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# Women in local government leadership: an analysis of transformational initiatives

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# Women in local government leadership: an analysis of transformational initiatives

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A research project in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA by coursework and a research report.

Industrial Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

## Plagiarism Declaration

A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of MA by coursework and Research Report in the field of Industrial Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 13November 2014

I declare that this research report is my own , unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.

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## Abstract

South Africa has seen an increase in the number of women in local government. This study sought to explore transformational initiatives led by women leaders in local government. The study sought to gain an insight into the challenges associated with the implementation of transformational initiatives in municipal authorities in South Africa. The literature survey focused on local government functions in an emerging democracy such as South Africa. The study recruited women leading transformational initiatives in a municipal authority in Gauteng Province. There were eight women leaders who voluntarily participated in the study. An interview schedule was used to collect data from participants. The study used a qualitative research methodology and data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The results showed that the women were succeeding in implementing the transformational initiatives that they managed although they faced some challenges associated with working in a quasi-governmental organisation in South Africa. Directions for future studies could focus on the development of tools to support women leaders working in local government in South Africa.

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# Chapter One

Local government is crucial in changing the lives of communities as it delivers basic services that are important in the daily lives of people (Ismail, Bayat, & Meyer, 1997). It is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa that every citizen has the right to food, water, electricity, and basic human dignity. It is at the level of local government that these services are delivered to the people (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). According to The White Paper on Local Government (1998), the participation of communities is crucial in the transformation of local government (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). In light of the fact that women leadership plays a major role in uplifting communities (Beall, 2004), it can be inferred that it is important to determine the impact women are making in local government.

The purpose of this study was to explore the transformational initiatives of women in local government, specifically focusing on one municipal authority in Gauteng. Local government has seen an increase in women in leadership positions (Beall, 2004). This necessitated further research and this study was interested in discovering what transformational initiatives these women in local government were involved in. As women become more visible, it can be surmised that it is essential to discover what impact they have in local government. The presence of women in local government leadership is of significance as women are associated with the transformational leadership style (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Transformational leadership is an effective leadership style that is known to boost organisational effectiveness, employee morale, and productivity (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Arnold & Randall, 2010).

Local government has been given a mandate to implement "developmental government" (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). The key aspect of developmental

government is the "promotion of local socioeconomic development, the empowerment of communities, improved living conditions, greater access to resources and opportunities, poverty alleviation, and equality" (McEwan, 2003). According to McEwan (2003), this is mostly aimed at the previously disadvantaged, with particular emphasis on women. Thus the equality of women is crucial in achieving developmental local government as local government cannot be regarded as democratic and developmental without the involvement of women in leadership (McEwan, 2003).

## Rationale

Since the advent of democracy, South Africa has seen a significant gain in women representation in national and provincial government (Gasela, 2007). The 2000 elections in South Africa saw an increase in women in leadership positions. According to EISA (2009), women representation has steadily increased at local, provincial and national government, as reflected in the table below:

**Table 1: Women representation in local, provincial and national government**

| Election Year | Local | Provincial | National |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/1995 | 19% | 24% | 27. 75% |
| 1999/2000 | 40% | 33. 3% | 32. 75% |
| 2009 | __ | 41% | 43% |

Source: *EISA (2009)*

It is widely accepted by women activists, government, and decision-makers that for South Africa to gain economic and vital social stability and growth, it is essential that women participate meaningfully in local government. Gender activists have argued that the participation of women in local government is likely to lead to the more efficient and effective delivery of service which will have a positive impact on the democratic system as a whole (Letlape, 2008). It can be inferred from statements made by senior government

officials that if more women participate in local government, a difference can be made in the lives of women as they participate in decision-making, and thus impact positively on how local decisions pertaining to housing, roads, water and electricity are delivered to the masses.

A gap has been identified in research in the field of women leadership in local government. Despite the substantial representation of women, there is not enough information on how these women are coping and impacting changes in local government. Researchers such as Burke and Collins (2001) and Bystydzienski (1992), focus on leadership styles between men and women and Letlape (2008) focuses on the challenges faced by women in local government. This study sought to explore the transformational differences brought about by women leaders in local government. The study explored the experiences of women leaders as they encountered leadership challenges in management, politics, and community development. The researcher was specifically interested in the transformational initiatives championed by women leaders in municipal authorities. In particular, leadership styles were surveyed and how women leaders positioned themselves in a municipal authority and leadership hierarchy.

The intention of this study was to identify the positions of women in leadership and how they performed their roles by accumulating and appraising information relating to the various local government bodies in South Africa, in particular information pertaining to the challenges faced by women in leadership positions. In the process, managerial structures and organisational organograms were also examined.

The study attempted to provide an insight into the extent and importance of women's influence in local government leadership, and ultimately sought to contribute to existing knowledge on women leadership by making an in-depth analysis of the opportunities for the professional development of women in local government in South Africa.

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

This section discusses the literature pertaining to the transformational initiatives that women in local government are involved in. It will start by discussing the structure and role of local government and the challenges it faces in South Africa. The literature explored local government initiatives in municipal authorities and the role of women in transformational leadership, and it then discusses the transformational initiatives that municipalities are involved in. These transformational initiatives are crucial as they will assist in evaluating the involvement of women in those transformational initiatives. This led to a discussion of the theories around leadership with particular focus on transformational leadership, a leadership style women are mostly associated with. The transformational barriers women face will also be discussed and possible interventions will be suggested. Feasible strategies, which could also be implemented by the government to aid women representation in organisations were discussed.

## Local government

There are three tiers of government, namely central, provincial and local governments (Ismail et al., 1997). Central and provincial governments are involved in formulating policy which is then implemented at local government level (Amtaika, 2013). Local government is an institution with legislative power and authority which operates a within clearly defined geographical and legal jurisdiction within a nation or state (SALGA, 2011). Local government is therefore independent of central government control, and has the ability to enact legislation within its defined jurisdiction, and thus enjoys a measure of autonomy (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 1998). In that regard, local government operates on its own and not as part of provincial or national government. Although the three

levels of government are distinct they must work together as decreed by The Constitution of South Africa through co-operative government (Constitution of South Africa, 1996).

Local government is the third crucial level of government that is created to bring government closer to the people (De Visser, 2009). It can thus be construed that although it is the lowest level of government, it is this tier that is in direct contact with people and thus significant in serving the needs of the community (Ismail et al., 1997). In addition, local government is important in that it acts as an intermediary between central and provincial government and the citizens of a nation. The needs of the people can be addressed and formulated into policy by provincial and central government (Amtaika, 2013). Thus no country can function without local government (Amtaika, 2013). The objectives of local government are stated as, "to promote social and economic development of citizens, to promote a safe and healthy environment, to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner and to encourage citizen participation in local government matters" (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developemnt, 1998, p. 8). It can be deduced from the above that local government is an engine for service delivery and is critical for the development of the country. Implementation of the government's economic and social policies happens at this level (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developement, 1998).

The provision of basic services can therefore be viewed as development (Amtaika, 2013). According to Amtaika (2013, p. 50), the term development is often "associated with the building of physical infrastructure such as roads, railways, harbours, and airports and with increased trade among cities, regions and states." In economics, development is measured by the high levels of consumerism and the ready availability of technology (for example, communication or electrical appliances). These are viewed as indicators of a developed community. In politics, the term development is measured by efficient functioning of

government and state structures and institutions." It can be inferred from the definition that development has several meanings and can be viewed from different perspectives.

The White Paper on Local government (1998) announced a new vision for local government known as "developmental local government" (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 1998). The main goal of "developmental local government" is to provide basic household infrastructure and basic services (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developement, 1998). In this regard, local government's role is to assist in the creation of economic development and improving the quality of life of the people. To achieve its mandate of developmental local government, local government needs the commitment of communities and community organisations (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developement, 1998). Therefore, it can be inferred that local government is tasked with the role of including local communities and community organisations in the development of local government, as outlined in Section 152 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996).

Local government is supposed to create jobs and provide water and sanitation, local roads, electricity, and drainage systems (Koma, 2012). The transformation of local government came about with the new Constitution of South Africa that sought to eradicate poverty and improve the basic living conditions of ordinary South Africans (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). As such local government was given a major role to play in ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, promoting economic and social development of the country, promoting a healthy and safe environment, and eradicating poverty through local economic development (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developemnt, 1998, p. 12). Local developmental government ensured that local economic development was made a priority in the development agenda of local authorities (Miraftab, 2007). According to Nel and Rogerson (2007), local economic

development is viewed as a solution to solving South Africa's developmental needs and is being implemented in all muncipal authorities. Local economic development has been successful in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban with projects such as inner-city renewal and support for the informal sector.

## Role of local government in South Africa

According to the Constitution of South Africa (1996), local government has a role in building democracy in South Africa. This is in line with promoting the rights of every citizen as outlined in The Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which states that everyone has the right of access to an environment that is not harmful, access to sufficient food and water, proper sanitation, and shelter (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). The Bill of Rights is part of the Constitution of South Africa which is the supreme law of the land. The Bill of Rights affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom on which the new democratic South Africa is founded (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). It is at local government level that these rights, as outlined in the Constitution, are delivered to the people. These rights are crucial for the social and economic well-being of the citizens of South Africa, and failure to provide for these rights can render the government liable (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). According to Jansen van Rensburg and Naudé (2007), the Constitution of South Africa has placed great responsibility on local government to uplift human rights through economic and social development. That can be regarded as transformational as it enables local municipalities to fufil their constitutional obligation (Jansen van Rensburg & Naudé, 2007). However, although local government has the primary constitutional obligation to provide basic services, this can be done with the support of provincial and national government (SALGA, 2011; Maharaj & Maharaj, 2004).

## Local government challenges

According to The White paper on Local Government (1998), there are a number of service delivery and governance problems that have been identified in municipalities over the years. These developmental challenges that local government needs to overcome are huge service delivery backlogs in housing, water, and sanitation. There are also poor communication and accountability issues within communities, problems with political administration, corruption and fraud, and poor financial management such as negative audit findings (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developement, 1998, p. 21).

To make matters worse, there has been an increase in the number of violent service delivery protests (Amtaika, 2013). South Africa has seen widespread service delivery protests since 2004 (Mathekga, 2006). These service protests indicate that the people are dissatisfied with local government service and show the lack of trust people have in local government delivery (Mathekga, 2006). According to Amtaika (2013, p. 160), service delivery in South Africa is an "emotive, relative and complex issue." This is due to the fact that service delivery encompasses a number of services which range from delivery of basic services to economic growth. People focus on services that impact directly on their lives and tend to ignore or discount areas of success outside their immediate needs (Amtaika, 2013). In addition, government always broadcasts and focuses attention on their successes in service delivery, and in the prosess lose credibility amongst the people (Amtaika, 2013).

Other challenges faced by local government are intra- and inter-political issues that impact negatively on delivery and governance, and there is insufficient municipal capacity due to a lack of scarce skills (Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Developemnt, 1998, p. 21). It is reasonable to conclude that for local governance to eradicate the problems listed above there is a need for all members of communities to be involved, including women.

From the foregoing, it can be argued that local government is regarded as the sphere of government closest to the people. It serves mostly to provide basic services that affect the daily lives of people. As such, one can conclude that local government has a vital role to play in shaping the economy and improving the lives of the majority of South Africans. Local politics therefore directly affect women's daily lives as they face the burden of providing for their families (Beall, 2004). It can be argued that increasing the number of women in local government will give them more opportunities to impact on policy matters that are of key importance to women and families such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure as women have unique contributions to make to the development and management of services that are crucial to communities (Beall, 2004).

Local government has been regarded as the political arena in which women are represented equitably and thus have become a place in which women can advance their careers (Whip & Fletcher, 1999). This has been supported by Drage (1997, p. 88) as cited in Maharaj and Maharaj (2004), that increasing the number of women's participation, "local government will accelerate the pace of change, promote collaborative styles of leadership and decision-making, broaden perspective and move communities forward." It can therefore be deduced that women have a crucial role to play in decision-making, alleviating poverty, and improving the socio-economic status of the country and as such should be allowed to hold key positions in local government.

**Structure of the Gauteng local government**

The new structure of the Gauteng local government was implemented by the Premier on the 1st of August, 2012 (Gauteng Province Office of the Premier, 2013). The Premier of Gauteng is the head of the organisation, followed by the director general and accounting officer. Under the director general and accounting officer are five branches which represent the core functions of this office (Gauteng Province Office of the Premier, 2013). The five

branches are policy coordination, monitoring and evaluation, executive support and stakeholder management, institutional development and integrity management, corporate management, and provincial communications services.

The structure comprises 216 positions and as at March 2013 the number of staff employed by the office of the Premier was 227 which included 23 contract workers, 16 fixed-term contracts and 17 internships (Gauteng Province Office of the Premier, 2013).

**Role of the Premier**

The office of the Premier derives its mandate from the policies of the Constitution, the Public Service Act (1994), the Public Finance Management Act (1999), and overall from the government. As defined by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 6, the Premier has executive, legislative, intergovernmental and ceremonial responsibilities. Therefore, as the political head of the provincial government, the Premier is responsible for implementing the principles of cooperative government and intergovernmental relations such as preserving the peace, the national unity of South Africa, securing the well-being of citizens, providing effective, transparent governance, and respecting the Constitution of South Africa (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). The Premier exercises the executive authority of the province with members of the executive council (EXCO) (Gauteng Province Office of the Premier, 2013). These executive members are appointed and are assigned responsibilities and delegative powers by the Premier (Gauteng Province Office of the Premier, 2013). The EXCO and the Premier are accountable to the provincial legislature for exercising their powers and executing the responsibilities and functions assigned to them (Gauteng Province Office of the Premier, 2013).

## Municipal authorities in Gauteng

The creation of local authorities was legislated by the Municipal Structure Act (1998) and this Act made provision for three main types of municipalities, namely category A, which consists of metropolitan councils; category B, which consists of local councils; and category C which consists of district councils. In the eight biggest cities in South Africa are metropolitan (metro) municipalities, namely Johannesburg Metro, Ekurhuleni Metro, Tshwane Metro, Cape Town Metro, eThekwini Metro in Durban, Nelson Mandela Metro in Port Elizabeth, Mangaung Metro in Bloemfontein, and Bufffalo City Metro in East London. The three largest metropolitan municipalities are found in Gauteng, namely Johannesburg Metro, Tshwane Metro and Ekurhuleni Metro (Amtaika, 2013). All the metropolitans are found in large urban areas with dense populations and high migration, high development and a plethora of industries and businesses, and this distinguishes them from local and district councils. Local councils are thus found in small cities and towns, and district councils are made up of local municipalities that fall into one district (Amtaika, 2013).

There are a number of municipal authorities in Gauteng but literature surveyed is based mainly on Johannesburg Municipality, a local authority for one of Africa's largest cities. The City of Johannesburg is home to a population of approximately four million people and is growing at a rate of 1.3% per annum (Johannesburg, 2012). The population growth of Johannesburg is a result of migration from all the other provinces and from the rest of Africa; 31.3% of the households in Johannesburg are headed by women (Johannesburg, 2012).

The City of Johannesburg is regarded as the "economic hub" of the country; it contributes approximately17% to the South African economy and comprises 48% of the economy of the province of Gauteng (Johannesburg, 2012). It should be noted that Tshwane Municipality is another large municipal authority in Gauteng with a population of approximately two million people. The majority age group in Tshwane Municipality is

between the ages 30 and 39. Thus the majority of the population of Tshwane falls in the working-age group. The dependency ratio for the City of Tshwane is 1:4 and contributes 35% to the country and 27% to the economy of Gauteng. Thus the city of Tshwane has a growth value added (GVA) which is similar to that of the City of Johannesburg. Governance of the two cities is similar to the national and provincial government as it is made up of legislative and executive functions. The legislative function is the political administration led by a council speaker, and holds monthly meetings to discuss council matters. The executive consists of the mayoral committee chaired by the executive mayor as well as the administrative function led by the city manager (Johannesburg, 2012).

The key challenges faced by women leaders working in both cities would be that of the eradication of inequality and poverty reduction (Lipietz, 2008). The 2011 quality of life survey conducted by the Gauteng city region indicated that poverty in the two cities is prevalent in the disadvantaged areas of the cities (Tshwane, 2013), and that these areas show poor social and economic development. It can therefore be deduced that the role of transformational women would be to channel resources to those areas to ensure that poverty is reduced and equality is fostered in the cities.

**Structure of local government**

Local government, like any other government, has a system of governance. Local government governance has two arms of service, namely legislative and executive. The legislative is made up of the council, and the executive is made up of the executive mayor and members of the mayoral committee (MMC) as well as the administration, led by the city manager (Amtaika, 2013).

The legislative deals with the political representation, leadership, and community participation whereas the executive deals with the implementation of policies that have been

set by the legislative (Amtaika, 2013). To exercise their legislative and executive roles, muncipalities must do so within the constitutional obligation of cooperative government (Cape Town Muncipalities Act, 2000).

The separation of the legislative and executive roles delegated executive functions to the executive mayor and thus the role of the legislative is that of making sure that the executive mayor fulfils his/her obligations as assigned (Johannesburg, 2012). The role of the mayoral committee is to oversee the executive's performance, and in that regard they may request the MMCs or heads of departments (HoDs) to be accountable for their performance and for the delivery of services (Johannesburg, 2012). It can be inferred that the role of the legislative of monitoring the executive and MMCs makes the executive accountable for their performance. Therefore, this could lead to an improvement of service delivery as the legislative is acting as an overseer of performance and service delivery. It can be surmised that including women in this structure of local government can be beneficial as women are are concerned about the provision of basic services.

**Role of the executive mayor**

In most of the municipal authorities in Gauteng, the role of the mayor is the same , the executive mayor, assisted by the mayoral committee, heads the executive arm of the municipal council (Johannesburg, 2012). The executive mayor plays a pivotal role in governance and executive powers are vested in him/her by the council to oversee and manage the daily affairs of the city. He/she therefore has a strategic and political responsibility in fulfilling his/her role, assisted by the ten members of the mayoral committee (Johannesburg 2012). Each member of the mayoral committee is responsible for one of the ten MMC portfolios, as illustrated in Table 2.

The executive implements policies, and the executive mayor is responsible for identifying areas that need to be developed, and to assist with the implementation of service delivery (Johannesburg, 2012). It can be deduced that it is at this level where major policies are formed and where transformation can be effected. It is also at this level that women in leadership need to be involved as this is where decision-making processes take place that impact on the daily lives of communities and on transformational initiatives (Beall, 2004). The table below shows representation within the mayoral committee in terms of gender.

**Table 2: Mayoral committee in terms of gender**

| **Portfolio chair/leader** | **Gender** |
|---|---|
| Corporate and shared services | Female |
| Community Development | Male |
| Chief Whip | Male |
| Speaker | Female |
| Public Safety | Male |
| Health and Social Development | Male |
| Housing | Female |
| Development and Planning | Female |
| Finance | Female |
| Environment and Social Development | Female |
| Economic Development | Female |
| Transport | Female |
| Mayor | Male |

Source: *City of Johannesburg, 2012*

According to the table above, seven out of the 12 positions of the mayoral committee are held by women. The women in the mayoral committee are in a strategic position to

implement change in the performance of the city. It is crucial to note the role women play in the committee in the transformation process of the City of Johannesburg, and how they are implementing change.

**Role of the mayoral committee**

According to SALGA (2011), the mayoral committee is appointed by the executive mayor. It has two main responsibilities, in the first instance to offer assistance and advice to the executive mayor. The MMC is required to perform any other functions as delegated by the executive mayor. The mayoral committee reports directly to the executive mayor and interacts with the city manager and staff via the executive mayor or, if authorised, by the executive mayor (SALGA, 2011).

**Role of City Manager**

The City Manager is the head of the administrative function and he/she is also the accounting officer as defined by the Municipal Structures Act (2000). The responsibilities of the city manager include managing the financial affairs and service delivery of the municipality and he/she is assisted by the executive management team.

## Municipalities' initiatives

The City of Johannesburg has a vision in which it sees Johannesburg as a world-class city with a vibrant, inclusive economy where every citizen is provided with a quality life and where learning takes place (City of Johannesburg Growth and Development Strategy, GDS 2040). This vision is similar to those of other cities of the world, such as Cape Town, which aims at ensuring that cities are able to be competitive in the global market and attract business (Miraftab, 2007). To achieve this vision, local government has embarked upon mega-

projects (Jansen van Rensburg & Naudé, 2007; Priemus, 2010). These mega-projects have been defined as "projects which transform landscapes rapidly, intentionally and profoundly in very visible ways" (Gellert & Lynch, 2003, p. 15). Mega-projects aim to change the image of the environment, at the same time promoting economic and social growth (Hannah & Sutherland, 2014). Mega-projects usually use advanced technology, usually imported from the North (Gellert & Lynch, 2003). It can be surmised that mega-projects impact on the economic, social, and economic environment in a profound way.

In the following section, projects that municipalities in South Africa are working on are highlighted. These projects include The Rapid Bus Transit System that is being implemented in major metropolitan areas, stadium upgrades, and sustainable projects such as landfill gas.

**The Rapid Bus Transit System**

Transport was identified by local government as a key infrastructural development priority and in that regard Johannesburg and Cape Town have introduced the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit System (Adewumi & Allopi, 2013). The bus rapid transit system is one of the transformational initiatives that women ledaers could be involved in. The bus rapid transport system has been defined as a "high-quality, bus-based transit system that delivers fast, comfortable and cost-effective urban mobility through the provision of segregated right-of-way infrastructure, rapid and frequent operations and excellence in marketing and customer service" (Galicia & Cheu, 2013, p. 47). It can be surmised from the definition that the rapid transit system combines new technology to improve the transport system. According to Adewumi and Allopi (2013), the Rea Vaya bus service is a new development in South Africa. This project is transformational in that it is changing the nature of public transportation as it will allow commuters to use a safe and reliable transportation system, and reducing the number of cars on the road which will also reduce the carbon emissions of vehicles

(Adewumi & Allopi, 2013). It is one of the major projects that the City of Johannesburg has embarked on and has taken years to implement.

According to the City of Johannesburg Case Studies (2003), the City of Johannesburg's public transport at that time was being provided for by minibuses or taxis; 14% by rail, 9% by bus, and 63% of the population did not own cars. The challenges are a result of the inefficient road usage of the past which had created urban sprawl and that had resulted in most people being eliminated from economic opportunity. The majority were impoverished Blacks, Coloureds and Indians who lived far out of town and struggled daily to commute to work, waking up early and getting back home late in the evening (Tshwane, 2013). As a result, the majority of commuters who lived far from work had no option but to use public transport. Commuting to work was difficult, painful and a costly exercise, sometimes involving using a number of taxis in order to get to and from work (Tshwane, 2013).

It is in light of this the City of Johannesburg decided to implement the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit System (Adewumi & Allopi, 2013). Similarly, the City of Cape Town has also introduced the bus rapid transit system in a bid to improve its transport system (Adewumi & Allopi, 2013).

According to the City of Johannesburg Case Studies (2013), the Rea Vaya system, funded by the public transport infrastructure and systems grant (PTIS), was an affordable option that could be implemented in a short time and was then fast-tracked when South Africa won the bid to host the soccer world cup in 2010 (Adewumi & Allopi, 2013). The benefits of the BRT is that it offers efficient and reliable transport, affordable fares, safe and secure transport, accessible transport for disabled people and pregnant women, a decrease in traffic congestion, a greener environment, reduction in pollution, and job creation. One of the chief organisers of the Rea Vaya bus transit system in the City of Johannesburg was a woman (City of Johannesburg Case Studies, 2012). According to the city manager, there has been

tremendous progress in terms of achieving gender equality at senior levels of the city (City of Johannesburg, 2012).

**Stadium upgrades**

The 2010 world cup was seen as an impetus that could speed up development of infrastructure (Gunter, 2011). The implementation of the infrastructure had to be "instituted" at local level through the host cities. Thus host cities had to use the world cup as a "driving force" to implement development of infrastructure (Gunter, 2011, p. 75). Hence projects that were already planned for were accelerated due to the world cup with the Gautrain, Rea Vaya bus network, and highway improvement being made a priority (Du Plessis, 2010 cited in Gunter, 2011). In Johannesburg, the Ellis Park Sports Precinct was developed. Similarly, in other muncipal authorities there were developments of the same nature. In Durban the Moses Mabhida Stadium was developed by the eThekwini Muncipality (Hannah & Sutherland, 2014).

**Landfill gas to energy clean developmental mechanism project**

In order to compile the Johannesburg Growth and Development Strategy (GDS 2040) of creating a low-carbon economy and green city, the City of Johannesburg embarked on the landfill gas to energy clean developmental project**.** Malodorous gases emitted by landfills are harmful to the environment and to people living nearby (City of Johannesburg Case Studies, 2011-2012). These hydrogen sulphide gases are known as volatile organic compounds which are dangerous and can result in death (City of Johannesburg Case Studies, 2011-2012). According to the City of Johannesburg Case Studies (2011-2012), the main aim of the landfill gas energy clean development mechanism project is to remove these gases from the

environment which generally affect the communities living close to these landfills, thus ensuring that the health and safety of communities are not compromised.

The removal of these gases will also eliminate a potential fire hazard caused by combustible methane gas. Once removed, these gases will be channelled into generating renewable energy, a source of revenue for the City of Johannesburg (City of Johannesburg Case Studies, 2011-2012), in accordance with certified emission reduction certificates (CERCs), through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) CDM processes. The extraction of these gases has to be done in compliance with national and provincial regulations (City of Johannesburg Case Studies, 2012).

The transformational initiatives outlined above could hopefully assist municipalities in reaching their vision of ensuring that South Africa is a world-class country, known for its vibrant economy and its safe and carbon-free environment. However, in order for municipalities to be successful in implementing and maintaining these initiatives, municipal authorities will be guided by leadership and women leaders in particular. The section below thus looks at leadership and defines what leadership is and the kind of leadership that is essential in bringing about transformation.

## Leadership

Leadership is defined as "…the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2006, p. 8). The term is also defined as "…the means to potentially influence others" (Lara, 2011). Bass (1985, p. 17) also defines leadership as "the ability to decide what needs to be done, and then to get others to want to do it." The common thread in the definitions above is that a leader should be able to influence others in order to act.

In order to understand more about leadership it is very important to show the difference between leadership and management. According to Bass (2010), Bennis (1989) and Kotter (1987, 1990, 1990a) agree that management and leadership are not mutually inclusive. Management and leadership are two separate yet corresponding systems of action, each with its own function and activities (Kotter, 1990a). Both management and leadership are essential for an organisation to survive and should be combined and balanced to ensure the success of an organisation (Kotter, 2007). In this study, leadership is viewed in light of how women make decisions that impact on the transformational initiatives that are introduced in local government.

**Management**

According to Kotter (2007), management is seen as a process that "runs" the operations of an organisation. Good management involves coping with complexity and ensuring that the organisation's processes are functioning well. Management arose as a result of the large organisations of the 21st century that needed orderly management systems (Kotter, 2007). Kotter (2007) views leadership as a process that creates organisations, and aligns organisations to changes in the environment. This has been necessitated by the changing nature of the world of work. There has been improvement in technological advancement, and organisations are now operating on a global scale. The business world is ever-changing, highly competitive, and volatile (Kotter, 2007). This has resulted in diversity in the workforce.

The more the world of work changes, the more the demand for leadership increases (Kotter, 2007). Kotter (2007) views the functions of management as planning, budgeting, organising, controlling, and problem-solving. Conversely, a leader is seen to be encouraging, motivating, and inspiring employees to achieve organisational objectives through a spirit of

commitment and teamwork. Thus a leader will, through vision and open-mindedness, bring radical change whereas a manager conforms to the norm and maintains stability by sticking to the status quo (Kotter, 2007). It can be concluded from the above discussion that leadership involves building relationships and creating change, and that transformational women in local government leadership will be able to effect change.

## Leadership

The challenge that most organisations face is leadership change (Kotter, 2007). This is supported by Bennis (1989), who asserts that in the 21st century, what are required to survive in this volatile environment are leaders, not managers. However, according to Bass (1985, p. 17), "It is leadership that is transformational that can bring about the big differences and big changes in groups, organisations and societies." Bass (1985) takes it a step further by introducing the style of leadership that is effective in bringing about change. It is not only leadership, but leadership that is transformational, that can bring about change. Therefore, leaders motivate and energise their followers to bring about change by satisfying their intrinsic and extrinsic needs (Kotter, 2007). According to Kotter (2007), this can be done in several ways.

Firstly, it involves sharing the organisation's mission in such a way that followers are energised and secondly, by providing followers with mentoring, coaching, feedback, and role modelling to enable them to grow professionally and to be able to excel at achieving the organisational mission. Thirdly, the employees are involved in the decision-making process and finally, rewarded for their achievement. This ensures that the employees are motivated. In addition, the leader has to have self-confidence and inner strength in order to be able to convince others of what he/she believes in (Bass, 1985). This study focused on leadership in a transformational context.

Leaders usually operate "dynamic and turbulent environments in which conflicts, people, productivity issues, outcome reports, events, and unanticipated developments converge on them daily if not hourly" (Lawson & Shen, 1998, p. 156). It can therefore be inferred from the definition that the the environment in which the leader is operating is constantly changing. In addition to a dynamc environment, leaders "make decisions on the basis of incomplete and ambiguos information." They have no option but to rely on this incomplete and ambiguos information and must rely on others to implement their decisions. In many instances, decision-making processes are highly political, rather than rational, and little time is devoted to planning and proactive or anticipatory behaviours (Lawson & Shen, 1998, p. 156). In local government the environment is political.

## Theories of leadership

In order to understand more about leadership and why some people are leaders and some are not, researchers need to look at theories of leadership. According to Kiamba (2008), societal conventions regarding gender and leadership traditionally exclude women, and top leadership is seen as a masculine domain. This is supported by Eagly (2007), who is of the notion that women still are prejudiced against because traditionally leadership has been seen predominantly as a masculine trait. Therefore, it is entrenched in patriarchal societies that a leader should be male.

## Transformational leadership

The theory of transformational leadership was first postulated by Burns in 1978 and was expanded by Bernard Bass in 1985. Transactional leadership is defined as a style of leadership where the leader is a catalyst of change that motivates employees to improve productivity (Al-Mailam, 2004). This is in contrast to transformational leadership.This

research focuses on transformational leadership.Transformational leadership has been defined as a "Process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organisation members and building commitment for major changes in the organisation's objectives and strategies. Transformational leadership involves influence by a leader over subordinates but the effect of the influence is to empower subordinates who also become leaders in the process of transforming the organisation" (Muchinsky, 2006, p. 434).

Transformational leadership has also been described as a leadership style where the leader inspires and empowers employees to reach improved productivity which consequently results in their personal growth and increased job satisfaction (Al-Mailam, 2004). The common thread in the definitions is that a transformational leader has the ability to inspire his/her colleagues to set aside their personal goals in order to achieve organisational objectives. The transformational leader will inspire individuals in three ways. Firstly, he/she will increase the employees' level of awareness about the importance of reaching set objectives and secondly, get them to sacrifice their own self needs for the organisation's mission and finally, changing their needs and wants as listed on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Bass, 1985). From the above definition it can be seen that transformational leaders are different from transactional leaders.

**Characteristics of transformational leadership**

The four distinct characteristics of transformational leadership are idealised influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass, 1985). With regard to idealised influence, Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998, p. 339), state that "the leader makes personal sacrifices, takes responsibility for his or her actions, shares any glory, and shows great determination." It can be inferred that through idealised influence the subordinates receive clear direction of the

organisation's mission, and they emulate the leader's morals and values to form their own identity. In addition, transformational leaders stimulate their subordinates intellectually by getting them to question the old and tried methods of solving problems which will motivate them to be creative, innovative, be open-minded, and develop and encourage new ways of solving problems (Avolio et al., 1999). Individualised consideration focuses on understanding employees' needs and enabling them to develop to their optimal level (Avolio et al., 1999). This is done through the delegation of projects, mentoring, and coaching which enhance employees' performance (Arnold et al., 1998).

Transformational leaders are only transformational if the organisation and/or society benefits from the transformation (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders are adaptive leaders (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Transformational leaders also focus on coaching and mentoring which encourages their followers to be more responsible and develop them into moral citizens (Zhu et al., 2011). The transformational leadership style is very important as it has been associated with women leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Individualised consideration is more likely to be practised by women as men are more likely to use a transactional way of leading (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

**Characteristics of transactional leadership**

Conversely, transactional leaders aim at controlling employees through the exchange of rewards such as resources (Bass, 1985) (Zhu et al., 2011). Thus the two characteristics that constitute transactional leadership are contingent reward, and management by exception (Bass, 1985). Contingent reward refers to "leadership behaviours focused on exchange of resources, that is, leaders provide tangible or intangible support and resources to followers in exchange for their efforts and performance" (Bono & Judge, 2004, p. 902). Individuals' performance determines the reward or punishment they receive and this is done through prior

arrangement with the leader (Bass, 1985). This reward is not always of a monetary nature and may be negative or positive. It can include feedback on processes that were not successful and goals not achieved, and penalties can involve dismissal (Bass, 1985). This is viewed as transactional leadership (Bass, 1985).

According to Bass (1985), positive contingent reward reinforces positive employee performance, and the employee is motivated to continue maintaining positive behaviour. Therefore, the employee can be given recognition or praise for work positively done and/or promoted, or given a bonus or an increment in his/her salary as a reward (Bass, 1985). Contingent punishment can occur in different ways, for example, when a leader highlights deviant behaviour. This is helpful as the follower can correct the behaviour. Penalties such as a fine or suspension without a salary can be imposed (Bass, 1985).

**Management by exception**

Management by exception has been defined as, "the leader does not seek to change the existing working methods of subordinates so long as performance goals are met" (Arnold et al., 2010, p. 339). Transactional leaders manage in both proactive and reactive ways. Transactional leaders are proactive when they observe and rectify the follower's behaviour immediately (Bass 1985). Transactional leaders act in a reactive way where they monitor the followers' behaviour only when something has gone wrong (Bass, 1985) (Bass & Avolio, 1996). This is known as management by exception as the leader focuses on remedying mistakes and meting out disciplinary measures (Bass, 1985) (Bass & Avolio, 1996). Providing negative feedback is less effective than contingent rewards as the intervention provided is negative and thus counterproductive (Bass, 1985). The use of management by exception is usually necessitated by the organisation's flat structure where the leader has many subordinates reporting to him/her and as such can only monitor negative behaviour

(Bass, 1985). It is expected that transactional leaders have a positive impact on shaping their employees' identities since transactional leaders rely on organisational structures to effect change from their employees (Zhu, et al., 2011). According to a study carried out by Powell, Butterfield, Alves, and Bartol (2004), male leaders are found to be more likely than female leaders to exhibit transactional behaviours; thus male leaders are more likely to use management by exception and contingent reward. Male leaders were found to mainly use transaction by exercising passive management by exception (Powell et al., 2004). As a result male leaders were likely to elicit negative responses from their subordinates in comparison to female leaders who were reluctant to use the passive form of management by exception (Powell et al., 2004).

According to Bass (1985), whether a leader is transformational or transactional is dependent on the external environment. Therefore, transformational leadership is more likely to emerge in a time of chaos or economic meltdowns. Change and transactional leadership occurs in a stable marketplace and structured society with clear norms and guidelines on how to mete out punishment (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders are thus needed to inspire individuals and mobilise employees' time and energy to steer organisations towards a stable environment (Bass, 1985). In addition, it is during times of turmoil and crisis situations that charismatic leadership arises (Bass, 1985).

## Organisational culture

Transformational leadership can also be understood in relation to the organisational culture in which it operates. An organisation's culture may be defined as that which makes the organisation distinct from other organisations such as shared values, assumptions, beliefs, norms, and rituals that hold the organisation together (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The culture of local government is typically masculine in which gender stereotypes are common and in

which the rules of the workplace traditionally favour men (Kiamba, 2008). According to Palermo (2004), it is the organisational culture that fosters gender bias. Features of a masculine culture entail an environment that is competitive and results-focused, favouring behaviours that are assertive and ambitious rather than communal, which are associated with women. There is a need to form strategic behaviours, and employees are committed to working long hours and being able to separate work and family (Palermo, 2004). These gender stereotypes have the potential of affecting women's experiences of the workplace (Palermo, 2004). It can be inferred that organisational culture is crucial for the progression of women. The organisation's culture is formed partly by the leader, but the culture of the organisation can also impact the type of leadership that develops (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

According to Bass (1985), transactional leadership operates within the organisational culture as it is, and transformational leadership changes the organisational culture. The transactional leader will be accepting of group identities, norms, beliefs, rituals and stories, and will use the existing norms, beliefs and rituals to communicate his/her values whereas the transformational leader will change, reinvent, and advance these norms, rituals and beliefs. Thus the transformational leader will change the existing ideology whilst the transactional leader will be accepting of the status quo. Transformational leaders are most likely to be found in organisations that have an innovative culture (Bass & Avolio, 1993). In such an environment, transformational leaders are able to articulate a vision and purpose to their followers that is based on the premise that everyone has a valuable contribution to make and thus encouraging everyone to develop to their fullest potential and to be innovative (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Transformational leadership is very important because many women are associated with the transformational leadership style (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Bass & Avolio,1994). Women see leadership as relational rather than power exercised over others (Irwin, 2008). It

is a leadership style that promotes organisational change within the organisation and its relationship to the environment (Al-Mailam, 2004). Women leaders are less likely to lead by exercising their power and control over their followers but through being considerate of the individual followers and acting on their behalf (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Thus women are more likely to lead differently than men as they do not need to be controlling as men tend to be (Eagly & Carli, 2008). According to Eagly and Carli (2007, p. 119), women tend to have a collaborative leadership style which focuses on "consulting, encouraging, discussing, negotiating." Transformational leaders seek in part to draw the best from others and they accomplish this goal by seeking collaboration and motivating others to follow in ways that are personally and professionally beneficial (Al-Mailam, 2004).

According to a meta-analysis by Eagly et al. (2003), women tend to be more transformational in their leadership style (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Eagly, 2007). Women are more interested in transforming a person's feelings of self-interest into what works best for the organisation (Lowe, 2011). According to Eagly (2007), women have a slight advantage over men because women are associated with being more transformational than men. In a study comparing male and female managers, female managers were found to be high on all the transformational subscales. Besides being attributed with idealised influence and being more inclined to use contingent reward, men were more associated with a component of transactional leadership, management by objectives, and laissez-faire leadership (Eagly, 2007).

It can thus be inferred from the above that women leaders are associated with a leadership style that is known to boost productivity, increase employee morale, and organisational effectiveness. If women leaders in local government are likely to enact leadership closer to the transformational style, it lends significant support to increasing the presence of women leaders in local government as a transformational leadership style does

have the potential to change local government. It is this capacity to change or transform that is central in this study.

The culture of the organisation is influenced by the employees that they attract and hire, the behaviours they exhibit, and the behaviours that they reward (Bass & Avolio, 1993). These norms and behaviours are then instilled in the organisation and adopted by all employees thus becoming the culture of the organisation (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Organisations can have cultures that are both transactional and transformational. A transactional culture will be one that focuses on clear and implied contractual agreements, all jobs and assignments are clearly set out with conditions of employment, disciplinary measures to be meted out if anyone transgresses, and benefits to reward performance (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Thus in such a transactional culture individuals are motivated to work, encouraged by the promise of the reward they will receive for their performance (Bass & Avolio, 1993). In a transactional culture, individuals work independently from their colleagues and there is little identification with the organisation and its mission and vision (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

**Transformational culture**

Conversely, a transformational culture is one where subordinates and leaders share common goals and commitment to the mission and vision of the organisation (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Individuals sacrifice their self-interest for the well-being of the organisation as a sense of family and belonging is fostered (Bass & Avolio, 1993). New recruits are inducted into the organisation by the leaders who act as role models and mentors to these new recruits. It can be deduced that in a transformational culture employees are encouraged to be part of the organisation and that gives them a sense of belonging which in turn motivates them to go beyond the call of duty.

## Transformational leadership in comparison with other leadership styles

A transformational leadership style is related to a charismatic leadership style (Bass, 1985; Berendt et al., 2012). It is believed that charismatic leaders themselves are transformational as they are able, through personal vision and energy, to inspire followers to emulate them to achieve the organisation's mission and vision, and therefore they have a major impact on an organisation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1996). Through emotional and symbolic gestures they are able to influence followers to make self–sacrifices, and sub-ordinate self-interest to serve a higher mission (Berendt et al., 2012). However, despite the similarity between the two leadership styles, transformational leadership and charismatic leadership are treated as being different (Bolden, 2003).

Both transactional and transformational leadership are necessary for organisational success. It has been argued by researchers that transactional and transformational leadership should not be seen as "mutually exclusive" although leaders can exhibit one or the other or even both (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012, p. 278; Arnold & Randall, 2010). Transformational leaders are also shown to be performing the transactional elements of their jobs. For instance, they can also administer contingent reward either in the form of money or praise (Arnold & Randall, 2010). Research has shown that transformational leadership augments transactional leadership in predicting performance (Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990). This has been referred to as the "augmentation effect" (Judge & Piccoli, 2004). This is explained by the fact that transaformational leadership complements transactional leadership and that the best leaders often enhance transactional leadership with transformational leadership (Judge & Piccoli, 2004). Thus transactional leadership lays the foundation for transformational leadership (Judge & Piccoli, 2004). In this study, the focus was on the transformational leadership style in municipal authorities.

**Laissez-faire leadership style**

The transformational and transactional leadership styles are also compared to the laissez-faire leadership style. The laissez-faire leadership style is regarded as a leadership style where the leader is not present (Judge & Piccoli, 2004). The laissez-faire leader is avoidant, does not make decisions, is not there when needed, and is hesitant to take action (Arnold & Randall, 2010). Therefore, a laissez-faire leader is seen to be similar to management by exception in that both adopt passive leadership styles. However, it should be seen as different from transactional leadership and should be treated separately since a laissez-faire leadership style shows an absence of leadership (Judge & Piccoli, 2004).

**Effect of transformational leadership style**

Research has shown that the transformational leadership style is more effective than the transactional leadership style (Eagly, 2007) and that transformational leadership leads to higher levels of job performance among followers (Jung & Avolio, 2000; Bass & Avolio, 1996). According to Eagly (2007), transformational leadership is effective, and transactional leadership is effective only as a result of its rewarding element which seems to be equally effective as transformational leadership. This was explained by the fact that when employees were rewarded they achieved objectives as they believed that achieving the objectives would result in getting the desired rewards (Gibson, Ivancevich, & Donelly, JR, 1994). In contrast, trying to influence employees' behaviour through punishment was as ineffective as using the laissez-faire leadership style (Eagly, 2007).

The effectiveness of transformational leadership lies in the ability of a transformational leader to influence his/her subordinates and to inspire them to go the extra mile (Eagly, 2007). This is supported by Bass et al. (2003) who view transformational leaders as having the ability to boost employees' performance levels in order for them to accomplish difficult

challenges. In a study done by Geyer and Steyer (1998) on the impact of transformational leadership in a bank branch in Austria, it was discovered that transformational leadership was effective in increasing the performance of the branch (Arnold & Randall, 2010). This was a result of individualised consideration and contingent rewards which were found to be instrumental in increasing branch staff motivation in contrast to management by exception which resulted in less effort and lower branch performance (Arnold & Randall, 2010). The positive effects of transformational leadership are not only related to financial gain, but have a positive impact on employees' well-being (Arnold & Randall, 2010).

## Transformational barriers facing women in local government

### Male-dominated environment

Despite the increase in women's representation in local government, women still face challenges such as the patriarchal system where decision-making powers are in the hands of men (Kiamba, 2008). Because of the patriarchal society, women historically have had fewer opportunities and exposure to leadership positions and as a result women often feel intimidated by procedures and policies and hence become more hesitant to participate in the decision-making process with confidence (Kiamba, 2008). Local government is male dominated and thus not conducive to women's participation. The environment does not provide adequate space for women's voices to be aired (Mncayi, 2006). As a result of leadership being typically seen as a male-dominated role based on trait, value incongruence is likely to be experienced by women, and they might consider themselves as not fitting the expected norm of leadership (Eagly, 2007). This is supported by practices that equate leadership to masculine traits and "powerfully if unwittingly communicate that women are ill-suited to leadership roles" and "such biases accumulate and in the aggregate can interfere in women's ability to see themselves and be seen by others as leaders" (Ely, Ibarra & Kolb,

2011, p. 475). According to Ely et al. (2011, p. 475), "women's under-representation in leadership positions validates entrenched systems and beliefs that prompt and support men's bids for leadership which in turn maintains the status quo."

Leadership is seen primarily as a male quality and women leadership is understood in light of this perspective (Barriteau, 2003). Women are expected to be communal, kind, cooperative, and to get along with everyone. Hence they do not match the typical traits of a leader (Eagly, 2007; Ely et al., 2011). A woman in leadership has to try and portray traditional masculine traits such as assertiveness, control, and tough-mindedness. However, these preconceptions of women are not particularly true and research has proved that male and female leaders tend to behave in a similar manner (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). According to Ashleigh and Mansi (2012), women are not necessarily kind and accommodating, and men do not necessarily maintain structure. However, despite this there are differences in leadership styles of men and women. Women tend to have an inclusive leadership style which is more focused on relation-building whereas men make decisions independently (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012). As a result, women leaders who do not exhibit characteristics atypical to feminine traits tend to be disapproved of and rejected (Eagly, 2007). This is supported by Ely et al. (2011) that these characteristics that are relational tend to disqualify women from being seen as leaders.

In addition, there is increasing pressure on a woman leader to perform in order to be taken seriously in the workplace and as such a woman leader finds herself in a precarious position as acting in a feminine manner hinders her influence, and by not acting in a feminine way has the same effect (Eagly, 2007; Ely et al., 2011). Literature has termed this the "double-bind" that women face (Eagly, 2007). It basically means that a woman is in a Catch-22 situation. If a woman exhibits masculine qualities, she is seen as competent yet tough and thus not liked, and if she portrays feminine characteristics she is perceived as

ineffective as a leader but liked (Eagly, 2007). To make matters worse, what appears as assertive, self-confident or entrepreneurial in a man often looks abrasive, arrogant or self-promoting in a woman (Ely et al., 2011). Thus a women leader has to be able to maintain balance through adopting a transformational leadership style as it is a style that fosters relationships (Eagly, 2007).

The way women leaders are perceived can be explained through the Adaptive Resonance theory (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012). Society has entrenched in our minds that the ideal leader is male. As a result stereotypes and negative perceptions on women leadership roles are attached (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012). In addition, there is also a "mismatch in perception of roles" (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012, p. 287). According to the role congruency theory, a cognitive incongruence is experienced between the expectation of how a leader's behaviour should be, and a woman's behaviour is expected to be (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This will devalue a women's leadership behaviour (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Women who have managed to enter leadership roles in local government are sometimes regarded as tokens. Tokenism theory states that women will encounter barriers to career advancement (Gregory-Mina, 2002). According to Zimmer (1988, p. 64), most of women's "negative experiences on the job and in particular their inability to achieve equality has been attributed to their token status – their low proportion in a workplace dominated by men." As a result of their small numbers women are "highly visible and intensely scrutinised by others." This creates pressure on women to succeed and as tokens some women might underachieve and others might overachieve, and this serves as an impediment to career progression (Zimmer, 1988).

In addition, tokenism has been found to be psychologically stressful to women as it leads to "unsatisfactory social relationships, a miserable self-image, frustrations from contradictory demands, inhibitions as to self-expression, feelings of inadequacy, and self-

hatred" (Zimmer, 1988, p. 66). To support that, Gregory-Mina (2002) found tokenism to be one of the main reasons women have poor work experiences. People prefer to work with similar people, and women, who are in the minority in an organisation, have reported more negative experiences than men such as work isolation and increased work demands (McTavish & Miller, 2006). This might be relevant in local government, especially since some of the women might have been put in leadership positions as a function of the 50/50 quota system (Mncayi, 2006). In local authorities, tokenism is experienced by women leaders when male-dominated structures motivate for the inclusion of women as a window-dressing exercise to portray a transformational image (Matherne, 2007).

**Networking and mentoring**

Networking is regarded as "the process of building relationships within and between groups" (Furnham, 1997:377). Networking is a critical factor in the career progression of an individual (Linehan & Scullion, 2008) because there are a number of benefits that are associated with networking. Networking assists leaders in information gathering which will enable them to set agendas and implementation (Furnham, 1997).

Corporations have both informal and formal networks which are divided according to sex and ethnicity (McTavish & Miller, 2006). According to Gregory-Mina (2002), these networks have a significant impact in filling vacancies. This can explain why more men are in leadership positions since men have developed more informal networks with other men and it is there where major decisions are made. Also, males will have access to vital information concerning upcoming vacancies and pending projects (Noe, 1988; McTavish & Miller, 2006). Conversely, women are less aware of the importance of informal networks at senior level and therefore have been less successful in using the full potential of these networks to further advance their careers (McTavish & Miller, 2006). This is especially true

in local government, a place where women have been historically excluded and as such have not had access to these informal networks (Beall, 2004). The barriers women face in joining the networks can also be a result of work-family conflicts (Eagly & Carli, 2008). Many of these key networks meet after work when women have family obligations that make it impossible for them to join.

Breaking into these networks is hard because, as described by literature, these networks are composed entirely or almost entirely of men formed as a result of the "old boy's network" and are almost entirely centred on masculine activities (Ibarra, 1993; Eagly & Carli, 2008). For example, executive activities could involve playing golf, fishing, and visiting strip clubs which are activities that are not women-friendly (Eagly & Carli, 2008). In addition, there are fewer women in higher positions to mentor other women in subordinate positions, and thus women have inadequate access to informal networks (Noe, 1988; Kolade & Kehinde, 2013). This has created a barrier for women striving to climb the corporate ladder (McTavish & Miller, 2006). In that regard, it is critical that women in leadership positions support other young women aspiring to be leaders, and forge relationships with women so as to share advice on how to create a work-life balance, how to overcome gender bias and other issues that a male mentor may not be able to address (Stroppe & Hagemaan, 2011).

**Mentoring**

A mentor has been defined as a seasoned employee in the organisation who assits a new employee to adjust to the new job and to advance in the organisation (Aamodt, 2013). In that regard, a mentor is usually an individual who is in a higher position and is sometimes older than the person being mentored (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2006). This definition highlights that the mentor is an experienced person giving guidance to an inexperienced individual. Mentoring can be formal or informal. Informal mentoring occurs when two

individuals form a natural relationship, and formal mentoring is organised and monitored by the employer (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2006).

The mentor offers counselling and support to the mentee on career development and the right career path to follow (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2006). The mentorship relationship often ends up with the mentee and mentor forming a lifelong relationship that assits the mentee in decision-making (Clutterbuck, 2001). Individuals who have mentors find that they have greater career success than someone without a mentor (McTavish & Miller, 2006). This is because mentors are essential for providing emotional support and confidence during the early years of a mentee's career thus allowing the mentee a platform to demonstrate his/her competence (Furnham, 1997). In addition, the mentor brings the mentee to "the attention of top management, a necessary step for advancement. They also protect protégés from the repercussion of errors, and help them to avoid situations that may be risky for their careers" (Furnham, 1997, p. 339).

Mentors also benefit from the mentor-mentee relationship. For instance, they can get recognition from others in the organisation for nurturing young talent (Furnham, 1997). The mentorship relationship is instrumental in promoting a young person's career (Furnham, 1997). It can be inferred that mentorship is needed in the development of leadership skills.Women have less access to mentors than men do since there are fewer women in executive positions to mentor other young women, and many males in a position to mentor women avoid such relationships to avoid misinterpretations such a relationship can cause, especially if it is an older man mentoring a young attractive female (Furnham, 1997). In addition, women in a position to mentor others avoid mentoring as it would put them under scrutiny from others and jeopardise their careers, especially if the mentee is unsuccessful as it would reflect negatively on the mentor. It can be deduced that this puts women at a serious disadvantage as it deprives them of a vital source of support. A study conducted by Palgi and

Moore (2004) found that women who had male mentors had greater success gaining access to key networks than if they had female mentors. Thus if women are mentored it can be inferred that their leadership potential to lead transformational initiatives increases.

To sum up, the lack of mentoring might impact on women from reaching senior leadership positions and this explains why there are fewer women in management positions globally and in South Africa.

**Demands of family life**

For many women the demands of family life are a barrier to getting into leadership positions (McTavish & Miller, 2006). Working women still continue to face difficult choices between family and career (LaPointe, 2000). Work-family conflict may be described as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). This conflict between work and family can lead to stress that can negatively affect women's aspirations for climbing the corporate ladder (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Women might find it difficult to balance the demands of family responsibilities and work responsibilities (McTavish & Miller, 2006). Although some men do share in household duties, the bulk of domestic chores fall on the shoulders of women (McTavish & Miller, 2006). According to Hochschild (1989), because of the unequal distribution of household work, women are said to work an additional shift at home in addition to their shift at work. Despite many fathers taking on the responsibility of child caring, the bulk of the work of raising a family does not stop for most women (McTavish & Miller, 2006). Even though men are taking more responsibility, they are seen as "helping out" rather than, "assuming real responsibility" for homemaking and child care (Greenhaus, Callanah, & Godshalk, 2000). This has been replaced by pressures for more intensive parenting styles and the increasing

demands of high-level careers (Eagly & Carli, 2008). However it should be noted that women are helped to raise families by nannies, fathers and other care givers. Thus although the primary role is the responsibilities of mothers , working women can employ nannies and au pairs to assist in taking care of the children whilst they are working.

The stress and pressures resulting from balancing family life and career demands can restrict a woman's career accomplishments in many ways. For instance, many mothers reduce their career involvement in an effort to reduce the work-family conflict by perhaps refusing promotions that require travel and/or additional hours at the office. They even stop working temporarily while they raise their families (Greenhaus et al., 2000). Consequently, women face a "family penalty" because their family responsibilities impact on their career choices (Greenhaus et al., 2000, p. 298). This penalty is often self-imposed because women voluntarily give up their career aspirations to factor in their family responsibilities. However, decision-makers can also discriminate against women because employers believe women have domestic responsibilities that make it difficult or inappropriate to promote them to demanding positions; employers are likely to see them as a poor fit for demanding roles (Greenhaus et al., 2000). Thus less investment in mentoring and coaching is provided for women (Greenhaus et al., 2000). It can be deduced from the above notions that women are disadvantaged as a result of trying to find a balance between work and family responsibilities.

In addition to taking responsibility of the bulk of domestic chores, women who become pregnant during their career will take time off for maternity leave and sometimes a few extra years to spend time with their growing children (Appelbaum, Shapiro, Didus, Luongo, & Paz, 2013). This will make it difficult for them to advance into leadership positions after having left work for a long period, and this is made even more difficult as a result of continuous family responsibilities (Appelbaum et al., 2003). Women are often limited in accepting positions that are far away from home as they need to take their children from home to school

(Appelbaum et al., 2003). Thus women often turn down jobs that involve travel or different geographical regions so as to be able to be in close proximity to their children and their activities (Appelbaum et al., 2003).

The most difficult part of balancing work and home is that it makes it difficult to have time for socialising with colleagues and building professional networks. This supports the notion that social networks are vital for progression and career advancement.

However, contrary to the above, a recent report by the Families and Work Institute has it that women of the millennial generation are ambitious and are just as likely to want jobs with greater responsibility despite the fact that they might have children at home. This can be explained by the fact that there is greater support now in the workplace for women with kids than ever before. Organisations are establishing crèches and child-minding facilities in the workplace and this affords more and more women the opportunity to be able to manage a work-life balance (Greenhaus et al., 2000).

## Strategies used to ensure equitable representation in leadership positions in local government

In order to get more representation of women in municipalities, local authorities provide incentives to retain and attract women in leadership positions. There is a need for intervention from government and municipalities to eradicate all the stereotyping and barriers affecting women to enter leadership positions. Understanding the facts that affect women's well-being at work will help in fostering a positive work-life balance (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012). Work-life balance is of importance due to the large number of women who have entered the workforce (Ashleigh & Mansi, 2012). Eradicating barriers that affect women should be of concern to most employers who want to attract and retain the best employees (Arnold & Randall, 2010). Carbrera (2009) gives some suggestions on how organisations

can retain women employees. These could be flexible working conditions, care-giving benefits, leave or time-off policies, job sharing, maternity leave, and onsite care facilities.

## Flexitime, telecommuting and part-time positions

Carbrera (2009) has suggested that organisations must come up with a new perspective on viewing where and how an individual works. This involves looking at flexitime, telecommuting, and the introduction of part-time jobs and reduced hours. It can be surmised that the idea of the traditional workplace should change from the office area to working from home and allowing employees, especially women, to work reduced hours to cater for their multiple roles.

The most important need for working women is a flexible working environment (Carbrera, 2009). The main idea of flexitime is to give employees a choice on when to arrive at or depart from work (Muchinsky, 2006). The system is designed in such a way that everyone must be available during certain designated hours and flexible in others (Muchinsky, 2006). Flexitime can allow women the flexibility to be able to control their working hours and enable them to leave work and/or come in later in order to fulfil their responsibilities at home (Carbrera, 2009). In a study cited by Muchinsky (2006), conducted by Narayannan and Nath (1982), flexitime was found to be of benefit to working mothers and dual-career families.

## Care-giving and maternity leave

Another strategy of retaining women employees involves the idea of care-giving, maternity leave and re-entry into the workplace after maternity leave. Women should be afforded a longer period of maternity leave and given support when re-entering the workplace (Carbrera, 2009). In addition, employers should be in constant communication with women

who have temporarily left the workplace in order to rehire them should opportunities arise (Carbrera, 2009). Many organisations are not open to hiring women who have left the workplace and should start recognising the value of rehiring these, often highly skilled, women (Carbrera, 2009). Organisations should recognise that the skills that women acquire during childrearing such as multitasking, negotiating, and empathic listening can be transferrable and of immense value to the workplace. Thus organisations should be supportive of the demands that childrearing poses for women (Carbrera, 2009).

Organisations can introduce on-site childcare facilities that cater for employees' young children and after-school facilities targeted at older children (Muchinsky, 2006). According to Muchinsky (2006), organisations can develop such centres for their own employees or in collaboration with other organisations. Organisations that have introduced such facilities have seen considerable gains in reduced absenteeism, stress, and employee turnover (Levy, 2010). Many organisations have introduced family leave, and in local government the law provides for leave for the birth or adoption of a child, care for a spouse or a parent or child with serious health conditions. This law is invaluable to parents with new-born children. According to Carbrera (2009), organisational culture should be supportive of women who choose alternative ways of working and should change to accommodate committed employees. It should no longer be perceived that only the employee who is willing to arrive early and leave late is the committed employee (Carbrera, 2009). Thus organisations should reward managers and leaders who are supportive of and responsive to the needs of their employees. Managers, especially male managers, should then also be role models; they could also telecommute or sometimes leave early or arrive later in order to support their families (Carbrera, 2009). This could send a message to all employees that it is acceptable to take flexitime and therefore change the traditional career model (Carbrera, 2009).

## Affirmative action policies

It has been very difficult for women to achieve positions in leadership without the intervention of the government and other structures such as Oxfam and the United Nations. The South African government has introduced structures to ensure that women are represented equally in all spheres of government. In South Africa, before 1994, local government was characterised by a workforce that was divided in terms of race and gender (Van der Westhuizen & Wessels, 2011). Thus "restoring legitimacy and credibility through the development of a broadly representative public service has become a major policy drive in the South African public service. "Thus affirmative action policies for the South African public service were introduced for the first time in 1994 (Van der Westhuizen & Wessels, 2011, p. 159). In addition, a representative workforce would be in line with the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) which states that public administration must be representative of the South African people.

"In its broadest meaning the phrase affirmative action is now generally understood to refer to the practice of favourably considering an individual's status as a woman, or as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group. Affirmative action is designed to aid those that have suffered historical and widespread mistreatment in the form of both de jure and de facto discrimination. Affirmative action may also be described as a temporary policy embraced by government, businesses and universities as a means of achieving true equal opportunity. Affirmative action policies are frequently used in awarding business contracts, in hiring and promotions, and in university admissions and granting of scholarships" (Starks 1992, p.939). It means that organisations should have equal representations of people from all groups, and this includes women. Affirmative action principles imply that women are to be employed in all levels of organisations, including in leadership positions.

Affirmative action measures in South Africa are determined by a number of legislations such as The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), The Employment Equity Act (1998), and The White Paper on Affirmative action in the Public Service (1998). As a result of these structures, South Africa is known internationally for its policies that seek to ensure the equitable representation of women (Beall, 2004). The above-mentioned Acts are reviewed below.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) lays down the fundamental values on which the Republic of South Africa is founded and includes, among others, non-sexism. The equality clause ensures that no unfair discrimination of persons can take place as everyone is equal under the law and have the right to equal protection and benefit under the law.

It is stated in Chapter 1, Sections 1(a) and (b) that:

"The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic State founded on the following values:

(a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.

(b) Non-racialism and non-sexism."

(Constitution of the republic of South Africa, 1996)

It stipulates that no one can be discriminated against unfairly on the basis of their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, conscience, belief, culture, and birth. This provision in the Constitution of South Africa protects everyone against unfair discrimination, including disadvantaged groups such as women. Discrimination is only allowed if it is an inherent requirement of the job. In this study, women in leadership positions were protected by legislation against any form of discrimination. Personnel management practices in local government are designed in such a

way that the imbalances of the past are redressed and are in fact governed by laws such as the Public Service Law Amendment Act (1997) and the Employment Equity Act (1998).

Chapter 2, Section 9(3) states, "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

**Employment Equity Act (1995)**

This is further enhanced in the Employment Equity Act (1995) which seeks to achieve equality in the workplace by the elimination of unfair discrimination to ensure that all groups are equally represented through the implementation of affirmative action measures.

It is stated in Section 5, on the elimination of unfair discrimination, that:
"Every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice" (Employment Equity Act, 1995).

Thus, Section 15(1) of the Employment Equity Act (1995), states:
"Affirmative measures are measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace of a designated employ."

Section 15(2) of the Employment Equity Act (1995, p. 9) states:
"Affirmative action measures implemented by a designated employer must include-

(a) Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affect people from designated groups;
(b) Measures designated to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people;

(c) Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workplace of a designated employer;

(d) Subject to subsection (3), measures to-

i. Ensure the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce…"

Thus affirmative action is "generally designed with three goals in mind: To eliminate existing discrimination against minorities and women; to remedy the lingering effect of past discrimination against these groups; and to prevent future discrimination against these groups" (Starks 1992, p. 940).

This is monitored by the government. In addition to the Employment Equity Act, the South African government also introduced a bill that is concerned with the empowerment of women and gender equality known as the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (2013). The aim of the bill is to promote equality of all people, including instilling measures of promoting gender equality and measures to empower women and eliminate discrimination.

## Quotas for women

Quotas for women seek to ensure that a certain number of women are represented in committees and governmental bodies. According to Mncayi (2006), in March 2005 South Africa officially launched the 50/50 Campaign – get the Balance Right! This campaign is in line with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) protocol on gender and development which states that countries must have 50% women in all decision-making positions in the public and private sectors by 2015. This is in line with the aims of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations to promote gender rights that all municipalities in South Africa seek to attain by 2015. The campaign aims to concretely

address the issue of women's under-representation in political decision-making, and to confront the structural and cultural barriers that impede women's access to decision-making and leadership positions. This campaign has raised awareness and has resulted in the ruling party's decision on the 50% quota for women in local government as well as the calling of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) for 50% representation for women in local government (Mncayi, 2006).

## Aim of the study

The study aimed to explore the transformational initiatives women leaders implemented in local government, and sought to explore factors that either enabled or hindered women leaders in local government to be agents of change.

## Research question

What are the experiences of women leaders as they implement transformational initiatives in local government?

# Chapter Three

## Methodology

This section discusses the methodology of the research. It looks at the qualitative research method which was the method chosen for the study. The advantages of a qualitative research method are discussed. The method of analysing data is discussed, looking specifically at the interview methods used in the study. Thematic content analysis and the process involved in conducting thematic content analysis are discussed. This leads to sampling and a description of the participants that were interviewed for the research. Finally, ethical considerations are looked at. This involves issues such as permission, sensitive issues, and informed consent.

## Research design

The study used a qualitative research method. A qualitative method describes "an array of interpretative techniques that attempt to describe and clarify the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena and is by design rather than open-ended and interpretive" (Gibson et al., 1994). The qualitative researcher relies on first-hand accounts and tries to describe in detail what is happening (Blanche, Durrheim, & Paimter, 2006). According to Creswell (1994), one of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study is to explore how people behave in the manner that they do.

A qualitative method is the best method to investigate issues where little is known about the experiences of people (Blanche, Durrheim, & Paimter, 2006). Not much has been written about the impact of women leaders in the transformational projects of local government. Thus the researcher sought to explore the experiences of women leaders in local government in order to gain an understanding of the transformational initiatives that women leaders are involved in. Qualitative research is about developing a detailed understanding of

individuals' views, attitudes, and behaviour; therefore, the researcher soughts to listen to the participants and build an understanding based on their ideas (Creswell, 1994). It can be concluded from the foregoing that the information obtained from qualitative research is in-depth, non-numerical and subjective (Blanche et al., 2006).

## Advantages of qualitative research method

The advantages of qualitative research include a straightforward and flexible method that allows a better and richer understanding of phenomena, and one can learn from specific cases in the research in order to gain a more holistic picture (Blanche et al., 2006). Qualitative research studies phenomena in their natural setting rather than in a laboratory setting, and thus individuals are studied as they go about their daily lives (Blanche et al., 2006). The qualitative researcher is required to become closely associated with the situation or problem being investigated (Gibson et al., 1994). In that regard, the researcher interviewed the women leaders at their places of work, in their offices, and interacted with the participants in an open manner (Blanche et al., 2006).

Qualitative research has been critiqued for being less scientific and therefore less reliable and valid as quantitative data (Blanche et al., 2006). However, qualitative researchers should attempt to be objective and remove any subjective biases towards their participants (Blanche et al., 2006). The research design was a phenomenological design. In a phenomenological research design, the researcher aims to understand a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participants, and this usually involves studying a small number of participants (Creswell, 1994). In addition, the researcher sets aside her own experiences and viewpoints in order to fully experience and understand those of the participants (Blanche et al., 2006).

The purpose of this study was to gather data regarding the perspectives of women leaders in local government about the phenomenon of transformational initiatives that the leaders are involved in. The phenomenological design was chosen to help understand the women leaders' experiences of working in local government.

## Participants and sampling

Participants were drawn from women leaders from all racial groups employed by a municipal authority in Gauteng, and the study sample was made up of eight women leaders working in local government. The women's ages ranged from 36 to 55 years of age. Of the eight women interviewed, four were married and had children. Two women were single mothers, and the other two were single women with no children. The women had tertiary qualifications; six of them had Master's degrees and two had Honours degrees. All the women were in senior management, with four of them reporting directly to the city manager. The women's roles were pivotal in decision-making as they represented the sectors they worked in. The women had been leaders for at least three years and were thus experienced in providing their opinions as leaders. The participants who were selected were those that were perceived as the drivers of change, those who showed a transformational leadership style and were involved in major projects in local governance. The participants regarded themselves as agents of change, and they described their leadership style as transformational. They were interested in participating in the study to share with others and express how they led transformational initiatives in a municipal authority.

The study was based on a large municipal authority in Gauteng. Sampling is the selection of research participants from an entire population and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours, and/or social processes are to be observed (Blanche, Durrheim & Paimter, 2006). The sampling method used for this study was

purposive sampling. The researcher handpicked the women leaders in the municipal authority; they would be able to provide the most valuable data as they were known for being transformational leaders (Denscombe, 2003). Handpicking the women leaders allowed the researcher to focus on participants who were able to "illuminate the research question at hand" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 16). Purposive sampling is designed to enhance the understanding of selected individual or group experiences, or for developing theories and concepts (Devers, 2000). This has the advantage of providing the researcher with "information rich" data that will provide greater insight into the research question (Devers, 2000)

## Instruments

An interview schedule was developed for this study was used to collect data from participants. (see Appendix 3). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the transformational initiatives implemented by women leaders in local government projects. The interview schedule (Appendix 3) comprised open-ended questions as this allowed the participants to be forthcoming and discuss freely their projects in the municipal authority (Creswell, 1994). The items asked participants to recount the projects that they led, how they got involved in the projects and what factors contributed or hindered the projects.

A face-to-face interview allowed the researcher to observe the nonverbal cues of the research participants, and any issues that needed clarification were then immediately attended to. Each interview lasted approximately one hour; however, this was just a guide as the length of an interview was determined by the information provided by the participant. The interviews were also audio-recorded, and the participants signed a consent form (Appendix 4) giving the researcher permission to record them. The data from the audio tapes were then stored in a password-protected safe which only the researcher and her supervisor had access to. Since this was an exploratory study, personal face-to-face interviews were held

individually with each of the women leaders. Interviewing participants is a more natural way of interacting with participants that enables researchers to get a thorough understanding of their experiences (Blanche et al., 2006). Semi-structured interviews were conducted at each individual women leader's workplace. Interviews were relatively easy to manage as ideas and opinions came from the participants which made it easier for the researcher to identify definite ideas with specific people (Denscombe, 2003). An interview schedule (Appendix 3) with open-ended questions was drafted in advance and adjusted during the interviews in order to afford the women leaders an opportunity to discuss in depth their own experiences and feelings (Blanche et al., 2006). This was unlike a structured interview where questions are mostly asked without adjustment as the researcher is mostly looking for straightforward information (Blanche et al., 2006). With the semi-structured interview the researcher was flexible and allowed the participants to speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher (Denscombe, 2003). Allowing the participants to speak their minds enabled the researcher to discover more about the women leaders in their transformational initiatives in local government (Denscombe, 2003). The interviews were mostly an hour long but this was ultimately determined by the information provided by the participant. Where the participant provided more information the interview ran into more than an hour, but where the participants had limited information the interview lasted less than an hour.

The interviews were then transcribed verbatim. This was done to ensure that there was no distortion of what the women leaders had said. During the interview the researcher constantly asked for clarity from the interviewees to ensure that she clearly understood them. The data was analysed thematically.

## Procedure

The relevant local government stakeholder was contacted for permission to gain access to the organisation. A letter addressed to the organisation (Appendix 1) as well as the letter

to the participant (Appendix 2) were attached to the email so that the stakeholder would be clear as to exactly what was expected of the participants. Once permission had been granted, a list of the participants' contact numbers and email addresses were then emailed to the researcher.

The participants were chosen based on the selection criteria that the researcher had given to the stakeholder. The researcher then contacted the women who had met the selection criteria. The participants were all in senior management positions. Due to their busy schedules-their calendars were mostly fully booked-many of the women had very little little time to devote to these interviews. Most of the women were either out of the country or travelling in another province. For those participants who agreed to participate in the study, times for the interviews were set for either very early in the morning before business started, during lunch, or after working hours. Due to urgent matters that cropped up unexpectedly and demanded their immediate attention, at least four of them cancelled their scheduled interviews at the last minute. Though the women were willing to participate, the nature of their busy schedules did not permit them to meet with the researcher.

The researcher managed to book definite interviews for eight women, but these appointments had to be booked three to four months in advance. The last participant was interviewed in early January 2014, yet the researcher had booked her interview as far back as August 2013. When the interviews were booked the researcher then met with the participants in their respective offices. One-on-one interviews were conducted. Immediately after the interview the researcher transcribed the recording. After all the interviews had been concluded, the researcher analysed the data thematically and wrote down the results. The method of analysis is explained in detail in the next section.

**Data analysis**

Thematic content analysis is a method that is concerned with collecting, analysing and interpreting data by observing what people say and do (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic content analysis is a suitable and reliable method for analysing qualitative data which provides rich data which the researcher must identify and analyse, and then report on the common themes that emerged from the data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic content analysis involves much more than analysing themes drawn from the data as it also involves inferring numerous aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic content analysis is a method that reports the real experiences of the participants and how the participants derive meaning from these experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic content analysis can thus be viewed as a method that looks at the deeper aspects of the participants' experiences and does not merely analyse superficial experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A theme in thematic content analysis explores information that is crucial about the data relating to the research question, and assists in creating meaning to the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As this is a qualitative research, a theme does not have to appear in all the data sets, and there is no hard-and-fast rule that prescribes a percentage for a theme that is prevalent in all the data sets for it to be considered a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence a theme might be present in one data set and not in another (Braun &Clarke, 2006). In essence, it is at the researcher's discretion whether a theme is to be considered as a theme or not. It is, however, vital that the researcher be consistent and truthful in choosing and reporting the particular themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes chosen should represent the data accurately (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In conducting thematic analysis, the researcher followed a step-by-step process as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase involved familiarisation and

immersion with the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the process of collecting the data the researcher became familiar with the data set and tried to understand the meaning of the data obtained from the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2009). Immersion with the data set involved the researcher repeatedly going over the data set to get a deeper understanding of the data, and exploring themes that were likely to be found in the data set and what are not (Blanche et al., 2006). This was a time-consuming process as the researcher had to go over the data set repeatedly. This explains why qualitative researchers tend to use smaller samples than quantitative researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step was crucial as it set the foundation for the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This step also involved transcribing the interviews into text form so that a thematic analysis could be done (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These audio recordings assisted the researcher in analysing all non-verbal and verbal cues gleaned from the interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The material was transcribed by a transcriber, and the researcher spent time familiarising herself with the data in order to verify that the transcriptions were accurate (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once familiarisation with the data had taken place, the second phase began. This phase involved the construction of first codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which involved arranging the data into similar groups (Braun & Clarke, 2009). Coding was done manually, and all data was coded by highlighting pieces of the text with coloured pens and recording annotations in the margins (Blanche et al., 2006). It was also important to note inconsistencies and contradictions in the coding process as this is part of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once all the data had been coded, the third phase began which involved analysing, sorting, and categorising the coded data into similar themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes were represented by the use of tables and or mind maps.

As the themes started to emerge from the data it became clear that some could be categorised into subthemes, and is was noted that some were not related to any of the other themes. It was important not to discard any other codes at this stage. This phase led into the fourth phase which involved revising the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some themes were merged to form broader themes that were more meaningful while some of the themes needed to be separated to form independent meaningful themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data within themes should fit together and themes must be distinguishable.

Once this had been done, themes were revisited and checked again to see if the themes that had emerged from the data were related to the theoretical framework and fit in with the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At the end of this phase it became clear what the themes were and how they related to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This led to phase five which entailed identifying the crux of each theme, what was interesting about each theme, and writing a detailed analysis for each one (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were analysed in reference to the research questions, care was taken to ensure that there was no duplication of themes, and that the themes and subthemes were connected to each other (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done by describing and naming the themes. The final phase involved the writing of the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The report writing gave a logical, concise, and interesting account of the data that captured the essence of the themes in a simple and vivid manner (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The report writing did not merely describe the themes but also provided arguments related to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## Ethical considerations

Ethics is defined as a "set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group" (Devos, 2001). The study benefits society and causes no harm to the participants and society. This research started with the researcher seeking for ethical clearance. In order to

do that, she drafted a proposal which outlined the rationale of the study, a brief overview of relevant literature pertaining to the study, the research question, aims of the study, and a description of the methodology to be used as well as the ethical considerations and how the research will deal with these ethical considerations. The proposal was then submitted to The School of Human and Community Development's ethics committee to determine if the research could proceed. Permission was granted.

Permission was sought from the proposed local government's human resource department in the form of an introductory letter from the researcher's university to the organisation requesting access, introducing the research topic, and stating the purpose of the research. Once permission was granted, letters of invitation were sent to the research participants inviting them to participate in the research informing them of the research purpose, what information was being sought, and explaining the implications and ethical considerations as they impact on the participants. The researcher provided participants with her telephone number and email address should they have wished to ask any questions. Attached to the letters to participants was a consent form (Appendix 4) which had to be read carefully, signed, and emailed back to the researcher or collected by the researcher during the interviews. Participants kept copies of the consent forms and returned the originals to the researcher.

Ethical considerations regarding sensitive issues were adhered to at all times in the research. Before interviews commenced, participants were informed in writing and in person by the researcher of the purpose of the research and the voluntary nature of their participation, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions and to seek clarity concerning any issues they did not understand before allowing the researcher to interview them. They were advised that at any time during the study they could decline to answer any questions. Informed consent is an

ethical requirement of all research studies (TerreBlanche et al., 2006), and participants confirmed their consent by signing the consent forms. Participants were informed that participation is voluntary, that no reward would be offered to them in any form, and that no harm or penalty would apply to them for refusing to participate in the research (TerreBlanche et al., 2006).

Informed consent will assure participants of the parameters of confidentiality of information they supplied. To ensure confidentiality during the interview process, participants were asked to use a pseudonym and to be selective when defining characteristics that could identify them (Blanche et al., 2006). Participants were also asked to fill in a demographic form where they were allowed to use their pseudonyms. This assisted the researcher in compiling information about the participants. The participants were assured that the transcribed data would be stored in a password-protected computer to which only the researcher her supervisor would have access.

Participants were told that the results would be published in a research report which would take careful attention of not violating the rights of the participants. Only a summary results would published in the research report and will be given to the organisation in the form of an executive summary. A summary of results will also be available to the participants on request. The participants agreed that the results may be published, especially where the researcher might want to use a substantive quotation to substantiate the results. However, it was agreed that quotes would be sanitised so that they were not traceable back to the specific participant. Data were stored in the password-protected computer for two years after publication of the research report.

The study was therefore carried out in a responsible manner, abiding by the values of honesty, clarity, comprehensiveness, accountability, and openness to public scrutiny.

# Chapter Four

## Results

This chapter presents the findings obtained in this study. The themes that emerged from transcribing the interviews are reported. The transformational initiatives that emerged are presented in relation to mentoring, networking, transformation, style of leadership, continual leadership, and projects that the women were involved in.

### Transformation as a process that involved change

The women leaders identified transformation as a theme and they defined transformation as a process that involved change. It was agreed by most of the leaders that transformation involved the human agency and behavioural change. According to the women, transformation was about people and how people changed their mind-sets when new projects were being implemented. Transformation was perceived as a collective agreement for the collective benefit. According to the majority of the women, the projects that they were involved in required a transformative approach. This is by virtue of the fact that they worked in local government that faced transformation challenges.

Participant 1 said, "*Everything in local government is transformational, work in local government is a monopoly and there is no other choice of supplier, you either use the road or there is no choice of another road, hence it is transformational to offer basic services to people who do not have those services, making sure that there is water, so that women do not spend time fetching water. I find that creating that security of supply for services is transformational."*

This sentiment was echoed by Participant 4 who said, *"When you reach transformation you will not have the disparity between the rich and poor where some sleep on empty stomach and some eat lobster."* Participant 4's description of transformation was equated to

bridging the gap between rich and poor and that this was established through the creation of employment. Creation of employment would ensure that everyone is afforded the chance to put "*bread on the table.*''

The women emphasised that an effective and sustainable transport system would be a powerful instrument that local government could use to transform municipal authority. Transport was regarded as important in freeing communities from poverty. It was noted that it was through transport that communities gained economic freedom as it was used to travel to and from work, schools, and universities. Participants recognised that the introduction of a well-functioning transport system, essential in connecting communities to places of business, schools and other educational institutions, was a powerful initiative that the City of Johannesburg had embarked on.

The participants also agreed that transformation can only be called transformation if it is sustainable and beneficial to society. For instance, Participant 1 was involved in the conceptualisation of the Bus Rapid Transit System. This was instrumental in ensuring that commuters had a reliable and safe transportation system. Participant 2 was involved in the provision of electricity, and Participant 3 was instrumental in the removal and collection of garbage.

Through her leadership the municipal authority had introduced a recycling project, and they liaised with local vendors in the recycling of material that they had collected. This transformed the vendors "*life in that they now could have a service to deliver and earn an income*."

According to the participants, sustainable transformation involves continuity and continual messaging. This implies that the people whose services are being transformed have to maintain these services. In addition to continuity, sustainable transformation involves

being reflective in the manner in which one implements processes. For transformation to be sustainable one has to keep abreast of changes through continuous training and development.

**Involvement of women leaders in projects**

The second theme identified by the women was involvement in projects, from conception to maturity. The women interviewed were all involved in one or more initiatives/projects. As most of them were in senior management, they were involved in the transformation, mostly by virtue of their positions. Almost all of the participants worked in senior management, levels 2 and 3. They were either executive heads of departments reporting to the city manager (executive directors) or directors reporting to the executive heads. By virtue of being in senior management they were then directly involved in projects. Women were now involved in conception of projects and this was transformational in the sense that previously this was a male dominated environment previously denied to women.

The women explained that the projects are directed by the national agenda which guides the leaders on what projects to initiate and how and when to initiate. The projects were influenced by politics and Participant 6 noted that, "*we work in a political environment and these political influences affect how we operate and which projects get put on the agenda. One needs to be aware of what government is pushing.*" Through collective agreement the management teams reach an agreement on which projects to implement that would serve as a roadmap to implement the city's vision. However, the municipal authority in which the women leaders worked, promoted innovation and encouraged women to be trendsetters in innovation.

Participant 5 said, *"It is innovation that we are known for. So my role includes knowledge management and innovation, because we thought that let's grow knowledge*

*management and innovation to support the strategic objectives. So whatever we are going in terms of strategy must include innovation."*

This was echoed by Participant 10, who claimed that "*the municipal authority is known for trying out things that have not been tested before. So we know that, as a leader in this authority you have to try new project, you are given an opportunity to introduce new projects by virtue of the authority's vision of being innovative."*

The municipal authority provided women leaders with a platform to initiate projects. None of them reported being prejudiced as a result of having come up with a project. Out of the eight women interviewed, three had initiated their own projects and these projects were ground-breaking, such that they were then implemented in other municipal divisions. For instance, the recycling project, where residents are expected to sort garbage into different bins according to the recycling need, is being rolled out in other divisions. In addition, one of the participants was spearheading the design and conceptualisation of The Smart City. Most of the participants explained that they were also involved in initiatives that were more of a social nature, benefitting workers that were of a lower rank. For instance, one of the participants explained that she had initiated a project that involved teaching women sweepers to drive so that they could become drivers. This was transformational in that women could now compete for driving jobs and could be able to operate in a platform that they did not operate in before. Another explained that her project was involved in teaching communities that lived in squatter camps how to recycle and involve the squatter camp communities in recycling.

**Women style of leadership in local government**

Style of leadership was another theme identified by the women. According to the women leaders, style of leadership is defined as how they lead, motivate, and what method

they use to instil discipline to ensure that their subordinates are committed to achieving the vision. There was uniformity among the women as to the type of leadership style they used.

Most of the women leaders saw themselves as giving direction and motivating their subordinates to excel. They all acknowledged that as leaders they focused on maintaining relationships and using these relations to exert their influence in a meaningful manner. They regarded themselves to be people-oriented. They realised that they were not capable of doing everything themselves, so they surrounded themselves with experts in different specialities, and through their delegative leadership they delegated tasks to their subordinates. As leaders they offered a supportive role, providing guidance when needed. Most of them had an open-door policy and they listened to their subordinates with an empathetic ear. When their subordinates suggested ideas of how business should be done they incorporated these ideas and were not dismissive.

Participant 6 said, "*I need to give direction to the innovation and knowledge management team, the strategy team, monitoring and evaluation team, so to be able to do that I focus on the strategic vision and just direct."*

Participant 7 also said, "*I recognise the strength and weakness of my team and capitalise on that. I provide the support they need in order for them to work optimally."*

**Managing relationships**

Most of the leaders surrounded themselves with competent teams and capitalised on their strengths. They identified and remedied possible weaknesses. In order to do this it was vital to have good inter-personal skills as leaders constantly managed relationships.

Participant 8 added that, "*leadership entail that I know every member of my team on an individual basis and have formed a relationship with each one of them. I know what makes*

*each member of my team tick and what motivates each one. That way it is building their loyalty in getting them to commit to organisational goals."*

Participants explained that a leader has to have good communication skills in order to maintain relationships. The women leaders recognised that it was important to treat subordinates as experts as they dealt with processes on a daily basis, and it was up to them as leaders to lead them in the direction that the organisation prescribed. As leaders the women have to be decisive. Subordinates looked to them for information and hence they were expected to be knowledgeable. They would represent the municipal manager in some situations, so they were accountable for upholding the city's vision, values, and ethos. As spokespersons of the city, they had to "carry the flag high" and to be successful in that regard they needed emotional and psychological strength in order to lead their teams.

The participants also pointed out that as leaders it was important to negotiate, compromise, and build collaborative relationships with subordinates. They said the same skills were required when dealing with both internal and external clients of the organisation. The soft skills, or human relations skills, were important when negotiating with different stakeholders and dealing with subordinates.

Participant 8 said, "*You know when you are married, you know that there are battles that are not worth it, and that makes you so valuable in the corporate environment, that you know that this is not a battle that I want to be in, and in particular if you work with politicians…"*

**Women versus men in municipal authority leadership**

Most of the leaders agreed that they led differently from men. Participant 8 said, "*I am not dominant. I don't know all the answers, so although I am leading the projects I allow for inputs and that way I know everyone is involved in the process*."

This was supported by Participant 7 who said, "*Male leaders are very authoritarian or undemocratic and as such one would find that their subordinates tended to change departments a lot."*

This was also supported by Participant 6 who said, "*As a woman I lead differently from men. I lead in a way to deliver. The leadership style I adopt is one that is instrumental for change*"

Participant 6 agreed with most of the participants that leadership is a function of gender. To women leaders, relationship-building is essential to any leadership style, and she pointed out that relationship-building is a most effective way in managing her subordinates. As such she described her leadership style as a transformational leadership style as she is not just concerned about the "bottom end".

Participant 3 concurred and said, "*The empathy that you have, helps you to pull the teams together and you need that in this environment. You need to understand how human emotion work, it is emotional intelligence that women possess. There is more than what meets the eye in the accomplishment of goals."*

## Networking and mentoring

For transformation to occur, networking was cited as gaining support from groups within the workplace. The network had a developmental impact on individual progress as it facilitated growth and career development. The participants also identified mentors as the people who worked side by side with them, especially colleagues from a higher level that guided the women leaders. In addition, mentors were also friends, relatives, and associates from the community who assisted them in developing their personal strengths and identified their weaknesses in order to reach optimal functioning within their professional careers. It was agreed that very often mentors ended up being close allies throughout their careers.

Almost all of the participants noted that networks were vital in climbing the corporate ladder; they noted that although they were all qualified and had Master's or Honours degrees it took someone in senior management to notice their potential for them to get the opportunity to be promoted. It was noted that it was very important for an individual to come highly recommended as this facilitated a smooth transition into leadership.

Participant 4 explained that, "*One executive noticed how I always came up with solutions for issues raised and he approached me saying I was the kind of person he wanted in his organisation so I applied and went through the process and got accepted."*

Participant 6 also said, "*I was working under the mentorship of the CEO and he just steered me in the right direction."*

Participant 8 said that, "*I identified someone who would mentor me as I was new in local government and I knocked on his door and asked for guidance."*

According to the participants, having a mentor was essential as this provided the support network that one needed and this was vital as a learning opportunity. Participants reported that they actively sought to be mentored by experienced senior executives. They also recognised that as women leaders they should actively seek networks and connections with other people, especially with senior people who can assist them with their career development. According to the participants, this was made easier by the fact that the municipal authority they worked for had a high number of women in executive position. As such one has an opportunity to actively seek out these leaders so that they can be mentored. Gender, race, and colour have not been an impediment for these participants in order to progress.

According to the participants, a mentor is very important for an individual's growth as one learns from the mentor's mistakes.

As participant 4 said, "*A mentor is someone who can give guidance in difficult situations. I get someone to bounce off my ideas and that is a platform for me to learn.*

Participant 5 said, *"I sit with my mentor on a monthly basis. I share my decision-making with her and she also tries to instil some discipline in the way I do things. I am learning from her to do things differently. For instance, she will say to me, 'look at the bigger picture here, how does that decision impact on your team on your objectives? How about if you implement it this way?' So she is guiding me on how to do things."*

A mentor was described as someone who could help the participants to deal with processes and clarify the pros and cons of taking possible actions. It is especially important to have a mentor within the organisation because such a mentor understands the context of the organisational culture in which one operates and is thus able to relate to one's situation and give advice that is insightful, based on own experience.

Benchmarking is another factor related to mentoring and networking. The majority of the participants referred to their travels locally and abroad, and how they had observed and learnt from good practices which they then implemented in local government. This was especially aligned with the use of new technology, for instance, the digitalisation of the city and the creation of a Smart City Concept. The women pointed out that when they travelled to different parts of the world they would note what other local governments were doing to improve service delivery, and they would go as far as asking other cities to form a partnership with their municipal authority. Most participants concurred that benchmarking was vital for implementing transformational initiatives. The municipal authority is regarded as one of the leading authorities in terms of progress in transformational initiatives and as such other municipal authorities use the authority as a benchmark to implement projects. They explained that the success of the transport system has resulted in other cities implementing similar transport systems.

**Leadership continuity**

Continual leadership referred to the continuation of a leader's term in office. The majority of the participants noted that the success of their projects was hampered by the fact that there was a lack of continued leadership in local government. There was a different city manager every five years who often had new strategies, new processes of implementing these strategies, and a new vision.

The participants managed the change in leadership by having policies and procedures in place that would ensure continuity of projects. However, according to one participant, this change in leadership was not a stumbling block as it prevented the organisation from suffering from "organisational inertia."

Participant 1 said, "*Although leadership changes projects are often seen to term, management often does not change. So with a new leader the management team will bring him on board to projects that were underway before his term in office. In addition to that continuation of projects are enforced by the political leaders."*

In conclusion, in this section of the research, it was evident how women leaders viewed and dealt with transformational leadership in local government.

# Chapter 5

## Discussion

The research sought to explore the initiatives that women leaders in local government are involved in. The themes explored above in the results section offer insights into the experiences of women leaders in local government, their leadership styles and what transformational initiatives they are involved in. The responses of participants showed how women in leadership positions dealt with transformational initiatives in local government.

The findings from this study view transformation as a process that involves a change in the mind-sets of employees, providing equitable resources to all the citizens of a country. It emerged that transformation involves the daily lives of the ordinary person.

A major question in this study was what the transformational initiatives were that women leaders were involved in, and how they became involved in these transformational initiatives. The finding of this study was that women leaders in local government are indeed vital for the transformation of the municipal authority as women leaders undoubtedly contribute to transformational initiatives (Beall, 2004). The participants were involved in projects by virtue of their being in leadership positions. The women were involved in major projects such as The Bus Rapid Transit System, building of soccer stadiums, and the regeneration of the inner city, waste management, and the provision of basic services such as water, electricity, and building of roads, among other projects. This provided new insight into the initiatives that woman leaders in local government are involved in. Thus far no study has adequately explored the role of women leaders in a municipal authority or local government initiatives.

The findings from this study illustrate that leadership can be regarded as a catalyst in bringing about change, and that it is leadership, and not management, that changes organisations (Kotter, 2007). This is in agreement with the findings of Kotter (2007). The

participants in this study seemed to exhibit leadership characteristics that one might align with the transformational leadership style and thus this is in agreement with researchers such as Eagly (2007) and Lowe (2006). This is in agreement with the theory of transformational leadership which is a leadership style that is mostly associated with women since women are more democratic than men and likely to exert their influence through the building of relationships (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2008). This is similar to the study conducted by Judge and Piccoli (2004) where they determined that women are more likely to exhibit transformational leadership traits than their male counterparts. The participants in this study led through influencing and motivating their subordinates to excel. This is similar to how a transformational leader leads (Al-Mailam, 2004). A transformational leader inspires and motivates his subordinates to sacrifice individual goals for the benefit of organisational objectives (Bass, 1985).

Another factor which emerged from the research findings is that women in leadership are concerned with relationship-building. As leaders the participants used a variety of skills to maintain relationships. Communication skills and listening were vital skills to building relationships. This confirms the contention of Ashleigh and Mansi (2012) that women tend to have a leadership style which is more focused on the building of relations as women have an inclusive leadership style. Women see leadership as relational rather than power to be exercised over others (Irwin, 2008). As such this confirms arguments in literature that women are less likely to lead by exercising power over others but by being considerate of others which results in the formation of positive relations (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The findings of this study suggest that men and women lead differently. This confirms previous literature that contends that men and women lead differently (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The findings illustrate that women leaders exhibit a collaborative leadership style that is concerned with leading through collaborative behaviours (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women

leaders employ collaborative behaviour such as listing, discussion, compromise, and negotiation in their quest to encourage subordinates to perform and excel at organisational tasks. It is through these behaviours that leaders influence and inspire their subordinates in a positive manner, and inculcate a feeling of value and a sense of belonging, in the process contributing positively to organisational performance. This way of leading, substantiated in litereature, is seen as a feminine way of leading.

The findings of this study confirm previous literature that mentorring and networking are vital in the progression to leadership (Furnham, 1997). For the participants to progress into leadership positions, mentorship was vital as it provided them with support and guidance. In addition to mentorship, a good network supplied the participants with information that benefited their progress. This is similar to the benefits of networking and mentoring as identified by previous research. It is clear from the findings that a mentor is instrumental in building an individual's confidence and allowing him/her the platform to learn and to gain from the experiences of the mentor.

It also emerged from the findings of this research that continuation in leadership in local government is vital in ensuring continuity of projects and/or initiatives that are being implemented in local government. However, it was also noted that despite the lack of continuity in leadership processes and mechanisms such as policy and management, structures should be put in place to ensure that the initiatives continue despite change in leadership. This would ensure that initiatives were taken to completion. Once these mechanism were effected, a change in leadership would have little or no impact on an initiative once it has been put in place.

Local government was predominantly a male-dominant environment prior to the advent of the new South African Constitution, and is still basically a male-dominated environment despite the increased number of women in leadership as well as in in other levels (Amtaika,

2013). Stereotypes about women in leadership positions still exist. Although a platform is being provided for women to be in leadership positions in local government, women continue to face the "double bind" situation (Eagly, 2007). Women who exhibit female characteristics are still seen as ineffective leaders and are regarded as playing a mothering role. Thus the majority of the women leaders expressed that they had to assert themselves and sometimes be forceful in order to be seen as effective leaders. In addition, most of the women leaders were of the view that they had to work twice as hard as men in order to prove that they are equally effective.

**Limitations**

A limitation of this study is that it mainly focused on the woman in leadership in local government, specifically in one municipal authority. It would have been ideal to have had the study also look at other regions to see transformational initiatives in other authorities compared to this municipal authority.

Another limitation of the study is that the participants recounted their experiences from memory which may have had an effect on the scope or the accuracy of the information they provided to the researcher. It would also have been useful if they could have corroborated their accounts with their superiors and/or subordinates.

A limited number of women were interviewed for this study and as such the findings from the study cannot be generalised as the findings have not been statistically tested to determine whether the findings are significant or are a result of chance. However, as this is a qualitative study it was not the intention that the findings of the study be applied to the greater population in general (Denscombe, 2003). The intention of the researcher was to explore the transformational initiatives of women leaders in local government.

## Recommendations

The findings of this report were focused on the eight women leaders that the researcher interviewed. It is recommended that further studies should include women from other local governments as well. In addition, a study could be conducted to look at the followers of women leaders as they do not operate in a vacuum. Leadership depends on followers as well as other factors that also impact on how one leads.

It is suggested that a survey be conducted that compares women's leadership styles to those of men, to compare how women and men differ in their leadership styles, and to determine how these differences impact on the projects that they are involved in. A comparative study can also be done to compare the initiatives of men and women as this can provide a different perspective on initiatives men are involved in that may be different or similar to those that women are involved in.

It is recommended that women leaders in local government become aware of their leadership styles and how gender affects these leadership styles. In that way they can become more aware of how their leadership styles can be used to their advantage and gain a competitive edge over their male counterparts. This can also assist them to enhance their leadership skills, thus enhancing their performance. In that regard a study can be conducted that explores the strategies and policies that organisations can put in place to advance women in leadership and to support those that are in leadership positions. Organisations can be encouraged to put in place business practices that support and encourage women to lead.

Another area requiring further research would be a comparative assessment of South Africa's municipal projects with other cities in the developing world. This would facilitate benchmarking and modelling from other local governments.

## Conclusion

The study aimed to discover what transformational initiatives women leaders in local government were involved in. A qualitative study was conducted to explore the transformational initiatives of women leaders using semi-structured interviews. The themes identified provided insight into the projects that the women leaders were involved in. Benefits derived from this study could be that policy makers in local government could be sensitised and become aware of the role women in leadership positions play in shaping local government affairs and operations. Women leaders who have contributed to the success of local government should be rewarded for the work that they have done and should be show-cased in order to provide role models for young women aspiring to be leaders.

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**Appendix 1: Application to organisation**

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

10 May 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref: Application to use your Organisation for my Research

My name is Faith Chamisa-Maulana and I am completing my Master's Degree within the Department of Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In the fulfilment of this degree my area of research is designed to explore the *Transformational Initiatives initiated by Women Leaders in LocalGovernment*

I am writing to you to seek permission to gain access to women leaders in your organisation and also permission to interview them and audio tape the interviews.

Participation is voluntary and no employee will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to partake in the interviews. The participants will not be offered any reward or monetary compensation for taking part in the research.

Given that interviews will be conducted as a method of collecting data, there will be no anonymity as all participants will be known to the researcher. Their identity will only been known to the researcher and thus confidentiality will be guaranteed. In the interview the participants can refrain from answering some questions, if they so wish.

Your staff will be provided with demographic questionnaire as well as interview questions. The interview will take approximately an hour to complete. Participants will all be provided with a covering letters which outlines all the conditions of participation above. Written informed consent will be collected from all participants before the interviews are conducted. Your employees will be able to withdraw from the study should they desire to.

Responses will not be used for any other purposes other than research. The data collected from the interviews will be stored in a password protected computer which only the researcher and researcher's supervisor will have access to. I am willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement if the organisation feels that this is necessary. The results will be presented to the organisation, in a written report, as group trends, which make it impossible to identify any particular respondent.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute to a larger body of knowledge on the advancement for women in Local government. The research will also offer suggestions on how women Leaders in Local government impact positively in the transformation of Local government.

The research study is an independent study which will be conducted under the supervision of an Industrial Psychologist at Wits University. Please contact me should you have any further questions. If you wish to meet with me for a discussion and/or wish to see a copy of my interview questions please feel free to contact me and I will meet with you and/or provide you with the necessary details.

Kind regards

Faith Chamisa-Maulana

Master's Candidate

Department of Psychology

University of the Witwatersrand

Email: faith_maulana@hotmail. com

Cell: 0829970718

Supervisor: Dr Calvin Gwandure

Department of Psychology

University of the Witwatersrand

Email: calvin. gwandure@wits. ac. za

**Appendix 2: Letter to employees**

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

11June 2013

Dear Employee

My name is Faith Chamisa-Maulana and I am completing my Master's Degree within the Department of Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In the fulfilment of this degree my area of research is designed to explore the *Transformational Initiatives initiated by Women Leaders in Local Government*

Responses will not be used for any purposes, other than for this research. Written informed consent will be collected from all the participants before the interviews are conducted. You

will be able to withdraw from the study should you so desire. Please be assured that data will be solely used for academic purposes.

The results will be presented to the organisation, in a written report and will indicate group trends only. This will make it impossible to identify any particular respondent. Further, note that this research has been approved by your organisation.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or not to complete the interview.

Given that interviews will be conducted as a method of collecting data, there will be no anonymity as all participants will be known to the researcher. Confidentiality will be guaranteed as you can chose to use a pseudonym during the interview process. Anonymity will be guaranteed in reporting of results as results will be summarised as group trends.

Data will be collected in person. You will be asked interview questions. The interview will take approximately an hour to complete. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute to a deeper insight on the transformational initiatives implemented by women leaders in Local government.

The research study is an independent study which will be conducted under the supervision of an Industrial Psychologist at Wits University.

Kind regards

Faith Chamisa-Maulana

Masters Candidate

Department of Psychology

University of the Witwatersrand

Signature_____

Supervisor: Dr Calvin Gwandure

Signature_____

## Appendix 3: Interview schedule

Open ended questions will be asked in the interview. The following questions will be used to probe the women to gain an insight into the impact the women leader makes in the organisation

1. May you explain the hierarchy of the organisation and where you fall in?
2. Tell me about your position and the projects that you are leading?
3. What qualities do you possess that make you a Leader?
4. May you explain your leadership style?
5. What factors make you effective or ineffective as a leader?
6. Describe the project that you are involved in.
7. Explain the significance of the projects that you are involved in?
8. What factors are contributing to the success or hindering the projects?
9. What tools or knowledge do you need to be more effective depending on the answer from above?
10. In what way does your organisation provide a platform for you to excel in your job?
11. What projects would you change?

**Appendix 4: Consent form - Interview**

**RESEARCH TITLE-Women in Local government Initiatives: An analysis of transformational Initiatives**

**APPENDIX 4: Interview consent**

**RESEARCH TITLE-Women in Local government Initiatives: An analysis of transformational Initiatives**

**Consent form: Interview**

I_____ _____ consent to being interviewed by Faith Chamisa-Maulana for her study on Women Leaders in Local government. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary

- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to
- I may withdraw from the study at any time
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report
- My responses will remain confidential

Signed_____

## Appendix 5: Consent form – audio recording of interview

### Consent form: Recording of Interview

I_____ _____ consent to being interviewed by Faith Chamisa-Maulana for her study on Women Leaders in Local government. I understand that:

- The tapes and Transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be stored in a password word protected computer
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report

Signed _____

**Appendix 6: Demographic information**

Age:

Gender Female Male

Marital Status _____

Home Language _____

Length of service to organisation_____

Job Title_____

Employment Type Permanent Contract

Highest Level of Education_____