

EXPLORING PUBLIC RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY UNDER TWO POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1948–2006

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the provision of public recreation to the citizens of South Africa under two distinct political ideologies of 'Apartheid' and the current democratic political system. Results from this qualitative and descriptive study of public recreation provision under two distinct political ideologies in South African apartheid and democracy are presented. Five themes emerged from an inductive content analysis: Philosophy and policies of public recreation service provision; Governance of public recreation provision; Legislation related to public recreation provision; Public recreation programmes and initiatives; and Recreation training and education initiatives. Findings suggested that similarities and differences of service provision existed, and neither of the two ideologies succeeded in optimising public recreation provision as instruments of social transformation to support the notion that public recreation benefits all. Although the political ideology of democracy brought progress and structure in terms of recreation policy, legislation, education and training, fragmentation of governance structures, lack of coordination, and a myopic focus on physical recreation were evident under both ideologies. It seems as if most South African citizens continue to be excluded from recreation access and opportunities as a social space conducive to individual exploration, reflecting social, cultural intellectual and spiritual growth.

Key words: Public recreation provision; Apartheid ideology; Democracy.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

The South African socio-political landscape from 1948 to 1994 was dominated by the political ideology of 'Apartheid'. The notion of Apartheid is grounded in the idea of separateness or segregation of racial groups. The backbone of the apartheid political system was a legal framework aimed at protecting and perpetuating the dominance of people of European descent (whites) over people of non-European descents (Africans, Coloureds and Indians). Under the laws of Apartheid, people were classified into racial groups based upon skin colour and geographically and legally kept apart from each other. The idea of differentiated social development in South Africa originated from a religious perspective, but soon developed into a political ideology based on white supremacy and segregation. Although the ideology of Apartheid was legalised in 1948, the roots of the notion of separate development can be traced back to 1910 in the political manifesto of the South African Party

under the leadership of General Louis Botha (Giliomee, 2003). In 1948, when the white South African Nationalist Political Party came into power, the ideological political system of Apartheid was legalised and solidified the social exclusion of the majority of South Africans along racial lines. From 1948 to 1994, race and ethnicity became the gateways to access the basic human rights of freedom of movement, freedom of association and quality of life (Giliomee, 2003). The political ideology of apartheid applied to all facets of social life, including sport and recreation provision and participation, intertwining the history of the struggle against racial segregation in sport and recreation with political freedom. The exclusion of the majority of South Africans from access to and opportunity for sport and recreation participation in an open and fair manner gave impetus to the non-racial sport movement's struggle against apartheid sport.

The efforts and campaigns of the South African Sports Association (SASA) and the South African Non-Racial Olympic Congress (SANROC) spearheaded the struggle to normalise access to sport and recreation opportunities since the 1950s. This struggle is well documented in the body of literature on sport boycotts against South Africa (Nongogo, 2013). Although the apartheid political ideology segregated humans based on race and ethnicity, it did provide basic opportunities for participation in sport and recreation, albeit in segregated structures in the so-called "homelands" (geographic areas allocated for different ethnic groups). The universally accepted potential of socialisation, mobility, solidarity and social tolerance advocated by sport and recreation participation throughout the world, however, did not come to fruition in South Africa, resulting in a racially divided society.

The end of the political ideology of apartheid dawned in 1990 with the unbanning of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and other smaller political parties and the announcement of Nelson Mandela's unconditional release from prison (De Klerk, 2000). In 1994, the first democratic election in South Africa brought the African National Congress (ANC) to power. The Freedom Charter, accepted in 1995 as the ANC's main political and social policy, was implemented. It guaranteed free and fair access to all social structures (including sport and recreation participation) for all South Africans. This democratic and liberated social order stood in direct contrast to the previous segregated ideology of Apartheid and white supremacy. Free and fair access to sport and recreation participation became a reality to be reflected and institutionalised in democratised sport and recreation governance structures, legislation, and policy aimed at redressing imbalances of the apartheid ideology.

Access to and participation in sport and recreation always played a pivotal role in shaping South African society (Shepherd, 1942; Hain, 1971; Grundlingh *et al.*, 1995; Nauright, 1997; Booth, 1998; Ramsamy, 2004). Ramsamy (2004) argues that sport at all levels remains a powerful instrument in bringing about any desired world order, whether just or unjust, while at the same time emphasising meaningful recreation activities as essential element for safeguarding total wellness of a society. Although the history of South Africa's struggle against apartheid sport is relatively well documented, the converse is true for public recreation provision in a South African context. It can be argued that recreation affects quality of life of more people than competitive sport due to recreation's inherent inclusivity and tolerance of diversity, and therefore, deserves recording. A possible reason for the lack of historical recording of public recreation provision could be contributed to its relative

unobtrusiveness as social phenomenon even though recreation provision emulates social and political dynamics of the time. Philosophy and content of public recreation service provision campaigns equally mirror fundamental principles of a particular ideology of the ruling political party of the day. It is, therefore, imperative to record the manifestation of public recreation provision as reflections of the political ideology of the day.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

This investigation aimed to explore the provision of public recreation to the citizens of South Africa under two distinct political ideologies, namely the previous apartheid system and the current democratic political system. The researchers were especially interested in analysing manifestations of public recreation provision to determine if it was used as instruments of social transformation and change under two distinct political ideologies. Furthermore, they thematically analysed public recreation service provision to uncover similarities and differences under two distinct political ideologies. Lastly, they documented the critical contributions of recreation service provision for the enrichment of South Africa's and international public recreation historiography. For purposes of this investigation, recreation is defined as 'activities engaged in voluntarily during one's free time, that are beneficial to both the individual and the community and fall within the social, cultural and legal parameters of a particular society'.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study followed a qualitative, descriptive and ideographic research approach. According to Creswell (2007), a descriptive study involves an in-depth analysis and description of a situation in a specific context to establish a chronological relationship between events. An ideographic research strategy aims to emphasise what is unique or distinctive in a situation or context (Mouton & Marais, 1992). In this particular investigation, the researchers explored in-depth the phenomenon of public recreation provision as a social artefact in the South African context over an extended period of time (1948–2006) to uncover similarities and differences and establish chronological relationships between public recreation service provision and the political ideology of the day. As this study aimed to understand the contexts or settings in which public recreation was provided, a qualitative approach was followed.

Demarcation of the study

The scope of research was restricted to organised recreation activity and service provision in the South African public sector in the timeframe from 1948 to 2006. This particular timeframe represents two distinct political ideologies in South African society: the segregated apartheid era (1948–April 1994) and the post-apartheid era of democracy from May 1994 onward. The end date of the timeframe of this study was set as 2006 marking the dissolution of the South African Sports Council (SASC). For the purpose of this research, the concept of *organised public recreation service provision* was delimited to recreation programmes and activities initiated by the government of the day, targeted at the masses and funded by public

funds for the purpose of reflecting and institutionalising the doctrine of a particular political ideology.

Data collection

The researchers used documentary sources and personal interviews as qualitative data collection strategies. Public reports, minutes of meetings, government policies on recreation, and legislation that described recreation provision as product of human behaviour during free time represented the units of analysis. Data triangulation was done by cross-referencing data collected from recorded personal interviews with government officials involved in recreation provision and historical documentary sources. Documentary sources were available in the public domain while informed consent was obtained from interviewees.

Data interpretation

Collected data were interpreted in the social and political contexts of Apartheid and democracy to develop a holistic picture of public recreation provision in South Africa. The researchers applied inductive content analysis to identify patterns and organise data into categories and themes cutting across both political ideologies. Five themes emerged from the content analysis: (1) Philosophy and policies of public recreation service provision; (2) Governance of public recreation provision; (3) Legislation related to public recreation provision; (4) Public recreation programmes and initiatives; and (5) Recreation training and education initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philosophy and policies of public recreation service provision

When the exclusive white Nationalist Party came into power in 1948, a strict policy of social and racial segregation was implemented, which also regulated the provision of public recreation activities. A series of acts establishing complete social segregation was promulgated within a decade. The *Group Areas Act* (1950) specified separate residential areas for different race groups. Strict influx control curbed freedom of movement of the urban black population and, in 1960, the focus of government policy shifted to the development of *homelands* – geographic areas allocated for specific ethnic groups. Basic family housing and recreation services for non-whites were provided only in homeland townships. In 1965, the act was extended to exclude non-white spectators from sports matches and other public entertainment in white areas. Additionally, *The Reservation of the Separate Amenities Act* (1953) imposed racial segregation in public places of recreation, entertainment and the sport stadiums. The *Native Law Amendment Act* of 1957 regulated segregation in various social structures such as recreation associations, clubs, schools and churches. *The Liquor Amendment Act* of 1963 forbade whites to consume alcoholic drinks with non-whites except on premises they owned, which effectively prevented persons of different races from mixing socially.

These acts controlled and prescribed the social environment in which both sport and recreation were practised. Increasing demand from non-whites for shared participation in

organised recreation and sport and joint governance and management led to the formulation of a sport and recreation policy by 1956. White and non-white population groups were to organise and practise their sport and recreation activities under separate controlling bodies, thereby preventing the integration of whites and non-whites. This policy of complete segregation stipulated that no mixed social activities would be allowed within the borders of South Africa. Non-white recreation organisations that sought international affiliation must have done so through the already-recognised white organisations. Government, however, refused travel visas to subversive recreation scholars who sought to discredit South Africa's image abroad or contested government's racial policies (HSRC, 1982a).

In 1978 public recreation provision was centralised in the national Department of Sport and Recreation that commissioned extensive research on the status quo of sport and recreation culminating in the *Hoek Report* (Hoek *et al.*, 1978). This report succeeded in fragmenting recreation provision at the national government level. It essentially recommended that recreation provision be implemented and regulated in a decentralised and fragmented manner by all public governance structures in accordance with their core functions in line with the political ideology of Apartheid based upon the above legislation discussed. The response of sport and recreation service providers to the notorious *Hoek Report*, compelled the apartheid government in 1979 to request the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), as a neutral scientific agency, to launch a nationally representative and scientifically-based investigation into sport and recreation provision within South Africa. The leadership proposed specific recommendations concerning a new national structure and dispensation for sport and recreation provision at all levels. This encompassing *HSRC Report* was completed and released in 1982. Where the *Hoek Report* of 1978 sought to entrench Apartheid in sport and recreation provision the *HSRC Report* sought to free it from the bondage of fundamental apartheid laws. The *HSRC Report* undoubtedly was a significant milestone in the philosophy of public recreation provision as it proposed the abolishment of or changes to certain apartheid laws and by-laws pertaining to participation in recreation. The *HSRC Report* served as a significant link between the apartheid and democracy ideologies because it provided neutral ground regarding recreation-related philosophy and policy (HSRC, 1982d; Scholtz, 2000).

In 1994, South Africa experienced major political changes when the first democratic government was elected. Both sport and recreation were identified as contributors to the social re-engineering journey of South African society (African National Congress, 1994). The significance of public recreation provision warranted a centralised governance system and a national Ministry of Sport and Recreation was re-established in 1994. For the first time in the country's history, a unit within the national government Department of Sport and Recreation dedicated to the provision of public recreation policy and services was established. Its mission focused on "the enhancement of the physical well-being of the nation through the provision of equitable, affordable, accessible recreation facilities, programmes, services, education and training" (Department of Sport and Recreation, 1995:8). This establishment of a national public recreation governance structure confirmed the new democratically elected government's commitment to the integration of sport and recreation into a desegregated social fabric of the country and resulted in the first dedicated central sport and recreation policy. The first *White Paper on Sport and Recreation* with the theme, "Getting the nation to play", was drafted in 1996 and unequivocally placed overall

responsibility for policy, provision and delivery of public recreation activities with the newly established central governance structure.

For the first time in South African history, the *White Paper on Sport and Recreation* provided central government policy guidelines for the delivery of sport and recreation to all South Africans regardless race or ethnicity. Eight priority areas were to be addressed by all sport and recreation role players and stakeholders. Priority four had direct reference to public recreation provision. It described key principles for the development of public recreation service delivery and stipulated that recreation development must be demand-driven and community-based, that participation in recreation activities is a fundamental human right and it must be based on equitable resource allocation, coordinated effort and integrated development.

Due consideration was given to the shortcomings of previous uncoordinated and visionless public recreation provision policies and activities and recreation's potential as an instrument of social change was recognised on government level (Department of Sport and Recreation, 1997). The most obvious contrast between the two political ideologies was the way in which the same social phenomenon (public recreation) was implemented. Under the apartheid ideology, it was utilised as a tool to segregate and divide people, while under the ideology of democracy it was regarded as a vehicle to unite society.

Governance of public recreation provision

Responsibility for creating governance infrastructure for public recreation programme provision under the apartheid ideology was shared by national government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Prior to 1960, pioneer initiatives to provide organised recreation programmes centred around increasing physical fitness and well-being of the white population under a National Advisory Council for Physical Education (N.A.C.P.E) housed in the Department of Education of the Union of South Africa (Botha, 1949). A journal entitled, *Vigor*, was founded in 1947 as a publication and mouthpiece of the N.A.C.P.E. This coincided with the founding of the South African Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (SAAHPER) in 1947 as the first scientific association in the disciplines of health, physical education and recreation. As it was governmentally funded, the ideology of segregated recreation service provision for different population groups within South Africa was reiterated and enforced.

During the so-called *Vigor* era, concerns were raised about national fitness levels of white Afrikaners and, as early as 1959, the first National Fitness Conference was held (Opperman, 1959). Interestingly, concerns were raised about national fitness levels directed only at one ethnic group (people who spoke Afrikaans) although the so-called white population group also included people of other European descents like the English, German and Dutch. Sport and recreation activities were stressed as appropriate ways to establish and reinforce the dominant political ideology of the day and gave preference to growing Afrikaner nationalism at the cost of other white ethnic groups. This approach of sub-segregation reflected in traditional dances and mass participation activities like gymnaestradas and festivals linked to political events, with the primary agenda of growing Afrikaner nationalism.

From 1948 to 1964, the function of public recreation provision was situated mainly in a national government Department of Education. In 1965, however, the apartheid government decided that a separate governance structure should be created to take care of its interest with regard to sport and recreation. In 1966, a Department of Sport and Recreation was thereby created to organise and stimulate white sport and recreation. Due to apartheid roots and motives covertly and overtly underlying the inception of this governance structure, it was, however, internally and externally perceived yet another creation of the apartheid system and was viciously rejected. These negative perceptions hampered the potential of public recreation provision, as it never was fully institutionalised in the social fabric of society.

The reaction of anti-apartheid movement organisations to the establishment of the national governance structure was to form a parallel shadow organisation called the National Sport and Olympic Council (NSOC) that operated outside the borders of the country. Under the apartheid ideology, public infrastructure was quadrupled to cater to recreation needs and demands of four racial groups with obvious financial implications. Due to economic rationalisation and changing government priorities, the autonomous national governance structure for sport and recreation was again relegated in 1980 to a sub-division within the Department of National Education (Scholtz *et al.*, 1998). Fragmentation of governance structures continued even further when regional administration and development boards were created to provide public recreation delivery structures to the non-white population. Although these administrative boards were labelled as independent agencies, it was funded and controlled by national government and subject to the principles of the apartheid ideology. Public recreation programmes and services were presented in conjunction with private sector welfare organisations attempting to present a front of holistic recreation provision (Bush, 2004).

In 1966, initiatives to create scholarly governance structures and associations in recreation science gained momentum with the foundation of a scientific and scholarly South African Association for Sport Science, Physical Education and Recreation (SAASSPER). Even though it was constituted as a non-governmental association concerned with the development of scientific knowledge in physical education, sport, recreation and tourism, government funded it and membership was limited to white academics and practitioners in accordance with the apartheid laws of the day (SAASSPER, 1988). A parallel governance structure (Trim and Fitness South Africa) was established as an umbrella body for whites-only recreation associations (TRIMSA, 1985). It was aimed to stimulate mass recreation activities within communities to build capacity and infrastructure on local level. The pattern of front-organisations funded with money from the apartheid government thus continued as, although both TRIMSA and SAASSPER were constituted as non-governmental associations, it obtained formal recognition and funding from the apartheid government.

In 1994, the democratically elected government based upon the political ideology of inclusion and integration inherited a fragmented governance structure relating to public recreation service provision that undoubtedly diluted the effectiveness of service delivery. Great expectations were placed on the ability and commitment of the new ideology not to repeat the mistakes of the past and create functional governance structures conducive to the potential of recreation as agent of social change. Two parallel macro governance structures were constituted to guide the public provision of sport and recreation. A national recreation council

was tasked with coagulating collective interests of recreation service providers both in the public and in the private sector (SANREC, 1998). Additionally, a sports commission based on the Australian model cemented the position of competition sport at the national level.

Unfortunately, the powerful image and attraction of top sport at the international level overpowered the transformational power of recreation, and the issue of public recreation service provision fell by the wayside. Among recreation scholars and community leaders, there was a strong belief that the commission did not satisfactorily accommodate recreation provision at national and lower levels. The need for a separate and autonomous national governance structure dedicated to recreation comparable to the sports commission or, alternatively, the transformation of the commission to accommodate fully the notion of public recreation provision, was explicitly expressed by recreation leaders, but with no effect (SANREC, 1998). Public recreation provision and mass participation campaigns were again fragmented to the detriment of the South African public. It became evident that although the significance of public recreation provision was verbally acknowledged under the democratic ideology, dedicated governance structures were notably absent. Governance structures and policies focused on high performance sport as reflected in the vision statement of the sports commission: “to lead South Africa to world-class sporting excellence” (South African Sports Commission, 2000:9).

The intrinsic value of recreation activities was regarded as subservient to competitive sport and the fragmentation of recreation governance structures also continued under the ideology of democracy. With the amalgamation of all macro sport governance structures into a centralised and united Olympic governance structure (SASCOC), the functions of mass recreation participation and recreation education and training were excluded and transferred back to the national government structure. It became clear that both political ideologies could not succeed in creating a functional and effective governance structure for public recreation service provision. Public recreation service provision was sent from pillar to post and by doing so largely lost its potential as agent of social change. The lack of coordination and networking between governance structures regarding public recreation provision that confronted the ideology of democracy in 1994 still persisted.

Recreation legislation

Under the apartheid ideology, no acts were promulgated to regulate public recreation provision specifically, as general apartheid legislation regulated all aspects of social life including public recreation provision (HSRC, 1982a). Under the democracy ideology, however, policy and legislation developed simultaneously. The first national policy on sport and recreation (1995) was not prescriptive and did not have any binding legal capacity; nevertheless, it provided a foundation for dedicated sport and recreation legislation that followed (Department of Sport and Recreation, 1995).

Between 1998 and 2006, national government passed legislation to regulate the promotion of sport and recreation in South Africa. For the first time in South African sport and recreation history legislation aimed at correcting imbalances in sport and recreation, promoting equity and democracy in sport and recreation, providing for dispute resolution mechanisms in sport and recreation and creating safe environments for participation were put in place. Even

though the promulgation of dedicated sport and recreation legislation entrenched the position of public recreation provision, it also contributed yet again to the fragmentation of public recreation provision, as was the case under the apartheid ideology. The fragmentation became evident from articles of the national Sport and Recreation Act when it stipulated that “every government ministry, department, province or local authority may carry out sporting and recreational activities relating to physical education, sport and recreation including training programmes and development of leadership qualities” (Republic of South Africa, 1998:7).

Public recreation programmes and initiatives

Under the apartheid ideology, the emphasis of public recreation programmes and initiatives was primarily on improving fitness levels of the white population. The emphasis on national fitness levels was justified in the context of nationalism and white supremacy propagated by the apartheid ideology. ‘Trim parks’ based on the German and Belgian models were selected as vehicles to improve fitness levels (HSRC, 1982b). ‘Trim parks’ provided self-directed physical recreation programmes and opportunities and were erected on communal social spaces in white residential areas. A spectrum of public recreation campaigns followed and focused on family fitness, games, swimming and walking events for senior citizens, office workers, youths and differently abled persons.

As could be expected from government-funded campaigns, the focus was exclusively on whites (HSRC, 1982b). Some sense of social inclusivity emerged in the national trim week campaigns from 1987 to 1990. National trim weeks aimed at getting all communities (white and non-white albeit at segregated venues) involved in a week of concentrated mass physical recreation participation to improve the general well-being of all South Africa citizens. An information strategy supplemented the week of physical recreation activities. Information was disseminated to the general public on healthy lifestyles, increased quality of life through fitness and physical recreation, as well as meaningful ways to manage leisure time. The last stages of the apartheid ideology (1990-1993) also marked the first attempts under the apartheid ideology to normalise public recreation opportunities. Deliberate efforts were made to include the non-white majority of South Africans in mass physical recreation campaigns (*Sport for All*) even though still organised along racial lines and delivered through segregated governance structures. Much was attempted with modest funding but in the absence of formal policy on multi-racial sport and recreation, no real progress took place (Bush, 2004).

The transition from the apartheid ideology to an ideology of democracy in 1994 uncovered a negative social scenario with high incidences of teen pregnancy, a culture of social disintegration, the rate of HIV/AIDS infection doubling each year, substance abuse, high rape and assault statistics, and a population leading a sedentary lifestyle. The need for focused intervention became imperative and mass recreation programmes and campaigns targeted at all citizens including marginalised groups of women, girls, prisoners and youth-at-risk became the drivers of this social re-engineering campaign (Tshwete, 1997). Confusion regarding a centralised governance structure, however, continued. Public mass participation recreation programmes on the national level were transferred from the national department of Sport and Recreation to the South African Sports Commission after its inception in 1999. It was then transferred back to the national Department of Sport and Recreation in 2004 after the dissolution of the South African Sports Commission.

Mass recreation programmes were premised on the belief that physical activity and recreation have important benefits for the economic, social and physical health of all South Africans. *Siyadlala* ("Let's Play") and Sangala (South African National Games and Leisure Activities) acted as flagship initiatives and delivery mechanisms for the vision of 'getting the nation to play'. Fundamental mass recreation programme values aimed to develop a new sense of united nationalism, encouraging lifelong mass participation, forging partnerships between national, provincial and local governments, unifying diverse communities, enabling communities to have fun, and facilitating volunteerism. Indigenous games reflected cultural diversity in South Africa and linked the African Renaissance movement celebrating Africa's diversity and contribution to global cultural capital (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2006).

Recreation training and education initiatives

A key result of the 1982 *HSRC Report* on sport and recreation provision in South Africa was a call for in-service training programmes for recreation leaders, as well as formal academic programmes at tertiary education institutions to build social capital through competent recreation leadership (HSRC, 1982c). Although the apartheid government acknowledged the importance of structured recreation training programmes, the actual design and delivery of such programmes were left to the educational and private sector. The first training programmes in 1983 under the apartheid ideology were presented to a racially mixed group of recreation leaders employed by the Administration Boards as segregated governance structures for non-whites (Bush 2004). Although these particular governance structures were aimed at non-whites, white employees also attended and it provided a first example of educational and training services presented to racially mixed group.

At the same time, formal recreation service related academic degree programmes were developed at South African institutions of higher learning through academic offerings in Departments of Physical Education, Human Movement Sciences, Forestry, Parks and Environmental Sciences (Goslin, 1983, Scholtz, 2000). Formal degree programmes were yet again only accessible to the white population group and the body of scholarly knowledge fragmented between academic departments. The need to co-ordinate and standardise recreation education in a national qualification framework at institutions of higher learning was first expressed in 1988 (SAASSPER, 1988). A lack of mutual trust, secrecy regarding contents of academic programmes, an often irrational fear of loss of initiative, and conflicting personal interests hampered efforts in this regard. The opportunity to educate recreation scholars and practitioners to optimise the social value of recreation was alas forfeited.

The development of human resources in all sectors of society (including sport and recreation) was emphasised as a key prerequisite for social restitution and reconstruction under the democratic ideology of the African National Congress government (African National Congress, 1994). This approach was subsequently institutionalised in the national policy on sport and recreation by acknowledging that trained human power is essential for effective management of sport and recreation (Department of Sport and Recreation, 1997). Recruitment and training of volunteers spearheaded a coordinated national recreation training initiative and strategy of national government under the ideology of democracy. Public

recreation training programmes were consequently developed and training courses presented in collaboration with national governance structures to qualify volunteers as community recreation leaders in senior citizen activity groups, street children shelters, rural communities and correctional institutions (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2001).

Between 2000 and 2006, the responsibility of training community recreation leaders rested within a sub-unit in the South African Sports Commission (SASC) who developed training materials for indigenous games leaders and generic recreation management programmes. When the SASC was dissolved in 2006, a new unit for Mass Participation of the national government department of Sport and Recreation took over intellectual property rights of all recreation training programmes developed in the public sector. For the first time, career paths in the recreation industry were formalised. The focus became credit-bearing skills development and training in recreation based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Recreation training efforts developed while being funded by the public sector. They focused on generic community recreation leadership competencies that were supplemented by training initiatives from the private sector. Substantial progress under the ideology of democracy was made in developing accessible recreation education and training programmes to contribute towards building social capital.

Similarities in public recreation service provision between political ideologies

The exclusive apartheid era and the inclusive democratic era represented two distinct political ideologies in the South African history of public recreation service provision. The inductive thematic analysis, however, revealed common trends under both ideologies. Both political ideologies acknowledged recreation participation as a basic human right and essential tool to improve the quality of life of citizens even though the majority of citizens were denied free access to recreation services under the apartheid ideology. Public recreation service provision constituted part of both ideologies' attempts. Policies to address social issues linked the value thereof to generic higher-level social objectives, such as nation building, socialisation, reducing crime or improving the health status of the population through mass recreation initiatives and campaigns.

Fragmentation, decentralisation and general indecisiveness regarding public governance structures responsible for driving recreation provision emerged under both political ideologies. Although the significance of public recreation service provision was acknowledged, neither political ideology succeeded in institutionalising these services in the social fabric of society. Reasons for this could be the ever-present dichotomy between sport and recreation in the minds of decision makers, as well as a lack of coordination and networking between fragmented governance structures.

Both political ideologies relegated public recreation provision to a subservient position to competitive sport. The value of recreation participation was never regarded as an end in itself but always presented as the first step to talent identification and participation in competitive sport, hence the exclusive focus on physical recreation rather than an inclusive paradigm of recreation participation. Where citizens were excluded from public recreation access along racial lines under the apartheid ideology, exclusion continued under the democratic ideology

based upon physical ability and sporting talent. Ignorance about the inherent nature and significance of recreation as a social phenomenon became obvious from the exclusive physical recreation perspective rather than an inclusive perspective acknowledging and utilising the rich diversity of the broad spectrum of recreation activities. Both ideologies focused narrowly on recreation's contribution to physical well-being rather than institutionalising its significant contributions to building social capital and psychological well-being.

The potential of public recreation service provision to reinforce a political ideology of the day was evident in both eras. Mass physical recreation participation programmes and festivals as vehicles to construct national identity featured prominently under both political ideologies and attempted to contribute towards a physically active nation by co-ordinating mass participation and festivals in conjunction with private and public stakeholders.

Differences in public recreation service provision between political ideologies

As was expected, marked differences between public recreation service provisions under two distinct political ideologies crystallised from the thematic analysis presented in this study. The most prolific difference involves the efforts of the democratically elected government to create an environment conducive to the development of public recreation service delivery through establishing appropriate policy and legislation of recreation provision. A national policy document referred to as the *White Paper on Sport and Recreation* introduced a structured recreation and sport delivery strategy according to priorities that shifted the paradigm from being separate and exclusive in the apartheid era towards being inclusive in the democratic era (Department of Sport and Recreation, 1997). The period 1994–2006 reflected the first sport and recreation specific legislation promulgated to provide for unified public governance structures for sport and recreation in South Africa to mirror the inclusive strategy of service delivery to all citizens. Recreation service delivery was initially included in a unified governance structure (South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee), but later were relegated to decentralised governance structures, diluting the potential of public recreation provision as nation builder and agent of social change.

Human resource development and capacity building emerged as focus areas under the democratic ideology. Skills training programmes formed an integral part of public recreation service provision strategy of government while left to non-governmental institutions and the private sector under the apartheid ideology. A national qualification framework for recreation and sport was developed and career paths emerged providing access to diverse recreation-related qualifications. This reflected a definite paradigm shift towards inclusivity, as opposed to exclusivity in the apartheid regime, committed to the principle of trained recreation leaders as basis for effective service provision.

Under the democratic ideology, public physical recreation provision was approached in a more structured way as became evident from business plans that directed all actions involving mass recreation activities and festivals. Although festivals and mass participation events also existed under the apartheid ideology, continuity and clear long-term goals were lacking. The myopic perspective on physical recreation provision was regrettably entrenched in these

business plans excluding particular target groups like the elderly and differently abled citizens from the potential benefits of recreation participation.

The reality of the rich and diverse cultural fabric of South Africa was recognised under the democratic ideology. Managing this cultural diversity, racial tolerance and social integration through public recreation service provision initiatives were reflected in the indigenous games programme encouraging the different cultural groups to celebrate their cultural diversity as part of the African Renaissance initiative on the continent of Africa. Public recreation initiatives in this regard under the apartheid regime did not acknowledge cultural diversity of citizens other than the white population group in accordance with the exclusive paradigm of the apartheid government of the day resulting in a culturally polarised society.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The provision of public recreation services to all South Africans is a dynamic process. The scope of this study focused specifically on the timeframe 1948–2006. Significant developments, however, were initiated after 2006 that need to be recorded. In 2012, for example the national Minister of Sport and Recreation, commissioned a Ministerial Recreation Advisory Committee to advise the Minister on the role of public recreation in South African society. It is, therefore, recommended that further research explore contributions from 2006 onward.

CONCLUSION

South Africa is a society in transformation. Transformation implies that individuals and society change its form and function. South Africa transformed from a society segregated along racial lines to an open, inclusive and democratic society. Edginton and Chen (2008) noted that the world lives in a time when leisure and recreation are valued concepts. All humans aspire toward freely chosen life experiences. The provision of public recreation opportunities could provide an optimal social environment for individual exploration, reflection, social, cultural, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth. Public recreation provision has the potential to be a carrier of the collective spirit of any community in transition. Crafting policies and legislation, establishing governance structures, securing resources and opportunities, as well as facilitating education and training career paths are avenues to allow recreation to work for all.

From the thematic content analysis of public recreation provision in two distinct political ideologies, it can be concluded that neither of the ideologies fully realised the potential of public recreation provision as an instrument of transformation. Although similarities emerged, the notion of discrimination or exclusion in some form was evident throughout the period under investigation and in both political ideologies. A fundamental antecedent for public recreation to facilitate transformation is a sense of freedom of choice. Neither of the two political ideologies guaranteed freedom of choice related to public recreation provision. Under the apartheid ideology, non-whites were denied freedom of choice and association whilst under the democratic ideology public provision choices are limited to physical recreation activities. As was expected, the era of democracy brought considerable improvements in terms of policy, legislation, training and education opportunities. Social

transformation and progress are measured in terms of commitment to continuous growth and development of all citizens of a particular society. It is concluded that public recreation provision has the potential to structure social spaces where transformation can be facilitated and benefit all South African citizens.

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