries a vital role in socio-cultural aspects. They do not only enhance liveability and greenery in compact cities but they also contribute to social justice and democracy by providing communities equal access to nature's amenities, psychological and health benefits. As Y.LO (2011) maintains, they

may contribute a sense of place through enhancing people's social life especially in marginalized, crowded and unpleasant living conditions where many cannot afford alternative recreational facilities. They give platforms for collective activities with cultural or political themes, arenas where one can interact with diverse people and children can play sports.

> "By enabling socialization and neighbourly contacts, properly managed open areas facilitate inhabitants' engagement in the community and carry people's memories, contributing to community and family ties" (Burgess et al, 1988; Kuo, 2003 cited in Y.LO, 2011 p.123).

With this backdrop it cannot be denied that the management of these public spaces is as vital as their production and accessibility. Park management in JCPZ is mandated as the Regional and Conservation Managers' responsibility and thus falls under the Service Delivery and Core Business organizational category and it is funded by the operational budget from COJ. According to a Regional Manager the Park maintenance cycles are informed by the IDP maintenance structure which is outlined on the JCPZ website. Following diagram exemplifies these cycles.



Source: jhbcityparks, 2015

The maintenance routines differ depending on the nature of the Park there is the developed parks (with facilities and park furniture) which are maintained every 21 days (for horticulturist services such as cutting grass, picking litter watering etc.). However,

> "These cycles never apply, so we don't necessarily follow them because not all parks are utilized the same, some parks are frequently used and thus need more regular maintenance compared to others" (Regional Manager, 2015).

The flagship parks (top of the range/ mayoral projects) examples given during the interview were Joubert, Peter Rroois, Florida Park etc. are serviced every 7 days. Flagship islands (the landscaped spaces in entrances of suburbs/ e.g. Jan smuts entrance) are maintained every 14 days and the undeveloped parks every 60 days, lastly the public open spaces, these are maintained on an ad hoc/ reactive maintenance based on complains by surrounding residents.

What was emphasized by one official as an issue of management that communities complain about is the issue of park safety and limited resources for maintaining parks.

> "Park safety is also a social issue but social development does not show interest" (Manager, 2015)

> "Implementation of operational projects needs dedication from different parties for example the evictions of the homeless are ineffective without social development taking over, this is irresponsibility" (Manager, 2015)

> "Partnership with the private sector used to work very well but they stopped it because politicians and communities feel like it takes away job opportunities but we don't have enough resources to maintain the parks" (Manager, 2015)

> "For example in Elizabeth park [close to Mandela Bridge, not Metro Park], every day workers have lunch there and leave the park littered whilst our team comes once a week" (Manager, 2015)

There seems to be a mismatch with how the maintenance structures are designed, the actual resources available and the issues on the ground. Referring to the quote, the official was discussing how in practice Park maintenance is demanding more than what their resources can address. And for this reality they used to partner with the property owners around the parks however this was viewed as privatization of the public parks and a deprivation of maintenance jobs that could otherwise be done by communities.

There is also an attempt to co-manage with Friends of the Park but as discussed in the previous chapter (4) this relationship is challenged by conflicting views about development and the kinds of activities that should and should not happen in a Nature Reserve.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the paper by reemphasizing the main arguments which have been supported by evidence from the field. This is presented in sub sections which highlight the main lessons of the research in a way that also goes back to answer some of the questions the research has posted. The research focus has been a difficult context to manoeuvre, having to deal a lot with reluctant or unavailable officials; the study had to make means with the limited information that was attained. Effective recommendations would need to come from a much greater understanding of the institution and the officials' practices. What is possible at this stage, reflecting on the main findings of the study are constructive critiques and implications of the analysis that was conducted on the challenges officials face in the endeavour of community engagement.

The Significance of Studying State Practices

The State is the leadership that drives the country; it contributes of institutions and structures that have a huge impact on people's daily lives and the physical world. The dysfunctions of the State thus trickle down and play out through issues in urban governance and urban management. This arena (the State) is worthy of research in order to trace, reflect and document what is both working and not working in governance and perhaps also begin to think of innovative solutions. As Ackerman (2003 p.448) once agued "there is a need for the sustained study of successful government innovations in order to inspire and direct positive action".

In an attempt to do that, this research grappled with changing practices of the State, looking specifically into the State institution of Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo. The theme thus spoke to endeavours of transformation by analysing what officials do in practice as the drivers of community engagement and how they view this notion of community engagement. The first lesson in light of this would be that reform begins in the mind and in the heart, what I mean by

this is that when an official sees value in something (e.g. community engagement) they are automatically in a positive mind-set to be the agents of its manifestation.

This lesson is supported in greater detail in Chapter 4, were the paper grappled with the officials' perceptions of community engagement. I dismissed the biased judgement that government officials are inefficient in an attempt to really try understand their side of the story, their view points, opinions and points of references drawing from their actual experiences with communities. When you try understanding someone's perceptions, you are less likely to misunderstand their actions/ practice because perceptions can tell us something about a person's passion, abilities (e.g. if or not they are well trained for engaging communities) and the inputs they contribute to their job.

The paper also challenged the views that the South African State is a failed project by appreciating the transformation efforts within JCPZ. Their institutional reshuffling should also be read as an attempt to identify and fix what has not been working and this is emphasized by how they have supported (as well as fund through an internship) this research and partnered with Wits University (CUBES), recognizing the importance and investing in the knowledge production.

Urban Governance is the act of Collaboration

Redrawing from arguments maintained by Elander (2002), Stone (1989) and Cornwall (2008) as discussed in the first Chapter of this paper, it cannot be denied that the engine of urban governance is influenced directly and indirectly by various actors, be it social, political, economic or environmental actors. This means that the practice of governing the urban arena requires the collaboration and community engagement of all these affected parties to negotiate differences, voice out perspectives and co-operate to influence the urban morphology in ways that are democratic, inclusive and sustainable. The rising relevance of community engagement discourses in contemporary cities has also indicated the value of engagement and collaboration with communities (Jones, 2002), what can also be called participatory governance.

However despite this undeniable truth about the value of community engagement, little has been documented about what actually challenges the success of these engagement platforms. Most community engagement discourses tend to take the side of communities, in a way that they are always portrayed as the victims of injustice and ineffective leadership as the Paper's literature review in Chapter two has discussed. Part of this argument (communities as victims) may be correct but it should be an argument that stems from a place that understands that community engagement is a two way process, a mutual effort, mutual respect and desire to make the collaboration effective and efficient (Jones, 2002).

There is value in understanding the other side of the story, the narratives of the officials who may actually be trying to actualize this notion of transformation and make a success of community engagement but remain constrained and challenged by various elements like structure, lack of resources, time frames or issues that are difficult to deal with such as poverty and inequality which all manifest consequences that work against the establishment of relationships with communities.

Structure Makes a Difference

The paper has demonstrated by analysing the Sites of community engagement in Chapter 5 that institutional structures have everything to do with the manifestation of actual practices, in that they provide the grounds, the support and means for officials to be able or unable to perform their mandates.

However this reality is somewhat neglected / blurred when one review the best practice models and principles of good governance (what can also be referred to as New Public Management discourses) which argue that States must cut costs, be performance orientated (e.g. KPI perhaps?) but still be democratic through fostering community engagement and stakeholder engagement. Chapter 5 examined the structures put in place to encourage this model and principles by discussing officials' Score Cards. We got to see that officials get assessed on the quantity of work they have done and not the quality of work. The score Card that was studied showed a preoccupation with how many community meetings officials have

conducted and not with perhaps with the agendas of the meetings and the matters they have resolved.

This institutional context that officials are embedded in can thus be used to understand their practical norms. Between policy intentions, legal requirements (KPIs), time frames (e.g. they would be required to develop about 18 Parks per financial year but it differs with different years) and institutional pressure, officials thus give into the culture of ticking the box of community engagement as a quarterly/monthly/daily Service Delivery mandate to meet their score cards demands. As Bénit-Gbaffou (2008 p. 7) maintain "the place of community engagement should be taken seriously and literally", and this would begin with implications on institutional structures and how they asses officials mandates, so that they can pave favourable and supportive platforms for developmental practical norms.

Going back to the Research Question

How do State officials understand their new mission to partner with communities in the Management of Parks?

It has been demonstrated and discussed in chapter 4 of the paper that officials are frustrated by the mandate to engage with communities. The research perceived a number of negative feedback from officials' experiences with communities. Although there is a realization of the need and importance of informing communities about JCPZ developmental agendas and 'taking them along' in the development process and management, some officials remain reluctant to engage as they feel misunderstood and pressured by communities and park users groups.

The research identified two sources as causal factors of these experiences with communities. The first was agency (the attitudes/ personalities officials had about communities and engagement): there were some officials that preferred to not engage with communities at all, on the basiss that it is simply not possible to try balance community demands and institutional demands (chapter 5 discusses these institutional pressures) and actually practice this agency by avoiding community meetings when possible. Hence these individuals remain strangers to

communities receiving pressures and misunderstandings as both these parties are not involved and investing in a more sustainable engagement.

This takes me to the second and bigger factor which is the institutional structures. In the case of engagement with Friends of the Park, one of the main issues was that officials do not communicate their development plans with FoP and the excuse was that some of these Master Plans still need to be reviewed by higher City or even Provincial government structures. This leaves the FoP feeling undermined and unconsidered and sometimes they expose these frustrations in the media (which doesn't paint the true picture, as it is informed by one side of the story), thus the problem lies with the institutional processes.

On the other hand, there is a bureaucratic culture whereby plans are signed off by the Councillor before they are presented to communities for comments and this has been very problematic, as the engagement process becomes consultative and not genuine engagement where officials can grapple with the ideas of the participants. Communalities are presented with a complete design concept and only asked questions around what facilities they would like to add (take note that this sells an image that the City can afford anything and thus raises the demands). Ultimately communities remain detached from the parks as they were not genuinely part of conceptualizing them (also maintained by some officials). And hence some communities withdraw from taking part in helping with the management of the parks but rather put pressure on the officials who are viewed to be the solver/ hero of all the problems.

Drawing on these two fundamental causal factors to how officials experience community engagement, (and thus how they practice their mandate to engage) I would recommend a reconstruction of officials key performance indicators and key performance areas (see chapter 5). I believe (also taking this from my experience in Varsity) how one is assessed becomes what they will be preoccupied with and invests more of their time in, if officials are not encouraged, trained, supported and rewarded institutionally for the quality of community engagement, they will remain perceiving it as a tick of the box exercise. The other change would need to be around the process of engagement, how communities are informed about these meetings and

how they are actually engaged. The information channels between officials and communities need to be strengthened, as only relying on the Councillor has its own political challenges and communities need to be taken as partners especially in the conceptualization/designing of the parks not as subjects that are not creative enough or informed enough to help in the construction of the park design concepts.

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