PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION SOURCES, SYSTEMS AND SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES IN INFORMATION PROVISION

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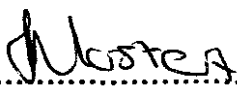M.LIS, University of Zululand, 1997.

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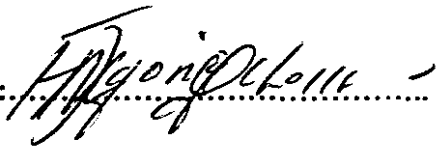
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the content of this thesis unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other university for a similar or any other degree.

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Signed:..

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Jako, and children Petri and Jako for their unwavering support during the time it took to complete the study. Also to my parents, Peter and Ena Bolink for their example and support throughout the years.

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ABSTRACT

Modern legislative functions demand that legislator's access, exploit and use information for effective decision making on a regular basis. It is increasingly assumed that legislative functions in a democratic country are becoming more complex as the electorate's political consciousness and knowledge of their rights and responsibilities is dramatically changing and transforming. During parliamentary sessions information is used for a variety of purposes. These include: preparation for speeches, participation in parliamentary debates, maintenance of formal and informal conversation with colleagues and constituents about matters of mutual concern, and to be able to contribute towards the legislative processes. It is also noted that during recess periods information is needed to communicate with constituents on a variety of issues.

Parliamentary libraries are formal institutions whose specific functions are to provide information services to parliamentarians. Currently they provide a variety of services to parliamentarians such as searching and retrieval of information on request, pro-active information packages on specific topics, research assistance and photo-copying services. In some parliamentary libraries searching facilities to conduct electronic searches are part of the services rendered. Based on their close proximity to the parliament environment, it could be assumed that the libraries would be heavily utilised by the parliamentarians. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

The aim of the study was to determine the extent to which various information sources, services and systems are used by parliamentarians to access information. The role of parliamentary libraries within the parliamentary information provision sector was also investigated. Similarly, the efficiency of these services in satisfying the information needs of their clientele was also to be established. Specific attention was given to the utilization of electronic information sources, especially the Internet. It was assumed that unsatisfactory educational background of the majority of the current parliamentarians impedes their ability to access information sources.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods that involved largely surveys by use of questionnaires were used. Informal interviews and observation were also used to collect data for the study. Data was collected from the parliamentarians, both on a national and a provincial level, as well as from the parliamentary librarians. Two questionnaires were designed, one for the parliamentarians and a separate one for the librarians. Informal interviews with staff from the Library of Parliament, Cape Town were held to supplement information gained from the questionnaire. An observation schedule was used to capture information relating to the conditions at the Library of Parliament, Cape Town.

The questionnaire for the parliamentarians was distributed to all parliamentarians on address lists provided by the parliaments, or those available on the Internet. Seven hundred and sixty questionnaires were mailed to parliamentarians and 167 were returned, giving a return rate of 23%. It was recognized that a low response rate is common on related studies reported in the literature. The low response rate, in our view, did not obscure the validity of the results obtained from the study. The questionnaire for the Parliamentary Libraries was mailed to all ten of the parliamentary libraries and a 100% response rate was obtained.

The major findings of the study were that South African parliamentarians indeed had the same incessant need for information as their counterparts in other countries. A variety of information needs were expressed, many of which could be directly related to the portfolio or committee to which the parliamentarian was attached. Three major information needs however emerged i.e. the need for information on governance, politics and provincial issues, as well as safety and security. It was found that the respondents used various information sources, services and systems to satisfy their information needs. The strongest preferences were expressed for printed materials; however utilization of electronic sources were strongly supported. In respect of using electronic sources a number of problems were highlighted by the respondents. Both formal and informal information services and systems were utilized a lot less than anticipated. However, a close relationship was found between the level of education of the parliamentarian and

the variety of sources used. For example, the higher the educational levels attained the wider the variety of sources used. It was interesting to note that only a small discrepancy was found between the preference to receive information in a printed or an electronic format. The oral medium, which is a prevalent medium within the African continent, was the least preferred.

The respondents notably preferred to look for the information themselves, but a large group also used an intermediary close to them, i.e. their Personal Assistants to do their information searches for them. Information sources utilized were mainly sources personally available to the parliamentarian. A large group also used their computers to search for information. Parliamentary libraries, even though they provide a variety of traditional and pro-active information services were not utilized optimally. This trend was reiterated by some of the librarians who mentioned that they were severely under-utilized even during parliamentary sessions.

With the exception of the Library of Parliament, Cape Town, parliamentary libraries at provincial level are new developments, and as thus still busy establishing themselves as role-players in the information provision sector. The success of their activities varies from library to library, from being well-utilized units, to being severely-underutilized. Problems identified in this regard are the marketing of services and products and user-education. The majority of the libraries are moving progressively towards the utilization and the provision of electronic information sources for parliamentarians.

Recommendations included an aggressive and effective marketing strategy to keep parliamentarians informed on the latest available products and services. In this respect, the electronic medium should be used optimally, either through the Intranet or the Internet. Innovative ways and means of user education should also be investigated.

It is also recommended that the parliamentary Libraries develop a niche area for themselves in respect of the provision of electronic information services. Parliamentarians do not have the time, nor the expertise, to spend on doing fruitless

searches. Particular attention should be given to the role of the Personal Assistant in the information seeking. Similarly, parliamentarians need to be educated about the advantages of using a skilled information-seeking intermediary instead of an unskilled person. Attention should be given to educating parliamentarians about the various information sources available to them, both within the parliamentary libraries, as well is in the country. Once again the parliamentary libraries could see this as a niche area for service delivery.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
AUSAID	Australian Government overseas aid programme
CD-ROM	Compact Disc Read Only Memory
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPA	Certified Public Accountants
CSIR	Council for Science and Industrial Research
DA	Democratic Alliance
DOC	Directory of Contacts
DVD/CD	Digital Versatile Disc/Compact Disc
EU	European Union
FAO	Food Agricultural Organisation
GBN	Global Business Network
GCIS	Government Communication Information System
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRSC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkhata Freedom Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOL	Independent Newspaper Online
LIS	Library and Information Science
KPMG	Klynveld, Peat, Marwick and Goerdeler
MEC	Member of the Executive Committees
NAARS	National Automated Archival Retrieval System
NAMAC	National Coordinating Office for Manufacturing Advisory Centres
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
NCOP	The National Council of Provinces

NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NFVSA	National Film, Video and Sound Archive
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NISC	National Information Services Corporation
NLSA	National Library of South Africa
NNP	The New National Party
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PASA	Publishers Association of South Africa
PIT	Public Internet Terminal
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
SA Media	South African Media
SABINET	South African Bibliographic Information Network
SAGD	South African Government Directory
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAIS	South African Interlending Scheme
SANDC	South African National Defence Council
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TWAS	Third World Academy of Sciences
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organisation

GLOSSARY

Library: an organized collection of items of various formats (books, journals, videos, CD-ROMSs, etc.) along with services required to make them available to a given user group or groups (Tennant 1999).

Electronic library: a library consisting of electronic materials and services (Tennant 1999). It includes the full range of optical, magnetic and digital technologies used to disseminate printed information (Demas 1994). An electronic library differs from a digital library in the sense that it contains materials originally typed in on the computer.

Digital library: a library consisting of digital materials, and services (Tennant 1999). Materials are digitsed by optically scanning in existing sources. Digital libraries can, but do not have to be, from one geographic domain. It can consist of related sources linked together.

Digital material: items stored, processed and transferred via digital devices and networks (Tennant 1999).

Digital information services: services that are delivered digitally over computer networks (De Kock 1998). Information available in digital form covers a wide range of topics and the services can provide the data as text, still and moving graphics, sound and conversations.

Virtual libraries: a library that does not exist "in real life" (Tennant 1999). It can also be seen as a library depending upon virtual reality for its existence (Barker in Olёn 2000) De Kock (1998:32) also describes it as "an international system of electronic networks providing access to all digital networks." Virtual libraries will allow the user immersion into the text enabling them to use their sense in the process of utilising the information. To derive maximum benefit from this experience it is possible that the user will have to use specifically designed gear or clothing, for example gloves or helmets.

Parliament: The word is derived from two sources, i.e. the Latin word 'parliamentum', and the French word 'parler' meaning 'talk' (Ilbert 1920; Laundy 1989). The basis of a true democracy is to allow ever citizen the opportunity to have their voices heard. Since it is not practically possible for every to speak their minds personally, they elect representatives who will make their voices heard within the highest echelons of power in a country.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Information has always played an important role in the governance of people's everyday lives. An ancient Chinese saying: "Knowledge is power" is even more applicable in today's world. People of all ages have always striven to generate, accumulate and distribute information (Celik 1994), but, according to Robinson (1998), this knowledge has for long periods been the monopoly of authoritarian executive structures, disempowering their citizens by their lack of knowledge.

Huntington in Robinson (1997) describes the last few decades of the twentieth century as the "Decade of Democracy". This view is shared by Tanfield with an observation that "the past decade has seen an extraordinary resurgence of the idea of democracy and of a revitalised role for legislatures" (1998: vi), and also by Muravchick (1992) who comments that, after a twenty-seven years derailment, the ideal of democracy seems to have captured afresh the minds of academics, students and workers from all corners of the world. LeDuc, Niemi and Norris also describe this period as: "a period of dramatic political change, a global surge toward democracy" (1996:1). The adoption and implementation of the democratic ideal had its origins in the democratic revolutions in Spain and Portugal, but gained momentum with the peaceful destruction of the Berlin Wall. According to the authors, this action opened up the path to democracy for the nations in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. From there it extended or re-established itself in Eastern Europe, Asian countries like the Philippines and South Korea, African countries like Mali, Zambia and South Africa, and Latin America countries such as Brazil and Argentina (Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1997). This surge brought democracy or partial democracy to 138 nations worldwide, with 53 still not "free" (Robinson 1997). According to Diamond (1997) the percentage of countries worldwide in which regular, relatively free and fair elections are held, increased from 27.5% in 1974 to 46% in 1990 and to 61% in 1996.

Robinson and Hyde (1998) posit that since democracy is still a very new concept to many of the nations, the process of building up democratic institutions and the consolidation of democratic ideals might take time and careful attention, in order for them to survive the challenges ahead. Huntington in LeDuc, Niemi & Norris (1996) explains that many of the previous waves of democratization that took place in the world have been followed by periods of reaction or as he call it, "reverse waves".

With the democratic revolutions sweeping the globe during the past twenty years, the availability of information became a major driving force in the establishment of meaningful legislatures (Robinson 1998). Robinson (1997:5) notes that "the key to democracy is an effective legislature". However, he also cautions that "the key to an effective legislature is the knowledge and information that permit it to make informed decisions on specific issues and to play an active role in the policy making process of the nation" (Robinson 1997:5).

The legislature, also known as the parliament, is the central legislative institution of the governmental system whereby executive officers are selected (Encyclopedia Americana 1986).   In a modern democracy the Parliament represents the will of the nation, and therefore the legislature needs access to information to generate and maintain public support. Once confidence is lost in a parliamentary institution, the way is open to revolution and/or anarchy (Brian 1997b).   In order to maintain the confidence of the population, governments need, according to Weaver and Rockman (1993:29), the following capabilities:

- to set and maintain priorities amongst the many conflicting demands
- to target resources for their most effective utilisation
- to be innovative if previous policies failed
- to coordinate conflicting objectives into a coherent whole
- to impose losses on powerful groups
- to ensure effective implementation of policies, once decided upon by parliament
- to make and maintain international commitments in the fields of trade and national defence
- to ensure policy stability in order for policies to have time to work

- to manage political affiliations and groups in order to keep an orderly society

As these capabilities imply active contributions by elected representatives in parliament, it can be assumed that information, in a variety of information sources and formats, would be needed to guide them in the decision-making processes needed to attain these capabilities. Maddison in Alemna and Skouby (2000) points out the necessity of decision-makers having access to information free of bias, reflecting the full range of existing opinions. Polsby in Robinson and Gastelum (1998:9-10) typifies the information and research needs of parliamentarians as follows (the needs are based on the levels of activity at which a government is functioning):

Table 1: Information and research needs of parliamentarians

Legislature	Information/research needs and services
Rubber stamp legislature	- Information/research needs are virtually nil - Representatives only expected to agree with all proposed legislation

Emerging legislature	- Needs information for effective participation
	- Creates/augment parliamentary library/research service
	- Services provided by library:
	  - materials on current issues
	  - clipping service topics of interest
	  - might provide permanent staff for legislative committees

Informed legislature	- Representatives can amend bills and propose some bills
	- Library/research service available, with small staff component
	- Service provided by library/research service:
	  - active reference service
	  - reports on selected legislative issues
	  - pro-active clipping service
	  - track progress of key legislation

Transformative legislature	- Representatives can:
	  - alter proposals initiated by the executive
	  - develop policies
	  - introduce fully developed proposals and enact them
	- Services offered:
	  - a large information collection
	  - huge library/research staff complement
	  - research analysis on party level
	  - large central research groups

Robinson (1999) points out that active legislatures, for example, informed and transformative legislatures, need vast amounts of information and research analysis to function optimally. Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999) point out that as democratic governance has grown and government has become more complex, the need for timely, accurate and relevant information has grown proportionally. According to Robinson and Hyde (1998) and Robinson (1998), information is needed for, and contributes to, the legislature in the following ways:

- by providing the background for informed decision-making, resulting in more effective public policymaking, especially as the representatives need to cope with a wide variety of complex issues

- capacity building of representatives, by providing them with the means to criticize, amend or present new approaches to public policy issues

- the supplying of a common body of facts which can facilitate political agreement, as it narrows down debates to the differences in values, rather than to differences over facts

- the provision of a perceived legitimacy of the legislature's actions in the increasingly technocratic era, as policies adopted can be better supported and their continuance sustained through the use of technology

- enhancement of the role of the legislature in the overall policy process of the nation, through allowing the legislature to act more independently.

Despite the expressed need for all parliamentary representatives to be informed, it is commonly found that executive agencies of governments enjoy privileged access to quality information and fields of expertise. This provides them with a much better opportunity to make and implement decisions than the ordinary representative (Serema 2000). Robinson and Hyde (1998) observe that based on their perceived superiority, ministries and their experts deem the legislature to be relatively uninformed and not likely to comprehend more complex matters. In many cases the executives can control and manipulate what information is to be made accessible, and what not, to the legislature. This can lead to a situation which Serema (2000, Role of constituency representatives and executive policy foundations, para. 4) describes as legislature "rubber stamping" executive decisions, thus leading to skewed decision making.

From the above mentioned it would seem as if the development of information structures, independent of party-political influence, should be made available to the legislature in order to manage, and make freely accessible, information that is publicly available to all-and-sundry in the legislature. This viewpoint is shared by Joseph (2000) who advocates that Parliament should have its own information sources, as well as its own information management systems, separated from control by the Executive. Robinson and Hyde (1998) identify the role of the legislative information provider as that of a transmitter, interpreter and synthesizer of information, ideally involving experts in the ministries, academia, non-governmental think tanks, state and/or regional bodies, and international sources. However since the legislature is always pressed for time, the prime function of the information provider should be to supply the relevant information, at the right time in the correct format to the inquiring member. Bannenberg (1994) adds that since their very survival can depend on the availability of information, most parliamentary representatives do not care where the information comes from, or who provides it, as long as promptly provided, accurate and appropriate.

The establishment of modern parliamentary libraries has been a direct result of the need for information. Celik (1994) suggests that the functions of these institutions could be seen as that of identifying, locating, analyzing and mediating information. To perform these functions the libraries could use a variety of sources, for example printed materials, like books, newspapers, journals, and reports generated internally in Parliament or externally in the private sector, audio-materials like cassettes or compact disks, audio-visual materials like videos and films. More currently electronic information materials, for example, databases, CD-ROMs and the Internet, are also utilised. With the dramatic growth in the capabilities of both technology and communications networks, the whole process of information access and dissemination has been revolutionised.

1.2 Problem statement and motivation

South Africa has an awful history regarding provision of educational facilities and programmes to all its citizens. Several Acts promulgated by the National Party Government had as their aim the entrenching of racial inequality, segregation and the

development of separate amenities for the different race groups. The Group Areas Act, No 41 (1950) controlled racial zoning of land and premises, and also developed a stranglehold on the movement of people seeking for employment outside their designated group area (The History Net 2003).

It is widely known that the Nationalist Government, who ruled from 1948 – 1994, allocated disproportionate funding towards the education of scholars from the non-white race groups. For example, the Bantu Education Act, No. 47, later superseded by the Bantu Special Education Act, No. 24 (1964), the Coloured Persons Education Act, No.47 (1963), the Indian Education Act, No. 61 (1965), as well as the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, No. 49 (1953) regulated separate amenities and educational facilities for race groups other than whites, thereby entrenching cultural segregation. This led to extreme differences in the quality of educational institutions and educational levels (Makhubela 1998). White educational institutions benefited the most from the educational budget, with the Coloured and Asian population receiving considerably less, while Black institutions were allocated a very small amount per schoolchild. The same inequality was also found in the provision of facilities and services. While most White, and in some cases, Asian educational facilities, were provided with library facilities, these facilities were very seldom found in Black and Coloured schools, thus leading to a situation where the majority of the nation's population had never been exposed to accessing and retrieving information other than from their school handbooks.

Overcrowding in Black schools was commonplace, and a chronic shortage of classrooms was experienced, with many classes held under trees with none or only very bare facilities, thus aggravating the educational imbalances. In addition to these problems, many of the teachers in Black schools were under-qualified – in many cases, especially in rural areas, people with only a Grade 12 certificate were employed as teachers.

Many areas had, up to very recently, no access to basic services like electricity, thus minimizing opportunities of many, mainly Black people to access electronic information. This is still the case in some areas today. Together with the extreme poverty of a large percentage of the population, this situation contributed towards

generations growing up without any access or exposure to either the printed or electronic information media.

With the advent of the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa, for the first time in its history allowed representatives from all the country's population groups to occupy seats in parliament. This resulted in many parliamentarians coming from disadvantaged communities where they were deliberately denied quality education by the former government. It is common knowledge that effective and informed legislation relies on adequate access to and use of information. Ultimately, without the necessary preconditions for information use it is doubtful that the present generation of parliamentarians can contribute effectively and meaningfully to parliament. This could jeopardize the present democracy and the future of the country.

Democratically constituted parliaments are institutions representing every element of the population, therefore setting the rules and regulations governing the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the society they represent (Celik 1994). Most authors agree that in order to function effectively parliamentarians need extensive and timely knowledge and information (Brian 1997b, Robinson 1998, Martyn in Ximena and Marialyse 1994, Pare 1996). According to Kanev and Anguelova (1996) information needs to be specifically tailored to the requirements of the legislature, and in many cases "produced" from within the parliament. Extensive knowledge and information is needed on the following:

- facts and events,
- the latest results in the fields of research, science and technology,
- public opinion, and
- solutions found by other parliaments to problems of mutual concern.

Also important is knowledge on the functioning of parliamentary procedures and processes itself.

Celik (1994) cautions that all parliamentarians are not necessarily aware of the need for information. He describes certain variables that could be attributed to this situation:

- the nature and general education system of the country
- the availability of, and accessibility to, institutions or organizations that can meet information needs. Lack of knowledge about the existence of such institutions or organizations, and the services they can render also plays an important role.
- the extent to which society reads and uses libraries and information centers
- the legal and social bases that motivate members of society to be informed
- the importance of educated people in society, both economically and socially.

In South Africa, as in other democratic countries, the parliament is the legislative authority vested with powers to make laws for the country in accordance with the constitution. It consists of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. The National Assembly is responsible for debating all draft bills brought to Parliament by Ministers, and can approve, reject or change them (Parliament of South Africa: National Assembly 2000) The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) aims to represent provincial interests in the national sphere of government.

The National Assembly can consist of 350 – 400 members elected through a system of proportional representation, while the NCOP consists of 54 permanent members and 36 special delegates (Burger 2002).

In accordance with the Constitution, each of the nine provinces has its own legislature consisting of between 30 and 80 members. The number of representatives is determined in terms of a formula set out in the national legislation. Proportional election is also used to determine political party representation. The functions of the provincial governments are:
- to make provincial laws
- to adopt a provincial constitution, provided that two thirds of its members agree to it (Burger 2002).

To perform optimally in the legislature, parliamentarians require up to date, comprehensive, and appropriate information.

Given the poor track record concerning equal education opportunities among all South African citizens, uneven distribution of information-providing institutions, organizations and facilities in the country, with increasing use of Information Communication Technologies the following questions can thus be formulated:

- are the newly elected parliamentarians equipped with the ability and knowledge to exploit and use information providing organizations and institutions, such as the parliamentary library?
- do the parliamentarians have the capacity to access and use information technologies, for example, on-line databases and e-libraries on the Internet?
- what are their levels of awareness of their information needs?
- What is their information-seeking behaviour?
- To what extent do parliamentary libraries provide the information needs of parliamentarians?

From the background discussion and the literature survey it is clear that very little research has been done to establish, examine and analyse the information support capacity for South African parliamentarians. In addition, factors determining their information behaviour have also not been investigated exhaustively. The study will therefore address this eminent gap by investigating the information sources, systems and services as well the information seeking behaviour of South African parliamentarians.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the parliamentary information sources, systems and services in South Africa and determine the role that is played by parliamentary information services in the country. The aim is fulfilled through the following objectives:

- to explore the various sources, services and systems used to access information.
- to determine if parliamentarians do access and utilize traditional information sources and systems such as the parliamentary library services to satisfy their information needs and to further democratic ideals

- to investigate the degree of Internet and e-source utilization in the information gathering and exploitation process
- to investigate the services of the traditional parliamentary library to determine its capacity to provide efficient information services to the parliamentarians
- to propose a conceptual model for effective parliamentary information services.

The study is primarily concerned with the accessibility of information by parliamentarians, but seeks to provide a model on how to structure information provision by parliamentary library services to the legislature.

1.4 Research questions

The following questions are investigated in the study:
- What is the nature of the information sources, services and systems available in South Africa to satisfy information needs of parliamentarians?
- To what extent does education play a role in information source utilization?
- Are the parliamentarians aware of the role of information in sustaining democracy?
- Which search strategies are followed in the information seeking process?
- What is the nature of the information needs of parliamentarians?
- What is the role of the legislative libraries in the provision of information?

1.5 Scope and delimitations of the field of study

This study is based on descriptive research.

1.5.1 Subject

The study has two focus points. In the first instance the study focuses on the information needs of South African parliamentarians, specifically referring to the sources, services and systems used to satisfy those needs. In the second instance the

study focuses on the role of the South African parliamentary libraries in information provision.

1.5.2 The context

Parliaments and their functioning differ from country to country. Although most democratically elected parliamentary systems have many points of resemblance with each other, they do differ in the aspect of the composition and nature of their members of parliaments, as well as the type of information needed to function effectively. Thus, although generalisations are possible when determining access to, need for, and utilization of information in general by parliamentarians, it is necessary to take the specific nature and circumstances of each representative body in each country into account before coming to a meaningful conclusion as to what their specific information needs are. Each country has its own unique set of representatives, each with their own education level, social background, levels of expertise in terms of their working environment, as well as their access to, retrieval and utilisation of information. Even their information needs are diverse, and usually related to their specific area of interest. It therefore stands to reason that a study of this nature should concentrate on information sources and systems specific to the country's parliamentarians rather than to come to some general conclusion on information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians worldwide. Generalisations can provide some broad insight into what can be expected generally from parliamentarians as far as their information seeking behaviour is concerned, but they are not very helpful in providing tailor-made and efficient information services to them as a group or as an individual. It is an envisaged outcome of this study to provide insights into the provision of effective information services to South African parliamentarians, based on their specific needs.

In South Africa the parliamentary system function on two levels, i.e. on national level as well as provincial levels. While it can be assumed that the national parliamentarians might have a need for a wider coverage of topics, than for those parliamentarians at provincial level, it nevertheless still needs to be proved.

The national parliament is seated for half of the year in Cape Town, being the legislative capital of South Africa, and the rest of the year they are seated in Pretoria, the administrative capital of the country. The Parliamentary Library is situated in Cape Town from where it provides information services to its members, and also to the general public. Each of the nine provincial parliaments also has its own parliamentary library services, which provides information services during parliamentary sessions, as well as during recess.

1.5.3 Research environment

The study was carried out in South Africa, amongst all the parliamentarians, both from the National Assembly, as well as from the Provincial Legislatures. South Africa is divided into nine provinces, with the Legislative Assemblies situated in the capitals of each province. The National Assembly is situated in Cape Town.

1.5.4 Methodological scope

The study used various methods to achieve its aims and objectives. Methods used included surveys through informal interviews and observations. The survey method was used to collect data from parliamentarians as well as from parliamentary librarians. Informal interviews were conducted with parliamentary librarians at the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, as well as with the librarians at the KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library. This was done to gather background information on the services offered, the parliamentarian's utilisation of the library services and future plans for the libraries. The observation method was used to observe the practical functioning of the Library of Parliament in Cape Town. This library was chosen, as it is the biggest, busiest and oldest functioning parliamentary library in South Africa.

Secondary data was gathered from monographs, journals, government documents, conference proceedings and the Internet.

1.5.5 Political limitations

To carry out this type of research among politicians proved to be a frustrating experience. Some provincial legislatures were very quick to respond concerning permission to do the research, but the majority had to be contacted again and again, slowing down the progress of the fieldwork. In the case of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, no responses were received despite several efforts. This resulted in this province not being surveyed at provincial level. Because of the busy schedules of the parliamentarians, as well as security issues, physical access to them was not possible, and thus the study had to be conducted using mailed questionnaires. The only case where a research assistant could initially be used was at the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, but after three visits to the Parliamentary complex to establish contact with the parliamentarians and retrieve the questionnaires personally she was informed that her access would in future be denied. The study was thus limited to impersonal contact through the mailed questionnaires.

1.6 Assumptions

The following assumptions can be made concerning the current elected parliamentarians in South Africa:

- That more than half of the parliamentarians received a sub-standard education, not equipping them to cope with the demands of their job. For example, some parliamentarians had to leave school at a very young age, because of political unrest or economical and social constraints, thus not completing their schooling.
- The lack of information sources, systems and services within certain sectors of the country resulted in:
- – scant knowledge of the existence of such sources, services and systems, resulting in unawareness of the wealth of information available for utilization, both through the traditional information sources, services and systems, as well as through the electronic media

– lack of ability to utilise the existing information sources, services and systems to enhance participation in the parliamentary processes, resulting in poor performance within the working environment

– reliance on traditional methods of information gathering such as word-of-mouth and speaking to friends and colleagues.

• Provincial and national legislatures function similarly and generate identical information needs. The only difference would be in the applicability of the information use. Whereas provincial legislatures will only be concerned with decision-making concerning their own provinces, the needs of the national legislature will cover a wider scope to include matters of national concern. It is however assumed that by the identical nature of the concerns covered by the different legislatures, the information seeking behaviour of their parliamentarians should be the same.

1.7 Significance of the study

Serema laments the "considerable lack of reading materials on the information needs of parliamentarians" (1999:180). The researcher could not trace any evidence of studies done in South Africa on the information needs and information seeking patterns of South African parliamentarians. The role and importance of parliaments and legislatures in a democratic country, as well as information for legislative activities makes this study of great significance.

The significance of the study can thus be stated as the following:

• Knowledge of the specific information needs of parliamentarians can assist all those working in the different information systems available to the parliamentarians, to tailor-make their services to satisfy these needs. Of the information systems available to them, the Parliamentary Library in Cape Town, as well as the Provincial Parliamentary Libraries, can benefit most from this knowledge as they provide services on-site, thus forming the first line of information service centres.

• This study can sensitise parliamentarians to the different information sources and services available to them. In many cases ignorance of the available

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information sources and systems can be overcome by making people aware of their existence, particularly to a person who grew up without sufficient exposure to information sources. Sensitization can open up a whole new world of knowledge to those willing to explore the possibilities open to them.

- Parliamentary libraries all over the world are experiencing changing service patterns, moving away from providing traditional print-based services to electronic-based in order to provide for the immediate information needs of their clientele. Knowledge of the extent to which parliamentarians use electronic information sources can assist the Parliamentary Library to adapt their services and resources to suit their needs. This can lead to the Parliamentary Library being the first-stop resource for parliamentarians when seeking information, instead of being a non-entity occupying space and an irrelevant information service.

- By mapping the information sources, services and systems available to parliamentarians in South Africa, this study should provide them with a wide range of alternatives in their quest for the correct information.

1.8 Dissemination of the findings

The information will be disseminated by means of conference papers, lectures and articles in scholarly journals. The data gained through the questionnaires and observation will be disseminated by means of a report to the respective parliaments.

1.9 Thesis design

Chapter 1: Introduction and background. In this chapter background information will be given on the topic. The assumptions, research questions and objectives will be provided, and a short indication of the preferred research methodology will be provided. Definitions will be made to explain certain concepts.

Chapter 2: The South African parliamentary system. A background study to the development of democracy will be provided. South Africa governmental developments had a long history of racial segregation before the eventual integration

of racial groups on an equal basis in the government in 1994. The legislative developments leading to this will be traced and discussed in order to shed some light on this part of our country's history. Current developments in Parliament will also be discussed in detail.

Chapter 3: Parliamentary information sources, systems and services. A myriad of information sources, systems and services are available to parliamentarians to provide them with answers concerning information needed to function effectively in their work. The sources, systems and services specific to the South African information scene will be described. Additionally, the development of parliamentary library services worldwide will be traced, and indications given on the nature and methods of information provision to parliamentarians. A detailed discussion of South African parliamentary library services will also be given.

Chapter 4: Conceptual framework. A detailed discussion of concepts applicable to the topic will be made in order to provide the theoretical grounds for the study.

Chapter 5: Research methodology. The methods used in a study are of the utmost importance to ensure the success thereof. It is also important to report it in detail in order to prove the validity of the findings.

Chapter 6: Data presentation and analysis. The data, once gathered, will be analysed and presented both in verbal form and in graphic form. This chapter will contain the responses of both the groups of parliamentarians (national and provincial), as well as that of the Parliamentary Library Services.

Chapter 7: Findings and discussions. This chapter will be devoted to a discussion on the findings of the surveys done. It will look at correlations, relationships, similarities and so on.

Chapter 8: Summary of findings and recommendations. Being one of the most important chapters in the study, careful notice will be taken of the major findings of this study. The analysed data will be used to come to meaningful conclusions about the findings of the study. The recommendations will suggest ways in which to model

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existing information services to enhance service delivery to the parliamentarians. Topics for further study will also be discussed in this chapter.

List of references. A full list of all the secondary sources used in presenting the study will be provided. The abbreviated Harvard method will be used for printed sources, and the APA-style will be used to refer to electronic sources.

Appendix. All applicable appendices will be attached in this chapter.

1.10 Summary

Within a democracy, effective participation in the parliamentary processes is expected from parliamentarians. To achieve this, parliamentarians need to be able to access, utilize and disseminate information on a variety of topics. A myriad of information sources, services and systems exist, but it is still to be proven that the South African parliamentarians are aware of their existence, and whether they can access and utilize it optimally. The study will therefore aim to provide enlightenment on this topic.

The next chapter will look at the development of the democratic ideal in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

2.1 Introduction

The word "democracy" can mean different things to different people and/or nations. A variety of democratic experiences exist up to today. Although a very old governmental system, dating back to at least 508 BC, many nations still do not have the benefit of a democratically elected government. Thus, they do not have a say in the governing of their everyday lives.

Democracy spread from the Western World throughout the rest of the world. Africa has been very slow in embracing full democracy. It was only after ridding themselves of the shackles of colonialisation that democracy came to most of the African nations. Even then multiparty representation was not always allowed.

The evolving democracy in South Africa has always been closely linked to race, and the perception by each race of the role it played in the governance of the day. Domination by one race, and the subordination of the other races making up the fabric of the South African nation, has always been the golden thread throughout the country's political history. This has only recently changed with the first fully democratic elections held in 1994.

Race has for the majority of three and a half centuries played a major role in determining the political rights and privileges of the inhabitants of South African. The country's strategic position between the East and the West, as well as its moderate climate, made it an attractive option to inhabitants of three continents, i.e. Africa, Europe and Asia, leading to an unique, multi-national nation, described by Drury (in Van Jaarsveld 1969) as "a very strange society". From the outset Europeans assumed a dominant role both in the governance and the administration of this new nation - a situation existing until as recently as the last decade of the previous century.

The word "Parliament" comes from the Latin word 'parliamentum', and the French word 'parler' meaning 'talk' (Ilbert 1920; Laundy 1989). According to Loewenstein (1967:ix), "Parliament" can be seen as " a body with a limited number of members whose official function it is to 'represent' others who cannot, by reason of their numbers or geographical dispersal, attend themselves." This implies that the voices of all the people in a country will be heard through their respective representatives in Parliament (The National Council of Provinces 2001).

This has not always been the case in South Africa, where the right to vote has for many centuries been vested in a minority. Since parliament plays a direct and active role in national affairs, this means that the major proportion of the nation had no representation, thus leading to skewed appropriation of funds and facilities. Since the legislative authority of the Republic of South Africa is also vested in Parliament, laws made thus favoured some while the rest had to suffer oppressive laws. To change this situation led to a history of struggle; sometimes passive but in later years also violent.

Full democracy for all the people of South Africa came in 1994 when for the first time in this country's recorded history, all people over the age of 18 could vote to elect the representatives they wanted to represent them in Parliament.

In this chapter attention will be given to the development of democracy in the world at large. Specific attention will be given to South Africa. Since the movement towards a democracy has always been linked to the racial composition of the South African nation, this will be discussed to determine each group's role in the eventual democratic outcome.

The historical background leading to the establishment of a democratically elected Parliament on both national and provincial levels will also be discussed. Parliamentary representation takes place on two levels, national and provincial, and the composition, functions and activities of both these houses will be given attention.

2.2 Democracy

2.2.1 Definition of democracy

To come to a precise definition of the word "democracy" can be a very demanding task, since the word can mean many things to different people, for example the word will have a totally different meaning to a Westerner, a citizen from China, or an inhabitant of an African nation. Even for people in neighbouring countries it might have different meanings, since democracy can be implemented in different ways and in different degrees. In this regard Arblaster (1987:5) maintains "the word had many very different meanings and connotations in its long history, and is understood differently today in the context of different social and economic systems". He adds that what is called democracy in the West would not necessarily satisfy those who have a different conception of the word.

The term democracy originally come from the Greek words "demos" meaning "people" or the whole citizen body living within a particular city-state, and "kratos" meaning "authority", or "rule"(Arblaster 1987; Research-Education-Advocacy-People 2001). Abraham Lincoln described democracy as government by the people, of the people and for the people (First 1997). According to the Lectric Law Library Lexicon (The 'Lectric Law Library's Legal Lexicon Lyceum 2000, The 'Lectric Law Library's Lexicon on democracy, para 1), the term "democracy" means: "that form of government in which the sovereign power is exercised by the people in a body". In other words with this form of government the people have the right to control their own destiny, have the final authority and have the right to make their own decisions or at least influence the decisions that affect their everyday lives (Research-Education-Advocacy-People 2001).

It would thus seem that there is a basic understanding that democracy implies involvement of the ordinary citizen in the governance of his everyday life. The extent of this involvement might differ from nation to nation.

2.2.2 Types of democracy

The authoritative power exercised in a democracy can be derived either directly or indirectly from the people in one of two forms (Research-Education-Advocacy-People 2001):

- *Direct democracy:* where everybody is given the chance to participate in making policy decisions.

- *Representative democracy:* where all people vote to elect representatives to make policy for them and a wide range of checks and balances help to ensure leadership accountability.

In both cases the exercise is usually accomplished by free and fair voting and/or consensus (The 'Lectric Law Library's Legal Lexicon Lyceum 2000). Voting decisions are mostly based on majority rule, in other words final decisions are based on more than half the votes cast. In the case of more than three candidates standing for an election the plurality rule is applied where the candidate with the most votes wins. Proportional representation can also be used where a political party is awarded a percentage of seats in the legislature in proportion to its share in the total vote cast (Groth in World Book Encyclopedia1995).

2.2.3 Criteria for a democratic process

Dahl (in Research-Education-Advocacy-People 2001) identifies five criteria that determine whether an organisation is democratic or not:

- *Effective participation:* This should allow for equal and effective opportunities to make an individual's view known before a policy is adopted.

- *Voting equality:* When a final decision needs to be made about a policy, every member must have an equal and effective opportunity to vote. All votes must be counted equally.

- *Enlightened understanding:* Within reasonable time limits everybody involved must have equal and effective opportunities for learning about relevant policies and their likely consequences.

- *Control of the agenda:* Members must have the exclusive right to decide how, and what matters are to be placed on the agenda.

- *Inclusion:* All members must have the full rights that are implied by the four mentioned above.

2.2.4 Features of a democracy

Although democracy varies from country to country, the features of a democracy are more or less the same. According to Kesselman, Krieger & Joseph (1996:15), the following features should be present in a democracy:

- selection of representatives should be through a free and fair election

- citizens possess civil and political rights, i.e. the right to vote for representatives, the right of freedom of expression, association, the right to criticize the government, and so on

- political parties must have the freedom to organize, present candidates, and compete in an election

- minority parties, not included in the government, must have the right to organise and criticize the ruling government

- the ruling government must develop policy according to specified procedures, and the executives must be held accountable

- an independent judiciary system must protect citizen's civil rights and liberties from violation by the government. It also has to ensure that government officials respect constitutionally specified procedures.

De Villiers and Sindane (1996) also added the following characteristics: universal franchise, protection of human rights, a multiparty system, accountability, representativeness, protection of minorities, checks and balances to prevent misuse of power, and separation of powers.

2.2.5 Parliaments and Parliamentary representation

As shown above, parliamentary representation, based on free and fair elections, forms an important aspect of a democracy. A parliament can be described as "the central

legislative institution of that system of government in which the executive officers are selected by and from the body of legislators" (Cannon 1986:465).

In most cases the executive body of parliament is comprised of a prime minister or state president and a cabinet of ministers. The cabinet ministers are normally chosen from the ranks of the majority party, except in the case of a coalition, where representation of all parties involved will be the order of the day (Dowse 2000).

All deliberations taking place in a democratic parliament, as identified by Cannon (1986), are based on principles that evolved over many centuries, i.e.:

- the basic principle of equal rights
- the rule of the majority
- the protection of the minority, and
- the orderly consideration of one subject at a time.

Parliamentary practices are strictly controlled by parliamentary procedure, i.e. the generally accepted rules, precedents and practices commonly employed in the government of deliberative assembly. A deliberative assembly, according to The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1991) has the following characteristics:

- it is an independent or autonomous group gathered to have discussions in freedom concerning "courses of action to be taken in the name of the entire group"
- it is normally a sizable group (12 or more members), therefore some sort of formality is necessary to regulate the proceedings
- the members are free to act
- each member's vote has equal weight
- members present act for the whole membership

Although the gaining of democracy, and therefore parliamentary representation, or at least a form of it, has a long history, it only became a globally popular governmental form in recent decades. The following history will trace the development of constitutional freedom from the origins of democracy until recent years.

2.3 Historical development of democracy

The word democracy was first used in Ancient Athens (508 -338 BC) meaning "rule of the people". The Greek population was divided into ten "constituencies", each choosing by lot 50 people who were to serve as council members for a year. Each group of 50 was also responsible to act as a steering and administrative committee for a tenth of the year. The function of the assembly was to pass the laws and decide government policies. With these moves, the power of the aristocracy was curbed and the power shifted to the council and the assembly (Arblaster 1987). However, even though known as a democracy, nearly 50% of the citizenry, including women, slaves and foreigners, were considered non-citizens, and could therefore not participate at all (Lefebvre 1997a). Judged on the criteria set out in the previous paragraph, this could not be seen as a real democracy.

The next significant development was when the Romans (509 - 27 BC) overthrew their king, setting up a "republic" in its place. Within this governmental system the power was divided into a Senate for nobles and an Assembly for commoners (Lefebvre 1997b). After the fall of Rome the democratic ideals were stifled by the influx of a horde of Barbarians to whom this governmental system did not appeal.

During the Middle Ages the system of feudalism required that individuals pledge their loyalty and services to one another. The individuals also had certain rights which had to be recognised by others, and which were protected by the feudal court system. These courts led to kings' councils, representative assemblies and modern parliaments (Groth 1995).

With the Renaissance came a renewed insistence by individuals for greater freedom in all areas of life. Both the Protestant as well as the Roman Catholic Church defended the right to oppose absolute monarchy, arguing that the political power of earthly rulers comes from the consent of the people (Groth 1995).

In 1215 AD King John of England was forced to sign the Magna Carta. This document created the English Parliament that from then onwards acted as the law-making body. It also curbed the power of the King and Royalty to make laws as they

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During the 1800's democracy, based on the British or American examples, spread to many countries. Elections and legislatures became relatively common features. With the rise of the educated working middleclass, created by the Industrial Revolution, came demands for, and the reception of, greater political rights. Many more people were given the right to vote, and freedom of speech, assembly and religion was also extended.

Applications of democracy differ greatly with varying results: from success to failure. The adoption of democratic institutions does not necessarily mean permanent democracy for the adopting nation. In many cases the democratic institutions become dictatorships, resulting in human misery and human rights violations (First 1998). In the case of countries like Nepal, for example, the institution of democracy led to total disillusionment, as the government was perceived as being totally corrupt and elitist. After ten years of democracy the Maoist Party left the democratically elected government, and resorted to guerilla warfare in an effort to work out a better deal for the people. This resulted in many human rights transgressions and the infliction of torture by the ruling party (Stevenson 2001). In Indonesia the embracing of democratic ideals also did not result in the contemplated political freedom for the ordinary citizen, as the transition phase between authoritarian rule and democracy was not properly executed. Currently this nation's political situation is chaotic, as their leaders claim that they do not know how to implement proper democracy in the nation (Hara 2001). Hara (2001) also reports that in many countries, like Zambia, Lesotho, Cambodia, Niger, Peru, Sierra Leone, and the Congo, democracy has reverted back to authoritarian rule.

Despite the attainment of democracy still being a far off ideal in a number of countries, many modern governments today have long and well-established histories of democracy, like Australia, Belgium, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Within the African continent, most countries only recently gained independence from their colonial masters. Most of them introduced elected governments and legislatures at national and state levels, but retained many of the exploitative colonial institutions and practices in their polity. In many cases it led to a state-controlled economy with a

dominant public sector. The result in most cases was irresponsible politics and a bloated bureaucracy, both not accountable to the people (First 1998). Tordorff (1993) also pointed out that although many differences exist between the different African nations, they experienced many of the same problems like:

- the lack of expertise, experience and knowledge to rule the country as a democracy,

- the problem of trying to hold nations together that came into being as a result of colonisation, and

- the fact that they were mostly poor, predominantly rural populations, dependent on the vagaries of the world market.

The problems experienced in coming to terms with a world economy, led to many African nations moving into a downward-spiraling economic crisis, leaving most of them economically worse off than they were during the colonial period.

From 1980 onward, widespread pressure on African governments to reform their style of government started mounting. It was felt that economic revival was dependent on getting rid of authoritarian, corrupt and inefficient one-party governments. The introduction of a multi-party system of government and political liberation of the people was seen as the panacea for economic restructuring. In their quest for a better life Western governments and the International Monetary Fund support the African nations. However, both Tordorff (1993) and Bratton and Van de Walle (1997) express their reservations about the short-term prospects of full democracy for all African nations, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the prerequisites for a stable democracy, like a stable and well-developed economy, a sizable middle-class and private sector and high literacy rates, are still lacking. Despite these gloomy predictions, Nzongolo-Ntalaja and Lee (1997) express a much more optimistic view, stating that the transition to democracy is irreversible. According to their viewpoint, the people of Africa have lost their fear of dictators and their oppressive machines, and that no state will succeed in taking away their sorely earned freedom of speech, assembly and press. They do, however, warn that it might be a long process to make the full democratic transition.

South Africa, currently seen as one of the countries where democracy has a better chance to survive, has since its earliest recorded history, some forms of representation on governmental issues, be it in an advisory, or in an executive capacity. However, despite the fact that the Europeans were not the only early inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, representation has always been closely related to privileges given on a racial basis. True democracy, thus representation, and the right to vote freely for the candidate of a person's choice, for all the different nations living in the country, has only been established as recently as the 90's of the previous century.

2.4 The development of democracy in South Africa

2.4.1 Khoisan

When Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape in 1652 it did not mark the beginning of human settlement in this country; it was only the beginning of Dutch colonisation. Many centuries before the arrival of the first Europeans, the Khoi-Khoi, together with the San, had already inhabited the Cape. These were mainly nomadic nations, living in small groups (Venter 1989a).

Politically, the San had chiefs, who did not wield much power or political authority, and had mostly rainmaking and ritual duties. Within the Khoi-Khoi the organisation was mostly clan-based, but clear structures of authority, for example chiefs and captains, existed. Clans were sometimes loosely associated into tribes under the leadership of a rich and powerful chieftain. The chiefs did not have much political power. Leadership was seldom hereditary, and after the chief's death the tribe normally disbanded and formed new tribes under new leadership. This fragmentation made the Khoi-Khoi defenseless against pressures within and forces outside the group. This group of people eventually intermarried with slaves and other people from the Cape, and became known as the "Coloureds" (Van Aswegen 1990; Venter in Venter1989a).

2.4.2 African people

Researchers seem to differ on when exactly the first African people arrived in the

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Cape. Some suggest that they were there as early as the late Iron Age (dating back to the early Christian era), while others suggest that they are relatively recent immigrants, only moving down from Central east Africa during the last few centuries (Van Aswegen 1990; Van Jaarsveld 1969).

It would seem as if groups like the Bushmen (San) and the Hottentots (Khoi-Khoi) have been living in this area for many centuries, but the Nguni and Sotho speaking people only migrated much later. The migration process, which was a very slow process, started about 2000 years ago, and was possibly the result of wars, population growth and the resulting need for new pasture for cattle, or the escalating trade in slaves by the Arabs (Van Jaarsveld 1969).

The first Nguni and Sotho people did not own private land, but owned it communally. Their economy was mainly based on subsistence farming, and no effort was made to either develop an infrastructure, or the natural sources available to them. The groups remained small, fragmented, socially and politically disorganised groups (Van Aswegen 1990). It was only during the reign of military leaders like king Shaka, that groups combined, forming bigger nations. This was mostly for short-lived periods, since their periodic wars with the Europeans moving from the South Western Cape scattered them throughout the country (Malan and Hattingh 1975).

According to Van Aswegen (1990) and Malan and Hattingh (1975), the groups moving down from the Central East Africa were divided into two big groups, i.e. the Nguni and the Sotho. Both these groups are subdivided into smaller groups. The Nguni-group, moving along the east coast was the first group meeting up with the White hunters and "trekboers" (cattle and sheep farmers) moving up from the South Western Cape. The Sotho-group moved into the South African Highlands and was already settled there when the Europeans landed in the Cape in 1652 (Malan & Hattingh 1975).

The Nguni, who mainly occupied the eastern parts of South Africa, were sudivided into the Northern Nguni, including the Zulus and the Swazis, and the Southern Nguni, who include the Xhosa, Mpondo, Thembu and Mpondomise.

The Sotho people were subdivided into the Tswana, the Northern Sotho and the Southern Sotho. Smaller groups like the Venda, Lemba and the Tsonga, who did not belong to the two big groups, also moved down from the Central East Africa. Although separate from the other groups they were influenced in certain aspects by their neighbouring societies.

All the different groups had a well-developed governmental system in place. All of them were organised according to a tribal system. Each tribe had its own area as well as a name peculiar to the tribe. The paramount chief was responsible for all judicial matters. Each tribe also had a central tribal government, as well as local governments for subsections of the tribe (Van Jaarsveld 1969). The tribal government consisted of advisors, deputy chiefs and influential people in the community.

Political power was carried over from one generation to the next. Appointed advisors assisted the paramount chief. The paramount chief, assisted by the tribal government served as the highest political authority. They were responsible for the making of laws, and also served as the highest judicial authority, being responsible for rulings concerning cases, handing down sentences and fines (Van Jaarsveld 1969).

According to Venter (1989a) the Sotho-group was fairly democratically organised with a national gathering, open to all adult males, which served as the "voice of the nation". Since this meeting represented the will of the nation, the tribal chief seldom ruled against the wishes of the national gathering. Thus important policies were only made with the support from senior tribesmen and relatives.

The smaller tribal family organisations were replaced by the end of the eighteenth century by a system of tribal confederacies.

When the African and the White people met during the eighteenth century in the Eastern Cape, this political system was still in place. However, according to Van Aswegen (1990), this centralised government style began disintegrating with the death of the Xhosa leader, Phalo. As more and more contact with White people took place the traditional political system came under even more pressure, and was seriously challenged by the Western type government introduced to them by the Whites.

2.4.3 White people

2.4.3.1 The Dutch period (1652 - 1795)

The first permanent European residents of the Cape were a group of Dutch, who under orders from the Dutch East-India Company (DEIC), arrived in 1652 with the commission to start a refreshment post for passing ships (Whiting-Spilhaus 1996). The first group consisted of about eighty people, but within the first year of residence the population had already grown to 136 (Muller 1968).

With the settlement of the first group of Europeans, Western society and culture was added to the cultures already existing. Externally, it made South Africa part of the greater European and international capitalist world, and internally it influenced the interaction between the different groups and the course of history. At the same time Africa also influenced the Europeans, transforming them into a distinctive community that made Africa their home (Van Aswegen 1990).

For the first one-and-a-half centuries (1652 - 1795), the Cape was politically governed by the Dutch East-India Company (DEIC). With their head offices being in Amsterdam, thousands of kilometres away, it was necessary to send officials who could govern on their behalf. The most important of these officials, who were accountable to the Chamber of XVII, the executive council of the DEIC, was the governor-general of Batavia. He, together with the Council of India, had the power to make laws applicable to all the colonies under control of the DEIC (Scholtz 1967). Since Batavia was also situated far away from the Cape, it became necessary to appoint a governor for the Cape to manage the affairs of the Cape. A small Council of Policy was also established, which consisted of four, and later eight senior officials. The Council of Policy was responsible for the making and execution of laws. It also acted as the highest court of law (Van Aswegen 1990).

In 1657 nine burghers of the fledgling colony were given the status of being "free burghers". This allowed them the opportunity to produce products on their own. They were given limited representation on the Council of Policy, but this was later transferred to the Court of Justice that was established in 1685. This resulted in the Cape burghers not having any legislative or executive authority. This situation was

tolerated for nearly a century until 1779 when they requested to serve on the Council of Policy - a request promptly turned down (Van Aswegen 1990).

Venter (1989) maintains that the Dutch colonization was important because it introduced the Roman-Dutch legal system, brought permanent White settlers, and drew the first outlines of an independent Western-style political entity in Southern Africa.

2.4.3.2 British period (1795 -1934)

The end of the century brought an end to Dutch occupation. From 1795 - 1803 the British took control of the country for the first time. As this was a short-lived period, there was no interference with the existing political institutions. However, the Batavian period (1803-1806) did bring about some significant changes which still exist today, for example the independence of the High Court from the political influences of the day (Muller 1968).

In January 1806 Britain officially annexed the Cape for a second time. The annexations drastically changed the political arena. Although the original agreement at the time of the annexation was to honour all rules, laws and rituals in use at that point in time, the British Parliament now became the legislative law. As was the case with the Dutch government, a governor was retained to look after the colony on behalf of the British government (Scholtz 1970). Throughout the following century the governor played a decisive political role as the most important local functionary in the Crown Colony.

As far as its governance is concerned, the Cape went through a period of successive administrative changes, leading eventually to independence and a democracy of some sort. Venter (1989a) describes these changes and their eventual influence in gaining independence:

2.4.3.3 Military government

Autocratic rule, instituted in 1806, was the order of the day. The governor represented

Britain and ruled by proclamations. He also had supreme authority over all three traditional departments of government, i.e. the legislature, judiciary and the executive. No local control or representation was allowed.

2.4.3.4 Crown Colony Government

The British governor, appointed by the British colonial government, still controlled all three government functions. Constitutionally the governor was not responsible to the colonists, but to the British Parliament and Minister of Colonies. However some local citizens could be appointed to the governmental bodies, mostly in an advisory capacity. The most important of these advisory bodies was the Advisory Council introduced in 1825. This consisted of six British colonials who advised the governor on legislative matters. All legislative measures were now in the form of "ordinances" (Scholtz 1970).

The Advisory Council was replaced in 1834 by a Legislative Council, which consisted of four most senior British officials, the Attorney-General and five to seven citizens, all nominated by the governor (Van Aswegen 1990). The governor was therefore still firmly in charge. With the creation of an Executive Council, the powers of the governor were somewhat curtailed, as this Council was to make joint decisions with the governor.

In this period local governmental institutions such as municipalities were instituted, which allowed the ratepayers to choose their own local councils.

As a result of the protestations of the British settlers, freedom of the press was instituted in 1828 (Van Jaarsveld 1969).

2.4.3.5 Representative government

Due to the increasing dissatisfaction of the colonists, the Cape of Good Hope Constitution Ordinance, promulgated in 1853, provided for more representation by locals. The governor was still in charge, but a legislative assembly and a legislative council were also instituted. This Legislative Assembly consisted of 46 members,

elected for a five-year period. According to Van Aswegen (1990) an individual had to occupy property to the value of 25 pounds or have an income of 50 pounds a year to be eligible for election. Although there were no restrictions on race, the educational and financial criteria for representation, made it virtually impossible for anyone other than European males to participate (Venter 1989a).

The Legislative Council, also instituted in 1853, consisted of a Chief Justice as President and 15 elected members. To be eligible an individual had to be a qualified voter, be older than 30 years, own unencumbered property to the value of 2000 pounds or have property to the value of 4000 pounds (Muller 1968).

The legislative authority was thus vested in a parliament consisting of both the houses. All bills introduced, discussed and approved in the Legislative Assembly were referred to the Legislative Council for further discussion. Once approved by these bodies the governor had to give his approval before it became law (Van Aswegen 1990).

The introduction of a parliament based on the principles of free elections and full burgher (citizen's) representation at the highest governmental levels, was a significant step forward in attaining independence. This step also laid the foundations for the British Westminster system that was to be introduced and accepted in South Africa (Van Aswegen 1990).

2.4.3.6 Responsible government

Since representative government had serious flaws in providing democratically elected representation in both houses, dissatisfaction with the system was rife. According to Venter (1989) the Constitution Act of 1782 institutionalised the British Westminster parliamentary system in the Cape. This allowed elected representation in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, and made the elected members accountable for their actions. In this dispensation the executive was now responsible to Parliament, and in the case of a vote of "no confidence", no funds could be ratified and the executive was obliged to resign.

Although many restrictions were still in place, restricting the powers and sovereignty of the Parliament was a major step forward in the fight for democracy.

An interesting consequence of the British colonial rule in the Cape was that it reflected the color prejudice of the Whites at that time. Especially in the Eastern Cape and Natal, it was instrumental in instigating the policy of racial segregation that played a dominant role in the political history of South Africa (Venter 1989a)

2.4.3.7 The Great Trek (1834 - 1854) - political consequences

With the Cape Province firmly under British control, a unique event took place that would spread the ideals of a free and just democratic society to the other areas, in what was eventually to become South Africa. The Great Trek was a result of various problems experienced by frontier settlers, one of which was dissatisfaction with British rule. As they trekked inland the Voortrekkers, as they were commonly known, declared their own states. The two most commonly known were the *Oranje-Vrijstaat* and the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.* Venter (1989a) describes the political developments in these two republics as follows:

2.4.3.7.1 Oranje-Vrijstaat

The highest legislative authority was the *Volksraad* - which fulfilled legislative, executive and judicial functions. The *Volksraad* had 29 elected members and its initial main function was to determine how the country was to be governed. This was done through the drafting of a constitution (Muller 1968). The voters consisted of enfranchised adult European males.

The executive was vested in a State President, who was elected by popular vote, and an executive council consisting of two official members and three non-official members elected by the Volksraad. The executive council had little formal power and served mainly in an advisory capacity to the President. He in turn was responsible to the *Volksraad.*

Although seen as a model republic, it remained firmly under control of White Afrikaner farmers throughout the republican period (1854 - 1902).

2.4.3.7.2 The Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

As was the case in the *Oranje Vrijstaat,* the *Volksraad* was in control of legislative and judicial matters. The executive power was initially under their control, but mismanagement led to the election of a State President (Muller 1968). He was assisted by an executive council consisting of officials and two elected burghers.

Venter (1989) observes that members of the *Volksraad* had to be white males over the age of thirty and of Protestant Christian Faith. All decisions were taken by majority vote. Legislation could be submitted by the State President, but also had to be submitted to the electorate for commentary and approval. Objections had to be tabled to the *Volksraad.*

Following the example of the *Oranje Vrijstaat* the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* was also dominated by a White, agriculturally-based group, reflecting the ideals of the Afrikaner. As this did not reflect the true population's composition and feelings, it led to the demise of both republics after the Anglo-Boer War in 1902.

2.4.3.8 Natal

As the Voortrekkers passed through, and in some cases settled permanently in Natal, they formed a loosely strung together governmental structure that was in power from 1839 -1845 when the British occupied the country. Preller (n.d.) reports that the *Volksraad* consisted of 24 men, elected by popular vote, all of whom were to serve one year at a time. No head or president was elected and at each quarterly meeting a new chairman was appointed. They seem to have had unrestricted legislative and executive powers.

Although the British occupied Natal in 1843, they only instituted their own governmental structures in 1845. Natal then became a province of the Cape. Executive powers were vested in a lieutenant-governor assisted by a council of five appointed officials. All legislative authority was vested in the Cape government.

During the fifties more self-control measures were implemented, paving the way for the introduction of a representative government. Although the right of every male inhabitant to be a voter was acknowledged, strict qualifications were put in place, making it virtually impossible for Blacks and Indians to vote (Muller 1968). This problem was addressed in 1883 when voter qualifications were lowered significantly to allow for a bigger voter's base.

Responsible government was introduced in 1893. This allowed for a nominated Legislative Council and an elected Legislative House of Assembly. The executive powers were in the hands of a Governor and a Cabinet consisting of six members.

Indians arrived in Natal in 1855 to work on the sugar plantations. After their tenure they could return to India, at government expense, or they could stay on and obtain land equal in value to the cost of repatriation (Marais 1989). In 1859 Indians were given the franchise but in 1896 a law was promulgated by the Government excluding Indians from the voters role, based on the fact that no non-Europeans, or their descendants, immigrating from countries without a parliamentary system were eligible to register for the voters roll (Muller 1968). Those who were already on the roll were not scrapped, but only a few qualified at that stage to be voters. During the war of 1899 – 1902 the government made many promises concerning political and social rights to the Indians, but this was quickly forgotten in the aftermath of the war. Even during talks about Unification during 1908/09 no mention was made of extending the franchise to the Indians or giving them direct or indirect representation in parliament. This was extended to all the other provinces (Marais 1989).

2.4.3.9 Unification of the British colonies under responsible government in South Africa

With growing national sentiments among the Afrikaners, as well as the discovery of the rich gold- and diamond fields in the two Boer Republics, the British government became more and more skittish about their strategic position at the southern most point of Africa. The discovery of more and more gold and diamond fields also attracted a growing number of British citizens to the two republics. As this was seen as a threat to their sovereignty, the *Zuid Afrikcaansche Republiek* changed their

voter's requirements for immigrants from having to live in the country for five years in order to qualify, to fourteen years. As a further safety measure a second *Volksraad* was instituted which could be *vetoed* by the first *Volksraad*. The first *Volksraad* consisted of 34 republican burghers and two immigrants. This was met with widespread resistance from the British immigrants. This fact, together with Britain's growing frustration with the republics for denying them free access to the rest of Africa during the period of the colonisation of the rest of Africa, led to the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) which changed the South African political scene forever (Van Jaarsveld 1969).

The Anglo-Boer War brought an end to the political institutions of the Boer republics. Both these former republics were now to be governed according to British policies. By 1907 both the former republics were given responsible colonial government, paving the way for uniting all four British colonies in South Africa into one state (Scholtz 1978).

An important aspect of the period preceding the unification was the fact that it internalised the racial prejudices of the Whites against the Black people of South Africa. In addition to denying them the franchise, they were also denied certain commercial and educational opportunities. The economic status of the African people was also affected, as they were regarded as competition and cheap labour. Restrictive laws were enforced in order to inhibit any threat to economic power. Thus the Black people were driven into economic subservience. On the other hand, the functioning of the British colonies in the interior was tailored to create an economic and social base for the development of the White and Afrikaner capitalists. The result was that the wealth, and with it the political power in the country, was vested in the hands of the relatively few capitalists (Spies 1993; Venter 1989a).

2.4.3.10 The union of South Africa

With Britain controlling all four colonies, as well as the three protectorates (today Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland), it made military and economic sense to unify all these areas. At a National Convention held in 1908/09, the four colonies agreed on a unitary state with four subordinate provinces, to be known as the Cape, Transvaal,

Orange Free State and Natal. The three protectorates could be incorporated at a later date. The Union came into effect on 31st May 1910 after the promulgation of the *South Africa Act, 1909* (Venter 1989a).

Under this dispensation, the legislative authority, the Parliament, consisted of a House of Assembly and a Senate. According to Saunders (1999) the House of Assembly was elected by European adult males, with a qualified vote for Coloured, Indians and Africans, in the Cape and Natal provinces. No vote of colour was allowed in the Transvaal and Orange Free State provinces. Members had to be elected by a majority, or 'first past the post' system. This parliamentary system eventually led to a situation where only the European electorate could compete for power (Du Toit 1995). Some petitions were received from European women for the granting of franchise, but surprisingly a large number of women petitioned against the granting of franchise. Franchise was only extended to European women in 1930 (Marais 1989).

The Senate members were elected on a proportional basis to represent each province. An electoral college consisting of provincial councilors and members of Parliament in each province elected the Senate members. The British Governor-General appointed eight members. Since the British Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1864 limited Acts of the Union, the Union government was not fully sovereign (Venter 1989a).

According to Venter (1989a) an executive council had the executive authority, with the council acting as the Cabinet, overseeing day-to-day activities. The Prime Minister, who was the leader of the majority party in the House, was the chief executive officer.

The four provinces each received a provincial council, with their members elected on the same voters' role as members of Parliament. Provincial councils were subordinate to Parliament. The executive council, chaired by a government appointed administrator, was responsible for the everyday affairs of each province. The administrator was directly responsible to central government.

Despite the Unification, the republican ideal was still very strong in the minds of the Afrikaners. This ideal would lead to bitter struggles between those loyal to the Union

and those proposing a republican government. Between 1910 and 1961 when South Africa became a republic, the country became a sovereign state within the British Commonwealth, freeing it from its submissive status. Many new symbols were adopted in an effort to rid itself of the signs of British imperialism. This brought its own struggles among the citizens of the country, with the Afrikaner-dominated National Party, winning the 1948 elections. This party would prepare and lead South Africa to become a republic (Grundlingh 1993; Venter 1989a).

2.4.3.11 Apartheid and its role in politics

The National Party, under the leadership of D.F. Malan, decided to solve the political, social and cultural issues concerning race, that bothered the Afrikaner. From 1949 onwards a continual set of laws regulated the lives of all people of colour (Leach 1989). *Apartheid,* as this system of government was commonly known, aimed at "comprehensive communal, economic and political control of subject populations, to be engineered, in every sphere by means of spatial relocation of selected categories of people" (Du Toit 1995:14).

Even though the word became common usage from 1948 onwards, Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989) points out that *apartheid* had its roots in the earliest history of European settlement in the Cape in 1652. White supremacy has been enforced from the beginning, and became entrenched in the colonial lifestyle.

Between 1870 – 1890 industrialisation had a detrimental effect on labour relations. The Afrikaner government in the two republics tried to tie the African people down on the farms by prohibiting them from moving without official documentation. However, since the mines and industries offered four times the wages earned on farms, the farmers could not stop the exodus to the cities (Malan and Hattingh 1975). This led to fears that urbanisation would lead to a loss of control over Africans (Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989).

At the same time the gap between the rich and the poor Afrikaners was widening. Poor farmers working for wealthy landowners were treated with even greater contempt than the Africans, making them poorer by the day. Events like the

Rinderpest (1890's) and the Anglo-Boer War worsened their plight, with many of them leaving the farms to go and squat in the towns and cities (Leach 1989). After the Anglo-Boer War Afrikaner leaders started warning of the dangers of the Whites 'going under' unless they regained control of the land and farms. It especially worried the leadership that they had no policy in place that could control the urban space, restore social order, and protect white civilization.

Early segregation measures were mainly concentrated on trying to control African movement and labour. Legislation was thus passed to restrict Africans to compounds and locations under municipal control. Lord Alfred Milner appointed the South African Native Areas Commission to provide a policy for handling "native" affairs. This ensuing policy influenced South African policy deep into the twentieth century (Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989).

The commission made the following proposals:
- that the land be divided into White and African areas
- that African town locations be established for Africans near all the major labour centres
- that African education concentrate on agricultural and industrial education rather than literary education
- that political segregation takes place.

Between 1910 – 1939 comprehensive social segregation measures were employed. Politically, African voters were removed from the common voters roll, and placed on a separate roll to elect white representatives to the house of Assembly (Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989; Venter 1989a), while four senators, elected by an electoral college, represented the Africans nationwide. Since the Coloured people were still on the common voters' roll the National Party had fears of African aspirations to have the same rights and therefore in 1955 Coloureds were also removed from the common voters' roll, and placed on separate rolls from where they could vote for White representatives (O'Meara 1996; Venter 1989a). The same thinking led to the scrapping of legislation giving the Indians the right to vote for representation (Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989).

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Educational segregation entrenched the subordination of the Africans as well as the Coloureds, as poor educational standards made it difficult for them to compete in the job market. With primary schooling compulsory for all Whites, but not for any of the other race groups, as well as the disproportionate distribution of resources for education, competition with the White job applicants became virtually impossible.

Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989) and Van Jaarsveld (1969) point out that in the ensuing decades several provisions were made to provide better conditions for the urban African, like social security benefits and increased spending in education. This however did not make any contribution to lifting standards. According to O'Meara (1996) and Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989) the situation actually deteriorated drastically, especially during the era of H.F.Verwoerd, seen by many as the architect of *apartheid.* During this era both the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the two major parties representing African political aspirations, were banned. This led to the formation of a military resistance unit, *Umkhonto we sizwe,* and the leader of the ANC, Nelson Mandela was detained and sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of sabotage (Saunders 1999).

In 1959 all African representation, in the form of white Members of Parliament, was abolished, and in its place Verwoerd put forward the idea of "separate development", whereby African people were to be given their own homelands that could eventually become independent from South Africa. Africans were to enjoy political representation in their own homelands.

2.4.3.12 Homelands

Prior to the promulgation of the *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill* in 1959, the segregation between the white and the African race groups in South Africa was legalised, first through *The Natives Land Act of 1913,* and later through *The Native Trust and Land Act of 1936.* These laws set aside specific areas of land for exclusive black ownership, thus prohibiting them from owning property in the rest of the country (Du Toit 1995). When Verwoerd introduced his Bill in 1959 he divided the already existing African reserves into eight (later ten) areas, to be known as Bantu-Homelands. The division was largely based on linguistic criteria. The *Bantu*

Authorities Act of 1951 activated tribal authorities, with the chief becoming the main authority (Du Toit 1995). The homelands were to be given limited self-government with the idea of eventually becoming independent under their own constitution (O'Meara 1996). The *Bantu Homelands Act of 1971* made it possible for the homelands to become mini-states, with elected legislatures, executive and judicial branches and bureaucracies with police forces and miniature armies (Du Toit 1995).

Transkei was the first of the homelands to be accorded self-government, with the Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Lebowa, Venda, Gazankulu and Qwaqwa receiving their self-government during the 70's and early 80's. Both Kwa-Zulu and Kwa-Ndebele resisted independence. Even given independence, the homelands still remained financially dependent on South Africa (Saunders in *Africa South of the Sahara 2000* 1999). None of these 'independent' countries were ever internationally acknowledged.

Within this system no room was found for the Coloureds and Indians. While considered to be South African citizens, they were seen as of lesser stature, and assigned to racially defined, territorially separate and politically subordinate institutions (Du Toit 1995).

2.4.3.13 The Republic of South Africa

On the 31st of May 1961 South Africa became a republic. Although Britain acknowledged South Africa's sovereignty, the Republic retained its constitutional pattern. On the party political front the National Party went from strength-to-strength without too much opposition to its planned course (Muller 1968).

2.4.3.13.1 Political dispensation

Politically the Republic consisted of a legislature and an executive.

2.4.3.13.2 Legislature

The legislature, also known as the Parliament consisted of three institutions:

- The State President
- The House of Assembly
- The Senate

Marais (1989) and Venter (1989a) explained the functioning of each of these institutions as follows:

2.4.3.13.2.1 The State President

The State President was elected by an electoral college consisting of members of Senate and the House of Assembly, and was mainly a nominal head of state without any real political power, acting mostly in ceremonial capacity. When the Senate was abolished in 1980 only the House of Assembly took part in the election (Marais 1989).

2.4.3.13.2.2 The House of Assembly

The House consisted of 165 single-member constituent representatives, elected by relative majority by White voters. Up to 1968 Coloured voters could vote for four White representatives on a separate voters' roll.

2.4.3.13.2.3 The Senate

Members were elected by an electoral college and proportionally represented each province and its interests. As political and legislative authority was vested in the House of Assembly the Senate could not fulfill its function effectively, and in the end became a house of revision for the Assembly with no real power or purpose, and was thus abolished in 1980. In its place came the President's Council, composed of White, Chinese, Coloured and Indian members. This Council was mostly an advisory body, advising the State President on matters related to the various race groups (Marais 1989).

2.4.3.13.2.4 The Executive

The executive was responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the country. They were all members of the Cabinet. The leader in the Cabinet was the Prime Minister, who was appointed by the State President. The Prime Minister and his Cabinet had to have the confidence and majority support of the House of Assembly to stay in power.

As the country moved into an era of security crises, increasingly complex governmental affairs, preferential access to information, and so on, the executive usurped the political role of Parliament, diminishing it to a policy-legitimising body, rather than a policy leadership body.

2.4.3.14 Pressure for change and the abandonment of apartheid

During the reign of P.W. Botha (1978 - 1989) the State Security Council became the dominant decision-making institution, reducing the powers of both the NP and the Parliament considerably. The senate was abolished and a President's council introduced in its place. The President's council consisted of White, Indian and Coloured nominated representatives. The council proposed the establishment of a tricameral parliament, consisting of separate houses for the Whites, Coloureds and Indians. Although it recognised that African people should be given representation in the government, it was denied to them (Saunders 1999; Venter 1989a). The tricameral Parliament was introduced in 1984, with P.W. Botha as the first executive president. Apathy by the Coloured and Indian voters concerning the new system, escalating political violence in the predominantly African townships, as well as continued international pressure to proceed with the process of the inclusion of the whole nation in the political arena, led to many white liberals denouncing apartheid and a calling to institute equality for all (Saunders 1999).

In 1989 F.W. de Klerk became the new State President and in 1990 made the announcement that Nelson Mandela would be released from prison, that all banned parties were unbanned, and that a democratic dispensation for all was to be instituted. Negotiations got underway as early as 1990 with talks between the governing party and the ANC, and in 1991 the first multi-party conference on the procedures for the

drafting of a new constitution, the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) began. Although this process was not as smooth as hoped, and suffered several setbacks, a compromise consensus was reached in 1993. An interim Constitution, that was to be finally drafted within three years, was accepted at the end of 1993. Parliament gave legal power to it, paving the way for the elections to be held in April 1994 (De Klerk 1994; Fetter in World Book Encyclopedia 2000; Liebenberg 1993).

2.4.3.15 Democracy and the new government

The election commencing on April 26, 1994 included 19 political parties, with both African and Whites voting together in peace. The ANC won with an overwhelming majority, but not enough to rewrite the constitution unilaterally (Saunders 1999). Nelson Mandela was elected the executive president.

Between 1994 – 1996 the Senate and the House of Assembly sat jointly to draft and adopt a new constitution. The new constitution had to comply with the constitutional principles and had to be certified by the Constitutional Court. Once certified, it would be final and binding (Amato 1994). The final draft of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) was decided upon, and approved by the Constitutional Court in December 1996 and took effect in February 1997. The Constitutional Assembly drew up the Constitution and it reaffirmed South Africa as a constitutional and republican state, with the Constitution being the highest and most important law in the land (Burger 1999).

Government is structured at national, provincial and local government levels. The legislative, executive and judicial authorities are separated from one another.

2.4.3.15.1 The National Government - Parliament

The Parliament is the legislative authority of South Africa and has the power to make laws for the country in accordance with the Constitution. All activities of the Parliament are carried out in the open and the public is free to attend parliamentary meetings. The public can also participate and influence decisions taken on its behalf.

The government advocates openness and transparency in all its actions in order to build a successful democracy. Accountability of parliamentarians is encouraged by questions that can be asked of Ministers, who have to reply in public. Furthermore, the Portfolio and Select Committees of parliament can investigate any aspect of the functioning of government departments at any time, and call any departmental officer or Minister to give account on departmental issues of importance to the Committees (The South African Parliament 2001).

The country is governed in terms of the Constitution which states that "the state is made up of three separate parts or arms", i.e. the Parliament, the Executive and the Judiciary (How our democracy works 2001:1). The Judiciary is an independent and impartial institution and is subject only to the Constitution and the law. The Executive is made up of the President, Deputy President and the Ministers. These three groups constitute the Cabinet, which is responsible for implementing the laws, and policies passed by the parliament. The main function of the Parliament is to make laws and to represent the citizens of South Africa (The South African Parliament 2001). It consists of two houses, i.e. the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (Burger 2001).

2.4.3.15.2 The National Assembly

According to the Constitution, the National Assembly cannot have more than 400 members, but also not less than 350. Members are elected through a system of proportional representation. Before each election each party draws up a list of candidates in order of preference. The candidates are then elected in proportion to the number of votes the party wins in the election (The National Assembly 2001). The term of office is five years. If the Assembly is dissolved, or when its term of office has expired, an election must be held within 90 days (Parliament 2001).

The National Assembly is presided over by the Speaker of the National Assembly, assisted by a Deputy Speaker and the Chairperson and Deputies of Committees (The South African Parliament 2001).

According to *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996* (1997) the National Assembly has the following powers:

- to consider, pass, amend any legislation before the Assembly; and
- initiate or prepare legislation, except money Bills.

They also need to provide the mechanisms to:

- ensure that all executive organs of the state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it; and
- to maintain oversight of
    i.   the exercise of national executive authority, including the implement-tation of legislation; and
    ii. any organ of state.

To ensure public accountability the National Assembly has to involve the public in the legislative and other processes of the Assembly and its committee, and conduct its business and sittings in public, taking measures to regulate public access. A member of the public can be refused access or searched if the National Assembly deems it necessary (Parliament 2001).

The National Assembly functions through Portfolio Committees for each Government Department. These Committees do most of the work on a Bill, and they are also responsible for consulting with the public about it. Members of the public can do this through *public hearings or the asking of submissions on the matter. A member of* public can also attend their meetings at any time.

Once a Committee has agreed upon a Bill, it is then debated and voted on in the full Assembly. Hereafter it is sent to the NCOP for debate, and changes can still be proposed at this stage. Once approved by the NCOP the Bill is signed by the State President and then becomes law (Parliament of South Africa: the National Assembly 2001).

2.4.3.15.3 The National Council of Provinces

The main reason behind the creation of the NCOP was to ensure provinces and local government had a direct voice in Parliament when national laws were made, since most of these laws have to be implemented or carried out in provinces and local government (The National Council of Provinces 2001).

The NCOP is composed of 90 delegates, 10 from each province. Each delegation consists of:

- four special delegates, i.e. the Premier, or in the Premier's absence a specially appointed member of the provincial legislature, and three other special delegates
- six permanent delegates.

The delegates must be members of the Provincial Legislatures, and must reflect the strength of the different parties in the province.

The function of the NCOP is to represent provincial interests in the national legislative process, and has to have a specific mandate from their respective provinces before it can take certain decisions (Burger 2001). Representation is made on a provincial basis, not an individual basis, and so they have to ensure consensus within the province on matters concerning Bills before casting their votes. According to Devenish (1998), permanently delegated NCOP members may attend and speak in their provincial legislatures, but may not vote.

2.4.3.15.4 Provincial government

Whew South Africa became a democracy, the boundaries of the existing four provinces were redesigned to become nine provinces. The Constitution of 1996 (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 1997) proclaimed the provinces as follows:

- Eastern Cape
- Free State

- Gauteng
- KwaZulu-Natal
- Mpumalanga
- Northern Cape
- Northern Province
- North West
- Western Cape.

According to the Constitution, Provincial governments are to consist of a provincial legislature vested with the following legislative powers:

a) to pass a constitution for its province or to amend any existing constitution. (This can only be done with a two-third majority consent.)

b) to pass legislation in the following areas:

- agriculture
- casinos, racing, gambling and wagering
- cultural affairs
- education at all levels, excluding university and technikon education
- environment
- health services
- housing
- language policy
- local government
- nature conservation
- police services
- provincial public media
- public transport
- regional planning and development
- road traffic regulation
- tourism
- trade and industrial promotion
- traditional authorities
- urban and rural development

- vehicle licensing
- welfare services (Burger 2001)

Decisions are taken by consensus, as happens in the national Cabinet. In order to fulfill their duties as a legislature, either the legislature or any of its committees have the power "to summon any person to appear before it to give evidence on oath or affirmation, or to produce documents,..., to require any person or institution to report to it ,..., to compel, in terms of national legislation or the rules and orders , any person or institution to comply with a summons or a requirement as set out above, and .... to receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested persons or institutions (Devenish 1998).

Apart from public input as mentioned above, the Constitution of 1996 compels the legislature to conduct its business in an open manner and in public, only excluding the public and media in unusual circumstances (Besdziek 1998).

2.4.3.15.5 The structure of provincial government

The Constitution states that each of the nine provinces has to have its own legislature consisting of between 30 and 80 members, the number of which is determined by a formula set out in the national legislation. Representation is based on proportional representation, and must ensure that the various political parties are proportionally representative of the total electorate (Besdziek 1998).

The executive authority will lie with the Premier, who is elected by the legislature from among its members, and an executive council, consisting of not more than ten members. The Executive Council heads the administration of the government departments (Burger 2001). As is the case with the national legislature, both the Premier and the Members of the Executive Committee are accountable, collectively and individually to the legislature, providing them with regular and full reports of their activities (Besdziek 1998)

2.5 Summary

Democracy has come a long way, since first introduced into the world, and has taken many shapes in the past. Although still an elusive concept in many ways, as individuals and nations have their own interpretations of the ideology behind the concept, certain common features can be determined. Based on these it has been found that democracy as a governmental system has made a global impact with many nations throwing of the shackles of an authoritarian government style, for a style where the individual's choices can be heard through a representative in the government.

Both Africa and South Africa in particular, has only very recently been introduced to democracy. Although in many African nations the transition from authoritarian to representative government has not been without major obstacles, it would seem as if the governments are at last coming to terms with the idea of being accountable for its actions to its constituent members.

South Africa, with its very liberal constitution, can be seen as an example of what citizens can expect from their governments, i.e. accountability, transparency, free and fair elections, respect of each individual's civil and human rights, and an independent judiciary system to enforce laws. It can also expect the government to protect each and every citizen's rights before the law.

The next chapter describes the information sources, systems and services available to parliamentarians in South Africa, with specific reference to the role of the South African parliamentary libraries.

CHAPTER 3

INFORMATION SOURCES SYSTEMS AND SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

South Africa is in the fortunate position of having a well-developed information sector providing access to a myriad of different information sources, systems and services, some more familiar than others. Britz, Boon and De Lange (1993) describe the information sector as those organisations and individuals concerned with the following activities in relation to the information cycle: collection, storage, organization, processing, tracing and provision of information on behalf of another person or organization (1993:62). Boon in De Lange, Boon and Britz (1993:62) differentiates between broad categories within the information sector:

- The sector concerned with inventing, generating and collecting knowledge which, if transmitted, is information for the recipient (including scientists, knowledge workers and collectors of data)

- The sector concerned with the packaging, storage, organization, recall and duplication of information (e.g. publishing and printing, libraries, documentation centres, information services, database brokers and archives)

- The sector concerned with the dissemination of information (e.g. the mass media, including radio, television and newspapers, books, journals, libraries, information centres and information brokers)

- The sector concerned purely with information technology (computers and telecommunications that create infrastructure).

To find information, parliamentarians have access to a sizable portion of the information sector. As political decisions hinge on the use of information, this chapter will aim to:

- map the existing information sources, services and systems available to parliamentarians to satisfy their information needs. The sources and systems will be arranged according to the categories identified by Boon (1993), though

it should be noted that a duplication of systems and services takes place between sector two and three. For the purpose of this study it has been placed under one of the two sectors, but its functions can include both collecting, storing and organising, and the dissemination of the information. (The sector concerning information users will not be discussed, as it does not concern the topic at hand)

- provide some background as to the role and functions of parliamentary libraries in general, but also refer to the South African parliamentary library systems in an effort to ascertain what information services are currently provided to South African parliamentarians by these information centres.

The information was gained using literature, advertisements, the Internet and the researcher's own experiences.

3.2 Information sources, services and systems

a) Sector concerned with inventing, generating and collecting knowledge

Parliamentarians are expected to be abreast of the latest developments in science, technology and social sciences. To gauge public feeling they also need to conduct, or commission the conducting of, opinion polls. In South Africa many such research organisations and information brokers exist (a search on the Internet on 14/05/03 revealed 803,000 hits), specialising in a number of fields, but for the purpose of this chapter only the major research institutions will be discussed, i.e. the Council for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council). Both their headquarters are situated in Pretoria.

- The Council for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR)

The CSIR undertakes market-driven research and development and technology transfer for the private sector, for the public sector on national, provincial and local government levels, national safety and security establishments, public enterprises and institutions, development structures like NGOs, funding agencies and so on.

Information services offered include a bookshop, a document procurement (DocDel) service whereby access is provided to "the world's store of hardcopy and electronic publications including journal articles, conference papers, theses, reports, standards, patents, etc. It has the resources to locate any published information from around the globe", and professional services like analysis of information, access to commercial databases, consultancy and advice, Internet searching, patent searching and procurement, and retrieval of "difficult-to-find" documents. These services are offered on a fee-based system, and electronic delivery is done wherever possible (CSIR 2002).

Access to the services is available through faxing, e-mail or via the webpage: http://www.csir.co.za. Contact addresses and telephone numbers are provided on the webpage.

- The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

The HSRC headquarters are situated in Pretoria, but they also have a presence in Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth (HSRC 2002).

The HSRC as an institution undertakes research in identified problem areas in the Social Sciences, and covers areas like democracy and governance, HIV/Aids, Human Resource Development, Education Policy, Employment and Economic Policy, Social Cohesion and Integration, Knowledge Management and Child, Youth and Family Development. Surveys, analysis, modelling and mapping services are also offered. Research is done in collaboration with local, national and international peers of other science councils, tertiary institutions and research entities (HRSC 2002).

Information requirements can be forwarded to their contact addresses which are available in the local telephone directory or from their website at http://www.hrsc.ac.za. The website provides access to the physical address of the institution, telephone numbers and fax number. Specific staff's contact details can also be obtained from the website.

The website offers the option of directly accessing documentation on current research projects, as well as an on-line bookshop, e-Library, Occasional papers and discussion papers which allows for interaction with researchers (HRSC 2002).

- Markinor

Politicians need to be aware of public feeling concerning issues of the day. In South Africa public opinion polls are normally commissioned to Markinor, a company that has for the last 30 years studied local and international markets (Markinor Homepage 2002).

Allthough their headquarters are in Johannesburg they also have field offices in Pretoria, Boksburg, Bloemfontein, Durban, Cape Town, East London and Port Elizabeth. Should an individual be unable to personally pay a visit to the offices, requests can be phoned through. The contact information can either be gained by consulting a telephone directory or on the website which supplies full contact details for all the offices, including physical and postal addresses, telephone and fax numbers as well as e-mail addresses.

Markinor specialises in doing information research and providing information consultancy services for Africa, through a staff complement of the most experienced data collection, processing and analysis specialists in the industry (Markinor Homepage 2002).

Results of public opinion polls are made available in hardcopy form to the institution commissioning their services, as well as on their website at http://www.markinor.co.za.

The website provides access to Gallup (http://www.gallup-international.com), an international group providing information on international opinion polls.

b) Sector concerned with the packaging, storage, organization, recall and duplication of information

- Publishing and printing

According to Burgers (2003) the technical handling of print ranges amongst the best in the world. According to Hendrikz (n.d) the South African publishing industry is characterized by a variety of publishers, ranging from big to medium sized to small publishers. Based on annual publication, the Directory of South African Publishers (1998/99) revealed that 2,951 publishers were active during that year. This list varies from year to year depending on active publishing during a year. Publication of all official publications of government and provincial departments, as well as local authorities, is the responsibility of the Government Printer of South Africa. During 1999/2000 they handled 6,267 print orders (Hendikz (n.d)).

A list of major publishers supplied in The Europa World Yearbook 2001 (2001:3596-7) indicates that a wide variety of materials are published on a wide range of topics including educational, general materials, biographies, history, Africana, reference materials, school textbooks, law, financial matters, art, religious materials, materials in all the different languages used in South Africa, and so on. Contact details, like address, telephone and fax numbers, and if available, e-mail addresses are supplied. Some of the major publishers also advertise their services on-line and provide on-line bookshop facilities, whereby materials can be ordered on-line.

On-line bookshops are available on the Internet. The most popular South African-based on-line bookshop is Kalahari.net (http://www.kalahari.net) (Hendrikz (n.d)). This website allows transactions in books, magazines, DVD/CDs, software, videos and games. It also provides access to the Van Schaiks on-line bookshop which specialises in tertiary materials and materials on continuing professional development. Other well-known on-line bookshops are:

- Amazon.com (http://amazon.com) providing access to information materials worldwide,

- Shuter and Schooter (http://www.shuter.co.za) publishing educational and materials of a general nature, as well as materials in African languages,

- Juta (http://www.juta.co.za) specialising in academic, general, law and electronic materials,

- Heinemann (http://heinemann.co.za) publishing local content textbooks and imported textbooks from Heinemann in the United Kingdom,

- Butterworth Publishers (http://butterworths.co.za) specialising in materials on tax, law and accountancy

- Tafelberg (http://www.tafelberg.com) *selling materials for juveniles, fiction and non-fiction, arts and crafts, nature and tourism* (The Europa World Yearbook 2001).

The Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA) provides a PASA Publishers Directory service on the Internet at http://publisha.co.za providing the names of publishers. Information provided includes the physical address of the publisher, a description of the books published, postal address, telephone and fax number, e-mail address and if available the website address of the publisher.

Retail bookshops are found in most major towns and cities in South Africa. Hendrikz (n.d) indicates that in a survey done of the *Braby's Commercial Directory* for the three cities, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria revealed in excess of 180 retail bookshops. The most well-known is the Central News Agency (CNA), while other chain stores like PNA and Exclusive Books also offer services in all the major cities. Several independent bookstores can be found in smaller towns.

- Libraries/Information centres

The library and information services sector provides access to approximately 1249 libraries in the country, including a national library, public libraries, provincial library services, special libraries, government libraries, school libraries, university and college libraries. Included is the South African Library for the Blind located in Grahamstown, catering for the needs of the blind and visually impaired. Acting as a

national library and information service, it provides audio and Braille books in seven South African languages free of charge (Burger 2002).

According to Hendikz (n.d) special libraries belong to private companies, government departments as well as private individuals. Normally they are not open to the general public, but many participate in the Southern African Interlending Scheme (SAIS) (discussed under the next heading), thus making their materials available and accessible.

Currently, 36 University, Technikon and College Libraries are available, but will be reduced to 22 institutions under the *National Plan for Higher Education*. Most academic libraries are accessible to their primary clients, i.e. the students and management of a particular institution, as well as to community members by prior arrangement with Library staff. All academic libraries participate in SAIS (Hendrikz (n.d)).

Hendrikz (n.d) states that school libraries are the responsibility of the governing body of the school. The Department of Education has the responsibility to provide stock for the libraries, but for various reasons, like a lack of resources or status, many schools have closed their libraries. It is estimated that only 30% of all schools currently have a library.

The Legal Deposit Act of 1997 (Act 54) regulates the legal deposit in South Africa, the purpose of which is to see to it that the country's intellectual and cultural heritage is preserved, collected, bibliographically controlled and made available to present and future generations (Beherens 2000). The five Legal Deposit Libraries include the National Library of South Africa (NLSA), the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg, the Bloemfontein Public Library and the National Film, Video and Sound Archives in Pretoria. The Library of Parliament, Cape Town has entered into an agreement with the legal depositors that it will only receive sources pertaining to the issues at stake in Parliament. Since legal depositors are required to deposit copies within fourteen days of publication, these libraries are in possession of the most recently published materials in the country (Behrens 2000).

Materials in all formats, ranging from books and journals to CD-ROMs, videos, microfilms and digital formats are subjected to Legal Deposit (Burger 2002)

The NLSA, with a division in Pretoria and one in Cape Town, consists of a collection of rare and contemporary materials, donations from various benefactors reflecting both the colonial and indigenous heritage of the nation, as well as special collections of photographs, news clippings, Africana manuscripts, rare maps and atlases and an art collection. By visiting the Libraries during office hours materials can be accessed. If an individual is not able to visit either of the Libraries the website http.www.nsla.ac.za provides access to their Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), access to the reference service offered by a reference librarian, as well as a document delivery service. Alternatively, information requests can be e-mailed, faxed or telephoned through (Burger 2002).

The Library of Parliament, Cape Town, provides access to a book stock of approximately 77500 books, all official publications dating back to 1910, and in some cases even further back; audio-visual materials, newspapers, journals, those subscribed to and those received through legal deposit, Internet access, on-line databases, and databases on CD-ROM[1] (Zwane 2001). The parliamentarians using the Provincial Parliamentary Legislatures are provided with access to a small book collection, newspapers and journals, with a variety of information services (see Chapter 3).

Access to the information sources stored within the majority of South African Libraries can be obtained via the interlibrary system available in South Africa, a system in which the Library of Parliament, Cape Town, and the Provincial Legislative Libraries participate.

The Pretoria division of the NLSA coordinates the Southern African Interlending Scheme (SAIS). This countrywide scheme allows the approximate 700 southern African libraries and other organizations affiliated to the scheme to share resources with each other. Requests are met by supplying the required book, or a copy of the

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[1] Observations made on a visit to the Library of Parliament on 16 April 2003.

article from the local library (Burger 2002). All participating libraries contribute to a union catalogue *SACat* to make their holdings known to the other members. All libraries participating to the union catalogue can enter a request either manually through the NLSA, or if they subscribe to the South African Bibliographic and Information Network Online (SABINET Online) requests can be posted on-line through their *ReQuest* service (Behrens 2000).

- Archives and record centres/Museums

Archival collections consist mostly of official information sources relating to the activities of a formal organisation like a government, business, institution, individual or society (Behrens 2000). The preservation of archival material in South Africa is regulated by the National Archives of South Africa Act, no. 43 of 1966. The law specifies that official records should be sent to the National Archives after 20 years (Hendrickz (n.d)).

Archives abound in South Africa, covering varied topics, ranging from political figures and parties like Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Steve Biko and the ANC, contemporary history, Africana, newspaper archives, popular memory, religious materials, pictures of news, sport, personalities and wildlife, language, government documentation, and so on. A search on the Internet reveals a wide selection of the archives available. Through the Internet, access to collections can in most cases be secured.

The official archive in South Africa is the National Archives of South Africa (NASA) with repositories in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Pietermaritzburg, and record centres in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

To use an archive repository, a visit can be paid in person, or alternatively a request for assistance can be phoned through or sent by mail. In the last two instances, in-depth assistance cannot be rendered. In some cases private researchers can be used to retrieve the correct information. Office hours are observed from Monday to Friday, but on arrangement the Archives can extend their hours during the day or weekend (Calitz (n.d.)). Access to the computerised database of holdings in the National

Archives can be gained through the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS), accessible through the website http://www.national.archives.gov.za.

The National Film, Video and Sound Archive (NFVSA), situated in Pretoria is a Legal Deposit institution, storing audio-visual and related materials made about South Africa. By visiting the reading room materials can be accessed. Materials need to be booked three days in advance before utilisation is allowed. Contact information to this archive is given on the NASA website or in a telephone directory.

Museums abound in South Africa, as is testified to by the fact that most cities and towns boast a museum or museums of some sorts, either to preserve local history or to provide information on a topical subject. Museums are generally open to the public during office hours. Alternatively, access can be gained through the Internet.

- Non-Governmental Organisations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) are a source of grassroots level information. NGO's can be traced in Telephone Directories, but also on the Internet. A good search engine to use is *Ananzi.com,* as it is South African orientated. A search on the search engine reveals a large number of NGO's available on the Internet. A good example is the website http://www.tzaneen.co.za/gov.htm, which lists not only local NGO's but also international ones. The individual websites normally provide background information about the NGO, services or programmes offered, publications, if any, and contact information.

- Embassies

Foreign embassies are providers of information concerning their countries of origin. Parliamentarians often need information relating to those countries to allow for comparative studies with South African issues. Embassies can provide contact details to a host of government officials, organisations and institutions in their country, publications, information on legislation and policies, and so on. To establish contact the telephone directory can be used, or alternatively the GCIS website at

(http://cgis.gov.za/docs/directories/index.html) provides a *Directory of Contacts*. The information is also available in the Europa World Yearbook 2001 (2001:3591).

- Commercial Database industry

According to Behrens (2000), any organisation active in the production and making available of the information source electronically can be deemed to be a database producer. A producer can be a commercial publisher, an academic institution, a governmental organisation, a library or a research organisation. In South Africa many local databases are produced, but there are also many databases produced internationally. The databases are available electronically as CD-ROMs or as online databases. Access can either be sold, free or available on subscription (Behrens 2000).

Two well-known database services available in South Africa are the National Information Services Corporation (NISC) and SABINET Online.

The National Information Services Corporation is a United States based publishing company with a branch in South Africa. To distinguish the South African branch, it is known as the National Inquiry Services Centre (NISC SA). The NISC SA provides access to all databases produced internationally by NISC worldwide, as well as producing databases of local and African resources. South African databases available through NISC SA (http://www.nisc.com) include: *South African Studies, African Studies, African health anthology, Water resources worldwide, Fish and fisheries worldwide, African agriculture and business and South African magazines and periodicals* (Behrens 2000).

SABINET Online provides access to over 1 000 different bibliographic and full-text databases. As a subscriber to SABINET Online the Library of Parliament provides the parliamentarian with access to this service. A search on the website (http://www.sabinet.co.za) identifies a number of appropriate databases tailor-made for the information needs of the parliamentarian. This includes databases like:

- Bill Tracker: Supplies full details, present status and full-text of every bill tabled before Parliament. In conjunction with the SA Gazettes database, which

contains the full text of all acts, amendment acts and regulations, they provide a one-stop service on legislation.

- Legilink Monitoring Services: Provides e-mail service notifying users about Parliamentary information impacting on their business.

- SA Legal: Provided in conjunction with Jutalaw and includes the SA Statutes and Daily Law Reports

- SA News: Full-text research material from the major news media. Provides access to SA Media and SAPA – both databases covering the daily news, with SA Media also providing access to archived materials

- SA Tenders: provides information on current tenders

- Legilink Financial Round-up services: weekly e-mail service alerting users on forthcoming and current financial legislation and policies. Provides links to relevant full-text documents.

- Netlaw: Provides access to more than 486 acts with rules, regulations and forms that have been enacted since 1994.

- Ingenta: a periodical index database and article delivery service covering 12 million articles from 17 000+ journals.

- SA ePublications: provides full-text articles from South African published journals, online

- SACat Plus: Provides access to the following databases:

- SACat: Computerised database of all library stock in Southern Africa. Includes books, journals, conference proceedings, standards, and technical reports.

- SANB: Database containing a list of books, pamphlets, government publications, microforms, maps, technical reports, and periodicals published in South Africa.

- Book Data: Information on in-print, new and forthcoming titles

- UCTD: Bibliographic records of theses and dissertations at masters and doctorate level in South African Universities since 1918.

- Navtech: Current and completed research projects undertaken at Technikons

- Subsidie: List of all periodicals approved as research platforms.

- Current and Completed Research: South African research projects in the field of economics, science, and humanities.

- Fiction: List of fiction available in printed, braille and sound format.

- SA Citations Plus: covers national and international information by indexing records from journal articles, research reports, conference proceedings and chapters in books. It includes the following databases:

- Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP): Indexed articles from more than 600 S.A. periodicals

- Kovsidex: Selected articles on a wide range of reference works on the theory and practice of education

- Forestry: a pamphlet collection from forestry, wood science and nature conservation research institutes locally and internationally

- Centre for Rural Legal Study: Focus on agriculture and agricultural workers on commercial farms in S.A.

- CLOVERDEX: indexed periodical articles collected by CLOVER (Sabinet Homepage 2003).

Other databases of note are EBSCO Information Services, Elseviers Science, Swets and Blackwells, Bowker-Saur, Isi, Kluwer Academic Publishers and HW Wilson. Vendor specialising in producing information in CD-ROM format, and making it available via the Internet includes CD-ROM Information, Silver Platter and The Dialog Corporation (Behrens 2000).

c) Sector concerned with the dissemination of information

- Mass media

A vigorous mass media sector exists in South Africa, consisting of broadcasting services, including radio and television, newspapers and magazines.

- Broadcasting

The major broadcasting corporation is South Africa is the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), who controls both radio and television services on a national and a local level. National services include a twenty four

hour radio service with stations broadcasting in English and Afrikaans. Domestic services are offered on a regional basis and include services like: Radio South Africa, Afrikaans Stereo, Radio 5, Radio 2000, Highveld Stereo, Good Hope Stereo, Radio Kontrei, RPN Stereo, Jacaranda Stereo, Radio Algoa, Radio Lotus, Radio Metro, Radio Lebowa, Radio Ndebele, Radio Sesotho, Setswana Stereo, Radio Swazi, Radio Tsonga, Radio Xhosa and Radio Zulu. An external service is also offered i.e. Channel Africa Radio. This service broadcasts 217 hours a week in English, Kiswahili, Portuguese and several other African languages (The Europa World Yearbook 2001:3597).

SABC television operates television services in seven languages over three channels (The Europa World Yearbook 2001). A private subscription television service was launched in 1986, and has currently 1.23 million subscribers from 41 countries across Africa. Consisting of two channels, the main channel focuses on movies and sport, but also offers children's programmes, series and magazine programmes. For a two hour period between 17:00 and 19:00 everyday unencoded programmes are available to all viewers. The second channel, Community Services Network, offers sports programmes, as well as community channels for Indian, Portuguese, Italian and Christian communities (Burger 2002).

Digital satellite broadcasting is offered by Multichoice Africa. Currently the service is offered to 1.4 million subscribers in over 50 countries on the African continent. This services offers over 54 video and 48 music channels (Burgers 2002).

The free-to-air television service, e.tv, a free commercial service reliant on advertising, started broadcasting in October 1998. It offers a 24-hour service and news broadcasts (Burger 2002).

- **Newspapers and magazines**

Various newspapers are published, ranging from national to regional to local newspapers, as well as the free "knock and drop" types (Behrens 2000).

Because of the geographic size of the country a true daily national does not yet exist, except for the four Sunday newspapers (*Sunday Times, Rapport, Sunday Independent* and *Sunday Sun*), and the weekly newspaper City Press (Burgers 2002).

Seventeen dailies, seven Sunday papers and 21 weeklies are published in South Africa. About 158 community papers are printed on a weekly basis providing news on local events. The majority of the papers are published in either Afrikaans or English, however in 2002 an isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe* was launched in KwaZulu-Natal (Burger 2002).

Burger (2002) reports that according to *The Media Yearbook of South African Rates and Data*, there are 300 consumer magazines, and more than 500 trade, technical and professional publications available.

Magazines and newspapers are sold on the street, in shops and cafés, and also door-to-door (Burger 2002). Subscriptions to these publications are delivered by mail.

Most of the bigger publications have on-line websites. In South Africa 600 'net-zines' alone are listed as online publications (Burger 2002). Most of the major newspapers, both national and international are available on-line, with some providing full-text, and some only selected articles or brief headlines. Access could be through the newspaper's or magazine's own webpage or through a vendor or portal. Some like the Mail and Guardian even provide archived materials dating back to 1994 (Behrens 2000).

Two popular South African portals are *IOL.* Independent Newspapers (http://www.iol.co.za) and *News24* (http://www.news24.com). Independent Newspaper *Online* (IOL) is a web-based electronic newspaper providing local and international news and other news articles published in the various newspapers. The articles are selected from 14 different newsrooms as well as international wire services. Other than the articles it contains photographs and illustrations. *News24* provides free access to news and magazine-type

information, and provides links to publications published by *Media24* (Behrens 2000).

For access to newspapers and periodicals worldwide a website like *AJRNewslink* (http://ajr.newslink.org) can prove invaluable.

- The Internet

According to Behrens, Olën and Machet (1999:185) the Internet provides access to:

- thousands of libraries, databases and research centres worldwide and experts in many different subject fields

- e-mail to exchange information and ideas with people in other cities or even in other countries

- listservs or newsgroups, also called mailing lists. Vast numbers of newsgroups cover a wide variety of subject areas, allowing for participation in discussions, posing or answering questions, obtaining other people's opinions and so on

- tele-conferencing and live, multi-user discussions which can be held by groups sharing similar interests

- the full text of thousands of books and classics, magazines, journals, newspapers, government documents, newsletters and information on any conceivable subject

- many different types of reference sources like dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs and directories, and

- many indirect reference sources, such as indexing and abstracting journals.

Other than the myriad of information sources available to parliamentarians via the Internet, specific useful sites were built to fill the need for South African government and legal information. A few popular examples include:

- Government Communications and Information System

To facilitate communication between the government and the public, a government communications agency, the Government Communication and Information System

(GCIS), was established. This information, both available through the website (http://www.gcis.gov.za) or in hard copy format, provides invaluable information to parliamentarians (Molawa 2001).

The GCIS website provides access to various publications, most notable the annually published South African Yearbook – the only official source of reference in the country - and the Bua Magazine aiming at encouraging debate and promoting government communications. Other publications include:

- GCIS tenders
- Bua Magazine
- Diary of Government Activity
- Government Communicators' Handbook
- Profile containing CV's of government role-players in alphabetical order according to surname
- Annual reports (1998 - 1999)
- Government Communication (GCIS 2003)

Importantly, three directories are published and regularly maintained, i.e.

- the South African Government Directory (SAGD) containing contact details of government officials at national and provincial level, as well as those of government bodies, structures and task groups
- The Directory of Contacts (DOC) containing contact details of foreign embassies in South Africa, South African Embassies abroad, international, business and professional organisations, as well as political parties and legal deposit libraries
- The Media Directory containing contact information of South African media organisations, foreign media in South Africa, community radio stations, local community newspapers, and freelance journalists in South Africa (Molawa 2001:4).

To provide information about government departments, provinces and other government bodies, the GCIS created two websites linked to their website: South

African Government Online (http://www.gov.za) and Parliament South Africa (http:www.parliament.gov.za).

- Parliament South Africa (http:www.parliament.gov.za)

This website includes links to sites of government departments, provinces and other government bodies; organisational information (such as the mission, vision, functions, organisational structure, role-players, and contact information); government documents and publications; speeches and press releases by government players; the *Government Tender Bulletin*; national symbols; provincial and local government information; and information on South Africa (Molawa 2001). The site also provides information on the committee meetings of the day, the parliamentary programme of the day, order papers and daily press releases.

This website provides access to the Library of Parliament's Intranet.

- South African Government Online (http://www.gov.za)

This is another extremely useful site, maintained by GCIS. It provides access to a variety of topical information sources, like information on the Presidency, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Government Departments, Documents, Reports, Forms, Speeches, Provincial and Local Government, key issues, Travel and Tourism, and so on. Full contact details and full text documents are supplied. Forthcoming events are displayed well in advance.

- Polity (http://www.polity.org.za)

This initiative provides access to parliamentary information like notices and regulations, *policy documents, speeches, budget information and news in review.*

- **Government Departments**

With the exception of three departments all the government departments have a website available where useful information can be gained. The following table provides some insight into the kind of information offered on these websites:

Table 2: Government Departments homepage evaluation (14/05/2003)

Department and homepage address	Publications/ Documents	Speeches Media Releases	Reports	Legislation/ Policies	Links	Events	FAQ	Site Map	Search Facility	Contact detail	Dept. Description	Other information
Agriculture www.nda.agric.za					✓						✓	✓
Arts and Culture www.dac.gov.za			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Communications www.docweb.pwv.gov.za	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Correctional Services www.dcs.gov.za		✓				✓				✓	✓	✓
Defense www.mil.za	✓		✓		✓				✓		✓	✓
Education Education.pwv.gov.za	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
Environmental Affairs and Tourism www.environment.gov.za	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Foreign Affairs www.dfa.gov.za	✓				✓						✓	✓
CGIS www.cgis.gov.za		✓			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Health www.doh.gov.za	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Home Affairs Home-affairs.pwv.gov.za	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Housing www.housing.gov.za				✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Independent Complaints Directorate www.icl.gov.za	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Justice and Constitutional Development www.doj.gov.za	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Labour www.labour.gov.za	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓
Land Affairs land.pwv.gov.za		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Minerals and Energy www.dme.gov.za		✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Agency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
National Intelligence Agency www.nia.org.za				✔	✔		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
National Treasury www.treasury.gov.za	✔	✔		✔	✔				✔	✔	✔	✔
Provincial and Local government www.dplg.gov.za	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔					✔	✔
Public Enterprises www.dpe.gov.za	Password needed to get access to website											
Public Service and Administration www.dpsa.gov.za	✔		✔	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔	✔
Public Service Commission www.psc.gov.za	✔	✔			✔			✔		✔	✔	✔
Public Works www.publicworks.gov.za	✔	✔							✔		✔	✔
Science and Technology www.dst.gov.za												
Secretariat for Safety and Security www.gov.za/sss/		✔	✔		✔	✔				✔	✔	✔
South African Management Development Institute	No website but contact details and ministry access given on www.gov.za											
South African Police Service www.saps.org.za		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔				✔	✔
South African Revenue Service www.sars.gov.za		✔		✔	✔					✔	✔	✔
South African Secret Service	No website but contact details and ministry access given on www.gov.za											
Social Development www.welfare.gov.za	✔	✔		✔		✔				✔	✔	✔
Sport and Recreation www.srsa.gov.za	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔						✔
Statistics South Africa www.statssa.gov.za	✔	✔	✔		✔					✔		✔
The Presidency	No website but contact details and ministry access given on www.gov.za											
Trade and Industry www.dti.gov.za	✔	✔		✔		✔				✔	✔	✔
Transport www.transport.gov.za		✔			✔	✔						✔
Water Affairs and Forestry www.dwaf.gov.za	✔	✔			✔	✔				✔	✔	✔

The government departments websites provides full text to documents, policies, speeches, reports and media releases. All the websites also contain information specific to their department's programmes or services. Very useful features of the majority of the websites are the contact details provided, as well as the links provided to other applicable websites dealing with the issues at hand. This option can save parliamentarians time in having to search on their own for information.

d) The sector concerned with information technology

South Africa has an extensively developed telecommunications system (Africa South of the Sahara 2001). According to the Yearbook of South Africa 2002/2003 the total number of telephone lines installed by the end of March 2002, was 4.96 million. Other services included the installation of 707 881 fixed-line prepaid lines, 195 399 payphones and 467 518 Integrated Services Digital Network channels (Burger 2002).

According to Burger (2002) a study done by World Wide Worx in 2001 determined that 2,89 million South Africans (1 out of every 15) have access to the Internet. It was estimated that this total will have grown to 3.1 million at the end of 2002, making South Africa the largest Internet consumer in Africa. In an effort to facilitate e-government, the government through the Department of Communications engaged in the installation of Public Internet Terminals (PIT). This entails the installation of Internet kiosks in Post Offices countrywide (Burger 2002). Smart card technology is being used to gain access to the PIT's.

A check on the Internet, using e-mail addresses as an indication of having access to the Internet, has revealed that the majority of parliamentarians in the National Assembly and NCOP, as well as several parliamentarians of the Provincial Legislatures, e.g. Gauteng and Western Cape have access to the Internet. Data analysis in Chapter 6 has also revealed that many parliamentarians have home computers linked to the Internet.

3.3 Parliamentary libraries and their role in formation provision to parliamentarians

Parliamentary libraries form part of what is commonly known as special libraries. These libraries by the nature, and/or format of their information sources serve a very specific, limited clientele, and all services offered by them are geared towards satisfying the needs of this clientele. Paré (1996:4) sees parliamentary libraries "as the only institutions bringing together disparate skills to provide the range of services needed for legislators to meet the challenges of the information age."

The existence and level of utilisation of the parliamentary library is closely related to the level of democracy achieved in a country. The more advanced the democratic principles in use in a country, the greater the need for information and research by parliamentarians in order to perform efficiently and effectively. Parliamentary libraries could also contribute towards the strengthening of democracy by providing information on the political process and promoting transparency in the policy making process to the citizens of a country (Torres 1999). Laundy (1980:6) adds that "Parliament belongs to the people and in serving Parliament the library is servicing the public interest", especially since much of the work done by parliamentary libraries enters the public domain directly or indirectly.

3.3.1 The development of parliamentary libraries

In 1988 Membrey points out that parliamentary librarians were "the first cohesive group of librarians to realise the demand for instant, accurate and comprehensive information services that can be provided in a cost effective fashion" (Membrey and Adcock 1999:1). They noted that they provide very personalised services to a small group of powerful and influential users. This was not always the case.

Parliamentary libraries are a relatively new library type. Within the traditionally English-speaking countries parliamentary libraries have been in existence for quite a while. In some cases their existence can be traced back for more than a century, for example the Library of Congress in Washington (1800), the Library of Commons in England (1818) and the Library of Parliament of Canada (1867), the Parliamentary

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library of New Zealand (1854) and the Library of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (1854) (APLESA: South Africa 2001; Laundy 1980; Purser 1996). Within many Asian, African and Central and Eastern-European countries, parliamentary libraries also exists, but their functioning seems to have been seriously hampered by governmental intricacies and/or the failure of democratic systems (Abeleda-Roberts 1996; Blagniene 1998; Parliamentary Information and Research Library: 2001; Thilakarathne 1996). However, in the rest of the world, where true democracy is still a very new and often fragile concept, parliamentary libraries, and/or research services, have only just emerged (Jianxiong 1996; Kasemets 1998(b); Lee 1996; Salterova 1998).

According to Laundy (1980) the majority of parliamentary libraries started as traditional libraries, reflecting the nature of their respective societies. Their collections, he notes, reflected the notion of the day, being that of collectors of books, rather than disseminators of information. The emphasis of the collections was on the society's cultural heritage, and materials of local interest. Modern and classical literature, literary periodicals and serious newspapers, as well as unbroken runs of government and parliamentary publications also formed an important part of the collection. Yet, despite the availability of these sources, many parliamentarians did not conceive of the libraries as institutions able to support their information needs. Rather they were used as "havens of refuge from the political turmoil of the debating chambers" (Laundy 1980:3). Deploring the inadequacy of the Library of the British House of Commons, H.G. Wells in Laundy complained that: "There are no research workers, preparing synopses or abstracts of information: no effort, indeed, at all to relate the library, as such, to the specific needs of those who might use it" (Laundy 1980:3).

It was only as recently as the Second World War, and in many cases, only in the last few decades those parliamentary libraries showed that they could make a valuable contribution towards effective government (Delano 1998; Joseph 2000; Kasemets 1998(a), Robinson and Hyde 1998). The transformation of parliamentary libraries from passive collectors of information sources, to vibrant pro-active disseminators of information has been dramatic, with the shift from an organisation concentrating on collecting stock and offering a reference service to becoming a provider of

information, consultancy and research services. These services are currently provided both in oral and written form, using technological and conventional means, utilising all information sources available, both within the library and outside the library (Alemson 1999; Celik 1994; Laundy 1980).

3.3.2 Role of the parliamentary library

In general parliamentary libraries serve a very limited clientele, consisting mainly of individuals connected with Parliament, and can include individual parliamentarians, parliamentary committees, associations and delegations, parliamentary staff of individual parliamentarians and party caucuses (Blagniene 1998; Paré 2001; Salterova 1998). In some cases services are offered to a wider clientele, including clients from governmental departments, the courts, regional executive bodies, legal information centres, accredited representatives of the press and other media, foreign embassy staff, librarians from other institutions and in some cases even the general public (Andreeva & Kirkwood 2000; Lee 1996). The major clientele however seem to be attached to parliamentary institutions, and as such Laundy (1980) advocates that, in order for the parliamentary library to fulfill its role as information provider with maximum effectiveness, this group should be guaranteed priority at all times.

According to Bannenberg (1994) parliamentarians have a seemingly inexhaustible appetite for information, since their survival can depend on their ability to access and utilise the right information at the right time. The modern parliamentarian is now expected to know something about everything. Not only do they need to be able to solve local constituency problems, but indeed that of the nation and the world. Information is thus needed on a wide range of subjects ranging from economics, health, social welfare, transport, environmental issues, agriculture, housing, transport, technology, education, communication, etc.

In order to satisfy their information needs, parliamentarians do not always perceive the parliamentary library as their sole information provider. Ximena and Marialyse (1994) point out that other than the library, parliamentarians also make use of external study groups, political think tanks, the academic world and personal contacts with experts in particular fields of interest. Added to this list is the growing utilisation of

electronic sources, notably the Internet, by the growing number of younger and technologically literate parliamentarians (Membrey and Adcock 1999). According to Bannenberg (1994) it does not matter to them who supplies it, as long as their need is fulfilled promptly, accurately and appropriately.

The parliamentarian's indifference to the type of source from which the information is found poses a big challenge to parliamentary libraries to prove their viability. Bannenberg (1994:2) points out that: "there is no reason why the principle of 'compete or perish' should be any less applicable to parliamentary libraries than to other businesses or service organisations".

3.3.3 Trends in international parliamentary libraries

3.3.3.1 Services and products

Parliamentary libraries offer a wide range of services and products. The degree of sophistication in which the services/products are offered vary according to the resources, human and financial, available in the library. The kind of information sources available also plays a significant role in the services/products offered. In developed countries parliamentary libraries as a rule offer both traditional services, like lending and reference services and the preparation of bibliographies, as well as more sophisticated services. The latter includes electronic searches, in-depth research analysis, electronic SDI and/or current awareness services, etc (Brian 1997b). Within developing countries, as well as countries where parliamentary library services only recently started operating, services and products are still very basic, and mostly based on traditional services and information sources. Interesting to note is the acknowledgement by these developing libraries of the role played by the electronic information technology in the provision of efficient and effective services. In most cases progress, in the way of making services and products available through electronic means, is reported (Chiwandamira 2001; Ku 2001; Marialyse 1995; Robinson & Gastelum 1998).

3.3.3.1.1 Traditional services

3.3.3.1.1.1 Lending services

Depending on the policy of each parliamentary library, material can either be borrowed from the library to be taken home by the parliamentarians, or its use can be restricted to loan on the premises. It can also be made available for loan within the library study areas. Depending on the library's policy, materials can be borrowed through means of the Interlending System. A literature survey has however revealed that Interlending Services are not widely practiced services (Brian 1997b; Laundy 1980; Robinson & Gastelum 1998). This might be due to the fact that Members need immediate access to information, and long waiting periods for materials not currently on the shelves are perceived as inefficient service.

The kind of materials available for borrowing depends on the restrictions set by a specific library.

3.3.3.1.1.2 Reference service

This is one of the most popular services on offer, especially during sessions. Its main aim is to collect and supply on demand factual and objective information to the parliamentarians (Joseph 1996). Requests for information can be made in person, by phone, or in writing, and answers are provided using both traditional information sources, as well as electronic sources. Depending on the resources available, the following services can be offered by this section:

- information provision concerning the catalogues, information collection and the utilisation of services
- instruction to users in utilisation of the automated library systems, internal and external databases in use in that specific library
- information on locating external book collections and access to electronic information resources
- compilation of manuals and guides to databases
- bibliographic information services and reference research

- consulting service in legislative and parliamentary areas of interest and legislative activity

- current contents service on request

- SDI on request (Sosna 1998:62)

- answers to quick reference questions

- provision of information on any topic of interest (Landry 2001)

3.3.3.1.1.3 Compilation of bibliographies

Bibliographies on any topic of interest, be it an expressed request by a parliamentarian or an anticipated request, are compiled. Lists containing information on new acquisitions are popular (Abeleda-Robles 1997; Malackova & Sivakova 1998), as well as compilations of enacted laws, or in some cases (Ukraine) lists of translated foreign legislature (Robinson and Gastelum 1998).

3.3.3.1.1.4 Development of databases

According to Robinson and Gastelum (1998) this is becoming a more frequently offered service, containing the catalogue of books and periodicals housed in the library, and articles from selected periodicals of interest to the legislature. In the case of the Library of the Hungarian Parliament, they produced a database of "Hungarian legal literature" containing materials dating back to 1990. The database, containing references to law books and periodicals published in Hungary has been made available for publication in CD-ROM format, by a commercial firm (Haraszati, Nagy & Prohle 1998).

3.3.3.1.1.5 Other services

A myriad of different services or products can be offered at any one time, depending on the availability of resources and the needs expressed by the parliamentarians. It can include:

- translations

- press clipping services

- folders systems keeping track of legislation and related documents at any stage of the legislative process. These folders can contain reports, comments and opinions from Government, committees and outside sources (Filipovska 1998)

- info pack services which can consist of information which has been requested by parliamentarians, or alternatively information on issues which the librarians anticipate to arouse interest (Abeleda-Robles 1997)

- indexing of information systems

- copy services

- provision of daily summaries of newspapers (Brian 1997(b); Laundy 1980, Robinson & Gastelum 1998).

3.3.3.1.2 Automated/Electronic services

Robinson (1995) concludes that automation of services will greatly impact on the way in which services are offered in a legislative library, leading to more effective service delivery. According to Celik (1994) and Landry (2001) the automation of services holds many benefits to the parliamentarian, like increased speed and accuracy in the provision of information, accessibility to and availability of, new media, the integration of information sources and the possibility of expanding the number of subject areas for information retrieval. It also allows for many new services to be offered. Celik (1994) identifies four services that can be offered as a result of automation.

3.3.3.1.2.1 Automation of library services

New services, offered in conjunction with traditional services, can include for example:

- *SDI services*. With an automated system, tailor-made services for each member can be offered. The service can be applied to new acquisitions, periodical articles and whatever other documentation requested by a parliamentarian.

- *Accession to records from different locations.* With this service

parliamentarians can access any publicly available information via any Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN) without having to be physically within the library. It also allows the library staff to access the information for the parliamentarian and place it at his/her fingertips by means of electronic document delivery or e-mail. Especially in providing access to laws and policies enacted in foreign countries, this service plays a vital role.

- *Data transfer and sharing.* Through automation it is possible to transfer data from one medium to another and from one institution to another. It paves the way for cooperative activities between libraries, like locating, sharing and using information. Thus a much larger collection becomes available to the parliamentarian, at a fraction of the cost that would have been needed without the ability to share (Celik 1994).

3.3.3.1.2.2 The automation of legislative services

According to Celik (1994) by automating the legislative services the library is able to provide the following services:

- *Controlling the flow of legislative information in the parliament.* This allows the library to track the legislative process and prepare digests, informing the members of the progress made.

- *Recording debates.* Computers can assist the parliament in keeping its records. The debates stored in electronic databases allows for easy storage, access, printing, indexing of information and rapid transmittal to parliamentarians.

- *Maintenance of legal code.* Legal laws, statutes and regulations have been automated as an ongoing concern in many legislatures (Brian 1997(b), Paré 2001, Robinson and Gastelum1998). By automating the legal codes, the organisation thereof is improved, providing rapid access to it (Celik 1994).

3.3.3.1.2.3 The creation of data banks

Celik (1994), Landry (2001), and Robinson (1995) note that a way of keeping parliamentarians informed about facts, news events and public opinion, is by creating data banks, based on the needs expressed by parliamentarians. There could be data

banks on newspapers, specific topics, party political information, biographical information on parliamentarians, archival databanks covering TV and radio broadcasts, status of proposed legislation and literature databases. According to Marialyse (1998) the Chilean Library of Congress for example provides a weekly Press Bulletin underlining the main issues and news as reported in the weeks' newspapers and magazines. They keep online, full text dossiers, research studies, names and CV's of parliamentarians, and legislative commissions' information.

3.3.3.1.2.4 Providing access to Information networks on the Internet and Intranet

As a result of technological developments, remote access to information networks has become a reality, providing the parliamentarian with an alternative method of accessing the libraries collection, as well as a wealth of other electronic information sources via the Internet. Linkages to national and international networks can also be provided (Celik 1994).

Intranet provides a dedicated client service portal, linking internal and external resources, contacts and expertise. This can include networked databases, CD-ROM services, the catalogue, commercial information services, web-based Internet resource guides, full-texts of own publications, and printed guides to services and expertise offered by the library. A well-designed Intranet has the potential to become the major information gathering tool for both the parliamentarian as well as staff as it displays and provides access to the most commonly used sites and services needed to access relevant information (Membrey and Adcock 1999).

Parliamentary library services are currently in flux, moving from being libraries operating independently, to becoming part of the global network of libraries and information services using and sharing information resources held in electronic form (Brudenall 1996). Within the electronic library, traditional library services are irrelevant, making access to full-text information or commercial document exchange between creator and user an immediate event (Sosna 1998). In comparison with the physical presence of information materials in traditional library services, the electronic library does not keep any physical records. Instead, access to information

sources is provided at the time of publication and at the place of publication (Sosna 1997). This could result in a totally revised role for the librarian, moving from a keeper of records to a gateway to sources.

According to Sosna (1997) and Sosna (1998) the main characteristics of an electronic library are:

- the user-orientation of the library, i.e. its main objective is to satisfy the information needs of its users

- less emphasis on large book collections as they only satisfy limited requests. The library has less need for huge outdated collections and can discard many useless publications

- greater reliance on external information sources, especially on-line databases

- a shift from possession of sources to access to sources by means of using publication intermediate services, on-line databases of full text documents and interlibrary services

- the offering of a wide range of information services

- the creation and use of databases and full-text documents to satisfy information requests

- client/server connections to the Internet, and

- flexibility and openness of the library systems.

Toornstra (2001) warns that the electronic library, to be a viable and competitive option amongst all the other information sources and services available to the parliamentarians, needs to provide a package that can clearly distinguish it from other alternatives. Thus, from the myriad of electronic sources available, the electronic library should provide access to information that is non-partisan and tailor-made to the specific information requirements of the parliamentarians. A further differentiating factor is the fact that the electronic library is accessible 24 hours a day, thus allowing parliamentarians the luxury to search for information at all hours.

Electronic technology provides the ideal platform to expand information services for parliamentarians, from merely providing access to electronic sources to the provision of electronic client services via the Internet. In the Parliamentary Library of Taipei,

Taiwan, China, for example, the library staff has already established the first phase of a project in an effort to create a virtual library service to its parliamentarians. A website library was developed providing a reference and question service, a selective dissemination of information service, a multimedia storage and retrieval service, and general Internet access through the library's portal. Although still a very new development, Ku (2001:6) proclaims its virtues as "a very important component of the library of the future who will seamlessly combine real space and cyberspace collections". Access to similar services has also been introduced to a lesser degree at other leading parliamentary libraries, like the Parliamentary Library in Canada and the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. (Clinton-Parker 2002; Landry 2001). Landry (2001), however warned that the full scale introduction of electronic parliamentary libraries might not be an immediate possibility, due to the high cost involved in maintaining and upgrading technology, the prevailing preference for paper copies, as well as the inability of smaller parliamentary libraries to provide the necessary infrastructure, workforce and funds to introduce such a system.

3.3.3.1.3 Parliamentary research services

According to Joseph (2000) demands made on the modern legislator to be informed on a wide range of topics, not only necessitated the need for library services, but also for research services which could provide analysis or in-depth reports on the various issues of the day. Research offered in a legislature is of an applied nature, seeking to draw on existing knowledge and applying it to understand and provide solutions to concrete problems. The research activities could include the meaningful analysis of facts, locating and synthesising articles and expert opinions on public policies, the gathering of knowledge that will highlight the nature, scale and severity of the public policy problem and/or tracing the effects or implications of policy options before they are implemented (Englefield 1993).

Though a relatively new service, it has already become an important part of the institutional structures in most legislatures. Organisationally they fit into one of two models: either they function as a separate independent unit, or they form part of the larger information service structure. In 1993, 50% of the respondents answering a questionnaire sent out by the editors of the World Directory of National Parliamentary

Libraries, indicated that the analytical and research activities within their legislatures resorted under the library, while the rest operated independently (Kanev & Anguelova 1996).

Kasemets (1998a:11) describes the functions of research departments as follows:

- *To act as an accumulator and maintainer of legislation-related information and to supply this information when requested.* This can be performed by using information technology, by cooperation with other research units, and by disseminating the information through seminars, professional face-to-face contact, and so on.

- *To act as professional adviser and expert in the parliamentary information market* through advertising the department's services and expertise. Also to provide useful and needful information to parliamentarians.

- *To act as an information mediator for various information sources and groups outside Parliament,* by promoting and demonstrating access to the legislative process and information.

- *To act as information mediators for parliamentarians and their advisers* through the compilation of information requests.

- *To prepare the conducting of public opinion polls, sociological studies, and so on, related to parliamentary purposes and functions in civil societies.* Cooperation with universities, research institutions and academic associations must be solicited, and questionnaires, prepared for research must be discussed with the respective parliamentarians and their advisers.

- *To act as coordinator* – to coordinate the flow of information with colleagues from the research units of other parliaments and international organisations. To execute this function the research unit has to compile requests, coordinate the answering of international questionnaires, attend international conferences and seminars, and cultivate their ability to utilise foreign languages.

- *To act as an analyst/a researcher* - to conduct and produce analysis, fact sheets and comments, expert opinions, reports, and so on, relating to draft laws. This is the most labour-intensive and time-consuming activity.

- *To act as a filter and auditor of various information sources, for example lobby groups, Non-Governmental Organisations, party, and so on,* through the

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analysis of the arguments and proposals related to amendments, and, to find better solutions/alternatives if the draft law has an important economic, social or political impact.

- *To study and forecast the information needs of the Parliament,* by analysing socio-economic and -legal studies, court statistics, mass media content, and so on, and to observe the governmentss law drafting plans.

- *To act as an investor in information in the legislative process of the Parliament,* who by doing the right thing at the right time contributes positively to the decision-making process of the parliamentarians.

An infinite number of products and services can be offered, depending on the size, and qualifications of the staff, as well as the budget available. It can range from a simple informative product/service to a sophisticated one, and can be provided either in writing or orally. Englefield (1993) categorized the products and services as follows:

- *Written products* that include brief legal reports, bibliographies, background papers, memoranda and other personalised responses, option papers, analytical and/or comparative reports/information and special products like the provision of briefs and/or information packs. The latter are collections of materials most consistently in demand (Engelfield 1993; Kanev and Angeluelova 1996).

- *Oral communications/In-person briefings.* This can be effected through a telephone conversation or, if time permits, a face-to-face briefing on the topic.

- *Audio and video products.* These can be provided to the parliamentarian to listen to his/her own convenience. This can also provide a parliamentarian with the opportunity to brief themselves on workshops or seminars missed.

- *Training of parliamentarians' staff or parliamentarians themselves in their fields of expertise,* thus enhancing the legislative staff's skills, and contributing towards effective government (Englefield 1993).

3.3.4 Barriers to the provision of effective and efficient information services in parliamentary libraries

3.3.4.1 Inadequate funds and resources

Parliamentarians without ready access to information sources are at a serious disadvantage, both to keep up with the latest developments, as well as to make informed decisions. Although the majority of modern parliaments do make proper provision in their budgets for parliamentary information and research services, some parliaments neglect to do so. Lack of funds can result in failure to attract qualified librarians and researchers who are able to fulfill the information needs of the parliamentary library users. Higher salaries, as well as the opportunity for further development might be needed to attract the best qualified staff (Brian 1997b; Robinson 1998b). With the exponential growth in human knowledge, as well as the utilisation of electronic systems to retrieve the information, it should also be expected that existing staff develop their abilities and qualifications (Alemson 1999).

A serious financial barrier could be to collect, or, to provide access to the vast amount of information needed, by parliamentarians. Brian (1997b) maintains that the development of a good in-house collection depends on the size of the allocation of funds for purchasing of materials as well as the expertise of the staff responsible for the selection of the material. As a possible solution to inadequate funds he suggests the enactment of Legal Deposit legislation, allowing the parliamentary library to receive a copy of all local publications. Paré (1996) suggests that financial constraints could lead to the rationalisation of services and the establishment of partnerships with other non-parliamentary libraries especially in the field of collection development and resource sharing. Demand for sources other than the traditional print sources, like for example CD-ROMs, multi-media products, online databases and computerised networks will also have an effect on the budgetary allocations, especially if the high cost of licenses and subscriptions to online full-text databases is taken into account. To counteract these costs, and still be able to provide maximum services, Paré (1996) advocates increased co-operation between parliamentary libraries.

3.3.4.2 Lack of support for library services

Ximena and Marialyse (1994) observe that parliamentary library users differ in their demand for services from the library. Some parliamentarians utilise it frequently, some only occasionally, and a number do not require the services of the library at all. Kedem (2001) who refers to the non-user as a "disadvantaged" legislator has corroborated this finding. Ximena and Marialyse (1994) point out that in many cases the parliamentarians obtain their information from sources other than the library. Parliamentary libraries, being relatively expensive institutions should therefore be under review as to their relevance and whether their current modus operandi justifies their existence. Paré maintains that the fundamental justification for the existence of a parliamentary library is "that they meet the information and documentation needs of parliament more effectively and efficiently than any available alternatives" (Paré 1996:2).

Bannenberg (1994) argues that it is of great importance to remind users from time to time of the contribution that the library can make towards fulfilling their information needs. He advocates that the lack of promotion could lead to a dwindling awareness of the value of the services offered by the library, a decline in the use thereof, and eventually to the marginalisation of the library. He suggests that the following methods could be used to promote the services on offer:

- *Orientation programs.* This could be given to all newly elected parliamentarians as part of their introduction to the legislature and its services, and also offers the opportunity to the parliamentarian to get acquainted with the library staff and the services they can offer.
- *Professional presentations.* Can be done either as part of the orientation programme or as a separate method.
- *Associated and complimentary printed material.* This could include colourful brochures promoting existing services. Included could be contact names and numbers of staff or information on specific services offered.
- *Information releases on Library activities.* These eye-catching sheets, released at infrequent intervals, should preferably contain information which will directly benefit the parliamentarian.

- *Seminars on topics of current interest.* Seminars, inviting guest speakers on a variety of topics, can be organised for the benefit of the parliamentarians.

- *Traditional service bulletins.* These could include lists of recent acquisitions, indexed and abstracted journal articles, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) bulletins, and so on.

Bannenberg (1994) warns against complacency on the side of the library which could lead to stagnation and resultant loss of clientele. He also points out that the library needs to demonstrate and promote its ability to use the latest technology to retrieve information, as failure to do so could raise questions about the competency of staff in the minds of parliamentarians. Celik (1994) agreed that by providing automated and electronic services to the parliamentarians, the Library could convince them that it was indispensable for the effective functioning of Parliament, thereby winning their support.

3.3.5 South African Parliamentary Library Services

The South African Government is based on a system of national representation, as well as representation on a provincial level. At national level representatives form part of the National Assembly or the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). Both these houses gather in Cape Town, the legislative capital, to take decisions concerning the nation as a whole. Provincial representatives gather in the Provincial Legislatures of each of the nine Provincial capitals, i.e. Cape Town in the Western Cape, Bisho in the Eastern Cape, Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu/Natal, Nelspruit in Mpumalanga, Polokwane in Northern Province, Mmabatho in North West, Johannesburg in Gauteng, Bloemfontein in the Free State and the Kimberley in the Northern Cape Province.

To assist parliamentarians with their information needs a parliamentary library has been developed at each of these institutions.

3.3.5.1 The Library of Parliament, Cape Town

The Library of Parliament in Parliament House, Cape Town, is one of the oldest existing libraries in South Africa. Its history can be traced back to the granting of Representative Government to the Cape in 1854 (Taylor 1967). As the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly met in separate buildings, two separate library collections were established (Musiker 1986).

3.3.5.1.1 Library of the Cape Legislative Council, 1854-1884

According to Taylor (1967) the Legislative Council immediately made moves to establish a library. On July10, 1854, a Select Committee was appointed to consider the matter of the establishment of a Library for the Legislative Council. Two months later the Committee reported that no progress had been made, principally because no suitable room was available. With the Legislative Council meeting in the Cape Supreme Court building it hoped to appropriate one of the rooms occupied by the judiciary, but the Chief Justice, Sir John Wylde, refused to vacate the room in favour of the Council. According to Burgers (n.d.) "despite repeated attempts to take possession of the room, the negotiations ended in deadlock and it was only after the retirement of Sir John Wylde that the Committee could report, in 1857, that possession had at last been taken of the room and that 'there would be no objection to the Chief Justice or judges having the use of the room during the prorogation or recess, providing due care was taken for the safe custody of the books during such occupation' ". The Council formally adopted this report on April 27, 1857.

In anticipation of finding appropriate accommodation, a sum of £100 had been allocated for the purchase of books, and according to Taylor (1967) a small collection of books was acquired. A select list of 33 books were prepared and ordered from England. In addition to the books on parliamentary procedure and constitutional law and history, such standard works as Hallam's Middle Ages, Hume's History of England, Macaulay's Essays, and his History of England, Gibbon's Decline and Fall, and representative histories of Scotland, Ireland, America, China and Russia were included to form the nucleus of the Council's library (Burger n.d.). The Clerk of the

Council supervised the books. To signal the extra duties performed he was given the additional title of Officer-in-Charge of Books (Taylor 1967).

3.3.5.1.2 Library of the Cape Legislative Assembly, 1854-1884

According to Taylor (1967) the Legislative Assembly also proceeded immediately with plans to establish a library. On the 1st of July 1854, the first day that the Cape Parliament met, it was recorded in the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly that a petition was received from a Major Longmore, applying for appointment to the posts of Serjeant-at-Arms and Librarian (Burgers n.d.). As no library then existed he was only appointed in 1857 when the library was established.

On the 11th July 1857, Mr. Saul Solomon, an influential member of the Legislative Assembly and the possessor of a considerable private library, moved the appointment of a Select Committee to consider and report on the establishment of a library. A fortnight later the Committee reported, recommending that there should be a joint library for the use of Members of both Houses and at the same time suggested that the House of Assembly should acquire a certain number of standard works of reference for its own use. Towards the formation of this separate library for the House of Assembly, the Committee recommended that a sum of £100 should be voted. The Speaker did this and early in 1857 a catalogue of 57 books obtained from England was tabled. The books purchased were of a technical nature dealing primarily with law, parliamentary procedure and constitutional matters, but also included titles like Barrington's Personal Sketches, Cruise's On the Origin of Dignities, and Hallam's History of England (Burgers n.d.).

As the two legislative bodies occupied two different premises half a mile apart, i.e. the oval room of the Old Supreme Court and the banqueting hall of the Goede Hoop Lodge respectively, no progress was made to join the two libraries (Musiker 1986). Thirty years were to pass before that ideal was realised (Burger 2002).

3.3.5.1.3 Library of Parliament, 1885-2003

On the completion of the new Houses of Parliament in 1885, the two libraries were merged to form a joint library and accommodated in a spacious galleried hall conveniently situated midway between the two Houses. With its magnificent teak paneling and lofty ceilings, soaring to a height of three stories to accommodate two upper galleries of shelves, and its imposing entrance from Government Avenue, reached by a flight of granite steps leading to the doorway under the facade of massive Corinthian columns, it was the pride of the Members of the House (Burgers n.d.).

In 1901 the first full-time librarian, Dr. William Flint, was appointed. His major contribution was to attempt to establish a comprehensive subject catalogue for the library collection (Musiker 1986).

With the unification of the four self-governing British colonies, the Cape of Good Hope, the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange River Colony, in 1910, the Library of Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope became the first Library of the Union Parliament (Burgers n.d.).

In 1921 P.J.S. Ribbink succeeded Dr. Flint, and it was his responsibility to unpack and arrange the Sidney Mendelssohn collection (Musiker 1986). The collection was a bequest made by Sidney Mendelssohn, a Kimberley diamond merchant. It consisted mainly of books and pictures dealing with Africana. This collection was to form the nucleus of the existing Africana collection housed in the Library of Parliament. A sum of money was left for the upkeep and improvement of the collection (Taylor 1967). Opened in 1922, it is still in demand by scholars and Parliamentarians alike. In 1927 the collection was boosted when 15,000 items belonging to the collection of Major William Jardine were bought. Ribbink initiated and supervised the reclassification of the whole library collection to the Dewey Decimal Classification system, whilst also producing a classified catalogue and subject index (Musiker 1986).

In 1949 Mr. Tielman Roos who served until 1967 succeeded Ribbink. During his tenure the Library became known as the Library of Parliament of the Republic of

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South Africa (1961). Of the library itself Mr. Roos wrote in 1954 "to members of parliament their library is a sanctuary. To its seclusion they repair for mental *pabulum* as well as for recreational reading, knowing that once within its walls they are beyond the reach of visitors..." (Taylor 1967:27).

The Copyright Act no 22 of 1950 gave the library copyright privileges, and as such received a copy of all materials published in South Africa. This posed a space problem for the Library, as many of the materials received had no direct relation to the information used by the Members. The problem was exacerbated by the Revised Copyright Act no 63 of 1965 as many private institutions like schools, commercial, financial and mining companies became aware of the act and started inundating the Library with their magazines, publications, and annual reports (House of Assembly Annexures 1967). This led to a very strenuous selection process whereby only between 25% – 30% of all legal deposit materials received, are retained. Materials like juvenile books, stories for older children and adolescents, school textbooks, popular novels, handbooks of a highly technical nature, certain periodicals and ephemera of all kinds were not incorporated in the collection, but were disposed of by being donated to educational institutions (House of Assembly Annexures 1965). The introduction of the Legal Deposit Act no 17 of 1982 reduced the workload connected to the selection and disposal of redundant materials considerably as section 3(2) of the Act stipulated that "if a legal deposit library does not require any particular publication, or a publication belonging to a particular category of publications to which the Act apply, the publisher may be exempted from the obligation to supply a copy of such publication to that library" (Parliamentary Annexures 1987 84 -106:5). In 1987 head and regional offices of all political parties, as well as Regional Service Councils and Regional Services Advisory Committees, were informed by letter of the provisions of the Act and requested to supply the Library with copies of all their publications (Parliamentary Annexures 1988).

In order to obtain materials of interest from other Parliaments the Library introduced an exchange agreement with the Governments of Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as bodies like the United Nations, the Library of Congress, the Council of Europe and other official sources. Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho were added to the list in 1967 (House of Assembly Annexures 1968). Materials exchanged

include: official yearbooks, statutes, statistical sources and items on parliamentary procedure, debates, and official documents such as government and commission reports

Since 1968 attempts have been made to acquire all unpublished theses from South African universities on topics that might be of interest to Parliamentarians (House of Assembly Annexures 1969).

In 1967 Mr. J.C. Quinton was appointed Chief Librarian, retiring in 1982. During this period the Library embarked on a rigorous weeding programme as space proved to be an ongoing problem. On advice from the National Assembly that the Library had to make do with the available space, thousands of books were weeded and dispatched to institutions that might have been interested in the materials. A notable recipient was the Rand Afrikaans University that personally selected 3000 books for their collection from the discarded materials (Parliamentary Annexures 1976). Lists of available materials were also circulated to 170 institutions that could choose from the list. As from 1979 a decision was taken that the list first be circulated to parliamentarians before being sent out to other institutions (Parliament Annexures 1980).

In 1969 a valuable collection of maps concerning topographical, topocadastral, climatological, hydrological and geological information pertaining to South Africa, was received by the Library, and the staff set about sorting, classifying and storing it (House of Assembly Annexures 1970).

On the 20th of July 1970 the Minister of Information (for the Minister of National Education) moved that a Select Committee be appointed for the management and superintendence of the Library of Parliament. The Committee to be appointed was to have the power to confer with a similar Committee. This step gave the Library a more direct avenue for addressing problems at a high level (House of Assembly Annexures 1970).

Lending services were only offered to parliamentarians, judges, ex-judges, ex-members of parliament, officers of parliament and government advisors (Musiker 1986), though non-parliamentarians could make use of the facilities for research

purposes. A reference service was available, and on request more in-depth research could be done on specific topics, though in the Librarians Annual Report 1973, mention was made that the service could be used more enthusiastically by Members (House of Assembly Annexures 1974). The situation seemed to have changed with the introduction of telephonic requests (Parliament Annexures 1979), as well as by mail. Though requests answered via mail is deemed very time-consuming it is a much-appreciated service by those who cannot visit the Library in person (Parliament Annexures 1983). In 1978 R7000.00 was voted for the installation of a computer terminal to replace hand operated-systems to reduce processing periods for reports from 5 – 3 weeks. In February 1981 the reference service was further improved by transferring all data from magnetic tapes to discs, speeding up the service. By removing the terminal from the press-cutting room in July 1978, and installing it at the reference desk, a quicker and more efficient service could be delivered (Parliament Annexures 1997). In 1983 a letter was circulated by the Speaker to Members indicating that Reference Services were only to be used for official purposes, and that the staff would no longer handle private queries (Parliament Annexures 1983).

Currently eight (three of which are available to parliamentarians) networked computers are available to reference staff for handling requests and delivering the information to the parliamentarians either via e-mail or in person[2].

Other than books, parliamentary publications and journals, pamphlets were added to the collection in 1972 and proved to be very popular (Parliament Annexures 1975). In 1973 control and supervision of the newspaper collection, kept in the stores in Senate and the House of Assembly, were transferred to the library. It comprised of full sets of the "Argus " (1910 -), "Die Burger" (1915 -) and the "Cape Times" (1879 -), as well as a selection of 34 of the most representative regional newspapers. (The latter are currently only kept for one year before disposal). This grew to be one of the most popular services offered to parliamentarians and regular requests are received for information from the newspapers (House of Assembly Annexures 1974). Acting upon requests of parliamentarians, the Library in 1991 subscribed for a trial period of one

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[2] Informal interview with Mr. A Ntunja, 15 August 2002.

year to the foreign newspapers, i.e. "The Times" of London and the "International Herald Tribune" published in Paris. Even though the service was well advertised and Members urged to make use of the service, it was decided that it was not a viable option and subscriptions were not renewed (Parliament Annexures 1992).

Early in 1974 the Speaker directed the Library to start a press-cutting service on a limited scale. The most important South African newspapers were to be used for this service. It was brought to the attention of the Speaker that a comprehensive press-cutting service was available through the Institute for Contemporary History (INCH) of the University of the Orange Free State. This service gave access to cuttings made from 30 newspapers and 25 magazines. After an *in loco* inspection by the Deputy Secretary a possible link-up with the service was discussed, and after submission of the Report of the Deputy Secretary to the relevant Committees, the Parliamentary press-cutting service was discontinued. On 18 February 1975 a decision was taken to subscribe to the service for a period of three years, with the option of extending the period. (Parliament Annexures 1976).

A special room was instituted for the service, and the representatives of all parties were allowed to consult the collection. Due to its popularity a temporary assistant was employed fulltime to supervise the service employed (Parliament Annexures 1977).

As the service proved too costly, a decision was made in 1977 to discontinue reception of photocopies of all articles, but rather to opt for access to the INCH index to trace reports in its collection of newspapers. A decision was also made to subscribe to the microfiche version of the service. Photocopies of the press-cuttings on microfiche can be provided by the reprographic services inside the Library using a microfiche reader/printer (Parliament Annexures 1978).

The reprographic services are responsible for making photocopies from printed materials, press-cuttings and for sending and receiving faxes. A tele-facsimile machine was installed in the Library in 1987. The fax machine is mainly for the use of the Library and the Secretariat (Parliament Annexures 1988).

The restoration of Library materials is the function of the Restoration Section of the Library. In December 1982 the section moved into its own premises supplied by the Department of Community Development. As part of their functions, books are treated with ethylene Oxide gas in vacuum sterilisation chambers and then cleaned. Reparation work is carried out and preservation treatment is given to leather and parchment bindings. Restoration and remounting of paintings is done on a regular basis. For the binding of its material the Library is dependent on the Binding section of Parliament, resulting in long delays (Parliament Annexures 1993).

In 1982 Mr.G Swanepoel succeeded Mr. Quinton as Chief Librarian (Musiker 1986).

On 16 June 1983 the Select Committee authorised the Secretary to Parliament and the Chief Librarian to enter into negotiations with the South African Bibliographic and Information Network (SABINET) in order to obtain membership. The negotiations were finalised in August 1984 when the Library's membership was approved. A terminal was procured and the installation of data transmission facilities conforming to SABINET requirements was disposed of by the end of the year. Training of staff in using the system was also arranged (Parliament Annexures 1985).

In an effort to stimulate Interlibrary cooperation, the Library commenced with the regular distribution of government publications and official documents tabled in Parliament in 1983. This was initially sent to 34 leading libraries, but due to financial restraints this was scaled down to 20 libraries (Parliament Annexures 1991).

During the parliamentary sessions of April 1984 the Prime Minister referred to the lack of adequate information and research facilities available to Members. He announced the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry, led by the Hon. A.L. Schlebusch, to investigate the possibility of establishing a research service for parliamentarians. A full Committee meeting, comprising of representatives of Parliament, the Library of Parliament, the President's Council, Department of Community Development and the academic and research community met to discuss the issue (Parliament Annexures 1986).

Prof. J.A. Boon, Head of the Department of Library and Information Science of the University of Pretoria and a member of the Committee was seconded to assist the Committee in a full-time capacity for the period 1 January – 30 June 1985. After the Committee had undertaken visits abroad to gather first-hand information, it tabled a memorandum on April 15, 1985. This was considered to form the basis of the report. The final draft report was considered and passed on 17 June and presented to the House of Assembly (Parliament Annexures 1986).

A direct result of the findings of the Subcommittee on a Research Service for Parliamentarians was the recommendation, in 1987, by the Standing Committee on the Library of Parliament that the Secretariat should start planning for the implementation of an integrated computerised Library and Information Service. A subsequent investigation into suitable software led to the decision to acquire the *Inmagic* software. Consumer boycotts against the country however thwarted the acquisition. This led to a renewed investigation, and the decision was made to give preference to a DOS-based system as it displayed greater adaptability to the existing systems. When the ban was lifted in 1990, the networking version of the *Inmagic* software was ordered. In October 1991 the Secretariat gave permission for the establishment of the computerised information system, and preparations for the upgrading of existing equipment and the installation of a network got underway (Parliament Annexures 1992). As a first priority the Library's catalogue was computerised. At that point it consisted of two catalogues namely the Old Catalogue that was closed in 1980, and the New Catalogue that consisted of materials acquired after 1980. The initial conversion was done on the New Catalogue. Due to the time-consuming nature of the catalogue conversion it was decided to outsource the conversion of the New Catalogue to an Australian company, Amarc Data International who commenced with the work in 1992 (Parliament Annexures 1993).

Data capturers from Parliament performed the conversion of the Old Catalogue, but the results weren't of a high standard. Currently Cataloguers in the Library are working retrospectively trying to enhance the records[3].

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[3] Informal interview held on 16 April 2003 with Mrs. Eagen, a Cataloguer in the Department of Processing and Indexing of the Library of Parliament.

During 1999 – 2000 Cataloguers in the Department of Processing and Indexing captured the existing backlog of materials. Currently new catalogue entries are prepared and keyed in on-line by the library staff. The system is available via the network inside the Library and on the Internet[4].

In 1996 the European Union embarked on a Parliamentary Support Programme. The Library benefited by having its Information Technology upgraded. Hardware and software were purchased, and the PCs, file servers and networks were upgraded. At the same time the European Union also funded the purchase of some computers, printers and software for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff (Parliament Annexures 1997). Access to the Internet was established in 1996.

Mr. A. Ntunja succeeded Mr. Swanepoel as Chief Librarian in 1998.

In 2003 an effort was made to assist parliamentarians with easy access to a variety of information sources via the Internet. The Special Services Unit created a webpage giving access to basic electronic information sources that are primarily used by parliamentarians for information searches The webpage provides access to the following South African e-newspapers: The Argus, Die Beeld, City Press, Independent online newsgroup, Mail & Guardian on-line, Natal Witness, Online newspapers, News24, Rapport and Die Volksblad. Access to the following Library databases and online-resources are provided: Commissions of Enquiry catalogue, Index to Parliamentary manuscripts, Annexures 1910 – 1922, Library catalogue, Library special collections catalogue, SABINET online, EBSCO online journals and Butterworths online. Given the time constraints under which parliamentarians operate, the webpage also provides access to a variety of on-line journals' thus saving them the time of searching for specific titles. Useful links to other parliamentary websites are

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[4] Informal interview held on 16 April 2003 with Mrs. Eagen, a Cataloguer in the Department of Processing and Indexing of the Library of Parliament.

also provided [5].

3.3.5.2 Organisational structure

Up to 1998 the Library functioned as a unit on its own. As a result of the findings of the Subcommittee on a Research Service for parliamentarians, a Research Service was instituted in 1995, functioning as a separate unit. Restructuring in 1998 resulted in the combining of the two units into one, known as the Information Service Section.

The Information Service Section Manager is responsible to the Division Manager of the Legislative and Oversight Division. He in turn reports to the Secretary of Parliament.

The Information Service Section is divided into two Units i.e. the Library and the Parliamentary Research Unit, and managed by Unit Managers.

The Library Unit consists of four sub-Units under supervision of a Control Librarian. The four Units are the:

- *Reference Sub-Unit*. This unit provides a reference and lending service to Members of Parliament, researchers and staff of the Parliament.
- *Special Services Sub-Unit*. The staff manages the Library Special material, including the Mendelsohn, Jardine, Boer War and artworks collections. Marketing, promotion and user education form part of their activities. Currently IT support and the development and maintenance of the Library Web Page is also this Unit's responsibility. (It is however envisaged that this function should be taken over by a Systems Manager – a new position to be created). Also envisaged is that the Unit will in future provide parliamentarians with current news from TV channels and international journals, and provide them with the opportunity to view copies of parliamentary debates and special occasions. Tapes will be made available on radio news.

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[5] Informal interview on 16 April 2003 with Mr. M.E.O. Burgers, Librarian in charge of the Special Services Unit

- *Acquisitioning Sub-Unit* – proactively acquires relevant information sources.
- *Processing and Indexing Sub-Unit* – processes all material accessioned by the Library (Library Structure n.d.).

Each Unit has it own complement of Librarians, Administrative Assistants and Library Assistants. All the Librarians have a professional library qualifications.

The Parliamentary Research Unit employs 18 staff members all of whom have a degree and postgraduate qualification.

3.3.5.3 Services offered to Members by the Library Unit

The Library offers the following services to their clients:

- *Reference services*: services are offered over the counter, by telephone, mail or e-mail. The reference collection consists of dictionaries, encyclopedias, telephone directories, statistical sources, collections of quotations, biographical dictionaries, official yearbooks of countries and other reference works. Should the staff be unable to provide an answer from these sources, outside sources like other libraries, government departments, institutes or bodies dealing with the subject, or databases on the Internet will be utilised (Library services n.d.). A major proportion of the service is quick referencing answers, but many require in-depth research (Parliament Annexures 1992).

- *Consulting/research service*: In-depth research services are offered. No interpretation is made of the information provided (Library services n.d.). Assistance is also given to Party researchers who do not always have the expertise to do their own searches[6].

- *Compilation of information files in respect of Bills*: information in respect of new items of legislation is pro-actively compiled and kept on file until the information is not topical anymore (Swanepoel 1996). Information that remains a focus point, like HIV/AIDS, gender issues, and so on, becomes a permanent part of the collection.

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[6] Informal interview on 16 April 2003 with Mr. B. Schwarz, Librarian in charge of the Reference Unit in the Library

- *Lending services and the provision of information sources in the library.* All books and pamphlets except those falling into special categories like reference work and rare Africana may be borrowed for a period of 14 days. All other available materials may be used inside the Library. During recess materials can be sent to parliamentarians upon request (Library service n.d.).

- *Provision of an Interlending service*: materials not available within the library are borrowed from institutions that have the requested copies available. The popularity of the service can be adjudged by the fact that a full-time dedicated staff member is responsible for this service (Swanepoel 1996).

- *Press-cutting services*: it involves the retrieval of indexing information from the SA Media database of the INCH Press-cutting Service, as well as the printing of copies required by parliamentarians (Swanepoel 1996). This database currently provides access to press-cuttings from fifty leading newspapers.

- *Photocopying facilities*: Photocopies of documents and parts of publications are provided to Members.

- *SDI services to Researchers in the Parliament*: newspaper clippings generated by the Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) are e-mailed on a daily basis to the parliamentary researchers.

- *Translations*: this is not a regular service, but if it is a short section that needs to be translated, it can be organised through the Library.

- *Access to Internet*: The Library has three Personal Computers available for the use by Members[7].

3.3.5.4 Services offered by the Research Unit

The function of the Research Unit is to provide quality research and information services to Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Committees and Senior Management of Parliament in a professional and objective manner (Parliament of South Africa 2003).

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[7] Informal interview on 16 April 2003 with Mr. B. Schwarz, Librarian in charge of the Reference Unit in the Library

The Research Unit provides services upon request from clients. Services that may be requested from the Unit include:

- Summaries and analyses of Bills
- Analysis and review of Policy documents.
- Comparative studies and international best practices.
- Statistical information and analysis.
- Budget analysis.
- Background information for speeches.
- Assistance with reports on public hearings.
- Briefings and presentations to Committees.
- Constituency-based information.
- Research support for national and international study tours.
- Research support for national and international conferences (Parliament of South Africa 2003).

The Unit also conducts pro-active research ranging from individual briefs on current or forthcoming events to larger projects of an inter-sectoral nature (Parliament of South Africa 2003).

3.3.5.5 Staff development

The Library Unit has for many years followed a policy of staff development. Staff is afforded the opportunity to attend both national and international conferences and workshops on topics suiting their expertise (Parliament Annexures 1992). Ongoing training is also given on systems used by the Library like SABINET. A Control Librarian, as well as a Librarian, annually attends the Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) meetings, where information exchange and networking takes place[8].

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[8] Informal interview on 16 April 2003 with Mr. B. Schwarz, Librarian in charge of the Reference Unit in the Library

3.3.5.6 Cooperation between the Library of Parliament and the Provincial Legislative libraries

No formal cooperation exists. Formal contact with their provincial counterparts is established during meetings of the Research and Information Cluster that gathers each time at a different library. During these meetings, matters of mutual concern are discussed, and the meetings are used to learn from one another, i.e. to establish a "best practice". Formal structures to throughput the information to all the staff does not exist, and so not much benefit is currently derived from these meetings[9].

3.3.5.7 Promotion of services offered by the Library of Parliament

The promotion of services is the responsibility of the Special Services Unit. Currently the services are marketed using the following methods:

- Sending a marketing brochure via e-mail to all parliamentarians
- Writing articles in the house journal
- Making available flyers in the Library or alternatively putting them in the parliamentarians' postboxes
- Announcements of induction or other courses offered in the Library. Induction courses are normally offered after each election to introduce new parliamentarians to the facilities available to them[10].

It is anticipated that in future marketing will be done via an internal MATV channel dedicated to the Library. It will show video presentations on the latest acquisitions, advertisements for the Library and its services and website information.

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[9] Informal interview on 16 April 2003 with Mr. B. Schwarz, Librarian in charge of the Reference Unit in the Library

[10] Informal interview on 16 April 2003 with Mr. M.E.O. Burgers, Librarian in charge of the Special Services Unit

3.3.6 Provincial legislative libraries

These libraries are mainly creations of the new dispensation, with the exception of the Library of the North West Province, which has existed since 1987 as the legislative library for the Boputhatswana Homeland Government. All the libraries have a very small staff complement ranging from one staff member to six.

Although very little is known in the public domain about these libraries the following table provides some insight into their nature (Zwane 2001):

Table 3: Provincial legislative libraries

Provincial Legislative Libraries	Staff members	Book collection size	Official publications	Library publication/s	Information services subscribed to	Information Technology
Eastern Cape	3	1500	Government (Gov)/ Provincial (Prov) Gazettes Statutes	Accession list	Mast Van Zyl, Ruud and Associates SAIRR	3 PCs 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 1 Printer
Free State	3	2300	Gov./Prov. Gazettes Consolidated ordinances Reports Green/White Papers Statutes	None	SABINET Legilink INCH Press Cutting Service	3 PCs 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 3 Printers
Gauteng	4	1600	Gov. Gazettes S.A. law Reports & Bills *Special collection:* Grey Literature	GLIC manual Catalogue	SABINET Legilink Jutastat Internet Business mapper EBSCO online journals	6 PCs 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 4 Printers
KwaZulu-Natal	5	20 000	Gov. /Prov. Gazettes Hansard NCOP documents HIV/AIDS Women	Guide to the Library for the MP's	SABINET S.A. Media Butterworths IDASA SAIRR Statistics S.A.	5 PCs 2 Fax 2 Photocopier 4 Printers
Mpumalanga	1	1000	Gov./Prov. Gazettes Hansard NCOP documents S.A. Law *Special*	Accession list	Jutastst SAIRR Statistics S.A.	1 PC 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 1 Printer

			collection: Maps			
Northern Cape	1	1000 – 1300	Gov./Prov. Gazettes Hansard *Special collection:* Maps	Accession list Daily Current Awareness Service	None	4 PCs 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 2 Printers
Northern Province	5	1000	Government Gazettes Hansard Statutes	None	SABINET Butterworths	1 PC 0 Fax 0 Photocopier 1 Printer
North West	1	3000	Government Department reports Hansard *Special collection:* Video cassettes	Accession list	Legilink Butterworths SABINET HSRC Centre for Policy Studies SAIIA SAIRR	8 PCs 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 8 Printers
Western Cape	2	3500	Gov./Prov. Gazettes Hansard (Cape Prov. Council, National Assembly, Senate, Constitu-tional Assembly, NCOP, Western Cape) Statutes, State Tender Bulletins, Cape Provincial Ordinances, Order • Papers, Minutes and ATCs (NA, NCOP & Western Cape) *Special Collections:* Cape Provincial Council Memorablia Photos & Pamphlet collection	Library news Periodical contents	Legilink INCH Press cutting service SAIRR Jutastat- S.A. Statutes *Constitutional* library and govt. gazette Index InterAccess – Govt. Gazettes	2 PCs 1 Fax 1 Photocopier 1Printer 1 Paper Shredder

A more detailed description of the functioning of these libraries will be given in Chapter 6.

3.3.7 Modern parliamentary library and research services vs The Library of Parliament, Cape Town

Well developed and technologically advanced parliamentary library and research services are mostly found in first world countries, while services offered by third world countries, like South Africa often lag behind, lacking technological advancement. Services offered are often still based on basic print-based sources, with not much prospect of providing the pro-active, timely services their parliamentarians need. South Africa has been in the fortunate position that the previous governments, as early as 1854, recognised the importance of information provision to their parliamentarians, and has always been actively involved in the advancement of the services (Taylor 1967).

Technologically South Africa is one of Africa's leading forces. Internet infrastructure is partly in place and the country as a whole is ready to leap forward into a true information society (Walker 2001).

To determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current service delivery of the Library of Parliament, Cape Town, a comparison could be drawn between the Library and trends emerging in well-developed parliamentary services.

Table 4 provides an insight into the comparison of service delivery levels:

Table 4: Service delivery levels: Well-developed parliamentary library services vs Library of Parliament, Cape Town

Trends in well-developed parliamentary library services	Library of Parliament, Cape Town	
	Yes	No
1. Lending services		
– Home borrowing	✔	
– Interlending	✔	
2. Reference services		
– Answers to quick reference question	✔	
– SDI on request	✔	
– Provision of information on any topic of interest	✔	
– Current contents service on request		✔
– Information provision concerning the catalogues, information collection and the utilisation of services	✔	
– Instruction to users in utilisation of internal and external databases in use in that specific library		✔
– Information on locating external book collections and access to electronic information resources		✔
– Compilation of manuals and guides to databases		✔
– Bibliographic information services and reference research	✔	
– Consulting service in legislative and parliamentary areas of interest and legislative activity		✔
3. Compilation of bibliographies on topics of interest		✔
4. Development of internal databases		
– Library catalogue	✔	
– Articles from selected periodicals of interest		✔
5. Other services		
– Translations		✔
– Press clipping services	✔	
– Folder system keeping track of legislation and related documents at any stage of the legislative process		✔
– Info. Pack services	✔	
– Indexing of information systems		✔
– Copy services	✔	
– Provision of daily summaries of newspapers		✔
6. Electronic services		
– Electronic data transfer via e-mail	✔	
– Providing Internet Access	✔	
– Sharing data with other Libraries	✔	
– Website Library service		✔
7. Research services		
– Act as an analysts/researchers	✔	
– Accumulate and maintain legislation–related information to be supplied when needed	✔	
– Provide professional advice and expertise meeting the need expressed through an information request	✔	

– Act a information mediator between various information sources and groups outside Parliament and the MPs	✔		
– Compile information requests for MPs and their advisors	✔		
– Prepare the conducting of opinion polls, sociological studies, etc. related to parliamentary purposes functions			✔
– Coordinate the flow of information between the parliament and colleagues of other parliaments and international organisations by attending workshops, conferences etc.	✔		
– Study and forecast information needs of parliament			✔
– Pro-actively have information available to provide when requested	✔		

From the above table it is clear that the services offered in the Library of Parliament compare favourably with services delivered in well-developed parliamentary library services. Both the lending and the majority of reference services are on par with the best other services have to offer. Since the advent of Internet access in the Library in 1996 the ability of the staff to provide information timeously has improved dramatically. A very positive step has been the availability of internal and externally subscription to databases, and other sources of importance that have been made available to the parliamentarians via the Library's Intranet. This provides the opportunity to parliamentarians to access these sources after-hours when the Library is closed.

Some of the services not offered by the Library, like translations, folders, systems keeping track of legislature-in-progress and provision of newspaper articles on a daily basis, are activities currently done by other departments within the Parliament – thus available at any time. As a service the Library could perhaps make the parliamentarians aware of the existence of the services, and direct them to the relevant Departments or Website (in the case of newspaper articles available on the GCIS website).

A current weakness seems to be the question of user education as to the use of especially the electronic information sources within the Library, as well as those provided on the Parliamentary Library's Intranet. Since no manuals on how to use the systems have been compiled, and user education is not currently offered, many parliamentarians may be disadvantaged by their inability to access and utilise these valuable sources.

3.4 Summary

Publicly available information sources abound in South Africa. Compared with the rest of the African continent, a wealth of information sources, services and systems exist. However to be able to fully utilise their potential requires time, effort and skills; attributes which parliamentarians do not always possess.

Parliamentary libraries have come a long way from being places of leisure to vibrant organisations, keeping their fingers on the pulse of activities and events taking place on a daily basis. Worldwide, and also in South Africa, the libraries have had to adapt to modern ways of storing, retrieving and accessing information. Services have to be modernised and in most cases brought into step with the electronic era of service delivery. That most parliamentary libraries, even those of fairly young democracies, are striving to do just that, is a tribute to their governments and their insight into the fact that timely access to information is the best investment made towards responsible governance.

The conceptual and theoretical framework will be presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to provide an insight into the theoretical and conceptual basis for the research.

Conceptual and theoretical frameworks, according to Van Lill, provides the scientific grounds for studying objects, situations, or phenomena. The existence thereof, acknowledges Van Lill, provides knowledge on which researchers can base future research. The findings of such research contribute to a unifying body of knowledge of theory, experience or models on which researchers can build (Van Lill 2000). Busha and Harter (1980:13) define theory as "assumptions, definitions, and propositions which explain a group of observed facts or phenomena in a field or discipline", while model is seen as "a verbal, mathematical, or graphical construct representing a phenomenon ...... often providing the framework for the conduct of research." Silverman in Pettigrew and Mckechnie defines theory as "a set of explanatory concepts" (Pettigrew and Mckechnie 2001:62), while Odi (1982) views it as "a systematic explanation from the observed facts and laws that relate to a particular aspect of life" (Odi 1982: 313). According to van Lill (2000) existing paradigms, theoretical frameworks and methods provide researchers with a clear picture of what he/she is engaged in, as well as which issues, attributes and interactions should be addressed.

Within the field of Information Science, specifically in the field of information need and use studies, the lack of a unifying body of knowledge is lamented by many Library and Information Science (LIS) scholars (Dervin and Nilan 1986; Itoga 1992; Krikelas 1983; Hjørland 1998; Van Lill 2000). Busha and Harter (1980) ascribes the situation to the fact that in librarianship practice leads the way instead of theory, thus leaving the theoretical field with ill-defined concepts, inferences, plausible explanations, and general orientations towards selected subject areas. Rohde (1986)

concurs with the two authors viewpoint by pointing out that the fragmentation of literature on user studies, as well as the superficial nature thereof, has made it very difficult to draw meaningful conclusions and support a unified theory.

Both Kulthau (1993) and Van Lill (2000) concur that Information Science is currently in a theory building phase with traditional conceptual frameworks being revisited and new perspectives proposed. The lack of a theory therefore makes it a very difficult field to study.

With this in mind this chapter has set out to explain key concepts in the field of user studies as currently used in the literature. Applicable models that could be used are also discussed.

4.2 Theoretical framework

According to Ikoja-Odongo (2002) concepts refer to the major phenomena studied, eventually forming the foundation of the conceptual framework of the subject under investigation. Maxfield and Babbie (1998) view concepts as mental images expressed as subjective thoughts about things that we encounter in our daily life. As it is not possible to communicate these thoughts directly, they observe, words, symbols, and phrases of language are used to represent these mental images and to communicate it to one another. In daily communication a system, of general and often vague agreements about the use of terms, is used, often resulting in misunderstandings. By conceptualizing terms an individual specifies precisely what is meant by a specific term (Maxfield and Babbie 1998).

Davis (2000) maintains that many concepts used within the field of Information Science can have different meanings, depending on the context within which they are being used, and it therefore needs to be clarified within context.

As the study hinges on the concept "Information", it is clarified and put into context. Further concept clarifications are done throughout the discussions in this chapter.

4.2.1 Information

Consensus about the precise terminology for the word has not yet been reached. As Losee (1997) points out the term is defined, understood and interpreted differently across a vast array of disciplines that use the term.

The concept originated from the Greek words *typos, idea and morphé* evolving into the Latin word *informatio*. In its modern context the word "information" is used in the sense of "to instruct, to furnish with knowledge" (Capurro 1992:2). The Oxford English Dictionary describes it as "knowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject or event" (1989:944).

Information has also been defined as "a property of matter, any message, document, or information resource; any publicly available symbolic material; or any data" (Smith 1991:85). Kaniki views information as "ideas, facts, imaginative works of the mind and data of value, potentially useful for decision making, question answering etc" (2001:191). In his opinion the awareness of the above mentioned facts and data leads to a state of knowing.

The interchangeable usage of the concepts data, information and knowledge adds to the confusion, but as Miao (in Ershova & Hohlov 2002) points out the differences between the concepts are slight, but significant. Data can be described as measures and representations of the world around us. According to Cilliers (1983) the sensory organs are the instruments used to gather data. In itself data is meaningless, but by assigning meaning to relationships and patterns that occur over a period of time, data becomes information (What is knowledge? What is information? 2000). Westbrook (1993) supports the notion that data, through a process of change, become organised, thus becoming information. Miller (2002) argues that information as such is static and lifeless, simply existing in a variety of formats like magazines, television, Compact Disc-Read Only Memory's (CD-ROMs), letters, and so on. Only when human beings assign meaning and interpretation to the information does it become knowledge which Miller (2002) aptly describes as: "what we know". Westbrook (1993) posits that by analyzing information it becomes knowledge, which can result in some form of action. Nitecki (1985) adds that knowledge is an ever-changing

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entity, changing as a new understanding of relations between different aspects of reality emerges. Sveiby in Miller (2002:4) distinguishes between information and knowledge as follows:

Table 5: Information and knowledge

Information	Knowledge
Static	Dynamic
Independent of the individual	Dependent on individuals
Explicit	Tacit
Digital	Analogue
Easy to duplicate	Must be re-created
Easy to broadcast	Face-to-face mainly
No intrinsic meaning	Meaning has to be personally assigned

Miller, F.J. 2002. I = 0 (Information has no intrinsic meaning). *Information Research*, 8(1).

According to Ingwersen (1992) the action required upon gaining knowledge leads to the cognition of a state of uncertainty in the receiver, or as Belkin, Oddy and Brooks (1982) put it 'an anomalous state of knowledge'. As the human being finds himself in a position where he is unable to solve the state of uncertainty through his own mental efforts, a process of communication, e.g. interrogating a formal or informal information retrieval system, is needed. Through this process information can be seen as the content of the message conveyed, which is assimilated by the receiver of the message. By conveying and assimilating messages an individual can be spurred into action, make a decision or change their state of knowledge (van Lill 2000).

During the last few decades several interpretations concerning the meaning of the concept emerged, the earliest effort being that by Shannon who in 1948 published his *Mathematical Theory of Communication*. This viewpoint did not propose a mathematical definition, but supplied a measurement for the entropy of the message (Watson and Hill 1996). Although this theory measured the probability of receiving messages through a channel, it did not concern itself with the semantic aspects of the message. Saracevic and Kantor (1997) judge this interpretation as very restrictive as it exclusively appropriated information as a property of the message. Chmielecki (1998) also criticises the content's neutral approach to the theory, as its only concern was the

technical/economical, quantitative problems of data transmission and communication. Since the field of Information Science generally assigns meaning to information the theory was thus found inadequate (Ingwersen 1992; Watson and Hill 1996).

Werswig and Neveling in Watson and Hill (1996) identified six approaches commonly used in the literature to identify the meaning of "information":

- *The structure approach.* This approach views information mainly from a philosophical viewpoint, stating that all structures of the world, be it visible or invisible to humans, are information. Using this approach information is seen as "what remains after one abstracts from the material aspects of physical reality" (Losee 1997:2). Information thus forms an integral part of the physical object about which it informs.

- *The knowledge approach* sees knowledge acquired through perception as information.

- *The message approach.* Based on the mathematical communication theory of Shannon and Weaver this approach identifies the message itself as information. It can either be seen as the physical carrier of the message, or the symbols or signs used to convey the message. Measuring transmitted and received information, as well as the minimising of noise, form the current focus point for the wide array of scientific fields, specifically in the electrical engineering, computing and cognitive sciences that laid claim to this approach (Losee 1997).

- *The meaning approach.* Dominated by the field of computer science this approach states that the meaning assigned to signs and data is information (Losee 1997).

- *The effect approach.* This approach assigns meaning to "information" from the angle of the communication process, stating that it is "a special effect of a specific process". The recipient is perceived as the major benefactor of this effect.

- *The process approach.* Information is perceived not as an object but as a process in the human mind. Losee (1997) suggests that all processes produce information and it is the values of characteristics in the processes' output that are information.

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Smith (1991) and Van Lill (2000) distinguish between two interpretations i.e. a traditional viewpoint and an alternative or cognitive viewpoint. The traditional viewpoint sees information as a product of human invention or symbolic representations of reality. Information can be any recorded source of information, ranging from the printed word, to symbolism to any data. As such its value and use to humans lies in the fact that information gained from these sources contributes towards individual's attempts to cope with their lives. Alternatively it also becomes something that reduces uncertainty (Smith 1991). The alternative viewpoint concentrates on the user, be it as recipient or constructor of information. In this instance the existing knowledge base, values, beliefs and so on of a human being influence what it perceives, receives or produce. Central to the formation of perceptions is the allocation of meaning to the information received, as well as the context in which the human finds himself (Belkin 1990). Stonier (1991) agrees with this viewpoint, adding that information only becomes meaningful should it be analysed, compared and integrated with existing information within the perceiver's system. By attaching meaning to information it becomes a contributor towards problem solving and decision-making (Boon 1992).

McCreadie and Rice (1999) provide a very concise overview of the current conceptualisations of information. According to them there are currently four major assumptions about information:

- *Information as commodity/resource.* Information is seen as a physical commodity to be "produced, purchased, replicated, distributed, manipulated, passed along, controlled, traded and sold" (1999:46). Buckland (1991) advocates that information-as-thing is always situational, and that the information value of a given piece of information can differ from situation to situation. An underlying assumption of this conceptualisation is that a message is sent from the sender to the receiver, with the expectation that the receiver of the message will be able to understand it and attach the correct meaning/interpretation to the message.

- *Information as data in the environment.* This conceptualisation sees information as including the data available from an individual's environment. This data can be communicated intentionally or unintentionally for human

processing, and can be gained from objects, artifacts, sounds, smells, visual and tactile phenomena, events or phenomena of nature.

- *Information as a representation of knowledge.* Information is viewed as "a representation of, or pointer to, knowledge" (McCreadie & Rice 1999:48). The printed document like books, journals, citations, and so on, is assumed to be the primary representation of knowledge. Recent technological advances in the electronic media have provided alternative options as primary representatives.

- *Information as a part of the communication process.* Meanings are seen to be in people rather than in words or data. A variety of factors like timing, social factors and personal factors influence the processing and interpretation of information. When interpreting and evaluating information, the context, be it geographical, social, educational, professional, and so on, will influence the understanding of the message (Madden 2000). Allen in Davis 2000:56 concurs by describing information as "the process by which an informant's cognitive structures are encoded and transmitted to an information seeker who perceives the coded messages, interprets them and learns from them".

Parliamentarians are an "information dependent" group of individuals. Their value as representatives of the nation as well as their continued existence as legislators relies heavily on their awareness off, access to, utilisation of, and dissemination of information. In their case information needs to be seen in its broadest interpretation. Within the context of the study information is seen as:

- *A commodity.* Parliamentarians need access to all kinds of information, be it freely available in the public domain, or only accessible at a price. From the perspective of their role as information providers to their constituents they can also be observed as producers, manipulators and communicators of information.

- *Environmental data.* By the nature of their work parliamentarians need to observe their environment for meaningful decision-making. Some portfolios in Government ask parliamentarians to make observations from their environment, for example agriculture, safety and security, water affairs, and environmental affairs. In many cases information gained through observing

objects, artifacts, acts of nature, can provide the necessary information for decision-making.

- *Representation of knowledge.* From the viewpoint of information representation, in whichever format information is presented, representations are seen as the sources of information. Parliamentarians make use of both formal and informal information systems and services to gain information. Within the formal systems it would be assumed that the written document is the preferred medium of communication of information.

- *A process.* Parliamentarians are confronted on a daily basis with information gained through different means. Interpretation and evaluation of the messages received can lead to a continual process of rejection or acceptance of that information. Both these reactions should lead to actions, either of repeating the search for information or by internalising and acting on the knowledge gained.

4.3 Modeling of information seeking behaviour

How information is found and used has for long been a major focus point in the field of Library and Information Science, resulting in extensive developments in the last few decades (Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvian 1996). Several general models concerning information seeking behaviour have been developed in the last few decades, notably that of Krikelas (1983), Ellis (1989) and Kulthau (1991).

Krikelas (1983) suggests that a user perceived a need in the context of his environment, leading to the user searching for information from a variety of information sources. These could be human sources, information systems or any other information resources. The seeking process can result in either success or failure, in which case the process can be repeated (Hayden n.d.). Kulthau's model concentrated more on the actual seeking process. The major focus of this model is based on the formal search process i.e. the deliberate, planned actions to find relevant information. The importance of Kulthau's model is that it suggested active participation of the user in the information seeking process (Hayden n.d). Ellis's model laid the foundation for determining the different steps taken during the information seeking process. He initially identified 6 steps in the process, i.e. starting, chaining, browsing,

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differentiating, monitoring and extracting, with two more features added during later studies: verifying and ending and filtering. Ellis proposed that this model could be used for studying both conventional and electronic sources (Turnbull n.d.).

Despite the development of these general models none of them were totally applicable when determining information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians. Further literature analysis however revealed another general model that presented the possibilities needed for the study, i.e. the general model as proposed by Wilson in 1997 (Wilson 1997).

Wilson (1999) describes a model as "a framework for thinking about a problem and may evolve into a statement of the relationships among theoretical propositions" (1999:250). In his opinion the majority of models currently available tend to be in a pre-theoretical stage concentrating on diagrammatical descriptions of statements, indicating causes, factors, and consequences, rather than concentrating on the theoretical stage where relationships among theoretical propositions are described.

According to Wilson (1997) the study of information seeking behaviour cannot be monopolised by Information Science, since many disciplines actively contribute to the knowledge of how humans seek and use information, which channels are preferred in the process, as well as which factors hamper, or contribute towards information utilisation. Disciplines involved, according to him, include psychology, consumer behaviour, innovation research, health communication research, mass media, communication studies and information requirements in information systems design. Despite the interdisciplinary nature of the field, Wilson (1997) claims that a general model can be constructed supporting the needs of all the respective disciplines. (This model will be discussed in more detail later.)

4.3.1 Background information to the development of the model

In 1981 Wilson attempted to construct a model explaining information seeking behaviour. The main aim of this effort was not so much on 'model building' but mainly to describe interrelationships among concepts (Wilson 1981). Correlating with Krikelas' view, Wilson determined that the satisfaction of an information need is

proposed to be the driving force behind the action taken by a user. In order to satisfy a perceived information need, demands are made upon either formal or informal sources/services resulting in failure or success. Success leads to utilisation of the information, which can result in fully or partially fulfilling the perceived need. Should it not be the case the search process needs to be repeated.
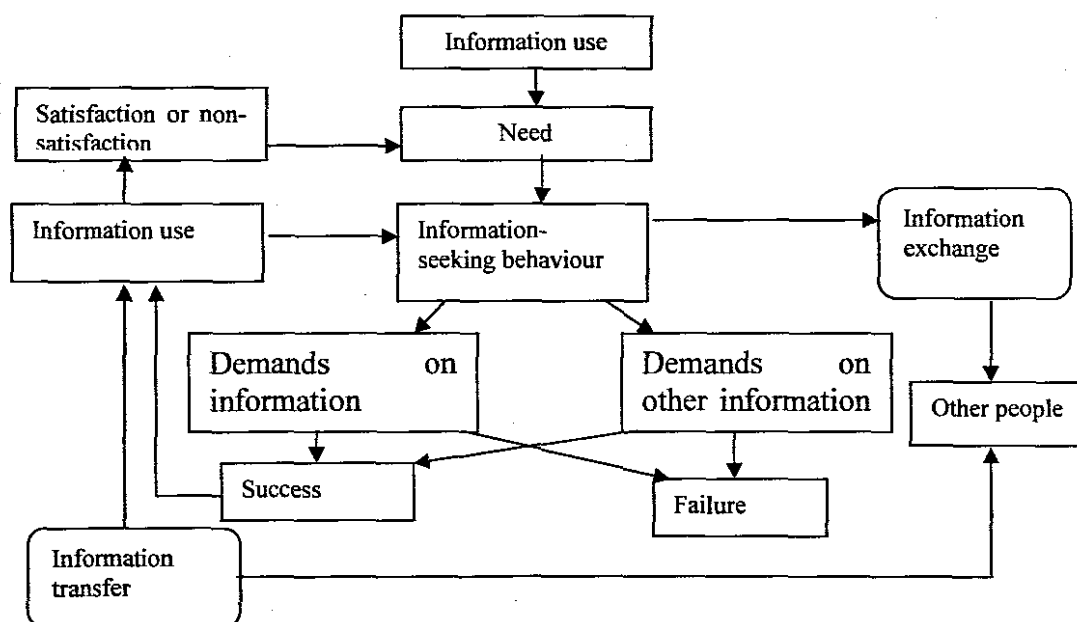
Fig. 1 Wilson's model of information behaviour

Source: Wilson, T.D. 1999. Information behaviour models. *Journal of Documentation,* 55(3):251

He also identified circumstantial elements playing a role in information-seeking behaviour, i.e. the situational context in which the need arises, the barriers preventing or enhancing a search, and information-seeking itself. In an amendment of the model in 1994 Wilson showed how the model of Ellis could be incorporated into his model (Wilson 1997).

Despite these early efforts, Wilson conceded that this effort in model building was mainly aimed at identifying and showing the gaps to be researched. A review of the literature pertaining to information on information seeking behaviour in general resulted in an expanded version of his 1981 model, describing general information behaviour, rather than just information seeking behaviour (Wilson 1997). The study was based on this later model.

4.4 Wilson's general model of information behaviour (1996)

Wilson expanded the 1981 model to provide for a more effective framework for studying information-seeking behaviour. Expansions include an activating mechanism between the person-in-context and the decision to seek information, which would compel the user to look for information. Wilson proposes the stress/coping theory as an activating theory, but also concedes that any other motivating factor could act as the activating mechanism (Wilson and Walsh 1996). At the same time another activating mechanism is suggested between the determining of the need and the actual searching process. Several theories are proposed i.e. the risk/reward theory, social learning theory and a closely related concept: self-efficacy (Wilson and Walsh 1996).

The later model also expanded the barriers to information seeking proposed in 1981 to include the fact that information source characteristics can form a barrier/variable, and that personal barriers could be either psychological or demographic (Wilson and Walsh (1996).

The information seeking process was expanded to include other modes of searching, other than just active searching as proposed by Wilson (1981) and Ellis (1989). Finally the model also included a new step, going beyond information seeking, linking back to the person-in-context (Wilson and Walsh 1996).

Diagrammatically Wilson's expanded model can be illustrated as in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2: Wilson's general model for information seeking behaviour

Source: Wilson, T.D. 1999. Information behaviour models. *Journal of Documentation,* 55(3):251

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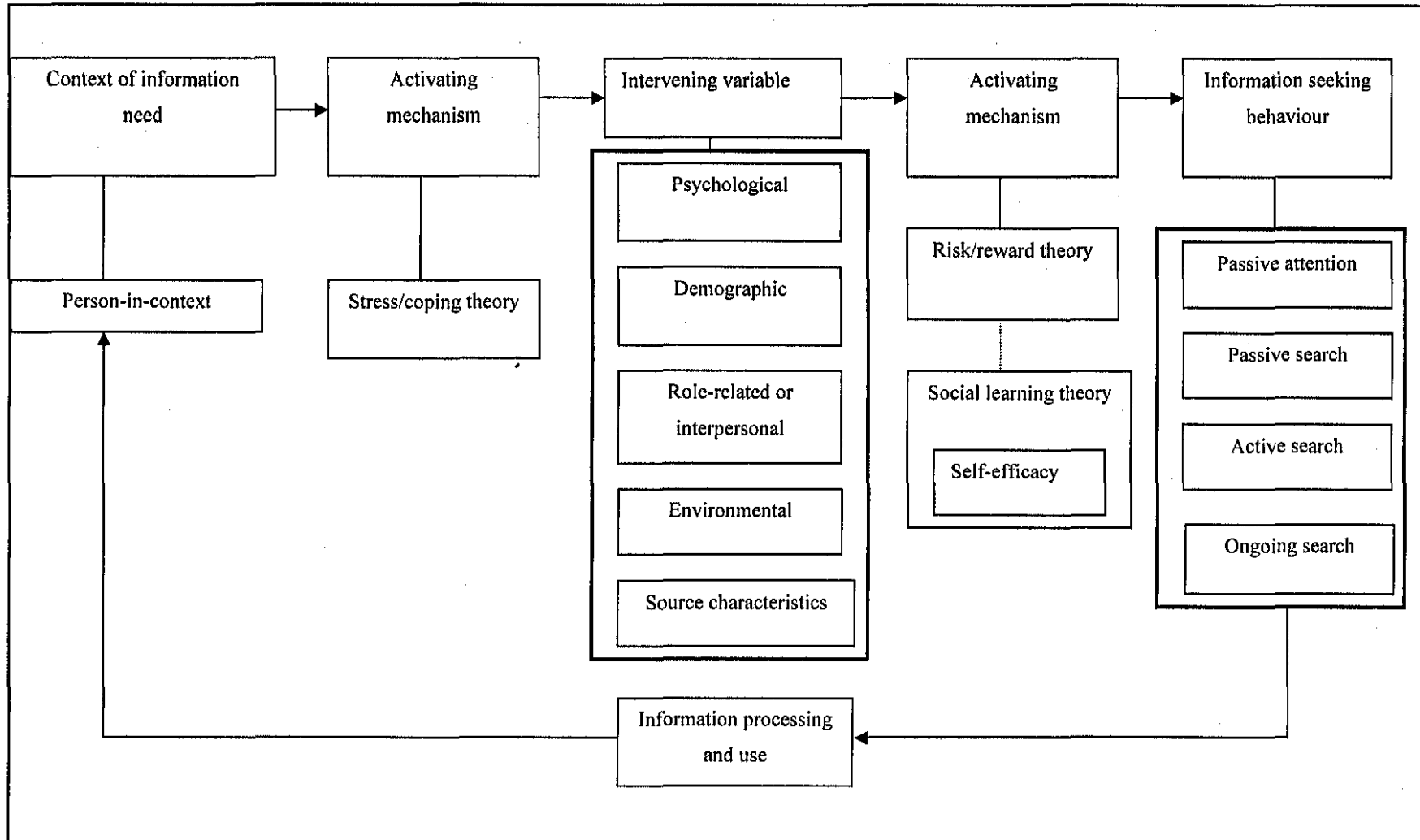
The model consists of concepts that need to be clarified in order to understand the relevance of the model to the study.

4.4.1 Information needs

In general terms the word "need" can be described as: "a fact of or feeling of the lack of something" (Collins Dictionary of the English language 1979). It can also be seen as "that which a human should have to function effectively" (Kaniki 2001:190). Needs can thus be seen to be either: physical, social, affective, economic or cognitive.

Van Lill (2000) observes that in order to satisfy an existing human need, information becomes a need. Belkin, Oddy and Brooks (1982) however disagree postulating that an information need does not equal a need. It should rather be seen as a method to solve problems. A problem is seen as an inadequate state of knowledge, or to use the term coined by them, an Anomalous State of Knowledge (ASK). Information seeking is used to resolve the "inadequacy" which can manifest itself as a gap, lack, uncertainty or incoherence. According to this theory the process of becoming informed is reached in a series of stages. Cole in Ikoja-Odongo (2002) describes the stages as that of an individual being confronted with a problematic situation. This leads to the realisation of a gap/anomaly in the person's knowledge base, resulting in a feeling of uncertainty. The gap is resolved by the intervention of an outsider or intermediary who provides the needed information.

Dervin and Nilan (1986) explain that an information need arises from a certain gap in an individual's knowledge i.e. the individual's "internal sense has "run out"" (1986:21). A gap originates from a variety of causes like differences in time, place, observation, personal and cultural assumptions and stories, and so on (Dervin 1999). To fill the gap new sense must be created. Modulating the process they named it SITUATION-GAP-USE, whereby the "sense-maker" is stopped by a situation, whereby forward movement is hampered by the gap. To overcome the gap the sense-maker then has the potential to use whatever mechanism is at their disposal. Typically the gaps are postulated as questions in the mind of the sense-maker.

Several efforts have been made to categorise information needs. Citing MacKay, Taylor (1968:181) describes an individual with an information need as having "a

certain incompleteness in his picture of the world – an inadequacy in what we might call his 'state of readiness' to interact purposefully with the world around him". This "inadequacy" led Taylor to discern four levels of information needs:

- *The visceral need* that is an existing need, either on a conscious or unconscious level, that is still unexpressed. It can manifest itself in the form of an "unease", which has the potential to develop into action as more information becomes available.

- *The conscious need* that is expressed but rather vaguely, ambiguously and indecisively. By communicating the need it might be hoped that clarity can be gained.

- *The formalised need.* The need is formally stated as a rational statement.

- *The compromised need* representing the question as eventually posed to an information system.

Devadason and Lingam (1997) distinguish between expressed, unexpressed and dormant information needs. Dormant needs are seen as needs of which a user is still unaware that can be activated by an information service provider. According to Krikelas (1983) unconscious needs do not necessarily lead to eventual action. Smith (1991) classifies information needs as being either general or specific; general information needs being the need for current information on topics of interest, while specific refer to solution finding, problem solving and so on. Van Lill (2000) and Fine (1984) however warns that information should not be seen as a need in itself, but rather a construct or tool used to satisfy primary human needs.

Both Kulthau (1991) and Kebede (2000) agree that satisfying information needs is a dynamic process where absorbed knowledge can lead to renewed information needs. Cognisance should be taken of the fact that information can be differently interpreted and meanings assigned to it by each individual, depending on their specific need. In this respect Kebede (2000) refers to the content and non-content aspects of information. The content aspects of information are related to facts, data, claims, concepts or conceptual structure in order to solve problems. The content is interpreted within the context of the individual information seeker's problem(s) or question(s), which might differ from person to person. Non-content refers to the carrier of the

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information. The need for the appropriate carrier is also a user need that needs to be met. Within a work environment, for example, several factors will influence information needs, be it content or non-content oriented. Lin and Garvey (1972) conclude that factors like the type of work, whether the work is on a basic or applied level, as well as the specific field of discipline within which the work falls will all influence information needs, both on content, as well as non-content level. Paisley (1978) through his study of scientists in their work environment concurs with this opinion by pointing out that the work environment influences the nature and type of information requirements of individuals.

From the perspective of the work environment in which a parliamentarian has to operate, many and varied needs could emerge. In the process of satisfying the needs, or to find solutions for problems posed through the work environment, information is needed. The problems could manifest as decision-making, understanding or gaining insight into a situation, awareness of issues, laws, protocol, rules and regulations, or dealing with problematic situations. Though the information needed in many cases is of a content nature, the non-content or carrier can be as important, as information needs of the parliamentarian are mostly of a very current nature. Thus when a parliamentarian realises a gap, inadequacy or an uncertainty in his knowledge state, his reaction could be two-fold. He could refer to his own memory store (tacit knowledge), or could make use of an external source, be it an individual who knows, or a record containing the needed information (Smith 1991).

4.4.2 Stress/coping theory

Stress and relief can be seen as likely activating mechanisms prompting an individual into action to satisfy a perceived information need. Originating from the field of psychology stress can be defined as: "the physiological and psychological reactions of people exhibited in response to environmental events called 'stressors'" (Louw and Edwards 1997:609). It can also be seen as "any circumstances that threaten or are perceived to threaten one's well-being and that thereby tax one's coping abilities" (Weiten 2001: 530). Louw and Edwards (1997:646) define coping as "any effort, healthy or unhealthy, conscious or unconscious, to prevent, eliminate, or weaken

stressors, or to tolerate their effects in the least harmful way", while Hufmann (2002) sees it as an attempt to manage stress in some effective way.

Lazarus in Schwarzer (n.d) conceives that processes of emotions are composed of three elements, i.e. casual antecedents, mediating processes, and effects. Antecedents concern the person and can consist of variables like commitments and beliefs, or environmental variables like demands or situational constraints. Schwarzer (n.d.) notes a direct relation between perceived social demands and/or environmental conditions and personal coping resources. Individual differences in perceived personal resources make people more, or less, vulnerable to the same demands or conditions, for example the perception of the environment within which the parliamentarian operates, and the information demands made on him/her can differ from individual to individual, depending on their information seeking skills, as well as the resources available to the parliamentarian.

Mediating processes between the cognitive appraisal of the situational demands and personal coping efforts, aim at focusing on the problem and emotions. Kleiber *et al* in Wilson and Walsh (1996) describe problem-focus coping as "efforts to change the actual circumstances of an adaptational encounter" while emotion-focused coping is seen as "cognitive activities that do not alter the relationship with the environment but do alter the way in which the person-environment relationship is perceived" (Wilson and Walsh 1996:5). Van Zuuren and Wolfs in Wilson and Walsh (1996) determine a high correlation between 'monitoring' (i.e. information seeking) and problem-focused coping.

According to Schwarzer (n.d.) immediate effects are brought about by stress experiences and coping results, for example psychological wellbeing, somatic health or social functioning.

4.4.3 Intervening variables

Individuals with different personality traits react differently to stressful situations, and in many cases stress-related illnesses can de directly correlated with the way in which an individual personally perceives and interprets events (Berry 1998). Factors like

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internal and external locus of control can equally play a role in coping with stressful situations, like the pressure to participate meaningfully in parliamentary debates without being well informed, as Eliot, Chatrand and Harkins in Berry (1998) found that individuals with a strong internal locus of control cope better in a stress-related job situation than those with an external locus of control. As individuals vary to the extent in which they react to internal stressors it might provide an explanation why some react more actively than other. However, this personality is not always the only determining factor in the coping process. Several other factors can also influence the decision to act or not to react, like motivation, frustration and so on.

In Wilson's (Wilson 1981) initial model describing information-seeking behaviour he identifies three sets of barriers (also referred to as intervening variables), i.e. personal barriers, social or role related barriers, and environmental barriers. Wilson (1997) expands on the variety of variables that can influence the decision of the individual to take coping mechanisms in reaction to a stressor experienced. His list includes the following:

a) Psychological variables
b) Demographic variables
c) Role related/interpersonal variables
d) Environmental variables
e) Source characteristics (Wilson 1997)

a) Psychological variables

Cognitive appraisal and interpretation of situations differs from individual to individual. Lazarus in Halonen and Santrock (1996:88) defines cognitive appraisal as "individuals' interpretation of events in their lives as harmful, threatening, or challenging, and their determination of whether they have the resources to effectively cope with events". Appraisal is done in two phases, i.e. primary and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal determines the harm, loss or threat or the challenge to be overcome, while secondary appraisal evaluates the resources available and how to effectively cope with the event. In a study done by Thapisa (1996) amongst parliamentarians in Botswana he found that they were constantly confronted with situations where information was not available when important decisions were to be

taken, causing great embarrassment when having to report back to Constituents. Parliamentarians reported that in the event of information lacking they have learned to depend on the "grapevine".

Wilson (1997) identifies the notion of cognitive dissonance as a motivational factor. According to Festinger in Berry (1998) individuals constantly engage in cognitive evaluation, using either objective or subjective criteria to evaluate their thoughts and opinions. Cognitive dissonance relates to an inconsistency that occurs in the cognitive structure (i.e. opinions or beliefs) of an individual, causing tension. The greater the dissonance the more tension is created, motivating action in order to alleviate the tension. The feeling of dissonance can be eliminated by reducing the importance of the dissonance, acquiring new beliefs that change the balance, or removing the conflicting attitude or behaviour (Cognitive Dissonance n.d.). This theory is especially applicable to the information-seeking behaviour of parliamentarians as it applies to all situations requiring decision-making and problem solving.

Emotion is described as "a feeling state with physical, psychological and expressive or social aspects" (Nash, Stoch and Harper 1990:237). Experiencing a stressful situation like needing information at a very short notice often results in the display of negative emotions, like anger or fear. Halonen and Santrock (1996) describe emotions as feelings that involve a mixture of physiological arousal, conscious experience, and overt behaviour. The behaviour could either be of a positive or a negative nature. Negative behaviour does not only influence the individual's own behaviour but also his/her social relations, and thus also the ability to make rational decisions. The more positive the emotions, the more likely that the individual will freely use his/her own resources to solve problems.

Studies reported in Wilson (1997) show a clear correlation between an individual's knowledge base and his/her information-seeking behaviour. In the study done by Bettman and Park it was indicated that the higher the knowledge base the less the inclination to search for information. This was confirmed by a study done by Radecki and Jaccard in Wilson (1997). Hoyer and MacInnes (1997) indicate that this is the result of more knowledge stored in memory, as well as the fact that they know how to evade irrelevant information and concentrate on relevancy. MacInnes and Jaworski in

Wilson (1997) posit that a more knowledgeable individual has a much better ability to encode information, making the assimilation of information an easier process than for those without a high degree of knowledge. Radecki and Jaccard in Wilson (1997) indicate that an individual's perception of his/her own knowledge is influenced by that of a friend's knowledge. The study also found that the more important an individual deems a topic, the more the possibility exists that they deem themselves as knowledgeable on the topic, while an individual, who perceives him/herself as having less knowledge, is more likely to search more for information. This was confirmed by Hoyer and MacInnes (1997). However Blake (1983) points out that lack of information skills, i.e. the knowledge to use indices, knowledge of appropriate information sources and of using bibliographies, often forms a barrier in searching for information.

The reception of a message is often impaired by psychological noise (Schiffman and Kunak 2000). This can be the result of a physical "noise" like the pounding of a hammer, traffic noise or on a more subtle level like cluttering of information, small print, daydreaming or stress. To overcome this senders often make use of the principle of redundancy, where the same information is repeatedly provided. Wilkie (1994) warns that this can lead to an overload of information, leading to confusion that can result in bad decision-making, or the ignoring of some information. This is confirmed by Louden and Della Britta (1993) adding that individuals experiencing information overload may fall back on simplifying "rules of thumb" to manage decisions. Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999) sounds a warning that a balance needs to be found between enough information on a wide variety of subjects and information overload, as Parliamentarians reportedly experience problems in selecting and retrieving relevant information from the mass of information sources and the wide variety of formats in which information is currently presented.

b) Demographic variables

Demographic variables can include things like age, gender issues, language preferences, occupation, education, and so on. Age can be seen as a determining factor in the preference of specific information source formats, as familiarity plays a big role in the ultimate choice. Membry and Adcock (1999), for example, found that

younger more technologically advanced parliamentarians showed a higher preference for digital information, than their older counterparts. Hoyer and MacInnes (1997) report a direct correlation between old age and the decline in certain cognitive skills, resulting in a reduced ability to process information. Old age can also be ascribed to the fact that older individuals spent more time processing information and making accurate decisions.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) and Wilkie (1994) point out that a close link exists among the demographic variables of education, occupation and income. Higher education leads to higher income and high-level occupations. In a study done on the media preferences based on different income, education and occupation levels a high preference for visual information showed for the lower levels, while newspaper reading was most preferred by those with high levels of the three denominators.

Hoyer and MacInnes (1997) maintain that within cultures gender roles are predetermined and inculcated from an early age. With the male normally seen as the dominant figure, and women more as caregivers, this influenced information needs. Increasing changes in society however, has to a large extent erased stereotyping with both genders moving into the domain previously ascribed to the opposite gender. Despite the changes Novello in Hoyer and MacInnes (1997) finds that males are still more sensitive to personally relevant information, while females prefer both personally relevant information and information relevant to others.

Communication between individuals is attained through written and spoken languages. Wilkie (1994) points out that: "within a given culture, language serves to provide continuity and an opportunity for consensus to emerge" (1994:318). According to him language allows for the existence of shared concepts with others within our culture. Cross-cultural barriers, however, exist because of language differences, sometimes leading to aggravating and embarrassing situations.

Tyler in Wilkie defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society" (Wilkie 1994:311). Wilkie (1994) distinguishes between external, material culture that refers to the tangible objects of our world, and internal, mental culture that

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refers to the ideas and points of view shared by the majority of the members of a society. This can include our knowledge systems, belief and value systems and the social normative systems. Cultural differences lead to different experiences in life-style, events, norms and customs. In a study reported in Hoyer and MacInnes (1997) culture had a big influence on the process of decision-making. It was found that different cultures attached a different value to the information at hand, based on their cultural framework. In the multi-cultural South African environment culture can thus form a huge barrier in the way information is interpreted and applied.

Language use, especially in a multi-linguistic environment like South Africa with eleven national languages, can pose a serious barrier to information seeking in both the written as well as the spoken form. A dearth of printed information sources available in all the languages spoken in the country potentially forms a barrier to an individual non-conversant in those languages (Chakava 1998). The majority of sources are available either in English or Afrikaans, with minimal output in the other languages.

c) Social/interpersonal variables

Wilson (1997) maintains that interpersonal problems arise where information is to be gained through a person or where the information source is a person. According to Halonen and Santrock (1996) pre-judgment of a person and their ability to be of assistance can jeopardise access to information. The way in which the information is provided can also create negative reactions, for example, by giving destructive advice or providing it in an authoritative, overbearing manner. Studies done by Thapisa (1996), Kimbunga (1996), and Orton, Marcella and Baxter (2000) shows that parliamentarians rely heavily on individuals to provide them with information. Any interpersonal clashes could result in non- or misinformation.

d) Environmental variables

The complexity of the task which requires information, as well as the environment, influences information seeking. The environment can be internally situated, or external. Internal environmental variables could encompass internal stress factors

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related to conflict, frustration and overload (Halonen and Santrock 1996). Fear of failure is also a strong internal factor. External factors, like a volatile environment, could lead to more information scanning in an effort to cope (Choo 2001).

e) Source characteristics

Selection and use of sources is influenced by the amount of time and effort to locate, contact and interact with them (Choo 2001). Choo identifies 3 different kinds of effort that could play a vital role in the eventual preference: i.e. physical effort to obtain the source, intellectual effort involved in finding the source, and the psychological effort, for example to deal with an unfamiliar or unpleasant source.

Wilson in Choo (2001) argues that a feeling of achievement concerning the use of a specific source, ultimately leads to continual use thereof, while the lack of confidence in dealing with a source leads to non-use. Lecki, Pettigrew and Sylvian (1996) concur and suggest that familiarity with a source, as well as proven success in finding information in it, is more likely to compel a user to consult it again. A preference for a specific packaging format was also identified as a possible barrier, but they cautioned that preference for certain packaging formats was in many cases purpose related, and could thus vary accordingly.

It can therefore be assumed that the major factors determining the use of specific information would be perceived accessibility and quality of the sources. Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvian (1996) in addition suggest that timeliness could be considered as a very important variable, as it is in many cases important that information be available immediately. Any time delay decreases the impact and usefulness of the source. This is especially true in the case of parliamentarians, as access to timely information is at the crux of their business.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) add that perceived credibility of sources influences choice. According to them word-of-mouth is perceived as an extremely effective source of information, as it is perceived as highly credible since the disseminator of the information is perceived as not standing to gain from it. However, the authors also warn that the objectivity of the person disseminating the information should not

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be taken for granted. Amongst more formal information sources not-for-profit sources are perceived more credible than those produced for profit. Formal sources like reports and newspaper articles are perceived to be much more credible than commercial sources, as they are perceived to be more objective (Schiffman and Kanuk (2000).

4.4.4 Risk/reward theory

Any occupation carries its own risks and rewards, be it financial, physical or psychological. Murray in Wilson (1997) correlated the amount and nature of risk with the amount of information seeking activity – the higher the risk the more information will be sought. He also correlates high risk with high reward. This is in line with Banneburg's (1994) observation concerning the urgency in information-seeking of parliamentarians, as their survival as representative depends on it.

Loudon and Della Bitta (1993) distinguish 5 types of risk, i.e. monetary/financial risk, functional/performance risk, physical risk, social risk and psychological risk. Each of these separately or in combination can be seen as an activator for taking action. The authors explain that risk can be reduced by acquiring information that will reduce uncertainty or the perceived consequences of a decision.

4.4.5 Social cognitive theory

The Social Cognitive Learning theory of Bandura concerns the learning process by observation and modeling of behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of others (Social Learning Theory n.d). Bandura claims that by observing others' behaviour new approaches to a task are laid down in memory. By encoding this information when required, it can spur the observer into action by applying the knowledge gained by the process of observation or modeling (Social Learning Theory n.d). From an information viewpoint this could be related to an individual observing information searching techniques within a library, for example, how to use the computerized cataloguing system, and then applying the knowledge in their own search.

Closely related to the social cognitive theory is the development of self-efficacy which is a belief in oneself that a situation can be mastered and a positive outcome procured. According to Halonen and Santrock (1996) self-efficacy influences behaviour in a whole spectrum of circumstances ranging from solving problems to going on diet. How much effort is put into seeking solutions, the length of time spent on searching and the amount of stress experienced in the event is all directly related to the individual's self-efficacy.

4.4.6 Information-seeking behaviour

Studies in information-seeking behaviour stem from the concern with understanding how people use information in their work environment. Krikelas (1983) observes that an information need is perceived within the context of an individual's environment. The individual recognises an inadequacy in his/her knowledge that needs to be resolved to be able to deal with a problem. The effort to satisfy the perceived need results in information-seeking behaviour. Wilson (2000) concurs, adding that in the process of seeking, a variety of information systems, be it manual or computer-based, can be interrogated. Hayden (n.d.) observes that the information-seeking process is concluded once the needed information has been obtained.

Several models have been proposed in attempts to describe the information seeking patterns followed by individuals in satisfying an information need. Ellis (1989) described the features of his model, in terms of staring, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting. He warns that the features not necessarily follow one another in sequence. Kulthau (1991) seeks to explain information- seeking in terms of six stages i.e. initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection and presentation, with each of these stages affected by three realms, i.e. affections (feelings), cognition (thoughts) or the physical (actions). Her model implies both active participation in the information seeking process, as well as a growth process whereby an individual's knowledge is increased as a result of the interaction with information. Closely resembling Kulthau's model is the Big Six Skills model as proposed by Eisenberg and Berkowitz in Hayden (n.d). Contradicting Kulthau's linear approach, all six skills need to be present, but the order of the stages differs as the search progresses. The six steps are identified as:

- Task definition where the information need is determined. Poor conceptualization of the problem often results in ineffective information seeking.

- Information seeking strategies concern decision-making as the most appropriate sources for solving the problem. Sources could include human resources, information resources or any other resources.

- Location and access is the implementation of the information seeking strategy. This task quite often requires the searcher to possess specific skills e.g. how to use a book, catalogue, and so on. However Eisenberg and Berkowitz advocate that the ideal would be for any information searcher to rather obtain general problem-solving skills than specific skills as it allows application thereof in the utilisation of new information sources.

- Use of information. Once retrieved the users' skills can be employed to utilise the information

- Synthesis: By applying all information that has been retrieved it can be presented in a repackaged format. In this process information becomes knowledge.

- Evaluation assesses the process, and concludes with the success or failure of the effort. Failure often results in perpetuating the process (Eisenberg and Berkowitz in Hayden n.d.).

Hayden (n.d.) concludes that non-linear information seeking models best depict information seeking patterns in both manual and computer-driven information environments, as with the growth of knowledge on specific topics, new sources and avenues are introduced that must be explored. Within the parliamentary environment information needs are common occurrences to be satisfied as effectively as possible. The level of information seeking skills will greatly influence both the source(s)/system(s) used, as well as how they are utilised, in order to affect a positive outcome to problem solving.

4.4.7 Information searching process

Both Wilson's and Ellis's model take into account that information seeking is an

active process (Wilson and Walsh 1996). By scouring the literature Wilson and Walsh (1996) identifies the following 'modes' of searching:

- *Passive attention* implying that no intentional information seeking takes place. Instead information is acquired unconsciously through listening to the radio or watching television.

- *Passive search*. This is also an unintentional search action leading to the acquisition of information that is relevant to what is needed by the individual.

- *Active search* is an intentional action seeking for specific information, like a topic that is debated in parliament, or information needed to write a research report.

- *Ongoing search* comprises an occasional search action to expand on existing knowledge, and which can be of assistance in future.

Choo, Detlor and Turnbull (2000) identify four modes used specifically in organisations that can be used to explain the searching and acquisitions process. Closely related to actions in the search processes identified by Wilson and Walsh (1996) they call the modes undirected viewing, conditioned viewing, informal search and formal search. Choo, Detlor and Turnbull (2000) argue that these modes of searching can also be applied to searching on the World Wide Web (WWW).

With directed viewing the user is exposed to information, with no need in mind. This is mainly an exploration exercise that can involve a wide range of information sources that might or might not be of relevance. According to Turnbull (n.d) this information searching and acquisition is based on previous experience and acquisition.

Conditioned viewing entails viewing information on selected topics. This is still not an active search but mainly a browsing action noticing the sources' importance to the topic of interest (Turnbull n.d).

Informal searching entails an active search for information to broaden and deepen knowledge on a specific topic. This is an unstructured effort to determine whether action is needed by an organisation (Choo, Detlor and Turnbull 2000).

Formal searching becomes a planned, structured and deliberate action to obtain the needed information on a topic or issue.

Aguilar in Turnbull (n.d) pointed out that in a real world situation the possibility exists that information searching cannot always be done using formal searching, as the sources to do so might not always be available or accessible, and that by using all four modes the individual can stay informed.

4.4.8   Information processing and use

Wilson (1997) pointed out that this is a topic that is currently not well researched – a viewpoint Ikoja-Odongo (2002) concurs with.

The study of information use is mainly concerned with the behaviour and experiences of users with information channels. Added to this can also be the environment in which the information is used (Menzel in Crawford 1978).

Salasin and Cedar (1985) suggests that the value of information can only be determined by the characteristics of the information as well as the context(s) in which it is being used. Characteristics identified include: relevance, timeliness, comprehensiveness, authoritativeness, specificability, locatability, acquirability and usability (1985:95). Taking the attributes into account Paisley (1968) and Hall (1981) concludes that the value of information can be influenced by several factors, for example:

- the reason for using the information, be it for the purpose of learning, decision-making , problem solving, verification, and so on,
- the specific characteristics of the individual, whether the preference is for complex or simple information and the ability to differentiate and label information,
- social and organizational factors like work organization, characteristics of the work team, and the professional group to whom the individuals belong. Allen (1969) in his overview concurred with this view, explaining how organizational factors, like the accessibility of an information channel, idea

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generating groups, etc., influences the use and dissemination of information in an organization,

- the task requirements, be it a recurring requirement or just an episodic one.

4.4.9 Uses and gratification theory

Fourie (2001) posits that the uses and gratification theory is based on the needs of users and the gratification that they can derive from using media. Questions such as What do people do with media? What do they use media for? and What do they get from their media use? provides insight into the needs and gratification.

According to Blumler and Katz in Uses and Gratification theory (n.d.) the theory implies active participation by the user in choosing and using the media. Media usage is seen as goal oriented as it is assumed that the media seeker seeks out a media source that best fulfills the user's own needs. Alternative choices to satisfy the need are assumed.

Fiske (1991) suggests that the audience attaches his/her own meaning to a message. This interpretation is not necessarily the message intended by the sender, different users could use the same media to satisfy different needs. McQuile and Blumler in Uses and Gratification theory (2002) add that the extent of the gratification received from a message is dependent on the cultural and social origins of the needs of the user. Herzog in Luo (2002:2) describes gratification as the "specific dimensions of usage satisfaction".

Luo (2002) describes the theory as relevant to the study of user's behaviour when using the Web. According to him three components of the Uses and Gratification theory form the basis in a study of Web searching, i.e. entertainment, informativeness and irritation. Entertainment concerns the extent to which the web media contributes to the fun and entertainment of the user, while informativeness can be defined as "the extent to which the Web provides the user with resourceful and helpful information" (Luo 2002:3). Since time and space barriers are non-existent on the Web it offers the user instant and insightful content. Irritation derives from the "messiness" or irritation

the user experiences when surfing the Web. Irritation can lead to annoyance or reduction in use by the user.

4.4.10 User-in-context

Gaslikova describes information seeking in context as: information seeking "in a concrete situation wherein the information lack appears and the process of its acquisition is realised" (1999:1).

User studies has until recently concentrated on the individual within his context. Paisley (1968) in one of the earliest studies showed the importance of context within which information seeking takes place. Gaslikova (1999) explains that contextual parameters can vary widely, and can include things like time and place of appearance of information need, time constraints when seeking for information, types of participants in the information seeking process, the purpose of information seeking, the task for which the information is needed, the process and situations of information seeking, and so on. Within collaborative information seeking in an organisation Dervin in Prekop, identifies context as "the collection of events, histories, culture, knowledge and understanding which exist together at a point in time" (Prekop, 2002:535).

Knowledge of context within which the user seeks for information influences the development of information systems, specifically computerised information retrieval systems. Gaslikova (1999) suggests that the Information Retrieval (IR) system can either be a rigid system where information processing forms the major component, and in which the user and his needs are not considered as a component of the system and context is not considered. Alternatively the IR system includes the user as an active component, and information seeking is based on user needs. The system takes into account its context of employment, conditions, situations, types of users and the different purposes for which it can be used. Studies done by White, Jose, and Ruthven (2003) and Debowski (2001) suggest that novice and inexperienced users of a computerised information system can experience difficulty in formulating a search strategy, and tracing and retrieving information related to a real information need. Debowski (2001) maintains that designers of information systems need to take

cognisance of the context in which an information search takes place, especially from the viewpoint of inexperience, as it affects the likelihood of retaining the use of the service. Carol and Olson in Debowski (2001) postulate that in order to manage in a complex decision-making process many strategies are employed by the searcher to break it down into manageable proportions, often resulting in a lower quality of search outcomes. Bandura and Payne *et al* in Debowski (2001) posit that a task may be altered from its original form to reduce complexity and retrieve more limited results from the IR system. Debowski (2001) warns that this minimisation of search focus can lead to a significant decline in search quality and outcome.

4.5 Application of the model to the current study

Gaining insight into the characteristics and work environment of the parliamentarian in the democratic South Africa can be of great value in determining the relevance of this model to the current study.

4.5.1 Background to the information needs of parliamentarians

In South African, as in most other democracies, parliamentarians come from varying social, cultural and educational backgrounds. Culturally, all the different cultures, i.e. Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloureds are represented, bringing with them a variety of different backgrounds (Burger 2002). Educational backgrounds range from Gr. 10 to individuals with postgraduate qualifications. Education ranges from attending the most highly accredited educational institutions, to rural schools with only the most rudimentary equipment, and under–trained teaching staff available. Socially people from all walks of life, and professions, are represented.

Orton, Marcella and Baxter (2000) posit that parliamentarians are arguably the most influential decision-makers in any society. This implies the necessity of access to a good quality of information, as this impacts directly upon the decision making process. Access to and utilisation of information forms an integral part of the daily activities of parliamentarians. Alemna and Skouby (2000) warn that without information the elected officials can make costly and at times dangerous decisions, having an impact on the nation as a whole. A challenging, and often hostile work

environment faces the parliamentarian on a daily basis. During parliamentary sessions the parliamentarian is expected to participate fully in debates, interpellations, Bill preparation, making of speeches, attending committee and other meetings, communicating with constituents, and attending to administrative obligations (Serema 1999). All of these require an informed mind, making it imperative for the parliamentarian to actively seek out information through an applicable information channel or source. Failing to do so can result in failure to participate, which in due course can lead to failure to be re-elected.

Information provided must be timely, accurate and relevant to be used to scrutinize government policy or to contribute towards the promulgation of a piece of legislation (Kimbunga 1996). He maintains that parliamentarians, especially those form third world countries need to take heed of the political and social developments taking place world-wide, but also specifically from the countries closely related to their own economical, societal and political arena. He warns that failure to do so could lead to wrong and dangerous decisions, detrimental to good political practices.

4.5.2 Model application

According to Robinson and Hyde (1998) information is the major contributor to the legislative processes. The need for information is stressed by many authors (Kimbunga 1996; Brian 1997a; Tanfield 1998; Serema 1999). Determining their information needs within the context of.their work environment is thus an important step in the information cycle. Within the context of the working environment of the parliamentarian information acts as a catalyst in clearing uncertainty in the mind of the inquirer, or as Dervin and Nilan (1986) advocate to "make sense". Building on existing knowledge, new insights are gained that can be used to perform optimally in the decision making process confronting the parliamentarian on a daily basis. In the process of "sense-making" information can be seen as:

- a commodity to be acquired by whatever means, containing a message that needs to be interpreted and acted upon,

- an active *interpretation of intentional and unintentional data available within* the immediate environment of the parliamentarian,

- available in knowledge representators, such as print or digital formats, to be utilised when the need arises
- an ongoing communication process of continual learning, and gaining of new insights to be utilised when needed.

Getting access to timely and accurate information and analysis on a variety of topics can create stress, especially due to the extremely busy and varied programme of the parliamentarians (Alemna and Skouby 2000). Stress can be induced by the perceived lack of information sources or systems to assist during a critical period or by the lack of skills to seek information effectively. In the process of coping with stressors parliamentarians can be confronted with a variety of barriers. Barriers can present themselves in a variety of forms, be it psychological, physical, or emotional. Even the physical characteristics of an information source can be perceived as a barrier. The identification of possible barriers confronting South African parliamentarians can contribute towards finding solutions in terms of the levels of information service delivery and agreeable information formats. Personal characteristics, social and educational background, exposure to information-seeking can all be determinants of success or failure. As barriers can prevent a message from reaching the receiver, they can impact on the receiver's ability to respond to it. Effective responses to a communication results in coping with a stressful situation.

Effective risk management decreases the risk of failure. As failure potentially can have a huge impact on the social, financial, personal, and performance aspects of a parliamentarian's life, risks need to be identified and managed. Risk-taking is part of the work environment within which parliamentarians operate, many of which can be avoided by accessing and utilizing information timeously. Louden and Della Britta (1993) advocate that information acquisition can reduce existing or perceived risk. Rewards for proving your ability to participate effectively, by either re-election or attaining a more elevated position within the parliamentary hierarchy, can be a powerful activating mechanism to continually search, and utilise information, be it purposefully or unintentionally. The Uses and Gratification theory advocates that rewards do not necessarily have to be of a material kind, but can also be derived from

emotions like a raised self-esteem, a feeling of contentment upon finding the correct information and so on.

According to Bandura in Social Cognitive Theory n.d. information seeking skills can be learnt through the process of observation and application. Parliamentarians can learn many information-seeking skills by observing the behaviour of their peers, for example, when they are surfing the Internet for information, their activities can be observed, copied and applied. The feeling of achievement results in higher self-esteem. A strong correlation can be found between and individual's confidence in his ability to complete an information seeking task, and the time and effort spent on the actual task. The feeling of mastery of a difficult skill, be it self-taught or through training can activate more active information seeking strategies in the parliamentarians.

The information seeking process can be either active or passive. Information seeking does not always imply a purposeful activity, but can also take place unintentionally. Information messages are communicated to society in every possible way, ranging from logos on every conceivable item, billboards, fliers, electronic messages, print, word-of-mouth, to satellite transmissions of events occurring worldwide. Information can be internalised unintentionally to be retrieved when needed. Though the environment of the parliamentarian advocates active, intentional participation in the searching process, this process can include interrogating the mind for passively received information. Through determining information seeking patterns, be it a formal print-based system or an electronic Information Retrieval (IR) system, information systems can be adapted to suit the behavioural patterns. A service designed for easy utilisation by their clients can impact positively on the utilisation of the system.

Contextual settings, within which an information need arises, form an integral part of the design and development of applicable information service delivery models. Context provides a setting and a perceived outcome on which information systems can base their services.

4.6 Critique of the model

Given the time constraints within which the parliamentarians operate the model does not allow for the utilization of a third party as an information mediator in the information acquisition process. The third party operates as a go-between between the parliamentarian with his information need and the information source, system or channel utilized to acquire and access the information. In the critique of the information-seeking models Gross (2001:1) comes to the conclusion that: "the majority of these models assume that individuals seek information and interact with information systems in response to their own, self-generated needs. While these models do recognize that people go to other people as potential resource when in pursuit of information, the models fail to recognize that the default behaviour, when the person doesn't have the answer, doesn't have to be an interaction with information providing objects, organizations or systems. Instead the person seeking information may ask someone to find the answer for them" .

4.7 Summary

Information-seeking behaviour can best be understood if all concepts are clearly understood within a specific context. Contextual clarification provides the basis for mutual understanding of the foundation for any study. A model provides the framework within which study takes place and determines the focus point and results gained. The model by Wilson was presented and conceptually clarified and its relevance to the study determined. The following chapter will provide insight into the research methodology followed to conduct the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to conduct the study. The description of the methodology provides insight into the methods followed, as well as the problems experienced during the research. Since the study is based on social research, the survey method was used.

The chapter describes the design of the research, and the methods used to obtain, process and analyse the data. As two different questionnaires were used to elicit responses both are described in detail to provided insight into its construction, as well as the kind of information the questionnaire aimed at obtaining. As the study population is a very difficult group to obtain information from, the problems experienced in the research process are discussed.

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which parliamentarians were able to retrieve, access and utilise the information source available to them. Parliament is considered to be an information intensive work environment that demands that its members be well informed in order to contribute meaningfully to the parliamentary activities. Their ability to identify and utilise information sources is an important aspect of their effective participation in parliamentary proceedings and activities.

The study also aimed at determining the role of the parliamentary library as a primary information source available to parliamentarians within their work environment, as well as how it envisages its future role in the technological age. Parliamentary libraries are expected to make a meaningful contribution towards fulfilling the information needs of the parliamentarians. However, with the availability of many other information sources, especially those in electronic and digital formats, it is important for the libraries to review their roles and functions to assure their viability.

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Given the information-poor environment many parliamentarians experienced during their youth the study furthermore intended to find out which specific sources they prefer and use. A major focus area was to determine the extent to which electronic information sources such as the Internet and e-libraries were used. Factors that hampered access and utilisation of electronic sources were also investigated.

5.2 Study population

According to Neuman (2003) the population used in a research project refers to the largest body of individuals being researched. Maxfield and Babbie (1998:208) see it as "that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected", while Busha and Harter (1980:57) describe a study population as "a set or objects that have at least one characteristic in common". Calder in Research Design (1979) explains that in order to access a population it needs to be explicitly and unambiguously defined. Once explicitly defined, leaving no doubt in mind as to who the population is, it becomes important to determine if individual members of this population group are identifiable.

The study targeted two different populations. For the survey amongst the parliamentarians the population consisted of the parliamentarians of all ten legislatures. No sampling was used as it became clear during the preparations for the survey that difficulty might be experienced in getting the parliamentarians to respond to the questionnaires. It was decided in order to get the widest possible response all parliamentarians be targeted. According to Burger (2002) parliamentarians are elected to represent the electorate on a system of party representation. During elections names of suitable candidates are published on a party list, but voting is done for the party and not for a specific candidate. After the elections, specific candidates are given/offered appropriate positions in Parliament or in the respective Provincial Legislatures. As the government is striving towards gender and race equality positions are appropriated accordingly. Currently at least 33% of the representatives are women. Parliamentarians attend either the National Assembly meetings in Cape Town or the Provincial Legislative meetings in their respective legislative capitals.

Any person over the age of eighteen is eligible to be elected as a representative with no age restriction on retirement. No educational or professional limits are set, thus anybody regardless of educational level is likely to be put on the party lists.

For the survey concerning the parliamentary libraries the chief librarians of all the parliamentary libraries in South Africa were targeted.

5.3 Research design and method

Selitz in Chailla (2001:109) describes research design as "the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose as economically as possible. A research design should provide a plan that specifies how the research is going to be executed in such a way that it answers the research questions".

Research design can be seen as the glue that keeps the research project together. Its purpose is to structure the research and to show all the major parts of the research project.

According to Maxfield and Babbie (1998) the design has two major aspects, i.e. firstly, specifying exactly what is to be determined and secondly to determine the best way to do exactly that. When designing a research it needs to be specific enough to provide the needed answer, yet at the same time it needs to be flexible enough to address complexities and challenges experienced during the study. Hagan (2000) explains that research design should address issues flowing from the problem formulation and other critical issues identified for observation. The design should highlight issues like:

- Who is to be investigated
- What is to be investigated
- Where the study is to be conducted
- What is of importance - past, present or future trends
- Timeframe for the study.

According to Kothari in Chailla (2001) it also takes into consideration the means to obtain information, skills levels of the researchers, objective of the study, and practical issues like time and funding.

Different research designs attempt to answer different types of research problems, and therefore use different combinations of methods and procedures. The kind of measurements, sampling, data-collection and data-analysis differ from study type to study type and is predominantly determined by the research problem, as well as the evidence that is required to address the problem (Babbie and Mouton 1998)

For the purpose of the study the survey method was used. According to Maxfield and Babbie (1998) surveys are ideal methods to use for descriptive, explanatory, exploratory, and applied research. Surveys are directed at groups of respondents with the aim of measuring a variety of variables, testing hypotheses, or creating order from questions concerning respondents' behaviour, experiences, or characteristics (Neuman 2003). This study had as its aim the testing of the behaviour of the respondents, specifically information seeking behaviour. The survey method enabled the researcher to gather data from all the parliamentarians, both in the National Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures, as well as all the parliamentary libraries in South Africa. It allowed the researcher to determine their attitudes towards information sources and channels, as well as opinions about the services offered to them by their parliamentary libraries. At the same time the survey method allowed obtaining the opinions from the parliamentary libraries concerning their services and the users.

5.4 Data collection instruments

To elicit information from both the parliamentarians and the librarians at the parliamentary libraries self-administered questionnaires were used. The reason for the choice was mainly because of the huge distances between each of the parliaments, as well as factors such as difficulty in accessing all prospective respondents during a specific timeframe. Due to their busy work schedules, as well as for security reasons, access to individual parliamentarians within their work environment was virtually impossible.

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In addition to the questionnaires observation was done at the parliamentary library in Cape Town. Informal interviews with the Chief Librarian of the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, the Head of the Research Unit in the Library, the head of the Special Services Unit, contributed to knowledge on the functioning of the Library, new projects planned, as well as problems and frustrations experienced by staff.

Documentary sources were used to review literature on the topic of the study. Mainly secondary sources were used.

5.4.1 The questionnaire

Mailed self-administered questionnaires were used in the study, mainly because it offers the possibility of administering it to a wide geographic area (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). Respondents were scattered throughout all nine provinces. The second reason for this choice was the question of inaccessibility of the parliamentarians, as explained in section 5.4. Neuman (2003) mentions that this method allows the respondent to fill in the questionnaire at his/her convenience and also allows them to check on their own records before sending it back. The fact that the respondent is given enough time can lead to more considered answers. Mailed questionnaires also offer the respondent the feeling of anonymity. It also eliminates interviewer bias effects.

The financial implications also played a role in the decision, as this method is seen as the cheapest type of survey, requiring no field staff, thus no transport and other costs (Hagan 2000).

A final consideration was that it was assumed that the respondents were literate and that their educational level was such that they could complete the questionnaire without researcher assistance. This was an important consideration as it became clear early on that research assistants from outside would not be allowed to conduct the survey personally.

5.4.1.1 Questionnaire design

Two types of questions can be identified, i.e. open-ended (unstructured) or close-ended (structured) questions. In the case of open-ended questions, the respondent provides his/her own answers in the space provided. With close-ended questions, the respondent chooses from a list of answers provided by the researcher (Maxfield and Babbie 1998). Both these question types have advantages and disadvantages aptly described by Neuman (2003).

On the question of the appropriateness of each question type in a questionnaire Lazasfeld in Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:254) suggested the following consideration be taken into account:

- *The objectives of the questionnaire.* Close-ended questions can be asked if a researcher wants to lead the respondent to express an opinion, but open-ended questions are more suitable when the researcher want to determine how a respondent arrived at a particular point.

- *The respondent's level of information about the topic in question.* Open-ended questions can be used to ascertain a lack of information on the part of the respondent. This is not possible with close-ended questions.

- *The extent to which the respondent has thought through the topic.* Open-ended questions are used when the researcher has not yet crystalised their opinions; however by using close-ended questions the respondent might choose an option that is not necessarily their opinion.

- *The ease with which respondents can communicate the content of the answer or the extent to which respondents are motivated to communicate on the topic.* The close-ended question requires minimum effort from the respondent and the response might be better than with open-ended questions requiring some mental input from the respondent.

To counteract the obvious flaws inherent in each question type most questionnaires consist of a mixture of both open-ended and close-ended questions. The questionnaire constructed for the study contained both structured and unstructured questions.

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5.4.1.1.1 Questionnaire for parliamentarians

The questionnaire was constructed in the following order:

Part 1 Personal information
(Items 1 – 7)

This section collected personal information about the respondents, like gender, educational level, political affiliation, position held in party politics, provincial representation, and ability to access Internet.

Part 2 Information needs and searching strategies
(Items 8 – 16)

Questions aimed at gathering information on how, when and why information is needed. It was also important to establish what information is needed. Information was collected about the regularity of information needs, reasons for needing information, search strategies followed, as well as the sources used. Respondents were asked to explain problems concerning electronic sources utilisation.

Part 3 Institutions used to find information
(Items 17 – 23)

The questions aimed at determining what channels parliamentarians use to find information, both on a national level and internationally. Specific questions concerning parliamentary library, and the research section utilisation has been asked to determine whether they play a role at all in information provision to parliamentarians.

5.4.1.1.2 Questionnaire for parliamentary libraries

The questionnaire intended for the parliamentary libraries was constructed as follows:

Part 1 Background information

(Items 1 – 5)

The questions aimed at determining information concerning the establishment of the library, as well as the physical layout of the building. Staff and service structure were also established in this section.

Part 2 Products and services offered by the Library/Research service

(Items 6 – 21)

The kind of services and products offered was established in this section. The aim was to ascertain whether the services/products offered were on par with worldwide trends, and also to determine weaknesses and strengths in the service provision.

Part 3 Developments in automation

(Items 22-29)

The worldwide trend is towards automation of library/research services. This section aimed at establishing the extent to which services had been automated as yet. Internet access, as well as access to electronic databases were investigated.

Part 4 Important developments in Library/Research services in the library

(Item 30)

With this section libraries were required to expand on any recent developments of note that took place or anything new in the pipeline. As it is required from parliamentary libraries to move with the changing times, this section aimed at establishing whether it was indeed happening.

5.4.2 Observation

In order to supplement the self-administered questionnaire for the Parliamentary Libraries, observations were done by the researcher at the Parliamentary Library in Cape Town. The observer made use of the non-participant passive observation

method i.e. the observer did not become part of the environment studied, thus being apart from the subjects. The main function of the observer was merely to record the data (Sarantakos 1998). A checklist was used to gather information. The checklist (Addendum C) guided the research as to observable data. The checklist concentrates on items such as the physical appearance of the building, directions to and inside the library, the inside appearance of the library and collection and service delivery. The data provided more information on issues not covered in the questionnaire, or issues that could be better described once observed firsthand, e.g. the actual service delivery to Parliamentarians, state of collection available for service delivery, whether the atmosphere was conducive, building of relationships with parliamentarians, and the appearance of the library.

5.4.3 Literature review

Neuman (2003) considers the value of literature review to be that of building on, and learning from, already existing knowledge. By sharing results the collective knowledge base is enlarged for the benefit of all scientific research. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) posit that literature review provides the context of the research by showing how it fits into a particular field. The main functions of such a review could be to:

- Identify knowledge gaps and develop a research problem
- Identify issues and variables related to the research topic
- Identify conceptual and operational definitions
- Identify methodologies (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999).

Documentary sources were used to review issues related to parliamentary library services (Chapter 3), parliament and its functioning, democracy and its historical developments worldwide, but also specifically in South Africa (Chapter 2). It was also used to determine the extent of information sources available to parliamentarians in South Africa (Chapter 3).

A major source of information, especially on parliamentary libraries and their functioning, was the conference papers available on the IFLA website, as well as their

regular publications in book form. This provided valuable insight into the latest developments into this specialised information service and proved helpful in benchmarking the South African Parliamentary Library services (Chapter 3).

The Internet was used extensively in the search for documents, and proved helpful in finding materials on a wide range of topics covered in the study.

Annual reports obtained from the Parliamentary Library in Cape Town, as well as a special report obtained from the librarian of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Parliamentary Library proved useful in providing background information on the history, developments and current status of the South African Parliamentary Libraries.

Studies on topics like information-seeking behaviour and information-seeking models (Chapter 4), as well as democracy and South African history were reviewed (Chapter 2).

On their own document sources can't adequately supply all the answers to questions raised through research, and must be seen as complementary to the study, providing the researcher with a theoretical framework for gaining information to form new opinions, judgments or applications of knowledge.

5.5 Pilot study

A pilot study aims at testing instruments for reliability, validity and applicability. Hagan maintains that pre-testing is "a reconnaissance operation or exploratory testing of the instrument using subjects who are similar to the group to be studied" (2000:154). The pilot study assists in clarifying confusions and misunderstandings. It gives the opportunity for critique of the instrument as well as suggestions for enhancing the instrument.

5.5.1 Research questionnaires - parliamentarians

The questions were drafted in consultation with the supervisor of the study. The questionnaire was of a structured nature requiring mainly the ticking of the applicable

option(s), though some questions solicited the respondents' opinions. The questionnaire was pre-tested on twenty parliamentarians of the Western Cape Legislature during March 2002. No major shortcomings were pointed out except for the omission of some minor political parties.

5.5.2 Research questionnaires – parliamentary libraries

The questions were drafted in consultation with the supervisor. This was a semi-structured questionnaire requiring the librarians to provide their views. The questionnaire was pre-tested at the Provincial Parliamentary Library of the Western Cape. No problems were identified.

5.6 Administration of research instruments

5.6.1 The questionnaires for parliamentarians

Permission to do the study was sought from all ten Legislatures in South Africa. Letters were addressed to the Speakers of arliament. Reaction from these Offices varied, from very prompt to having to repeat the request several times. Eventually nine out of the ten Legislatures responded. The Eastern Cape Legislature did not respond at all, despite several efforts to get permission. Once permission was secured the questionnaires were sent to a person appointed by the Speaker to liaise with the researcher (This only applied for the Provincial Legislatures). The National Parliament Office of the Speaker, although giving permission, did not want to be involved in any way. In this case the researcher visited the National Assembly herself, and with the assistance of the Chief Librarian of the Parliamentary Library had the questionnaires delivered through the internal mailing system. A research assistant from the University of Stellenbosch was responsible for follow-up work. Each questionnaire was addressed personally to each parliamentarian, and included a self-addressed return envelope. The questionnaires were distributed through the internal mailing system of each Legislature. The first batch of questionnaires was sent in mid-March 2002 and the last batch in August 2002. Respondents were given a period of three weeks to respond to the questionnaire. Follow-up work was done by way of letters. In the National Assembly the research assistant tried to follow a more direct

approach by contacting parliamentarians individually, but was not allowed to continue by the security staff.

A total of 763 questionnaires were sent out and the response rate was 167 (23%). Although this is considered to be low, this is in line with response rates for similar studies done both nationally and internationally, for example a study done by the Library of Parliament in Cape Town in 1996, initially had a response rate of 12.5%. As it was found to be too low, the study was extended and intensive follow-up work done. This resulted in a final response rate of 20% (Research findings of Library Questionnaire 1997). In a similar study done at the North West Provincial Legislature the return rate was 14%[11]. Thapisa (1996) had a return rate of 27% in his study done in Botswana. A study amongst parliamentarians of the Uganda Parliament was abandoned because of a return rate of 11%[12]. Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999) reported a response rate of 34% in a study done amongst parliamentarians representing the United Kingdom in the European Parliament.

5.6.2 Questionnaire for parliamentary libraries

Questionnaires for each library were included with each batch of questionnaires sent to the parliamentarians. Follow-up work was done with letters. Despite this two libraries did not respond.

5.6.3 The observations

This method was used to compliment the information gained by the questionnaires. The researcher carried out observations during a visit to the Parliamentary Library in Cape Town. Observation was done on the outward appearance of the building and its surroundings, as well as on the inside of the building. Things observed here were the collection, the arrangement of the collection, accessibility of the collection, utilisation of the collection by users, and staff attitude towards users.

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[11] Telephonic interview on 23 March 2002 with the Librarian of the North West Legislative Library,

[12] Information received from Robert Ikoja-Odonga, Lecturer at Kampala University, Uganda, 25 October 2002.

5.7 Data processing and analysis

Depending on the research method chosen the amassed volumes of raw data collected need to be organised, processed and analysed. According to Dane (1990) data organisation involves "designing a system for the accurate storage and retrieval of the information obtained during a research project". For storage and retrieval purposes any number of ways can be used, like using data sheets, computer disks or magnetic tapes. Today, as a rule of thumb collected data is coded, stored, retrieved and analysed using computerised systems (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996).

Sarantakos (1998:330) describes the value of using computerised systems as follows:

- fast processing and analysis of huge amounts of data
- fast completion of complex mathematical/statistical models
- relatively cheap data processing and analysis
- easy handling of enormous amounts of data
- a high level of accuracy
- making sophisticated statistical models accessible to non-statisticians.

5.7.1 Analysis of data from questionnaires

According to Babbie and Mouton (1998:101) the function of data-analysis is to interpret the collected data for "the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect the interests, ideas and theories that initiated the inquiry".

Analysis was done using an Excel spreadsheet to record and store the data, and the Ms Access database was used to extract the information to be analysed. For the purpose of doing the quantitative analysis the variables used were coded numerically. Multivariate analysis, i.e. the explanation of a dependent variable through the use of more than one independent variable, was used.

5.7.2 Analysis of data from observation

The data gathered was categorised based on the following themes: external

appearance of the library building, the inside appearance of the library, staff behaviour in the library, space and seating capacity within the library, guidance to library use and directional signage.

The analysis of the information provided the researcher with the facts and figures needed to interpret the results. This will be reflected in Chapter 6. This allowed for statements to be made on the significance of the findings for both individuals and the community studied. Chapter 7 will refer to these aspects.

5.8 Problems encountered

The study presented many problems and challenges to overcome. A major problem was the non-responsiveness from both the respective offices of the Speakers, as well as the respondents. From the perspective of the relative "seclusion", as well as the geographical dispersion, in which the respondents operate, it presented a very real problem to elicit responses from the respondents. Every effort was made to have follow-up procedures in place, for example, contact people in the provincial legislatures were asked to do some follow-up work, which unfortunately was also not always possible due to their heavy workload. The Speaker's personal sanction of the studies were sought in the hope that it would illicit more responses, and in the case of the National Assembly in Cape Town, a research assistant was employed, only to be deterred from doing personal follow-up work.

Being geographically so dispersed also proved too costly for the researcher to visit each legislature in person, which could have given more insight into the functioning of each specific provincial legislature. This could have led to a much more complete picture.

Within parliamentary libraries the study was also sometimes deemed with some suspicion, and therefore it could have influenced the way in which the questionnaire was answered. Personally contacting the librarians and explaining the reason for the study mostly overcame the problem.

5.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology used in data collection. The survey method was used involving self-administered questionnaires both for the parliamentarians, as well as the parliamentary libraries. The research was supplemented by observations and informal interviews to clarify uncertainties during a visit to the Library of Parliament in Cape Town. The research instruments were determined by the nature of the problem under investigation, research objectives and research questions formulated for the study. The time frame data collection was March to November 2002. Data collected was analysed using MS Excel and MS Access. Some problems were experienced that could influence the quality of the results, but from literature these problems seem to be a common occurrence within the environment in which the study was done. The research findings are presented in chapter six.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to present the results of the data obtained through the surveys conducted among the national and provincial parliamentarians, as well as the parliamentary libraries in South Africa.

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

- explore the various sources and systems used to access information.

- determine if parliamentarians do access traditional information sources such as the parliamentary library services to satisfy their information needs.

- investigate the degree of Internet and e-source utilization in the information gathering process and exploitation process

- investigate the services of the traditional parliamentary library to determine its capacity to provide information and satisfy the information needs of the parliamentarians

- propose a conceptual model for effective parliamentary information services.

The chapter is considered in three sections:

1. The information needs of parliamentarians – both on a national and provincial level

2. The analysis of the functioning of the legislative libraries in South Africa.

3. An observation of the Library of Parliament, Cape Town.

6.2 SECTION ONE: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONNAIRE

6.2.1 Responses from parliamentarians

The results presented in the first section are findings of a survey conducted amongst

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all the parliamentarians in South Africa, with the exception of the Eastern Cape Legislature, from whom permission for the study could not be obtained. The first section focused on personal details of the parliamentarians, the second section established their information needs and information seeking patterns, while the third part represents the institutions that play a role in information provision to the parliamentarians. From the 760 questionnaires sent out 167 were received back, giving a 23% return rate. Since all the study population was covered in the study, and considering the low return rate received from related studies as reported in section 5.6.1, this return rate is considered to be relatively sufficient.

The analysis is done to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What is the educational level of the parliamentarians and how does it influence their choice of information sources?
- Which sources are used by the parliamentarians to satisfy their information needs?
- What information needs do the parliamentarians experience?
- To what extent are electronic sources used in the search for information?
- What other information sources or systems are used to illicit information?

6.2.1.1 Personal information of parliamentarians

It was essential to characterise the parliamentarians in order to categorise their information behaviour, for example, to ensure that both gender groups were represented. Information on the educational levels was to provide an insight into the parliamentarians' levels of knowledge and skill as that also determines information access. It was considered that the position held in parliament by a legislator would also provide insight into information seeking patterns at different levels in the parliamentary hierarchy. For example, it can be argued that the higher the position held in office the less time available to do own information searches, and the higher the chance of using an intermediary to do the searching for the office bearer. It was also important to determine level of access to the Internet, in relation to access and actual usage of this information source.

6.2.1.2 Gender distribution

The South African government subscribes to a policy of gender equality, and as such it is compulsory that at least one-third of all positions in Government be allocated to women. Of the 167 responses received 119 (71 %) were males and 48 (29 %) females. Observing this distribution gives a fair indication that females are well represented in all the legislatures.

6.2.1.3 Educational level

The ability to search, collect and use recorded information is historically influenced by the level of education of an individual. The higher the educational level the higher the chances that an individual can make use of modern information. Education could also determine the level of reasoning, debating and interaction by a parliamentarian.

Fig. 3 shows the educational levels of the parliamentarians. (N=167)

Fig. 3 Educational levels
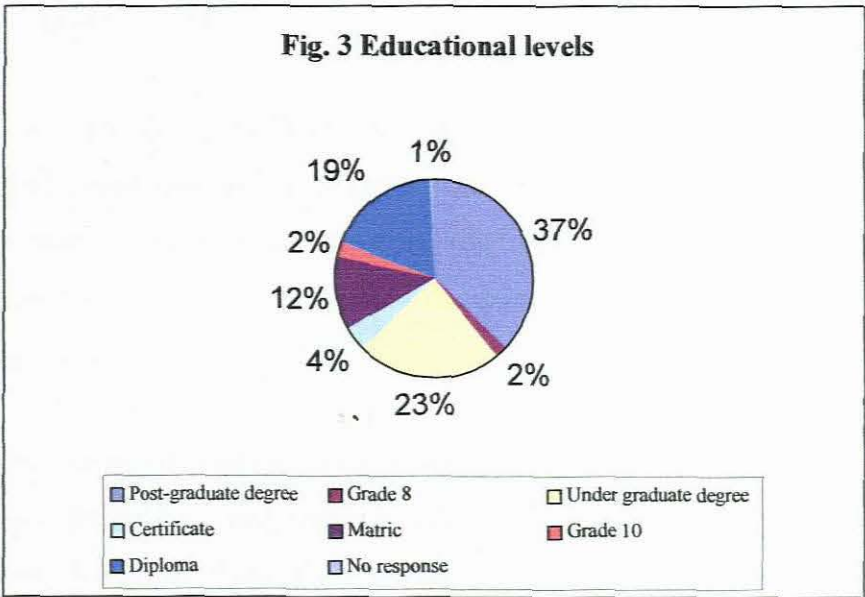
As shown in Fig. 3, parliamentarians holding a post-graduate degree formed the majority of respondents with 62 (37%) indicating that they have completed a post-graduate degree. Under-graduate qualifications were 39 (23%), while 31 (19%) held a Diploma. Both Diplomas and Certificates are qualifications obtained by an individual in the process of empowering him/herself with wider knowledge in certain subject

fields. It can be obtained from a tertiary institution such as a technikon or a university, or from private educational institutions, such as colleges. The results illustrate further that 7 (4%) obtained a Certificate, while Matric, which is the final year of secondary schooling, is represented by 20 (12%) respondents. The respondents who have not finished formal schooling are demonstrated by 4 (2%) individuals who have completed Grade 10, and 3 (2%) who have completed Grade 8. The latter is the first year of secondary schooling.

None indicated they only completed Grades 5 - 7; Grades 1 - 4; or that they have received no schooling at all. One (1%) did not respond to this question.

The results clearly demonstrate that the educational levels of the current body of parliamentarians are high, for example, 83% indicated that they are in possession of a tertiary qualification.

6.2.1.4   Political affiliation

The African National Congress (ANC) is currently the ruling political party with a majority vote of more that 66.3% in the central government. A number of smaller opposition groups are represented both at national and provincial levels. Essentially this section was to help in determining that the questionnaire was widely distributed among the legislators.

The results demonstrate that of the 167 responses, the major ruling party, the ANC, is represented by 99 (59%) respondents. Other major parties were represented respectively by responses from the Democratic Alliance (DA) with 24 (14%) responses, the New National Party (NNP) 16 (9%), The Inkatha Freedom Party 14 (8%) and the United Democratic Movement with 8 (4%) responses.

The smaller parties' results showed that the Freedom Front was represented by 3 (2%) respondents, the Pan African Congress had 2 (1%) respondents, while the African Christian Democratic Party, the Minority Front and the Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging had 1(1%) response each.

Though the response rate of the ruling party seem to be proportionately higher than that of the other parties, the response rates closely reflects the current representation rate of the different parties in the Government (Burger 2002).

6.2.1.5 Member status

The study included the whole spectrum of governmental representation, i.e. the National Assembly, the NCOP, as well as the provincial legislatures. This section aimed at determining the level of representation, whether national or provincial. The results indicate that 69 (41%) of the respondents belonged to the National Assembly, 22 (13%) represented the NCOP, while 76 (46%) respondents were provincial legislators. This was indeed a good distribution or spread of responses.

6.2.1.6 Position held within the parliamentary hierarchy

Parliamentarians can serve in various positions within their own party structure in the legislatures, or in the general structures of each legislature, for example, by becoming a member or chairman of the parliamentary committees. Some parliamentarians are elected to represent their government or province at the highest levels of decision-making where access to information is absolutely essential. It was required that parliamentarians indicate the position held in their respective legislatures. Responses to the question indicated the nature of representation to the positions across the whole spectrum of the governmental hierarchy.

The higher-ranking positions in the National Assembly, that of Deputy Minister and higher, as well as that in the Provincial Legislatures, that of Member of the Executive Committees (MEC's), and higher, are well represented in the group of respondents. The results demonstrate that one (1%) respondent was on the level of the Deputy President of the country, while 6 (4%) Cabinet Ministers, and 5 (3%) Deputy Ministers of the National Assembly responded. On the provincial level, 2 (1%) Premiers, 19 (11%) Members of the Executive Committees (Provincial Cabinet Ministers), and 1 Provincial Speaker (1%) responded. Whips, as the leaders of the separate caucuses, hold very responsible positions, as their leadership governs the discipline within the party ranks. Five (3%) whips responded.

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With the governmental style changing to one where committees make major decisions before referring the decisions to either the National Assembly, or the Provincial Legislative body, the importance of the role of the Committee Chairperson and Committee Members is underlined[13]. Twenty-nine (17%) Chairpersons of Committees, and 31 (19%) committee members responded.

Members who do not hold any office other than that of being an ordinary representative on either national or provincial level responded as follow:

- Ordinary parliamentarians   : 20 (12%)
- Ordinary provincial parliamentarians   : 36 (21%)

Fig. 4 shows the distribution of the positions held by the respondents.
(N = 167)

Fig. 4 Parliamentary position held
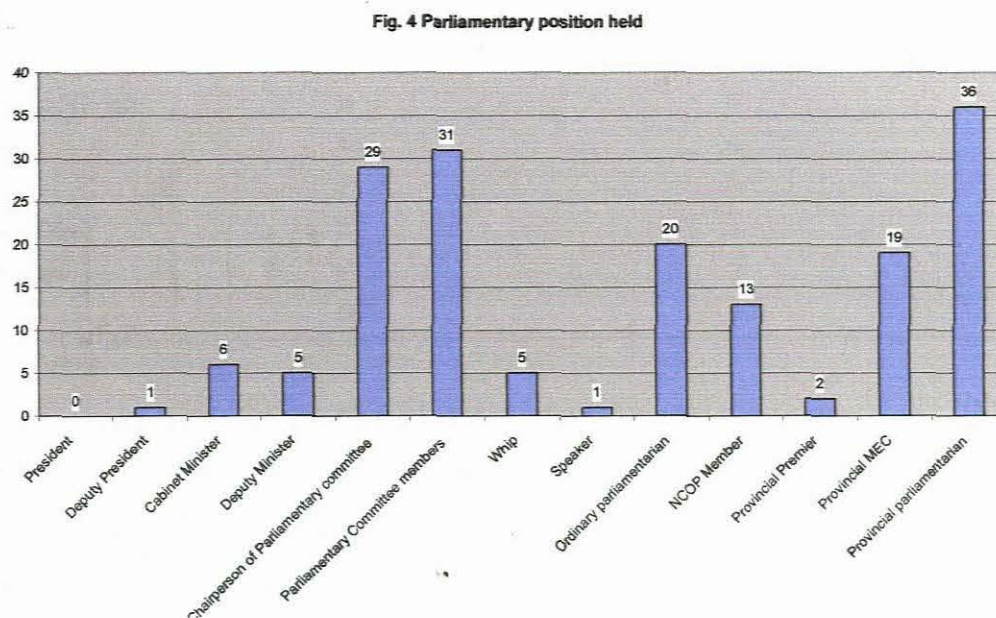
6.2.1.7 Provincial representation

This section aimed at determining provincial representation. Though the Eastern Cape Province was not included in the study on a provincial level, they were represented at

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[13] Mr. A. Ntunja, Head of the Library Unit of the Library of Parliament during an informal interview on 20 August 2002.

a national level through parliamentarians of the National Assembly.

Table 6 gives an indication of the provincial representation of the respondents. Note that the arrangement according to province is done in descending order, and not in the same order as in the questionnaire. This was done for the sake of clarity concerning the nature of the responses.

Table 6: Provincial representation

N = 167

Province	Number	%
KwaZulu/Natal	44	26
Gauteng	32	19
Western Cape	22	13
Free State	19	11
Mpumalanga	15	9
North West Province	11	7
Limpopo	10	6
None	6	4
Northern Cape	2	1
Eastern Cape	6	4
Total	**167**	**100**

From the above table it is established that all the provinces were represented. The six (4%) who indicated that they do not represent any province could be the result of the way in which the National Assembly parliamentarians are elected, i.e. voting is done for a party rather than a person, and based on the outcomes of the polls parliamentarians are appropriated to the National Assembly from a candidature list. It might be that the parliamentarians felt that they represented the country as a whole and not the specific province where they resided.

6.2.1.8 Access to personal computer (PC) connected to the Internet

This was a very important aspect of the study as it was to indicate the ability of parliamentarians to access electronic sources of information. Of the total of 167 respondents 95 (57%) indicated that they had access to the Internet at home, while 131 (78%) could access the Internet from their offices. Eighty one (49%) could access

a PC with Internet access both from their homes, and their offices. These figures demonstrate that potential access to electronic information sources is well within the reach of a majority of the responding parliamentarians.

6.2.2 Information needs and searching strategies

6.2.2.1 Period when information need is experienced

Information plays a vital role in the activities of a democratically elected government, as representatives need it for active participation in the events taking place around government. As Parliament is not in session the whole year it was important to determine if there were periods when information needs are more acute than other times.

Forty-eight (29%) parliamentarians indicated that they specifically needed information during the parliamentary sessions, while only 13 (8%) indicated a specific need during the parliamentary recess when parliamentarians return to their constituencies. Eight (5%) would like to have information just after the parliamentary session. The majority of the respondents, 129 (77%), wanted information right through the year. This clearly demonstrates the parliamentarians' awareness of the necessity of access to information, irrespective of whether they are busy functioning within the parliamentary environment, or whether they return to their constituencies to serve the public that voted them into office.

6.2.2.2 Frequency of information seeking

Despite the fact that the majority of the respondents indicated a continual need for information, it in itself is not a clear indication of how often information is sought during the periods mentioned in section 6.2.2.1. The aim of this section was to determine how often information was actively sought.

The frequency indicators could indicate how serious parliamentarians regard information as part and parcel of their effective functioning as representatives of the people, and how much effort they put into trying to satisfy their information need.

Ninety-five (56%) indicated that information is sought on a daily basis, while 56 (34%) wanted information on a weekly basis. Only 11 (7%) indicated that information is only sought on a monthly basis, while 3 (2%) seldom looked for information. Two (1%) did not respond to this question. The high number of incidences where information is sought on a regular basis shows the usefulness of information in parliamentary activities.

6.2.2.3 Reasons for seeking information

The legislators are expected to be able to perform a variety of functions, all of which demand an informed mind. Optimal functioning relies on the ability to skillfully apply the knowledge which the parliamentarian possesses at a specific period in time. A variety of reasons exist for which information can be used. The reasons were presented to the respondents to select using "often", "seldom" or "never". Table 7 shows how the responses were made.

Table 7. Reasons for seeking information

N = 167

Reasons	Often	%	Seldom	%	Never	%	Total
To help me participate in debates in parliament	137	82	16	10	14	8	167
To help me understand/give a background to what is being discussed in parliament	109	65	32	19	26	16	167
To help me prepare a Bill	55	33	49	29	63	38	167
To help me clarify concepts or information in a Bill that is not clear to me	57	34	63	38	47	28	167
To help me prepare for a parliamentary speech	131	78	16	10	20	12	167
To broaden my own knowledge on a given topic	129	77	17	10	21	13	167
To assist me in planning projects	49	29	56	34	62	37	167
To enable me to organise events	50	30	63	38	54	32	167
To be able to answer questions posed to me in Parliament	50	30	34	20	73	44	167
To be able to answer inquiries from constituents	98	59	42	25	27	16	167
To able to converse with colleagues, staff from other parliaments/organisations/governmental institutions on matters of mutual concern	76	46	47	28	44	26	167
Others	11	7	3	2	153	91	167

The common reason for needing information is to be able to participate in debates, with 137 (82%) responses. Preparation for speechmaking was the second most popular reason, receiving 131 (78%) responses. As this activity is closely related to that of debating the correlation is evident. The fact that knowledge expansion with 129 responses, was rated so high demonstrates that the parliamentarians realise the need to be informed. This once again is closely related to the activity of gaining an understanding/background information on topics discussed in Parliament. This attracted 109 (65%) responses.

When looking at the reasons which received a high negative response it would seem as if it is activities which are position related, for example the planning of projects 62 (37%), Bill preparation 63 (38%) and to assist in answering questions in Parliament 50 (30%). These activities are mainly the domain of the Ministers and Committees. Besides the reasons for seeking information that were structured for responses, the respondents were asked to indicate other reasons for needing information. The reasons put forward by not more that one respondent included:

- For public speaking and meetings
- To be able to develop alternative policies
- To be able to pose questions to the MEC's
- To gain information on how to conduct public hearings
- To develop new ideas and concepts
- To enable me to formulate policies
- To be able to do evaluation and comparative analysis on certain topics
- To determine the parliamentary programme
- To gain information on the Portfolio committee's subject area
- To prepare an article for publication
- To be fully empowered.

Two respondents indicated that they needed information to enable them to make media statements.

6.2.2.4 Search strategy

From the previous section (6.2.2.3) it is clear that information is used extensively for a variety of reasons. With the busy schedule that parliamentarians experience on a daily basis the question aimed at determining who did the actual information searching for them. Lack of time often prompt the use of intermediaries, and it was therefore important to find out if this was the case with the parliamentarians. Respondents were asked to indicate all the individuals involved in their information-searching and retrieval process.

The majority of the searching activity, 117 (70%), is conducted by the respondents themselves. This could be attributed to many factors, for example, the respondents know best what it is that they need and therefore feel that they are best equipped to do it on their own, or it might also be a question of not knowing that other intermediaries are available to assist.

An interesting second choice is that of utilising the services of their personal assistants. This option received 87 (52%) of the responses. This is especially interesting as this is not an individual known to be equipped with specific or specialised information seeking skills.

The research assistants in the parliamentary library received 59 (35%), and the parliamentary librarian(s) 55 (33%) responses. Private information brokers were not a very popular option 8 (5%). This could be ascribed to the fact that many people are not aware of their existence, or where to contact them. The cost factor involved could also play a role.

A relatively large group 26 (16%), of other information searchers were specified. The group included:

- Party researchers (13)
- Departmental staff (2)
- Research assistants of the caucus (2)
- Outside specialists/external research institutes (2)

- Committee/studygroup researcher (3)
- Constituency office (1)
- Research Unit of the Parliament (3)
- Media liaison (1)
- The Director in charge of my Ministry (1)
- South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) (2).

6.2.2.5 Information sources/systems used during retrieval process

Parliamentarians have a wide variety of information sources and systems at their disposal which they use to access and retrieve the needed information. This section aimed at determining which sources/systems were most often used, and which were not popular at all. The respondents were asked to indicate their use of the list of sources according to "often", "seldom" or "never".

Sources have been grouped together into four main categories, i.e. print-based sources, electronic sources, information systems and oral sources.

N = 167

Sources/systems	Often	%	Seldom	%	Never	%	No response	%	Total
Print-based sources									
Books	109	65	28	17	24	14	6	4	167
Journals	80	48	39	23	42	25	6	4	167
Newspapers	133	80	11	7	17	10	6	4	167
Magazines	80	48	40	24	41	25	6	4	167
Governmental publications	101	60	33	20	27	16	6	4	167
Electronic sources									
Internet	84	50	22	13	55	33	6	4	167
Digital libraries on the Internet	30	18	32	19	99	59	6	4	167
Virtual libraries on the Internet	20	12	29	17	112	67	6	4	167
On-line databases	25	15	25	15	111	66	6	4	167
Electronic journals on the internet	73	44	33	20	55	33	6	4	167
Electronic newspapers	62	37	38	22	61	37	6	4	167
Information systems									
Government Departments	79	47	47	28	35	21	6	4	167
NGO's	44	26	58	35	59	35	6	4	167
Parliamentary library	56	34	56	34	49	29	6	4	167
Public library	18	11	51	31	92	55	6	4	167
Embassies	16	10	44	26	101	60	6	4	167
National archives	15	9	43	26	103	62	6	4	167
Oral sources									
Parliamentary colleagues	57	34	44	26	60	36	6	4	167
Individuals in the private sector	40	24	52	31	69	41	6	4	167
Individuals in the public sector	45	27	41	25	75	45	6	4	167
Chiefs/indunas	11	7	21	13	129	77	6	4	167

The responses showed a very strong preference for the printed sources, which could be expected from a society, which is still very much print-based. Print also has the advantage that it can be revisited often, where and whenever needed, unlike the other sources that can only be used when the equipment and software is available as in the

case of electronic sources, or when a particular institution is open to the public. In the case of the oral sources, information cannot be revisited at leisure and is influenced by the receiver's ability of retention of the information.

The high "often", ranking of newspapers at 133 (80%) is proof of the need of the respondents to access information on the issues of the day. Books 109 (65%) and government publications 101 (60%) are also seen as major information sources. The latter's popularity can be ascribed to the kind of information it contains as it has direct bearing on the work done in the government.

It is interesting to note that the electronic sources are used relatively extensively. Taking into account the relative "newness" of the public availability of electronic information sources, this stresses the importance of the enhancement of this source.

With the exception of Government Departments, which received an "often" response rate of 79 (47%), formal information systems did not receive a high ranking. Most notable was the low "often" ranking of the parliamentary libraries (56 (34%)), institutions which are at hand at the respective parliaments, and whose main function is to provide information.

Based on a prevalent oral culture on the African continent a strong trend towards oral information sources was expected. However this did not prove to be the case as for both the "often and "seldom" options the rankings were not exceptionally high for the sources listed. It could be because of many more "reliable" information sources available. Six (4%) individuals did not respond to the question.

6.2.2.6 Electronic sources utilised

Electronic sources are available in many formats, and the purpose of each source varies. Some are created to assist in finding bibliographic information, some provide access to full-text databases, some act as portals or hosts providing access to many other information sources, and some just provide information. Parliamentarians with access to electronic sources might use a variety of electronic source sites during a single information search. Respondents were requested to indicate the electronic

sources they used by indicating it in the appropriate space. This resulted in a varying number of respondents for each subsection:

6.2.2.6.1 Search engines

When ignorant about the URL of a specific site, or when a wide search on a topic is required search engines are used to retrieve and access the relevant site. Table 9 indicates the most used search engines.

Table 9: Search engines used

N=167

Search engine	Number	Percentage
Google	18	11
Yahoo	12	7
Ananzi	9	5
Aardvark	5	3
Dieknoop	1	1
No response	123	73
Total	**167**	**100**

Google, a relatively new, but very powerful search engine, was the most used (18 (11%), while the directory-based *Yahoo* was also well utilised with 12 (7%) responses. The other three search engines mentioned are South African based, and between them *Ananzi* was used by 9 (5%) of the respondents, while *Aardvark* and *dieknoop*, respectively were used by 5 (3%) and 1 (1%) of the respondents. One hundred and twenty three (73%) respondents did not respond to the question.

6.2.2.6.2 Database hosts

A host is a website that provides access to a number of databases. Only one host was listed, i.e. Ebsco host, though mention was made of two databases within the host, namely Business Source Premier and Academic Source Premier. One hundred and sixty five respondents (99%) did not answer the question.

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6.2.2.6.3 Databases

For the purpose of this study a database has been defined as a computerised list of sources/titles available on a specific topic. Many of the databases mentioned, specifically those found on the Internet, appear on websites that contain both database information, and information on the topic concerning the website. Overlap has thus occurred between this section and the following section (6.2.2.6.4) as many respondents mentioned the sites in both sections.

The results showed that the South African Government websites (discussed in Chapter 3) containing various databases were most utilised, namely by 18 respondents. Five specified the databases used, which were those containing references to legislation (3); speeches (4), and to order papers (1). One respondent used the ERIC database. No CD-ROM databases were mentioned.

One hundred and forty eight respondents (89%) did not respond to the question.

6.2.2.6.4 Internet websites/topics

Respondents had the choice of providing the URL of a specific site visited, or they could just indicate the topics on which searches were done. Eighty responses (48%) were received, while 87 (51%) did not respond.

- *Specific URL's*

www.gov.za (18); www.parliament.gov.za (17); www.anc.org.za (18); www.ncop.org.za (4); www.polity.gov.za (3); www.naspers.com/argiewe (3); www.sapa.org.za (3); www.gcis.org.za (2); www.msn.com (2); www.demarcation.org.za (2); www.southafrica.co.za (1); www.cnn.com (1); www.iec.org.za (1); www.capephotolibrary.com (1); www.housing.org (1); www.elections.org.za (1); www.SAOL.news.com (1); www.FAO.co.za (1).

- *Topics*

Table 10 provides an insight into the topics searched by the respondents. The topic most searched was the governance/parliamentary topics, as well as Politics.

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Table 10: Topics searched for on the Internet

N = 80

Topics	Responses
Governance and parliamentary topics; Politics	13
News; Economics; Information on political parties in South Africa	11
Health	9
Agriculture	7
Provincial legislative sites	4
Parliamentary Monitoring services (PMG); Education; Security; Britannica; Electoral information; Tourism; Crime	3
Defense; Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU); History of South Africa; Wits Law Library; iAfrica; World Bank; South African Institute for Race Relations; United Nations; Business Administration; HIV/AIDS; Social development issues; Demography; Trade and industry; Terrorism; History	2
Youth; children; Home Affairs; International Monetary Fund; Bank of International Settlement; South African Economics Standard Merchant Bank; Navy; European Union; Small Business Development Agency; Democracy; Science and Technology; Transport; Environment; State organs; Government Departments; Policing; Globalisation; Privatization; Abortion; Mayibuye centre; NGO's; Various institutions; Popnet	1
No response	87

Six respondents indicated that their search needs changed according to whatever topic was at hand, and that they then follow numerous leads to satisfy their information need.

6.2.2.6.5 Electronic journals or newspapers

The respondents had to indicate which journals or newspapers they read on the Internet. The response indicated either a website acting as a portal to different

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newspapers or journals, gave the specific name of the journal/newspaper or just specified the topics on which they read articles. Twenty-two responses were received.

- *Portals*

Media 24 Journals; News 24; IOL; Naspers; GBN (Global Business Networks) publications.

- *Specific titles: newspapers*

M&G Online; The Jerusalem Post; Business Day; New York Times; Washington Post.

- Specific titles: journals

Financial Mail; Economist; Sloane Review; Emerald Management Review; The Ecologist; ZA Finance; Institute of Security Studies.

- *Topics*

Christian material; Politics; Welfare; Women; Science; Children; Finances; Economics; Development; Health.

One hundred and forty five (87%) respondents did not answer the question.

6.2.2.6.6 Digital libraries

Six (4%) responses were received. Libraries on the following topics are visited:
Health, Transport, Politics and Government; Science; Law, Safety and Security; Education; and Economics.

No response was received from 161 (96%) respondents.

6.2.2.6.7 Virtual libraries

The Wits Law Library was mentioned by one (1%) respondent. No response was received from 166 (99%) respondents.

6.2.2.7 Problems experienced whilst using electronic source

The use of technology to access and retrieve information can create problems for users, ranging from problems with the technology itself to problems with using the actual programmes providing access to the information. For the purpose of reporting, the answers provided by the respondents have been categorised into broad categories, i.e. problems with technology, problems with the e-source, skills/time-related problems. Fifty-one responded to this question.

- *Problems with technology*

Slow down-loading of webpages (4)

A slow system/network (4)

No access to Internet in office. Have to rely on computers in other offices to gain access (4)

A faulty/unreliable computer (2)

Expensive Telkom accounts after accessing Internet (2)

When the Department's server is down, there is no access to relevant sites (1)

Do not have a computer (1)

Personal computer not able to access certain information sources (1)

Printing of information is sometimes a problem (1)

Computer freezes or there is no clear picture (1)

- *Problems with the e-source*

Out-dated information (3)

Too many cross-references provided making it time-consuming to find information (2)

Information not available (2)

Websites not responding (2)

Undated information (1)

The information provided is not relevant (1)

Some websites are barred (1)

Websites not always complete (1)

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Having to first become a "member" before a digital/electronic library can be accessed. That while the information is available elsewhere for free. (1)

Some websites are not compliant with the software used by a blind MP (1)

Some websites cannot be displayed (1)

S.A. statistics are not as complete as those of other countries (1)

Legislation should be available in Word/Word Perfect/Acrobat so that MP's can input Acts/Bills electronically and suggest amendments (1)

- *Skills/time related problems*

Lack of computer skills/computer illiteracy (8)

Too time consuming to find relevant sources (5)

Finding the time due to heavy parliamentary duties and programmes (3)

Lack of information-seeking skills (3)

Accessing relevant website timeously (2)

Choosing the correct keywords/phrases (2)

To find South African related information (2)

Not asking the correct questions to access information (1)

To find the correct website in the shortest time possible (1)

Too many hits which are difficult to filter (1)

Often yield too wide results (1)

Search results not always accurate (1)

Not enough manpower to do the job quicker (1)

Lack skills to access more than familiar websites (1)

Lack of knowledge on how to download a file (1)

Too little knowledge about electronic libraries available (1).

6.2.2.8 Information needs

Parliamentarians need information on a wide variety of topics. To determine which topics are most needed the question presented the respondents with a list of possible topics that they could use to indicate their preferences. They could also indicate other topics not mentioned in the list and it included topics like: Welfare (6); Environmental affairs (4); Gender issues (3); Poverty (2); Sport (2); Economy (2); Conservation (2);

Social development (2); Conservation (2); Public works (1); HIV (1); Public enterprise (2); Land affairs (1); Foreign affairs (1); Home affairs (1); Travel (1); Relief funds and programmes (1), Technology (1) and Crop marketing (1).

Fig. 5 indicates the responses.

Fig. 5 Information needs N = 167
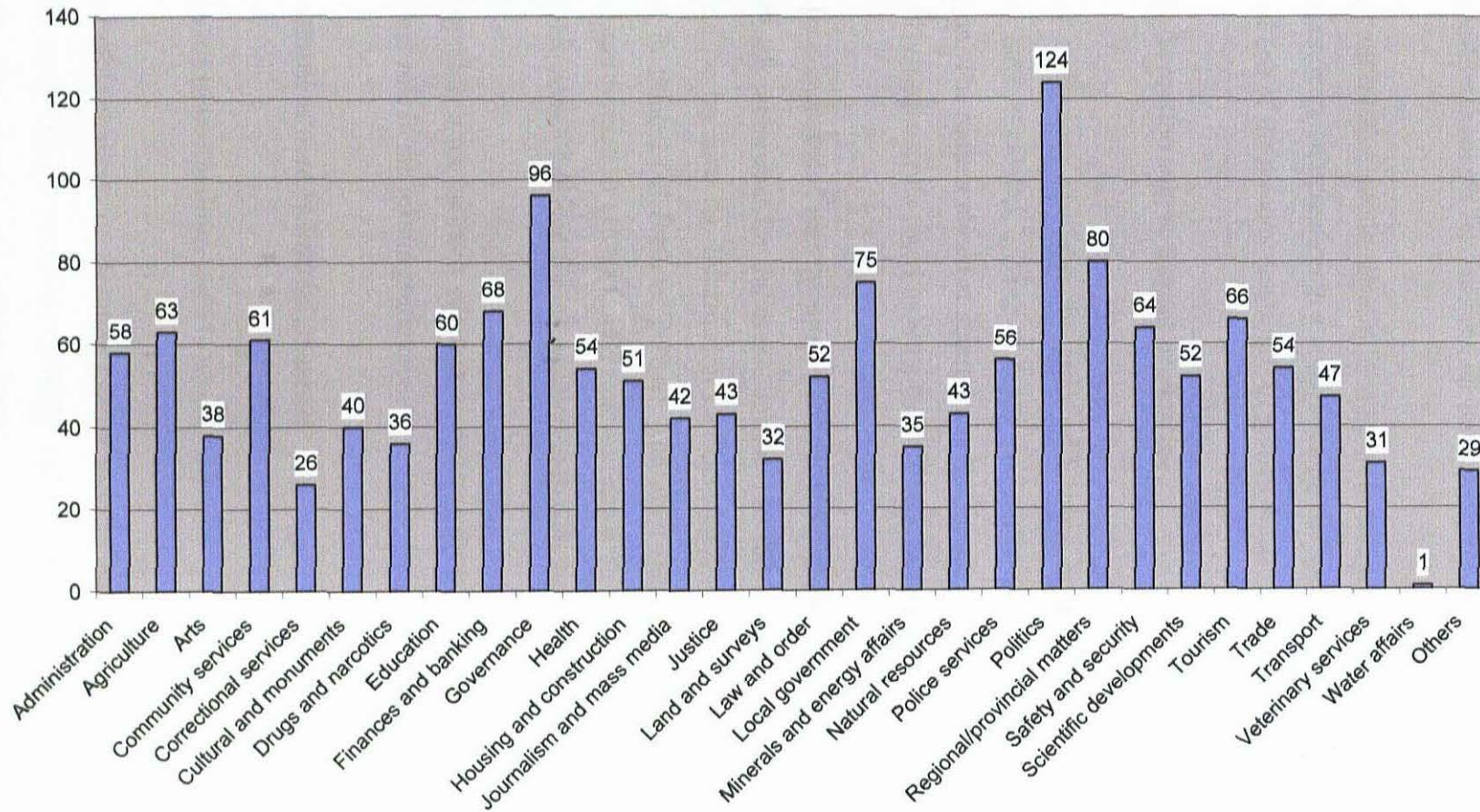
The figure demonstrates that information on Politics 124 (74%) is the most needed. Other issues that are high on the preference lists are Governance 94 (56%), Regional/provincial matters 80 (48%) and Local government 75 (45%). As it is the function of the respective legislatures to govern at all levels this is a good indication that information is sought for and used for this exact purpose.

The other information needs seem to be interest-based, and can probably be ascribed to the respondents participation in a committee on the specific topics, or alternatively because of one of the reasons mentioned in section 6.2.2.3.

6.2.2.9 Information source format preference

With new technology available the array of formats in which information can be presented have escalated, giving a much wider choice to the recipient of the information. The section aimed at determining the format preferences for information delivery. The respondents could indicate the different formats they preferred.

The results demonstrated that the printed format 124 (74%) is still the most preferred. A very strong preference for the digital format 100 (60%) has also been expressed. This could be because the information can be stored on the computer for future reference, or printed out for later perusal. The other formats showed the following results: visual format 30 (18%), sound (audio) format 16 (10%), and orally 14 (8%). One (1%) expressed the need for information in Braille format.

It would seem as if the fact that information can be kept at hand for later perusal plays an important role in the format preference.

6.2.3 Institutions used to find information

6.2.3.1 Institutions/facilities used to obtain source

A variety of institutions or facilities can be used to obtain the actual information source. In many cases timeous accessibility and availability of sources plays a vital role in the final choice. The section aimed at determining where the respondents

obtained their information sources. They were required to indicate all the different options used.

The results are reported in Table 11.

Table 11: Sources and facilities used to obtain information sources
N = 167

Source/Facilities	Number	Percentage
From my own personal sources	125	75
From the Parliamentary Library	102	61
From another local library/institution that has the relevant information	40	24
Use my PC	103	62
Use the PC available in the Parliamentary Library	32	19
From international organisations with the relevant information	43	26
From the other parliamentary libraries in South Africa	31	19
From international parliamentary libraries	13	8
Other	15	9

The majority of information sources needed to provide the necessary information seems to be within the respondents' own reach, as indicated by the 75% retrieval rate using own sources.

Both the computer and the parliamentary library seem to be important facilities used to obtain information sources. The high use of both seems to contradict the findings in 6.2.2.5 where these sources were not rated highly as sources for seeking of information.

A note of concern is the low utilisation of local institutions, such as local libraries and organisations 40 (26%), when trying to obtain an information source. It can be assumed that these institutions should be able to provide grassroots information on specific topics.

The other institutions/facilities mentioned included:
- Government Departments (2)
- The Civil Service
- Computer of the personal assistant

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- Own staff as well as my department
- The University policy units
- Colleagues of other provincial legislatures
- Private sector libraries
- Informal contacts or political party

6.2.3.2 National and International organisations contacted for information

Needing a wide background to be able to take decisions or make suggestions on certain issues, parliamentarians from time to time need to network with relevant organisations to gain more insight. The organisations mentioned are based both nationally and internationally and the majority can be contacted both in person or via the Internet:

- National organisations
South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (4), Agriweb (4), Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) (3), Independent Electorial Commission (IEC) (1), NAMAC (a trust supporting SMME's in South Africa) (1), South African Trade Unions (1), South African Reserve Bank (SARB) (1), Centre for Development (1), KPMG (a global network of professional services firms providing financial, advising, assurance, tax and legal services) (1), ANC Online (1), Institute for Multiparty Democracy (1), South African Department of Foreign Affairs (1), National Treasury (1), Provincial Treasury (1), NEDLAC (National Economic Development and Labour Council) online (1), South African National Defense Council (SANDC) (1), Government institutions (1).

- International Organisations
World Health Organisation (WHO) (9), International Monetary Fund (IMF) (7), United Nations (UN) (4), World Bank (3), World Trade Organisation (WTO) (3), Free Market Foundation (3), Food Agricultural Organisation (FAO) (2), Certified Public Accountants (CPA) (2), European Union (EU) (1), Australian Government's overseas aid programme (AUSAID) (1), Joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (1), World Federation of the Blind (1), HIVNET (1), The

World Conservation Union (IUCN) (1), Organisation of African Unions (OAU) (1) International Labour Organisation (ILO), Adam Smith Institute (1), The University of Stanford (1) Edusource (1), Commonwealth of Nations (1), Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) (1), and the Disabled People International (1).

6.2.3.3 Parliamentary library service utilisation

The parliamentary libraries form an integral part of the information systems available to parliamentarians. In most cases, the libraries are housed within the parliamentary complex, thus easily accessible. The aim of the section was to determine whether this potentially valuable source is utilised to its fullest extent or not.

N= 167

Chart 1: Parliamentary Library Utilisation
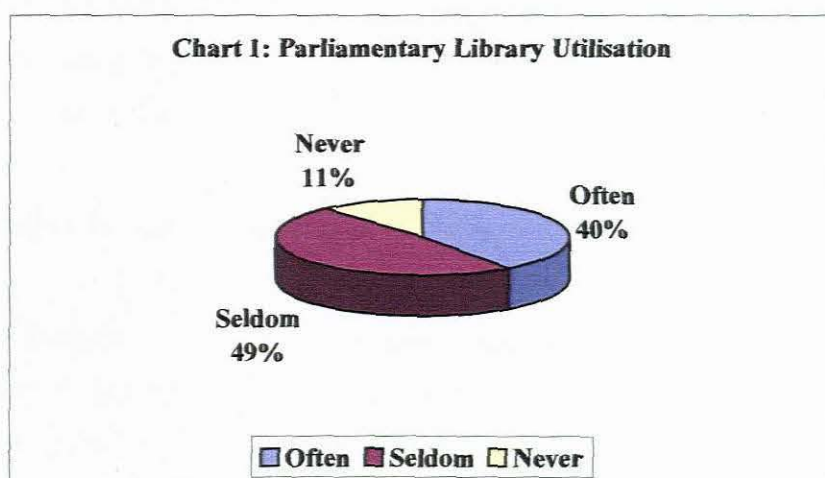
As indicated by the chart it would seem as if these facilities are not fully utilised as only 67 (40%) regularly make use thereof, while 81 (49%) only use it on occasion. Nineteen (11%) never make use of the libraries. This is cause for concern and the reasons for this should be researched.

6.2.3.4 Reasons for utilising the Parliamentary Library

When making use of the parliamentary libraries it could be for various reasons. The respondents were asked to tick the reasons for using the library. The results demonstrated that:

- One hundred and thirty one (78%) used it to find work-related information

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- Fifty-seven (34%) used it to read up on topics of interest
- Forty (30%) came to the library to consult with a research assistant
- Thirty-eight (23%) read newspapers/magazines in the library
- Two (1%) used it as a place to relax.

6.2.3.5 Availability of research assistants

The following three sections were asked to determine the existence of, and the utilisation of, in-house researchers.

On the availability of research assistants at their institutions 140 (83%) responded positively, while 16 (10%) responded in the negative. Eleven (7%) did not respond to this question, indicating that some respondents could be ignorant about the existence of research assistants within their legislature.

6.2.3.6 Utilisation of research assistants

When asked to indicate how often parliamentary research assistants were used, 85 (50%) responded by indicating that they utilised them on a regular basis, while 46 (28%) sometimes used their services. Sixteen (10%) never made use of their services. Twenty (12%) did not respond to the question.

6.2.3.7 Research service affiliation with parliamentary library service

This question aimed at determining whether the research assistants were affiliated to the library or whether they operated as a separate unit. Eighty-four (50%) responded positively and 45 (27 %) negatively. Thirty-eight (23%) did not respond to the question.

6.3 SECTION TWO: PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES

The second section will concentrate on analysing and describing the functioning of each specific legislative library in South Africa, aiming at providing insight into their

ability to provide a meaningful information service to parliamentarians.

6.3.1 Parliamentary Libraries

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the country has been divided into 9 provinces, with a legislative capital in each of the provinces. Other than the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, that serves the national Assembly and the NCOP, a provincial legislative library has been established and attached to each legislature, to serve their respective parliamentarians. The legislative capitals are:

- Western Cape: Cape Town
- Eastern Cape: Bisho
- KwaZulu/Natal: Pietermaritzburg
- Mpumalanga: Nelspruit
- Limpopo: Lebowakgomo
- Gauteng: Johannesburg
- North West: Mafikeng
- Northern Cape: Kimberly
- Free State: Bloemfontein

All the ten libraries responded to the questionnaire.

6.3.2 Background information

Library of Parliament (Cape Town)

As described in Chapter 3 the Library of Parliament, Cape Town, was established in 1854, as a result of the introduction of representative government in Cape Town. The Library is currently situated inside the parliamentary buildings, but the research section is housed outside the parliamentary complex. Communication between these two units, as well as the parliamentarians is done by way of telephone calls, Internet (e-mail), Intranet and faxing.

Western Cape Provincial legislature

The library unit was established in 1994, and the research unit in 1998. Both units are located on the 6th floor of the legislature building. Communication between the library/research unit and the parliamentarians is done via telephone, e-mail, faxing or by visits in person.

Eastern Cape Provincial legislature

The unit was established in 1995 and the research unit in 1998 in response to the establishment of the legislature in the province. The library/research units were initially located on the ground floor of the legislative buildings in close proximity to the Chamber, but moved in 1999 to its present location on the third floor, next to the offices of the parliamentarians.

KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislature

The present library has been inherited from the Department of Education, and came about as a result of the intervention of Chief Minister G. Buthelezi. It became a legislative library in 1995 with the aim of providing legislative parliamentarians with a means of accessing information for the purpose of participating in debates and legislation making.

Originally divided between two centres, Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg, the library unified in 2002 and is currently situated in Pietermaritzburg. The library is outside the Chamber building, but in very close proximity of the parliamentary complex and offices.

After an initial lack of focus on the clientele to be served the library staff has since established who are to benefit from the services, and through needs analysis the collection currently reflects the needs of the parliamentarians.

Mpumalanga Provincial Legislative Library

No background information was provided.

Limpopo Provincial Legislative Library

The Library/Research Unit, as an integral part of the provincial legislatures, was established in 1996 shortly after the promulgation of the new Constitution. The main branch is housed in the Parliamentary complex at Lebowakgomo, very close to the Chamber and Committee boardrooms. A satellite branch is housed at the Parliamentary Village in Polokwane, amongst the houses where the parliamentarians and their families reside.

Gauteng Legislature Information Centre

The Information Centre was established in 1995/96 in anticipation of providing an information support service to the Legislature. The Legislature is situated in the old city hall with the Information Centre located within the building. Communication between the Information Centre and parliamentarians is performed in various ways such as one- on-one communication, through the circulation of printed materials and through the internal e-mail system.

Development of the Information Centre was characterised by four phases. During the first phase the library system was formalised by the writing of policies, procedures and service manuals. The second phase concentrated on the automation of the service through the acquisition of library software. The third phase concentrated on the user's information seeking patterns and needs, and aligned services accordingly. A concerted effort to market the services of the Information Centre and products was launched in this period. The fourth phase concentrated on the expansion of services after evaluating the knowledge gained from the third phase. Services shifted towards the provision of electronic products. A user education programme to enable parliamentarians effective utilisation of these products and services was launched. Currently the focus of the library is on on-line networked services and products delivered at the clients' convenience at their workstations.

Though operating currently in a hybrid environment the library envisages being a virtual Information Centre.

North West Provincial Legislative Library

The library was established during the era of Homeland rule when the area was still known as BophuthaTswana, with the purpose of serving the then parliamentarians. It is situated on the ground floor of the new parliamentary building opposite the Chamber.

Northern Cape Provincial Legislative Library

The library was established in 1994 after the elections as a result of the establishment of the Northern Cape Legislature. The Library is housed in the same building as the legislature. The library and the research units are operating as two separate departments, but report to one manager, the Deputy Secretary: Parliamentary Services. Communications between these two departments, as well as the parliamentarians, is by way of telephone, e-mail or in person.

Free State Provincial Legislative Library

The library was initially part of the Orange Free State Provincial Library Services, but after the inauguration of the Free State Legislature in 1994 it became an asset of the legislature. Initially it served mainly lawyers, but after the 1994 elections parliamentarians became the main clients. It consists of one room and is located in the same building as the parliamentarians, though the MECs are situated in different buildings.

6.3.3 Information system

Information systems in legislatures can consist of only a library, or only a research service or a combination of both. All the respondents reported that their information systems consist of both a library and a research service, with the exception of the Free State that only has a library service. Mpumalanga did not respond to the question.

6.3.4 Research service jurisdiction

Research service in legislatures does not always fall under the jurisdiction of the library services. The research unit of the National Parliament falls under the jurisdiction of the Information Services Section which reports to the Division Manager of the Legislative and Oversight Division. The Western Cape Provincial Legislatures' research unit reports to the Procedural Services Division, as does the Library. In KwaZulu/Natal the unit is responsible to the Committees, while in Limpopo both the library and the research unit is under the jurisdiction of the Information Services Division. In Gauteng both the Information Centre and the Research Unit comes under the jurisdiction of the Information and Liaison Directorate. A third unit, the Public Relations and Communications Unit also comes under this Directorate. The Research Unit and the Library of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature report to the Parliamentary Services as separate units. In the Eastern Cape and North West Provincial Legislatures it falls under the jurisdiction of the Library.

6.3.5 Staff complement

With the exception of the Library of Parliament the legislative libraries/research units have small staff complements. This can be expected as the libraries/research units are still relatively young and in the process of building collections and services. Table 12 indicates the staff complement in each library/research unit.

Table 12: Staff complement in information systems units

N = 10

Legislatures	Library staff	Research staff
Library of Parliament	44	18
Western Cape	2	3
Eastern Cape	3	2
KwaZulu/Natal	4	4
Mpumalanga	1	1
Limpopo	4	5
Gauteng	7	7
North West	1	5
Northern Cape	2	1
Free State	3	-

6.3.6 Staff qualifications

The section aimed at determining which of the staff, in both units, held a Library and Information Science (LIS) degree. (It has been established that in cases where the research staff did not hold a Library and Information Science degree, they were in possession of a tertiary qualification).

In the Library of Parliament 24 of the 44 staff were in possession of a LIS degree. In the Western Cape legislature 2 library staff were qualified, while in the Eastern Cape legislature 3 librarians and 2 research staff have a LIS degree. In KwaZulu/Natal 2 librarians and 4 of their research staff have a LIS qualification. Both the staff at the Mpumalanga legislature are in possession of a LIS degree, while in the Limpopo legislature only 3 librarians are qualified. Gauteng have 7 qualified staff. In the North West legislature all the library (1) and research (5) staff are in possession of a LIS qualification, as is the case with the Northern Cape legislature's staff (2 librarians and 1 research staff member). In the Free State 2 of the 3 library staff members are qualified.

6.3.7 Products and services offered by the Library/Research units

Legislative libraries offer a wide variety of services, depending on staff complements, need and the necessary tools at hand. Table 13 demonstrates the services offered at the various legislatures.

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Table 13: Products and services offered
(N = 10) L = Library   R = Research Unit

Products/services	Library of Parliament		Western Cape		Eastern Cape		KwaZulu-Natal		Mpuma-langa		Limpopo		Gauteng		North West		Northern Cape		Free State		%	%
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Reference service	✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		100	0
News/reading room	✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		100	0
Newspaper clipping service	✔		✔				✔		✔		✔	✔			✔		✔		✔		90	10
Lending service	✔		✔				✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		80	0
Inter-library loan service	✔		✔		✔		✔				✔		✔				✔		✔		80	0
Translations										✔	✔											10
Compilations of bibliographies													✔								10	0
Publication of acquisitions lists			✔		✔		✔				✔		✔		✔				✔		70	0
Access to on-line databases/CD-ROMs	✔		✔	،	✔		✔				✔	✔	✔		✔		✔				80	10
Access to Internet	✔		✔	✔	✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔				90	30
Access to off-line CD-ROMs	✔		✔		✔		✔		✔				✔				✔				70	0
Access to audio materials	✔																				10	0
Access to audio-visual materials	✔						✔		✔	✔	✔										40	10
Current awareness service				✔			✔		✔		✔	✔	✔		✔				✔		60	20
Selective Dissemination of Information service							✔		✔				✔			✔				✔	30	20
Photocopy service	✔		✔			✔	✔				✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		70	10
Indexing of periodicals	✔					✔	✔				✔		✔		✔				✔		60	10
Info-packs on specific topics	✔					✔	✔		✔	✔			✔				✔		✔		60	20

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Products/services	Library of Parliament		Western Cape		Eastern Cape		KwaZulu/ Natal		Mpuma- langa		Limpopo		Gauteng		North West		Northern Cape		Free State		%	%
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Information service	✔		✔			✔	✔		✔	✔	✔		✔		✔		✔		✔		90	20
Research studies on specific topics	✔	✔		✔		✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔			✔		40	80
Do public opinion polls								✔								✔					0	20
Do surveys on specific topics						✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔					20	60
Provision of information & analysis thereof	✔	✔				✔	✔			✔		✔	✔	✔		✔					20	80
Provision of comments on Bills		✔						✔	✔	✔		✔	✔						✔		30	30
Provision of expert opinions		✔						✔				✔							✔		10	30
Provision of background papers on specific topics		✔				✔		✔	✔	✔		✔				✔					10	60
Provision of reports on policy issues		✔			✔			✔	✔	✔		✔				✔			✔		30	60
Overviews of issues discussed in Parliaments		✔						✔					✔			✔			✔		20	30

6.3.8 Special services

Special services encompass any service not offered as part of the daily routine services, but which will, when specifically requested by parliamentarians, be offered on an ad hoc basis. The Library of Parliament and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislative Library offer an audio-visual and video service where recordings of parliamentary meetings, workgroups, public hearings and speeches are kept and provided when required.

At the KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library the librarian scans the daily newspapers and highlights issues of importance. Copies of these articles are made and filed for further reference. Information on specific topics such as HIV/AIDS and education, requested by the parliamentarians, are also handled in the same manner. The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislative Library cuts out clippings and copies the information into a newspaper brief. This is forwarded to the parliamentarians through their secretaries. The Free State Provincial Legislative Library makes newspaper clippings from local newspapers and distributes it amongst the Legislators. The Northern Cape Provincial Legislative Library circulates daily clippings to key officials in various departments to keep them abreast with the latest developments.

Should it be required the *Limpopo* Provincial Legislative Library is able to videotape, edit the tape on a computer and produce documentaries on a VHS tape. The North West Provincial Legislative Library delivers a video taping service whereby policy speeches made in the National Assembly are taped for requesting parliamentarians. The Free State Provincial Legislative Library orders videos on request, and also dubs activities in the National Assembly, as well as other important events. These videos are issued like book issues.

6.3.9 Problems experienced in delivering information services to parliamentarians

The Library of Parliament indicated that they experience problems with a shortage of staff, as well as with access to relevant databases. The Eastern Cape Provincial Legislative Library is experiencing a lack of interest on the side of the

parliamentarians in that they don't bother visiting the library. A problem is also experienced with the proper selection of materials, as parliamentarians are not willing to give any input as to what they need.

The KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library experiences problems with non-utilisation of the service during recessions, but when the Parliament is in session they are overwhelmed with requests, especially for undocumented information. The librarian indicated the need to be ready with the latest statistics on a variety of issues, as requests are always urgent and needed yesterday. Lack of focus on the clientele to be served is still experienced from the side of management, as they do not seem to have clarity on the issue. This affects the staff allocation to the library.

Gauteng Legislative Information Centre reported problems with real time delivery of information due to the slowness of technology. This is caused by a lot of information traffic on the legislature's system.

The North West Provincial Legislative Library shares the problem of information needed at very short notice. This leads to problems in providing thorough information. Problems with clear statement of the specific information need are also experienced.

The Northern Cape experiences problems with under-utilisation of available resources by parliamentarians as only a few make use of the services. The other parliamentarians send their personal assistants to liaise with the librarians. Functions to market the library are not attended at all.

The Western Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Free State Provincial Legislature did not report any problems.

6.3.10 Size of collections

The size of the different collections is demonstrated in Table 14.

Table 14: Size of information sources collections
(N=10)

Legislative Libraries	Library of Parliament	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	KwaZulu/ Natal	Mpuma-langa	Limpopo	Gauteng	North West	Northern Cape	Free State
Books	96506	4000	4000	20000	3000	1700	1860	3500	2000	2000
Newspaper subscriptions		8	12	10	9	5	11	7	16	12
Journal/Serial subscription	161	31		12	8	14	59	32	4	40
Electronic journal subscription			1		1	1	1			
On-line databases subscribed to	3			1		8	5	3	6	2
Databases on diskette/CD-ROMs		2	1	2						
CD-ROMs	18			2		30	8		4	
Newspaper clippings*		1		1	3			1		1
Pamphlets									231	50
Videos			15	Few		25		1		70
Cassettes			20					15		5
CDs		50	9							
Legal Deposit journals	2250									
Magazines									19	

* Refers to newspaper clipping collections held in the library

With the exception of the Library of Parliament and the KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library who reported stock of 96506 and 20000 respectively, all the other libraries have very small collections from which to satisfy the wide array of information needs that parliamentarians could have. Newspaper subscriptions at all the libraries are of such a nature that it should satisfy the need for the most current information on issues of the day. Though the Library of Parliament did not indicate any subscriptions it should be noted that the library is a Legal Deposit library, and as such does receive the newspapers. The availability of all the major South African newspapers was observed during a visit to the library by the researcher. Journal subscriptions vary a lot, and can probably be ascribed to financial constraints within each legislative library, as well as the demands made on it by the parliamentarians. Access to databases seems to be common in most of the libraries, be it online or off-line. The majority seems to provide access to the SABINET Online database (discussed in Chapter 3), thus serving a dual purpose of providing database access as well as access to the online news-clipping service. The availability and utilisation of the videos was discussed in a previous section (6.3.7).

6.3.11 Reading room availability

The utilisation of reading rooms could give an indication of the general utilisation of the library and its information sources by the parliamentarians themselves. Reading rooms are available in the Library of Parliament, and the Provincial Legislative Libraries of the Western Cape, KwaZulu/Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and North West.

6.3.12 Number of reading rooms available

Both the Library of Parliament and the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislative Library has two reading rooms available for utilisation by their parliamentarians. Western Cape, KwaZulu/Natal, Gauteng and the North West Provincial Legislative Libraries only have one reading room available.

6.3.13 Position of reading rooms

All the reading rooms are attached to the library, thus forming part of the main parliamentary buildings.

6.3.14 Utilisation of reading rooms

The Library of Parliament and the Western Cape Provincial Legislative Library reported that their reading rooms are used very often, while the KwaZulu/Natal's reading room is used often during sessions or when there are committee meetings taking place, otherwise it is seldom used. The Provincial Legislative Libraries of the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and North West reported that their reading rooms are used very seldom. Gauteng reported that their reading room is used very often by individuals (about 10%) within the parliamentary corps, while about 50% use it often. About 40% use it seldom.

6.3.15 Reasons for utilisation/non-utilisation of reading rooms

The Library of Parliament keeps all the major newspapers in the reading rooms, and these are in huge demand. The researcher has observed the utilisation of the reading rooms for this purpose during a visit to the Library.

Proximity to and easy access play a huge role in utilisation as proven by the situation at the Western Cape Provincial Legislative Library with their reading room located on the same floor as the Chamber and within easy access of the Legislators' offices. This results in the room being frequented very often.

Gauteng Legislature Information Centre reported that the individuals using their rooms very often do so mostly to track down new information and for browsing. The group using the room regularly does so to prepare for forthcoming legislative business and events. The group that uses the Information Centre seldom does so only to read newspapers on hotly debated or controversial topical issues.

At the other Provincial Legislative Libraries the rooms are seldom utilised for a variety of reasons. The Eastern Cape librarian reported that her impression was that *the parliamentarians do not seem to regard the information available in the library as* of importance, thus they seldom care to visit the facility. At KwaZulu/Natal the facility is only utilised during busy parliamentary periods, but otherwise ignored. Alternatively an intermediate such as a personal assistant is sent to find the necessary information for them. Mpumalanga's parliamentarians receive a copy of the daily newspaper in their offices, thus providing them with the opportunity to catch up with the most current events in their own work environment. The librarian reports that for other information requests the telephone is used, thus not necessitating a personal visit to the library.

At the North West Provincial Legislative Library the preference is to borrow the materials and utilise it in their offices or at home, as the parliamentarians are always in a hurry and don't have time to sit down in the library to do their reading.

6.3.16 External service delivery and networking

Many specialised libraries offer exclusive services to their clients, but because of the nature of the information kept in these specific libraries it might be of importance to also allow external individuals/groups to make use of their services. The nature of the information required by parliamentarians also necessitates that the libraries need to network with outside individuals/groups/organisations to find whatever information is not available in the library. This question aimed at determining who else benefited from the sources available in the libraries, and which individual/groups/organisations were used for networking purposes. Table 15 shows the results.

Table 15: External individuals/groups/organisations served/networked with
N = 10
S = Serve   N = Network

Individuals/Groups/Organisations	Library of Parliament		Western Cape		Eastern Cape		KwaZulu/Natal		Mpuma-langa		Limpopo		Gauteng		North West		Northern Cape		Free State	
	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N
Ordinary citizens							✓	✓	✓		✓						✓		✓	
Committee members	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Parliamentary staff	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Other legislatures in South Africa	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓
Local bodies/Organisations				✓			✓		✓	✓			✓				✓		✓	
Ministries	✓			✓				✓						✓	✓		✓		✓	
Academics	✓			✓			✓	✓						✓					✓	
Researchers	✓			✓			✓	✓						✓	✓			✓	✓	
International bodies/Organisations/Parliaments	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				✓	✓						✓	
Other libraries in South Africa				✓	✓		✓	✓						✓	✓				✓	
Provincial Government Departments																	✓			
School children																			✓	

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The legislative libraries offer access to its information sources to a wide variety of individuals/groups/organisations. It was interesting to note that ordinary citizens are afforded utilisation of the sources at 5 of the establishments. It would be interesting to establish the nature of these visits. Networking or providing access to sources between the legislative libraries in South Africa seem to be an established practice, as all mentioned contact through one of the options. Parliamentary staff are also allowed to make use of the facilities, which explains the utilisation of personal assistants to do information searches for the parliamentarians. An interesting group served is the school children in the Free State Provincial Legislative Library. As in the case of the ordinary citizens' visits this could also be of interest to determine the nature of these visits.

At some libraries networking seem to be very important, while some like the Library of Parliament, the Eastern Cape and the Free State Provincial Legislative libraries do not put a high premium on these activities. The KwaZulu/Natal Legislative Library and Gauteng Legislature Information Centre have been the most active in establishing contact with external sources.

6.3.17 International Network contacts

Contacts for networking purposes are established for various reasons, and this section aimed at establishing which institutions/organisations were used as networking contacts and for what reason.

The Library of Parliament has established links with the World Bank as well as other international parliaments for the purpose of exchanging information. Limpopo Provincial Legislative Library has established contact with the European Union Parliamentary Support Programme as well as the Canadian Parliamentary Centre. The nature of these contacts is donor-based.

The other libraries indicating networking contact with international bodies/organisations did not respond to this question.

6.3.18 Marketing of services and products

Marketing of services plays an important role in the utilisation and knowledge of the services and sources available. A wide variety of methods can be used, and often creativity contributes to the success of a marketing campaign. The libraries were required to indicate what methods are used in their respective libraries.

Table 16 provides insight into these strategies.

Table 16 : Marketing strategies

N= 10

Legislative Library	Strategies followed
Library of Parliament	– Providing brochures advertising services – Publish an internal newsletter
Western Cape	– In-house publications
Eastern Cape	– Fliers – Exhibitions – Book displays – Publication of acquisitions lists
KwaZulu/Natal	– Displays – Acquisitions lists of new books – Proactive research
Mpumalanga	– Brochure on services provided – Organise exhibitions
Limpopo	– Presentations – Current Awareness Services – Book displays – Providing bookmarks with contact details of the library
Gauteng	– Information brochures – Information Centre newsletter – Accession list ˋ – Displays – Book launches – Word-of-mouth during user education services – The orientation programme for new parliamentarians include a service and products manual
North West	– Involve legislators with selection process by circulating catalogues – Acquisitions list of new books – Celebrate focus days such as World Book Day or Literacy Day. Presentations are held on these topics
Northern Cape	– Exhibitions – Arrange seminars – Contribute to an internal newsletter
Free State	– Organise a library day where all legislators are invited to attend

From the table it would seem as if the traditional library marketing strategies are followed in most cases. Innovation is found in the bookmarks with library contact details used in the Limpopo Provincial Legislative Library, as well as the celebration of specific days in North West Provincial Legislative Library. Gauteng Legislature Information Centre's use of personal communications during user education is an extremely effective tool, as the products/services can be seen and experienced in the process. Their inclusion of a services and products manual in the orientation programmes is also a novel idea. This provides the new parliamentarians with a detailed overview of all services/products available to them, as well as how to use it.

6.3.19 Restrictions on the utilisation of library services

With the exception of the Eastern Cape and North West Provincial Legislative Libraries all the other libraries indicated restrictions on the utilisation of their services.

6.3.20 Type of restrictions applied

Restrictions can be introduced either on a membership basis, or on services offered. Table 17 provides the results of this question.

Table 17 : Types of restrictions on library utilisation

N = 10

Legislative Library	Restriction/s
Library of Parliament	– Membership restricted to parliamentarians only
Western Cape	– Membership restricted to parliamentarians only – No services offered to family, friends, constituents of parliamentarians – No assistance with school or other non-parliamentary projects
Eastern Cape	– None
KwaZulu/Natal	– Public not allowed to take out library materials
Mpumalanga	– Reference material not loaned out – Newspapers only to be read in the library
Limpopo	– Non-partisan work performed for Committees and parliamentarians. No party political work is done
Gauteng	– Some electronic products can only be accessed through Information Officers because of licensing agreements.

North West	–	None
Northern Cape	–	General public can only use services inside the library
Free State	–	Membership restrictions – only parliamentarians, supporting staff of parliamentarians, political parties and legislative staff may be members

6.3.21 Service statistics

Statistics are good indicators of the level of utilization of services. As it was assumed the statistics were not always at hand the libraries could either provide statistics or just indicate if specific services were used "Often", "Seldom" or "Never". It was hoped that these alternative indicators could provide an insight into the level of activities taking place in the libraries. Where statistics were provided it is indicated in brackets. The options given were

- Materials circulated/borrowed
- Inter-library Lending requests handled
- Translations done
- Information (reference) requests
- Information and analysis requested

The Library of Parliament indicated that the following services were used "often":

- Materials circulated (1211)
- Inter-library Lending requests handled (380)
- Information (reference) requests (3381)

No indication was given as to the utilisation of the options: "Translations done" or "Information and analysis requested". It is assumed that where no indication is given the service is not utilised at all.

Western Cape Provincial Legislative Library indicated that all the services were used "often", except "Translations done" where no indication has been given.

The services in the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislative Library are "seldom" utilised. Statistics reveal that only 15 materials were circulated/borrowed and 2 Inter-library

Lending requests handled in the previous year. Five information (reference) requests were received, while two requests for information and analysis were handled.

KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library reported that materials circulation/borrowing, Inter-library lending and Information requests are often used, but translations are never done. No indication was given on the requests for information and analysis to be done.

Mpumalanga Provincial Legislative Library did not answer this question as the librarian was only recently appointed to the position, and the information was not at hand.

Limpopo Provincial Legislative Library provided the following statistics:
- Materials circulated/borrowed (350)
- Inter-library Lending requests handled (55)
- Translations done (0)
- Information (reference) requests (75)
- Information and analysis requested (90).

Gauteng Legislature Information Centre reports that the following services are utilised "often": Materials circulated/borrowed; information (reference) requests; and requests for information and analysis. Inter-library Lending is seldom used, while translations are never used, as it is not a function of the Library. However the Public Relations and Communications Unit resorting under the same Directorate as the Information Centre do translations.

At North West Provincial Legislative Library the services of "Materials circulation", "Information (reference) requests" and "Information and analysis request" is "often" utilised. No response was given on the other two options.

The Northern Cape Provincial Legislative Library could not give any indication, as their staff complement does not allow time to keep statistics.

Within the Free State Provincial Legislative Library materials are circulated/borrowed often (4010), whilst "Inter-library Lending requests" and "Information and analysis requests" are handled only seldom. Translations are never done. Information (reference) requests are received "often".

6.3.22 Perceived information format preference

Technological developments have enlarged the variety of formats in which information can be communicated to parliamentarians. Based on an individual's knowledge and interaction with the different formats, as well as external factors such as literacy, educational level, disabilities and so on, preferences for certain formats in which information is to be communicated can be expressed by the parliamentarians. Librarians were asked to indicate the preferences as experienced by them during their service delivery to the parliamentarians. A Lickerd Scale was used to express the level of preference attached to a specific format. One indicated a very high preference, while five showed a very low preference. Where the librarians indicated no preference for a format it was assumed that in their experience the parliamentarians have not showed any preference for that format at all. This will be indicated with the number 0. Table 18 shows the results.

It was interesting to note that the libraries perceived personal communications especially face-to-face communications to be highly appreciated by their clients, while communications via the electronic medium received a low ranking by the libraries. This is contradicted by the opinions of the parliamentarians as reported in 6.2.2.9 where the printed format, as well as the electronic format was the preferred options, while oral communication received the lowest ranking.

Table 18: Preference perceived in libraries for specific information formats during the dissemination of information process

N = 10

Communication format	Library of Parliament	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	KwaZulu/ Natal	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	Gauteng	North West	Northern Cape	Free State
Face-to-face	1	1	0	1	4	1	1	2	1	3
Telephonically	1	3	0	2	1	1	3	2	2	1
In book form	0	4	0	1	1	0	2	2	2	1
In report form	0	3	0	2	1	1	1	1	2	3
As an abstract	0	2	0	3	4	0	2	0	5	3
In an illustrated form	0	5	1	3	5	1	0	5	5	3
As an e-mail communication	1	3	0	4	4	4	3	5	5	3
Audio-visual form	0	5	0	5	5	3	0	5	5	5
In a visual form only	0	5	0	5	5	0	0	5	5	5
In audio form only	0	5	0	5	5	0	0	5	5	5
As a display/exhibition	0	5	0	4	4	0	0	4	5	5
As a facsimile	1	3	1	2	1	2	0	4	2	3
As a Selective Dissemination of Information service	0	4	0	1	1	0	2	4	5	5
Through researchers	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

6.3.23 Availability of computers in the library

Computer technology has become an integral part of both information provision and as a tool for daily administration. The section aimed at determining the availability, or non-availability of these tools. All the respondents indicated that they have computers available in the library.

6.3.24 Number of computers available to staff and clients

Computers can either be for the sole use of the staff in the library, thus making it difficult for a parliamentarian who does not have access to a computer in his/her office or at home, to do his/her own information searches accessing the Internet or information in CD-ROM form. The question aimed at determining who is provided with access to, and the number of, computers available for utilisation by the different groups. Table 19 demonstrates the results:

Table 19 : Computer availability in the libraries N =10

Legislative libraries	Parliamentarians	Library staff	Research assistants	Researchers
Library of Parliament	8	37	0	0
Western Cape	0	2	0	0
Eastern Cape	0	3	0	2
KwaZulu/Natal	0	4	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	1	0	1
Limpopo	2	4	0	6 (these are not available in the library)
Gauteng	1	7	0	7
North West	1	1	4	1
Northern Cape	0	2	0	0
Free State	0	3	0	0

Though all the libraries provide computers for their staff members only the Library of Parliament (8), Limpopo (2) and North West Provincial Legislative libraries (1), provide their users with access to a computer. Researchers and research assistants are also in some cases not provided with access to computers. It should however be remembered that in the case of the Library of Parliament and Northern Cape

Provincial Legislative Library the research services do not form part of the library and it is then probable that the researchers are provided with computers within their own departments. KwaZulu/Natal indicated that researchers all have their own computers on their desks, and that plans are underway to provide Legislators with computer access in the library. The Free State does not have a research unit (6.3.4).

6.3.25 Networking of the computers

To be able to do information searches using the Internet the computers need to be networked to a Wide Area Network. All the libraries indicated that their computers are networked.

6.3.26 Connection to the Parliamentary Network

The libraries can be networked by either attaching to the network used by the Parliament or can be connected via their own network. The question aimed at determining in which manner the network connections were established. With the exception of Mpumalanga, and Western Cape Provincial Legislative Libraries and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislative Library who indicated that the Parliament does not have its own network, all the other libraries are networked via the parliamentary network system.

6.3.27 Name of Network connected to

Only Limpopo, North West and Northern Cape Provincial Legislative Libraries answered this question. Limpopo's library is connected to the servers in the Premier's Office, while the other two are connected to the Local Area Network used by the Government Services.

6.3.28 Main functions of computers in the Legislative Libraries

As indicated in 6.3.22 computers can be used to perform a variety of functions, not all information related. Table 20 shows the application of the computers in the legislative libraries.

Table 20 : Main functions of computers in Legislative Libraries

N = 10

Functions	Library of Parliament	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Kwa-Zulu/Natal	Mpuma-langa	Limpopo	Gauteng	North West	Northern Cape	Free State	%
Provide access to on-line/electronic information services to staff	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	90
Provide Internet access to staff	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	80
Provide facilities for staff to do their library/research service	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	80
Provide access to off-line/electronic information services to staff	✔	✔		✔			✔		✔	✔	60
Provide e-mail/communications facilities for staff/researchers	✔	✔	✔ (Library staff only)	✔			✔		✔	✔	60
Provide Internet access to parliamentarians	✔				✔	✔		✔	✔		50
Provide facilities for Parliamentarians without access to computers in their offices/at home to do their work				✔		✔		✔		✔	40
Provide e-mail/communications facilities for parliamentarians				✔ (not to all)	✔	✔			✔		40
Provide facilities for the researchers to compile their documents				✔		✔	✔				30

Nine (90%) of the libraries use the computers to allow their staff access to on-line/ electronic sources of information, while 8 (80%) utilise it for the purpose of doing their administration work concerning their library/research service. Eight (80%) use it for the purpose of giving staff access to the Internet, while in 7 (70%) of the cases it is used to provide e-mail facilities to the staff. It would not seem as if the libraries deem it a very high priority to provide either Internet access (50%) or e-mail facilities to parliamentarians (40%). This could be because apparently many parliamentarians do have access to Internet and e-mail from their offices. The researchers once again are in most cases not catered for in the library, as they are operating from different premises.

6.3.29 Computer utilisation for information-seeking purposes by parliamentarians in the library

In the case of the Library of Parliament the computers are used often for the purpose of seeking information on the Internet, as well as for on-line and off-line databases or CD-ROM searching. At the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislative Library the parliamentarians often do Internet searches on the computers but never use it for any other electronic searches. At Limpopo Provincial Legislative Library the situation is the same, except that they use the computers seldom for an on-line/off-line electronic information search.

At the Gauteng Legislature Information Centre parliamentarians seldom make use of the facilities either for Internet access or to access on-line/off-line electronic sources.

Parliamentarians at the North West Provincial Legislative Library seldom use the library's computers for an Internet search and never for an on-line/off-line electronic search. Though the facility is available at the Northern Cape Provincial Legislative Library the parliamentarians never use it at all as the librarian reports that the researchers do these kinds of searches for them.

6.3.30 Other technology used in the library

Advancements in technology have made it possible to use a variety of instruments to

receive, transmit and disseminate information. In the work environment where access to information is at a peak these technologies are paramount. The question aimed at determining what other technologies, other than the computer, were used in the information provision process. Table 21 will demonstrate the different technologies used.

Table 21 : Technologies used in the information searching process
N=10

Legislative Libraries	Faxing	Imaging technology e.g. scanning	Library networking
Library of Parliament	✔	✔	✔
Western Cape	✔		
Eastern Cape	✔	✔	
KwaZulu/Natal	✔	✔	✔
Mpumalanga	✔		
Limpopo	✔	✔	
Gauteng	✔	✔	✔
North West	✔		✔
Northern Cape	✔		
Free State	✔	✔	✔
Total	10	6	5
Percentage	100	60	50

Using the fax machine 10 (100%) is the most popular application of technology, other than the computer, as it allows documents to be transmitted and received simultaneously. This is thus a valuable tool to use when a document containing information needed at short notice, has to be received or sent. The use of imaging technology is not that well-utilised, as only over half of the libraries indicated using it. Only 50 % used technology to network with other libraries.

6.3.31 Important developments in the library/research services in each respective library

This question was asked to gain any other important or interesting information about the libraries that was not covered by the previous questions. The libraries were asked

to comment on things like recent developments in their libraries, new products/services recently introduced, management styles, comments on anticipated future developments in their libraries, and anything else that might have been of interest.

Only five libraries endeavoured to answer the question.

- *Eastern Cape Provincial Legislative Library* has recently installed an advanced library management system (PALS) which place them in a position to issue membership cards to their users.

- *KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library* reports that because of the advancement of technology a paradigm shift in the way in which information is provided has taken place, and that a need has been identified within their library to embark on an information audit so as to be able to add value and reach a competitive advantage over other information suppliers. However their efforts are hampered by the lack of finding a niche in the Legislature. They hope to overcome this impediment by a strong marketing campaign and focus on user needs.

Concerning the management style followed theirs is a participative style, especially as the library is a specialised field, of which the department to whom the library is responsible does not have enough knowledge to properly manage it on its own.

Their future plans include the development of a proper Business Plan that will allow them to function optimally.

- The *Limpopo Provincial Legislative Library* reports that they experience slow but continued growth and they expect this trend to continue in the future. They have recently subscribed to an additional SABINET database, i.e. *SA ePublications.*

The management style used in this library is of a consultative nature, with a rotating chair for all staff meetings.

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- *North West Provincial Legislative Library* will employ an additional staff member as soon as the organisational structure is completed. A computerised library system will be installed soon.

- At the *Northern Cape Provincial Legislative Library* they have recently subscribed to two additional SABINET databases: *Bill-Tracker* and *SA ePublications*. An active library committee consisting of key parliamentarians and officials has also recently been established.

A participative management style is used involving all staff, and requiring input from all. As far as the future is concerned, concern has been expressed that future growth would not be possible without enough staff.

6.4 SECTION THREE: OBSERVATIONS AT THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT, CAPE TOWN

6.4.1 Location and observation of the library building

The library forms part of the Parliamentary Complex, situated in a tranquil environment. The building is well maintained and the garden well kept. The Library is part of the Parliament House, a very imposing building, with pillars and marble steps on the outside. The interior is as impressive, with wood finishing used all over. The Library however is not a clearly recognised or visible feature inside the building. As its entrance leads out from a corridor it is very difficult for an outsider to distinguish which door will lead to the library. Only a small plaque on the door indicates the existence of the library. No clear direction posters to the Library were observed.

6.4.2 Inside of the library building

The main library consists of a three-storied hall as the library is entered (all three stories can be observed from the entrance), as well as two reading rooms leading off to the right where books, journals and newspapers are kept. To the left is a small room mainly used by library assistants for the purposes of photocopying and other administrative duties. A spacious cellar forming part of the library is used to store some of the Africana materials, paintings, and to provide seating space for external

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researchers using the library facilities. As the library is bursting at its seams the collection is currently scattered all over the parliamentary complex.

Computers are available in the library and it has been observed that they were in constant use, mainly by the staff on duty, which both mans the enquiry desk and does the searches in between. Because of a lack of space staff rooms are scattered throughout the building, with especially the Special Services Unit situated far away from the actual library.

Inside the library no visible signs or posters indicating services offered by the library were observed, neither any indication of how to use the services.

The Library does provide tables and chairs to sit and read or take notes. Lighting is ample.

A quick check of the materials showed many outdated materials in between the rest of the collection. The reason for this is the fact that the Library is a Legal Deposit Library and as such are not allowed to weed the collection too stringently. Current services are available in the form of the latest copies of newspapers and journals. Especially the newspapers were put to good use during the period of observation.

The materials are arranged according to the Dewey Decimal System. Because of the general outlay of the facility, as well as the fact that the materials are scattered through several locations, it can become a daunting task for a Parliamentarian who would like to do a search unaided. Small labels indicate the Dewey numbers covered on a particular shelf, but no indication of the subjects covered is given. Knowledge of the Dewey Decimal System seems to be assumed. As a large portion of the materials can only be accessed by using a ladder to reach specific shelves, this is not an option for any person with a fear of heights.

6.4.3 Library staff

The staff was professional in their service delivery, and the staff morale seems to be good. Users have been assisted in a friendly manner.

6.5 Summary

The chapter dealt with the analysis and presentation of the findings from the three instruments used to obtain data during the survey. The major findings were:

- Parliamentarians experience constant need for information, whether in session or in recess

- A wide variety of sources are used to satisfy their information needs

- Access to Internet is rapidly becoming a reality to most of the parliamentarians, and a strong preference for this source of information has been expressed

- Though information needs vary depending on the interest and parliamentary involvement of the parliamentarian, strong preferences for certain topics, such as Governance, Politics and Provincial/Local government, have been expressed.

- For receiving their information parliamentarians still expressed strong preference for print-based sources, but information in a digital format has emerged as a strong contender.

- Despite their convenient locations it would seem as if the parliamentary libraries are not frequented as would be expected, which should be a matter of concern to those working in the libraries.

- The ten parliamentary libraries offer a.wide variety of services and products, which could potentially provide the parliamentarians with most of the information needed. However many libraries report under-utilisation. Aggressive marketing and service delivery could alleviate the problem.

- Computers and other technological devices used in information delivery are available in all the libraries. In some cases the parliamentarians are provided access to the computers for information-seeking purposes, and in some the facilities are still restricted for staff use only.

The next chapter will present the discussions of the findings.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the results emerging from the analysis of the research findings presented in chapter six. The chapter will relate the literature reviewed in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 and relate it to the results analysed and presented in Chapter 6. The discussion is organised using the objectives and the research questions as its guideline for discussions.

7.2 Information sources, services and systems

Third World countries, specifically Africa, are widely perceived to be information-poor. This is attributed to many factors, such as the poor publication output, poor bibliographic control, stringent censorship rules and authors who for economic purposes prefer to publish in a market language such as English, using foreign publishers (Chakava 1998). Information services and systems such as libraries, inter library lending services and access to electronic information systems and sources are uncommon in regions where information poverty is the norm. Thapisa (1996) suggests that information-poor environments harm democracies. As a case in point, he cites the harm done to the decision-making process in the Botswana National Assembly, as their parliamentarians do not have the benefit of a complete information structure.

Governments are major producers, publishers and processors of information in a country, particularly the kind of information needed for governance. Most of these government publications are in the form of grey literature. The nature of these publications militates against their bibliographic control, making it difficult to collect and access them (Behrens 2000). The problem is compounded in Africa where bibliographic control is in many cases non-existent, and sources are widely dispersed and jealously guarded by government departments (Kaniki in Mostert 1997). The

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problem is alleviated in South Africa with the Legal Deposit law that obliges all publishers to deposit copies of their publications in the five Legal Deposit Libraries, of which the Library of Parliament in Cape Town is one. Though the Legal Deposit law stipulates that all published materials be deposited with the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, the nature of the clientele using this specific library, as well as the nature of their information needs, does not warrant the incorporation of all the information sources received as a result of the law. Specific selection criteria based on the profile and needs of the parliamentarians dictates the sources accepted and those rejected.

In contrast with the rest of Africa, South Africa has a burgeoning publishing trade dating back to 1824 (Muller 1968). As shown in Chapter 3 many publishing houses, both local and international, are actively involved in the book trade. Newspapers both regionally, nationally and internationally, are widely available in a myriad of shops, cafes or from street vendors. With the advent of democracy, the stringent censorship criteria, crippling so many Third World countries, disappeared, bringing in its stead one of the most liberal publication policies in the world (Burger 2002).

Throughout South African history, libraries formed part of our development (Taylor 1967). From a historical perspective provision of information services was far more advanced in the areas designated for whites, than those for people from other race groups, resulting in information-poor environments within those communities (Zaaiman, Roux and Rykheer 1988). Bekker and Lategan (1988) observe that even in those townships where libraries were erected for the utilisation thereof by Black people, libraries were seen as tools of the apartheid government, and as such were not frequented by the public. Within the new democratic dispensation, efforts are underway to rectify the imbalances created by apartheid laws.

Currently libraries, be it public-, school-, special- or at tertiary institutions, are available in the majority of townships, cities and towns throughout the country. Though physical access to the information sources contained in them is not always feasible, the SAIS and the SABINET online systems potentially provide access to the collections of the majority of libraries in southern Africa (Behrens 2000). Both these systems plays an integral part in providing materials to areas which are still

disadvantaged concerning easy access to information sources, such as remote towns and rural areas.

Technology has changed the information landscape worldwide. South Africa, being one of the major utilisers of the Internet in the world, can boast modern technology and networks providing access to a wide variety of electronic information sources such as on-line bookshops, newspapers, journals and databases, parliamentary websites, both local and international, reference source materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedia, and webpages containing information on a myriad of topics and organisations.

The study found that Internet access is widespread amongst the respondents as 78% had access to networked computers, either at home or in the office. Actual utilisation of this source was rated at 63% of the respondents. Taking into account that electronic information sources, such as the Internet were introduced to the general South African public only within the last decade, this is a good reflection of the widespread availability and utilisation of information technology, as well as to the adaptability of humankind. Compared to the 14% Internet access and utilisation in Ghana (Alemna and Skouby 2000), and 73% by the Members of the House of Commons, United Kingdom (Serema 1999), Internet utilisation by South African parliamentarians is relatively well placed. This has come about as a result of the government's commitment to the advancement of the status and availability of technology. This however does not necessarily mean that technological problems are not experienced. Some respondents indicated that they experienced problems with bandwidth that contributes to extremely slow access. Inadequate or faulty technology also contributes to much frustration amongst Internet users. Lack of both computer and information seeking skills is experienced as a major contributor to under-utilisation of the source.

7.3 Trends in information source utilisation by parliamentarians

As demonstrated in section 7.2, information is available and can be accessed through a variety of sources and systems. Familiarity with the source/system might influence selection, though the kind of information contained in the source might also influence choice.

Various studies done amongst parliamentarians indicated a preference for print-based sources (Orton, Marcella and Baxter 2000). The findings of this study correspond with those studies indicating that traditional sources such as books, journals, newspapers and governmental publications are still the most preferred information sources amongst parliamentarians. As described in section 6.2.2.5, both familiarity with the sources, easy access and use whenever needed plays a big role in its ultimate choice. As only 10% indicated that they never use newspapers it can be assumed that newspapers are a very important source of information for the parliamentarians. Issues of the day seem to be important. Governmental publications provide information on current policies and activities of government therefore it could have been expected to be well utilised. The use of such sources proved to be relatively high with 60% of the parliamentarians using them often.

As mentioned in section 7.2 the utilisation of electronic sources has been surprisingly high. Common access to the Internet is a recent development in South Africa. In an unpublished study done by the Library of Parliament in 1997 it was found that the median age level of parliamentarians was between 40 – 60, indicating a generation not exposed to electronic information sources. Despite this non-exposure, respondents seem to have taken advantage of the availability of the source in their work or home environment, and developed their own searching strategies for utilising the source. The sources providing updated, full-text data such as e-news and e-journals were well utilised. It was found that portals giving access to a variety of local or international newspapers or journals were preferred. Using this option news from different perspectives is easily available. The e-news-websites also offered the additional option of classifying news according to subject categories, saving time and effort. The availability of e-news archives leads to their utilisation in some cases. This proves the value of having a source at hand that can simultaneously provide both a past and present view on a topic.

Typical information searches on the Internet correlate strongly with the topics indicated in section 6.2.2.8, with access to political and party-political websites, receiving the highest response. Findings indicated that time was a very big factor influencing Internet utilisation. Complaints about slow technology, insufficient time to search effectively, and too many references to sift through were observed. These

are common to many Internet users, but given the time constraint, under which parliamentarians are operating, these factors can form a huge barrier in its effective utilisation.

The low utilisation of on-line databases, digital and virtual libraries can probably be attributed to ignorance about their existence, but also to the fact that in many cases a membership fee has to be paid.

With the exception of the information systems within the parliamentary work environment such as the legislative library and the government departments, information systems are not well utilised. The only exception is the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are well-utilised. When taking decisions concerning people at grass-roots level the NGOs are often the best sources to tap in to. Receiving information on the real issues and problems experienced lead to broader perspectives than just relying on what is presented in official government sources.

Legislative libraries function within the immediate work environment of the parliamentarians. As the main service of a library is to provide and disseminate information based on the needs of their users the legislative libraries are under-utilised. It is not clear why only 34% indicated that they use the legislative libraries often. Another 34% only use it seldom. This situation raises concerns about the perceived effectiveness of the services offered. Ineffective marketing strategies can provide a possible answer, though lack of library experience from the parliamentarians or a general mistrust in the partisanship of the service could also be possible reasons.

An assumption made in the study was that the oral tradition is still widely used as a means of seeking information. Thapisa (1996) describes it as a major source of information gathering amongst parliamentarians in Africa. However, in this study oral sources are not as highly valued as anticipated. A possible explanation could be the ready availability of many other sources of information. The information rich environment provides many alternatives that act as reliable and easily accessible sources. Seeking advice from an oral source can be a time consuming process, especially if it is a source from outside the immediate work environment.

This shift in the preference for disseminated information was explained by the revelation that whereas the majority of parliamentarians still prefer to receive their information in hard copy format (74%), an equal preference was expressed for information in a digital format (60%). The preference for oral communications was 14%, indicating a significant swing from the oral tradition. It could be argued that the preference for either hardcopy or digital format is influenced by increased preference for information that can be accessed at any time. Digital information sources can be printed out and stored in hardcopy format for later reference and convenient usage.

It was revealed that the majority of parliamentarians (75%) obtain their information using their own personal sources. As the study did not aim to determine the nature of these sources it remains unclear what that entails. The quality of the personal sources could also not be ascertained. However, it is the opinion of the researcher that parliamentarians should be educated on the necessity of using verified information, especially where it concerns information used for policy legislative activities that affect the entire nation. The notion of own searching of information is confirmed by the fact that 62% indicated that other than using their own personal sources, they obtain information by using their own PC. The growing utilisation of computers for information searching must be viewed as both a threat and an opportunity to formal information systems such as the legislative libraries. The threat lies in the sidelining of the library as a source of information, making the institution obsolete. The opportunity however should be seen in the fact that, taking the time constraints of the parliamentarians into consideration, value-added services can be provided by doing the searches for the parliamentarians pro-actively, and by providing it electronically.

7.3.1 Role of education in information source/system utilization

It is only very recently that every eligible individual in this country could be nominated, and voted into office regardless of race, colour or creed. From a historical perspective, where everyday life for a majority of the population has been regulated by stringent and harsh rules, "access to that educational foundation necessary for further learning, quality employment opportunities, or even full and active social and political participation" was the domain of a privileged few (Makhubela 1998:2). This

could lead to the assumption that the current group of parliamentarians lacked educational opportunities, and was provided with a very low educational standard. However, from the responses received a very different picture emerged, revealing a highly educated group of people with very few not in possession of at least a school-leaving certificate. This is contrary to the findings by Thapisa (1996), who reveals that the majority of African parliamentarians have not moved beyond a basic education, but in correlation with a study done by Alemna and Skouby in Ghana (2000). During an informal interview with Mr. Burgers[14] from the Library of Parliament, he confirmed the high educational levels, explaining that it mostly was due to the fact that within the current group of parliamentarians many are ex-activists who left the country during the apartheid era to receive their educational training in foreign countries. On their return to the country in 1994 they were well qualified and suitably equipped to take up their positions in Parliament. This factor can influence the information seeking patterns of future parliamentarians who grew up in the country as their educational experiences might differ radically.

The current high levels of education can be seen as an asset to the governance of the nation, as it indicates the intellectual capacity to think critically and the ability to engage in effective debate. The high attainment of tertiary qualifications is a good indication of the ability of the respondents to engage in the activity of seeking, accessing and retrieving information. Doing a cross-tabulation of the results, using the "often" choice as an indicator, it was found that parliamentarians with a high educational level used a bigger variety of sources and systems to avail themselves of information. It is expected from individuals studying towards attainment of further educational qualifications that they utilise a variety of sources. Knowledge gained from the different information sources is then applied within their working environment.

Respondents with a Matric and higher in general made use of all the information sources and systems mentioned in the study, while those in possession of a Grade 10 qualification availed themselves of only 12 of the available options, noticeably with the print options as well as some of the electronic options. Familiarity with an

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[14] Informal interview with Mr. Burgers from the Library of Parliament Cape Town on 17 April 2003.

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information source plays a big role in its ultimate preference, especially within less educated groups. Within the strong text-based educational environment that has been in existence in South Africa for many decades, familiarity with printed information sources is to be expected. Even the electronic sources utilised within this group, i.e. electronic journals and electronic newspapers have their familiar printed counterparts, thus making it a familiar source of information. Respondents in possession of a Grade 8 only used 5 options. This led to the assumption that a close relationship exists between exposure to information sources during formative years and the utilisation thereof. Table 22 provides insight into the relationship between education and the utilisation of information sources.

Sources	Post-graduate degree	Under-graduate	Diploma	Certificate	Grade 12 (Matric)	Grade 10	Grade 8
PRINT-BASED SOURCES							
Books	47	26	18	3	11	1	2
Journals	31	22	15	2	8	1	
Newspapers	47	35	28	6	14	2	
Magazines	31	25	14	2	7	1	
Governmental publications	39	27	16	3	11	2	2
ELECTRONIC SOURCES							
Internet	31	20	19	5	8	1	
Digital libraries on the Internet	14	7	4	2	3		
Virtual libraries on the Internet	10	4	2	3	1		
On-line databases	20	5	5	2	3		
Electronic journals on the internet	30	18	14	3	5	2	
Electronic newspapers	47	21	28	6	14	2	
INFORMATION SYSTEMS							
Government Departments	29	21	14	3	9	2	1
NGOs	17	12	9	1	4	1	
Parliamentary library	17	16	12	2	7	1	1
Public library	7	6	4		1		
Embassies	9	2	1		3	1	
National archives	5	5	2	2	1		
ORAL SOURCES							
Parliamentary colleagues	14	17	12	2	11		1
Individuals in the private sector	15	9		10	1	5	
Individuals in the public sector	14	11	13	2	5		
Chiefs/indunas	3	1	3	1	3		

Table 22: Relationship between level of education and information source utilisation (n=167)

7.4 Information needs and information seeking strategies

Information seeking is an action taken in order to satisfy an information need. Information need has been described as an inadequacy or a gap in an individual's knowledge (Belkin, Oddy and Brooks 1982). To bridge the gap, and satisfy the information needs, action is required.

7.4.1 Sustaining democracy through vigorous information seeking

Alemna and Skouby (2000); Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999) and Serema (1999) all observed the close relationship between the sustenance of a democracy and the ability of the parliamentarians to access and effectively utilise information. The close relationship between the level of democracy experienced and the availability and accessibility of information has been demonstrated by Polsby in Robinson and Gastelum (1998). Dahl in Research-Education-Advocacy-People (n.d.) explained that a democracy is determined by the level of participation of individuals, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda and inclusion. Closer scrutiny of these criteria show that the level of democracy attained closely relates to the ability of individuals to effectively participate in the decision making process related to democratic governance.

A democratic dispensation is based on the principal of representation. Representatives, in order to warrant their election, need to demonstrate the ability to effectively participate in parliamentary processes. Effective participation implies the ability to make informed decisions, and when necessary, disseminate it to their constituents. Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999) advocate that decision-making implies an ability to make a formal judgment or choice. To enable a representative to reach a decision is underpinned by access to accurate, reliable and comprehensive information about the available choices. According to them, as democratic governance becomes increasingly more complex on both national and international level, the need for relevant, timely and accurate information, supporting the decision making process becomes imperative.

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The study found that the parliamentarians who responded were aware of the importance of information within their work environment. Even though parliamentary sessions only last for certain periods in the year, the majority agreed that information was a commodity needed throughout the year. This indicates their awareness of their dual role as decision makers, but also as disseminators of information to their constituents.

Robinson and Hyde (1998) point out that information is needed to perform a variety of activities, such as providing background information for informed decision-making, capacity building of representatives, by supplying a common body of facts to facilitate political agreement, and empowering the parliamentarians to act independently. To perform optimally it is expected from the parliamentarian to both gather and apply the knowledge gained. A clear indication of the fact that information is indeed used and applied by the South African parliamentarian can be seen from the results as presented in Table 7 (Chapter 6). The findings show a strong resemblance with a study done by Serema (1999). Debate participation and preparation for parliamentary speeches were found to be the most popular reason for seeking for information. Alemna and Skouby (2000) support the finding. parliamentarians have the choice of actively participating during debates, or to remain part of the "back-benchers" who do not make any contribution towards discussions. By participating in debates, choices are clarified, providing a platform for informed decision making. By implication active participation implies the prevention of "rubber-stamping" of decisions.

Broadening of knowledge should be expected from parliamentarians. Constituents have the right to demand from their representatives to be informed, as Alemna and Skouby (2000) point out that an uninformed official can risk making costly and even dangerous decisions for the whole nation. The findings indicated awareness amongst respondents of the dangers of not seeking to enlighten themselves on topics of concern.

7.4.2 Search strategies

Ideally, parliamentarians function within a very information intensive environment.

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Parliaments' functions and activities are conducted within decision making in committees, rather than in the National or Provincial Assemblies. Decisions taken at Committee level are reported and approved at full parliamentary sessions.

The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents (70%) conducted their own searches. These findings concur with studies reported by Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999). As mentioned in section 6.2.2.2 the own search strategy can be ascribed to many factors. Either they are more familiar with their exact need, and do possess the necessary skills to extract the information, or they are unaware of other options, such as intermediaries, available to do the search for them. In contradiction over half of the respondents indicated a high preference towards utilising their personal assistants (52%) to do their information searches. Evidently, they seem not to like searching for information on their own at the higher levels of the hierarchy, e.g. the Cabinet Ministers. Whether the assistants are able to interpret their information need and are familiar with the search strategies, or use intermediaries, still leaves a lot of unanswered questions at this stage.

It is surprising that the researchers (35%) and librarians (33%), are an under-utilised group in information searching. Under-utilisation of the information provider could be attributed to under-staffed library/research units, or ignorance of their functions and the effective interaction between the information provider and parliamentarians. It can also be argued that time constraints could be a mitigating factor.

7.4.3 Nature of the information needs

Kimbunga (1996) warns that objective assessment of facts, crucial to intelligent decision making, is not possible with inadequate and delayed information, while wrong information could disastrously effect conclusions leading to incorrect decision making by Parliament. Land in Serema (1999) advocates that differentiation should be made between long term and short-term information needs, so as to be able to respond to changing needs. To be relevant parliamentary information provision needs to be flexible and responsive to the wishes of the parliamentarians.

Though it was found that a variety of information needs are experienced, major needs could be distinguished. As could be expected topics concerning political issues or governance were given the highest priority. These could be seen as long-term information needs. The multiple other needs expressed corroborate with findings in studies done that the needs of the parliamentarians are wide and many (Kimbunga 1996; Thapisa 1996; Marcella, Carcary and Baxter 1999). These shorter term needs seem to be related to the portfolio position of the parliamentarian, or as a special interest area for knowledge expansion. The majority of the respondents indicated multiple needs giving an indication that their interests were broad.

7.5 Role of the Legislative Libraries in the information delivery process

As a formal information system the legislative libraries are the closest at hand for parliamentarians in all the provinces. It has been found that all the libraries are within close proximity of the work environment of the parliamentarians making them easily accessible options to use.

With the exception of the Library of Parliament, Cape Town, with a history spanning nearly 150 years, all the provincial legislative libraries are newly established institutes, most not older than a decade. The majority has been established as a result of the introduction of a nine-province system, replacing the previous four provinces. With no local model to build on, other than the Library of Parliament it could be expected that they would have to rely on the Library of Parliament for guidance. It was found that it does not necessarily seem to be the case. Other than the occasional Research and Information Cluster meetings held on a rotating basis at the different legislatures (refer to section 3.3.5.5), the libraries have to rely on themselves for capacity building. Though the mandate of these meetings are to learn "best practices" from each other this does not seem to fully materialise, with the result that many of the libraries seem to operate on their own. Compounding the problems is the fact that the role of the library is not always fully understood by their supervisory departments, leading to understaffing, budgetary constraints and interference with the functioning of the libraries (refer to sections 6.3.8 and 6.3.9).

In line with developments worldwide the majority of the legislatures have both a

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library and a research service. The trend in foreign legislatures is to either combine both services under the auspices of the library, or to establish it as two separate services, functioning autonomously. The advantage of the service resorting under the library is that services can be shared, and professional jealousy is kept at a minimum. It was found in foreign legislatures that autonomous services quite often lead to strained relationships and problems in defining work boundaries. The study determined that only at Eastern Cape and North West Provincial Legislative Libraries did the services fall directly under the library.

The nature of the information needs of parliamentarians necessitates a big enough staff complement to react swiftly to urgent requests, or to pro-actively be able to compile information files on issues of the day. Should the legislative libraries envisage themselves as the number one choice information providers they should be in a position to provide effective services. All the provincial legislative library and research services reported very small staff complements. In the case of Mpumalanga and North West only one library staff member was reported, while the research staff of Mpumalanga and Northern Cape reported a similar fate. Despite the fact that the Library of Parliament indicated a relatively large staff complement, the majority of the staff are involved in administrative and management functions, leaving a small complement to perform the core function of the library, that is, to provide information to their clients.

Following trends in foreign legislative libraries the South African legislative libraries indicated a high percentage of qualified staff employed in both the library and research service units. Especially within the provincial legislative libraries the trend seem to be to employ staff with a Library and Information Science (LIS) degree, both for the library and research units. This is a positive trend on the one hand, as the staff is then equipped with information seeking skills. However, in the case of research staff, specialising in a specific field, combined with the information seeking skills obtained from a LIS degree, would be the ideal qualification, as many of the research problems require in-depth, specialised knowledge of the problem. Within the Library of Parliament all research staff have obtained degrees other than LIS.

Legislative libraries can decide what services to offer their clients. In most cases it is dependent on the resources and staff available. Despite small staff complements a wide variety of services are offered in the respective legislative library and research units. Core services such as reference services, newspaper clipping service, information service, access to Internet, and the availability of reading room facilities, are offered by all the libraries, with the exception of the Free State Provincial Legislative Library that does not offer Internet access, and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislative Library that neither provides a newspaper clipping service nor an information service. The latter is offered by the reference service. The basic services offered correlate with those offered by foreign legislative library services. The respective libraries offer a variety of auxiliary services. As it was not the aim of the study to determine why certain services are offered and some not, it is assumed that the services are not delivered because the clients have not expressed a need for it, or alternatively the staff complement does not allow the offering of more services.

It was determined that some libraries do have the capacity to offer some technical services such as the videotaping, editing and dubbing of activities of importance to parliamentarians. Value-added service concerning newspaper clippings of issues of the day is offered on a regular basis in a variety of legislatures. The value of these services lies in the fact that the parliamentarian can be assured that the information is either kept available in the library for future reference, or that through the services offered they will be kept up to date of the latest events. Time spent on scanning newspapers themselves can thus be used for other important activities.

Collections, with the exception of the Library of Parliament and the KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library, are very small, contributing to problems of providing thorough information services. Even sources like journals that are good sources of current information, are in short supply in most of the libraries. A positive development is the fact that electronic sources are available, or subscribed to, in the majority of cases. Though computers for the parliamentarian's own access to these sources is not available in all the libraries, all staff members in the libraries do have access to networked computers. This facility allows for the utilisation of the librarian as intermediary in the case of an electronic search. In the case of the Library of Parliament, Limpopo and North West Provincial Legislative Libraries,

parliamentarians can utilise the networked computers. With the facilities available in the majority of the legislative libraries it is possible to fulfill to a huge extent the needs of the parliamentarians.

Reading rooms where parliamentarians can sit down to either read the newspapers or do their research work are available in all the libraries. In some cases the rooms are very well utilised, while some libraries reported very little utilisation. The reason for this should be examined closer. Some reasons have been discussed in section 6.3.14. In conjunction with the problems mentioned, the lack of a proper marketing strategy should also be examined. As mentioned in Chapter 1 it is assumed that many of the current representatives are not familiar with the services offered by a library as they did not grow up with this facility available or accessible, and it is possible that ignorance is preventing proper utilisation.

Marketing of the services offered is done in all the libraries. Though many different methods are used innovation seem to be lacking. In an environment where the clientele's information needs are at a premium, and it is of utmost importance for the well being of the whole nation that decisions be based on sound information, innovative methods need to be devised to attract attention to services and facilities offered. Especially since the services are available on the premises of the work environment it is even more important to be judged as a preferred information facility. To a great extent budget and staff allocation is closely related to utilisation, making it imperative that services be fully appreciated and utilised. Simandjuntak (1996) points out that lack of understanding the business of the library results in rare increases in library funds to support the needs of the library. Marketing the services effectively will be no minor undertaking, especially with the time-constraints and workloads that parliamentarians experience. Innovation will ask for the utilisation of different methods, other than the traditional methods of displays, fliers and newsletters, and should reach out to the parliamentarian in his/her immediate work environment, thus bringing the library services into their offices, and not expecting them to come to the library. Here electronic facilities could be utilised with great success.

No library can function on their own any more, necessitating that a network of information contacts be established. Paré (1996) points out that increased cooperation

and networking with other libraries will become a very important aspect of the service delivery of legislative libraries in future, specifically due to financial constraints, as well as the increased access to electronic information. Cooperation can take many forms, be it through professional contact via national and international library associations, conferences, and partnerships with non-parliamentary libraries such as special, academic and national libraries, and cooperative activities like collection sharing. Paré (1996) advocates that cooperation through professional visits to other parliamentary libraries should be encouraged. This could take the form of visits for extended periods, or short visits to exchange views. The Library of Parliament actively participates in the annual meetings of the regional Parliamentary Association, APLESA, which covers parliamentary libraries situated within Africa, by sending two staff members to attend the meetings. Meeting at different venues all over Africa affords staff the opportunity to exchange information with fellow librarians, but also to observe the activities of the host library. Attendance of national and international conferences was found to be a regular occurrence at the Library of Parliament, building both capacity and a wide network of contacts.

On a local level, regular cluster meetings take place, rotating between the ten legislative libraries. Information exchange is the main aim of these meetings. The findings revealed that networking in South African legislative libraries, apart from the cooperation between the legislative libraries, also takes the form of building contacts with external organisations and institutions, mostly for the purpose of information exchange.

Paré (1996) points out that as financial constraints are likely to influence service delivery, cooperation will have to become the norm. Currently cooperation between the South African legislative libraries takes the form of resource sharing as they all participate in the SAIS system. In this way not only their resources are available to each other but they also share in the resources of all the participating information systems. Participation in cooperative cataloguing is effected through subscription to SABINET as cataloguing information can be offloaded from the system and used in their respective libraries.

Being a special library, a very specific clientele is being catered for. Kohl in Marcella,

Carcary and Baxter (1999) identified four models of parliamentary library service delivery, to which the authors added a fifth. The models provide different options concerning the clientele to be served. The legislative libraries, not falling under a uniform controlling body, can opt to follow the model most suited for their service vision. The findings reveal that a number of options, or combinations of model options, are followed by the legislative libraries, ranging from being extremely strict concerning those allowed to make use of their services, to making accessible their sources to whomever request to have access. Only two libraries did not report any restriction placed on membership or services offered, i.e. the Eastern Cape and the North West Provincial Legislative Libraries, though from their service delivery it can be assumed that membership is restricted to parliamentarians only. The Library of Parliament, and the Western Cape Provincial Legislative Library also follow the model whereby only parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can hold membership. On arrangement members of the public such as researchers, academics and government officials can make use of the facility at the Library of Parliament, though no other services, other than providing access to information materials and making of photocopies, are provided. From the point of view of this library being a Legal Deposit Library, with valuable special collections, it is a very valuable information facility. Providing wider access, also to the ordinary citizen, could enhance access to sources not available for perusal, such as the Africana collection. It was interesting to note that five of the libraries do provide access to ordinary citizens, though only for the purpose of using materials inside the library. Being in many cases the only information facilities keeping governmental materials, this provides the ideal opportunity to the citizenry to access it, thus contributing to the communication between government and the electorate.

A second model, that of the collection being available to the entire political class is followed by the legislative library of Kwa-Zulu/Natal and the Free State Provincial Legislature. Membership however only applies to parliamentarians.

As technology produces larger varieties of information formats so does an individual's preferences for a specific format change. Within the last few decades the move away from print-based formats to more electronic-based gained momentum. To test whether this movement affected format preferences the libraries were asked to

express their perceptions in this regard. The findings reflected a high preference for information to be provided in an oral format, specifically face-to-face and telephonically. This finding co-incided with the findings of Thapisa (1996). A much lower preference was expressed for materials in a print-based form, while e-mail communications were not seen as a strong preference. Audio-visual, audio and visual formats were perceived to be not preferred. This finding was a strong contradiction to the preferences expressed by the parliamentarians, who strongly preferred materials in print-based or digital format. Oral information provision was one of the least preferred options, even less than audio-visual and visual formats. From the findings it seems as if a communication gap exists between the libraries and their clientele as to the preferred media of information dissemination.

The movement towards an electronic library service as described by Paré (1996) has found some tentative roots in South African Legislative Libraries. Though still far away from the ideal of providing all library services electronically to parliamentarians, the study has found that all the libraries are connected to a network providing them with either access to the Internet or to e-mail communications. This step enables electronic searches to be done, either on-line or off-line, and results to be communicated to the parliamentarians. The fact that most libraries subscribe to the services offered by SABINET provides the parliamentarians access to important current sources like the newspaper clipping service, indexed journal articles and full-text of the Bills and Acts promulgated by Parliament. Through Internet access the sources on the system can be utilised by both the parliamentarians and the librarians. As the majority of the respondents indicated having access to the Internet in their work or home environment it should not be a priority of the libraries to provide Internet access inside the library, except if the legislature does not provide networked computers to all their parliamentarians in their offices. The fact that 50% indicated that they do provide Internet access to parliamentarians inside the library is an indication that the work environment has not yet achieved this goal.

Utilisation of a service is always a good indicator of the value put on the services offered. It was found that the majority made use of the legislative libraries, however a cautionary note has to be issued concerning the utilisation of the services, as more than half of the respondents indicated that they seldom (49%) or never (11%) used the

services. This indicates that less than half of the respondents felt confident about the value of the services delivered.

7.6 Proposal of a conceptual model for effective parliamentary information services

The study has shown that parliamentarians use a variety of information sources and systems to satisfy their information needs. The information sources and systems used range from informal sources such as oral sources to formal information systems such as libraries. Insight gained into the information-seeking behaviour of the parliamentarians showed five trends emerging, i.e. that parliamentarians:

- commonly prefer to use their own information sources and expertise to satisfy the majority of their information needs
- often use an intermediary within their immediate work environment, i.e. their personal assistants to do their information searches for them
- utilise researchers, be they from a dedicated research unit within the Parliamentary structure, affiliated to the Library, or from within Party ranks
- utilise librarians or research assistants stationed within the library to find the needed information
- visit the library in person to do their own information searches, with or without the assistance of the library staff.

From the study it was clear that the parliamentarians have to cope with strenuous work programmes, leaving them with little time to effectively search unassisted through all the information sources, services and systems available to them, despite their stated preference for this option. Another hampering factor during the search process is the amount of unfiltered information that the parliamentarian could retrieve during a search strategy, leading to frustration and unnecessary stress. The options of utilising the appropriate intermediaries as gatekeepers to filter the information used by the parliamentarians should therefore be seriously considered. Gatekeeping allows for the filtering of information, thus providing the parliamentarian with relevant information. Currently, the gatekeeping role, in the researchers' view, is done as illustrated in the model on the following page.

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PIRS1 - Own information searching

PIRS2 – Information seeking through an intermediary

PIRS3 – Intermediaries searching for information from the

   information environment

PA1 – Personal Assistant

PA2 – Recommended role for PA1

PL – Parliamentary Librarian

PR – Parliamentary Researchers

Parliamentarian in working context

PIRS 2

PL

PR

PA2

PA1

PIRS3

INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Formal information sources

Informal information sources

Oral information sources

Electronic information sources

PIRS 1

VARIABLES

Psychological

Demographic

Role related/ Interpersonal

Environmental

Source characteristics

Figure 6: Information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians

As indicated previously parliamentarians within their working environment use various methods to retrieve information from the available information sources, services and systems. Most notable is the employment of own skills and expertise to retrieve and access information (PIRS1). Personal searching involves direct access to information from the information environment. Access and utilisation, however, can be influenced by various variables, e.g. psychological variables, source characteristics; role related/interpersonal variables and so on (refer to Chapter 4). The information environment includes formal, informal, oral and electronic information sources, services and systems (refer to Table 8.), and can include both information sources belonging to the parliamentarian, or information sources, -services and -systems accessible in the public and private domain.

However, for the information to be appropriate and relevant it needs to be reliable, accurate, understandable, comprehensive, close to the user, and current and in a format that is applicable to a specific information need. As indicated, information received from the information environment is often of an unfiltered nature, providing information unable to satisfy the information need. It is especially information retrieved through the electronic medium that can cause a lot of frustration, as it is a time-consuming process resulting in a multitude of "hits", the majority of which might be unrelated to the information required.

A second strategy that is used is the utilization of intermediaries (PIRS2). This is often the case when parliamentarians work against deadlines, are too busy, or realise their lack of expertise to retrieve the necessary information. The intermediaries are normally within close proximity of the parliamentarians and could include individuals such as the parliamentary librarians (PL's), researchers from research units within the parliament (PR's), as well as the parliamentarians' personal assistants (PA's). As part of their information seeking skills these intermediaries can be expected to provide information that will satisfy the information need of the parliamentarian. Filtering (gatekeeping) of information is thus essential as huge amounts of information, all of varying quality and appropriateness, are available. Filtering of information is part of a gatekeeper's daily activities, and indeed the professional information provider's role, making the gatekeeper ideally suited for the retrieval and dissemination of information to the parliamentarian.

Within the PIRS2 overlapping of information services seems to take place between the parliamentary librarian (PL), and the parliamentary researchers (PR) within the parliament. This is demonstrated in Table 13. Overlapping of services mainly concerns the provision of research-related services. The role of the personal assistant (PA1) overlaps with the information services provided by the parliamentary librarians. Based on the perceived lack of information seeking, and analyzing skills of PA1, it is assumed that overlapping with the PR's do not take place.

However, it is noted that PA1 is the most preferred intermediary and therefore it's role as gatekeeper needs more investigation. The skill to effectively filter information is only gained through training and experience, and this is not normally part-and-parcel of PAs training programmes. As trained and experienced human intermediaries/gatekeepers the PLs, as well as the PRs should be effective in filtering information. Based on this observation it is suggested that the role of PA1 as information provider/gatekeeper should be minimised (PA2) and rather performed by those intermediaries qualified to do so.

The third information search that can take place is that between the intermediaries and the information environment (PIRS3). Though intermediaries sometimes are able to provide the requested information without consulting the information environment, the majority of information needs can only be satisfied through interaction with the information environment. The information retrieved through the information environment is often in unfiltered form, thus needing further filtering by the gatekeeper before the dissemination process can proceed.

7.7 Summary

The findings of the study indicate that parliamentarians are indeed aware of the vital role of information in the perpetuation of the democratic ideals. They proved to be aware of their specific needs and for what purposes they needed the information. From the study it was also clear that the majority of the parliamentarians who responded were well aware of the different sources, facilities and systems providing information and were well equipped to do their own information searches.

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Though the legislative libraries in general are relatively well equipped to fulfill the majority of information needs, the findings did, in some cases, reflect underutilisation, and unawareness of the services offered. Though some legislative librarians did report a good response to their services, some did express the concern that seemingly the library currently has no role to play. This factor needs to be addressed by innovative marketing campaigns.

Many parliamentarians and legislative libraries had made the leap towards utilising electronic information sources, though in the case of parliamentarians their exposure seems to be limited to utilising the Internet. No mention is made of other digital sources like CD-ROMs.

Though the majority of the legislative library services are still in their infancy, they need to expand and build on the already existing foundations to become the first preference amongst the myriad of information sources and systems existing in South Africa.

Based on the determined search strategies a model was proposed indicating how these strategies could be enhanced to provide more effective information-seeking strategies amongst the parliamentarians.

The next chapter summarizes the findings and presents the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to summarise the research findings and to propose recommendations that can be used to improve parliamentary information services in South Africa. The chapter also suggests items for further research. The chapter is divided into introduction, summary, conclusions and recommendations.

The research objectives were to:

- explore the various sources, services and systems used to access information
- determine if parliamentarians do access traditional information sources and systems such as the parliamentary library services to satisfy their information needs
- investigate the degree of Internet and e-source utilization in the information gathering and exploitation process
- investigate the services of the traditional parliamentary library to determine its capacity in providing efficient information services to the parliamentarians
- propose a conceptual model for effective parliamentary information services.

8.2 Summary

The chapter is summarized by the respective research objectives and research questions:

8.2.1 The various information sources, services and systems used to access information.

- What is the nature of the information sources and systems available in South Africa to satisfy information needs?

Many developing countries are crippled by the lack of information resources, both materially, and in trained manpower. On the African continent, the publishing trade has historically been poorly developed, mainly due to lack of technology, trained manpower and budgetary constraints. There has also been a strong censorship culture in the continent that has tended to exclude publications that do not favour the government of the day leading to, among other things, the dearth of publication output from and on Africa.

South Africa, in contrast, established a vibrant publishing industry in the nineteenth century, and has since then maintained an ever-increasing output of publications, ranging from books to newspapers, journals, reports and government publications. Libraries have been in existence since the early eighteenth century and were introduced in all the major towns and cities in South Africa, within educational institutions, as well as in organisations and institutions in the public and private sector where libraries abound. For example, the oldest legislative library, the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, dates back to 1854. Since becoming a democracy in 1994 nine more Parliamentary libraries were introduced, one in each province.

An active and dynamic policy for the preservation of culture, art and history has led to the development of a host of museums, archives and repositories on all kinds of knowledge domains. The majority of these information systems is open to visits from the public, or they provide access to their collections and services on the Internet. An established legal deposit culture has also been created and maintained.

Technologically, South Africa stands to the fore in Africa, and is currently one of the leaders in the utilisation of electronic information services such as the Internet. It is expected that access to services such as the Internet and mobile phones providing Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) access to the Internet will grow exponentially, potentially providing a majority of the nation with ready access to knowledge and information of all kinds. This study has found evidence that South Africa is, relatively speaking, an information rich country, largely by providing access to most publicly available information sources that are within reasonable reach of the parliamentarians. For instance, the information systems and services in place, such as libraries and their interlibrary lending services, museums and archives and reasonable Internet access in

South Africa should indeed provide parliamentarians with access to sufficient information and knowledge sources to assist them in their challenging legislative responsibilities.

8.2.2 Parliamentarians' utilization of traditional information sources, services and systems during the information seeking process

- Are the parliamentarians aware of the role of information in sustaining the democracy?
- Which search strategies are followed in the information seeking process?
- To what extent does education play a role in information source utilization?

The majority of the current parliamentarians did not grow up in an information-rich environment. Understandably, this should have reduced their capacity to effectively use modern information sources, services and systems such as printed materials, libraries and electronic information sources. Unexpectedly, the study found that modern information sources and services are well utilized by this community. The table in section 6.2.2.5 demonstrates that a wide variety of sources, services and systems are utilised, thus suggesting that an information-poor background does not necessarily negatively affect an individual from exploiting modern information sources. It was however noted that the higher the education of the parliamentarian the more information sources, services and systems he/she uses, indicating that there is a direct link between level of education.and information use (see section 7.3.1).

The use of the parliamentary libraries raised concern. Results shown in section 6.2.3.3, indicate negative/inadequate use of parliamentary libraries, despite the fact that these libraries are on the premises of the Parliaments, and in most cases easily accessible to all parliamentarians. The librarians of the parliamentary libraries confirm this negative trend. The major functions of libraries are to gather, organise, store, retrieve and disseminate information. and it would seem as if parliamentary libraries are currently defaulting in the optimal fulfillment of these functions. It is noted that several information providers are competing to provide their information products and services to the parliamentarians by using all strategies in the business. Libraries, particularly the special libraries, are forced to develop innovative

approaches to information services delivery that is putting enormous strain on mundane forms of information services that are common in the public service, such as parliamentary libraries. Without bold transformation, irrelevant service delivery can lead to extinction of a vital facility, a situation that should be guarded against.

8.2.3 Internet and e-source utilisation during the information-seeking process

- What information sources and systems are used to satisfy their information needs, with special reference to electronic sources?

The accessibility of publicly available information in electronic format is still a relatively new development. Notwithstanding, it was established that nearly half of all the respondents access and use electronic information sources. It was observed that problems such as time constraints, lack of sufficient searching skills, as well as a variety of technological problems, do frustrate the legislators when exploiting this category of information sources. Information sources such as the Internet is set to expand, making it imperative that parliamentarians be properly trained in effective information-seeking, and that the technology supporting the information networks such as the Inter- and Intranet be sufficient. This could provide librarians with an opportunity to add value to their existing services, by saving the parliamentarian both the time spent on searching, and the frustration of not always finding what is needed, especially when using the Internet.

8.2.4 Efficiency of Parliamentary Library Services

- What is the role of the legislative libraries in the provision of information?

Parliamentary libraries are underutilized by the parliamentarians despite the fact that the ten parliamentary libraries provide a variety of information services and facilities, all aimed at providing the parliamentarians with the information they need. Most of the provincial parliamentary libraries reported under-utilisation by the parliamentarians. It is noted that existing marketing strategies used by the libraries do not yield the desired attraction of the parliamentarians to the library. From the results of the study, it seems as if there is a lack of communication and service sensitivity

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between the librarians and the parliamentarians concerning preferences for information delivery (see section. 6.2.2.9 and 6.3.22). Such communication problems could affect efficient service delivery. It is noted that most of the libraries are moving in the direction of providing facilities for electronic information searches. These facilities are either available to the staff only, or more commonly, PCs are now provided inside the libraries for the benefit of the parliamentarians. It is difficult to establish the effectiveness of these new strategies at the moment.

8.2.5 Conceptual model

The model indicates the different information search strategies utilised by the parliamentarians. The effectiveness and outcome of each searching strategy is determined by specific variables, such as the ability of the parliamentarian to effectively retrieve, access and utilise information from his/her own information sources, and the ability and skill of the intermediary to interact with and retrieve, and disseminate appropriate information. Using own skills and effort to retrieve, access and utilise information the parliamentarian in many cases is also confronted with external variables, such as psychological. demographical and role-related/interpersonal variables, that can affect the successful outcome of an information search.

8.3 Conclusions

Based on the above summary it can be concluded that the study has fulfilled its aim and objectives. The assumptions however were disproved. For instance, the assumption that an information-poor background would be a negative factor in the information-seeking process, proved to be wrong. A strong link between educational level and information utilisation has however been proved.

The study proved that South African parliamentarians are aware of the value of information, as is the case in the majority of democratic countries. Information is used for a variety of purposes, especially to be able to participate in decision-making, debating, and to be able to contribute effectively towards the legislative processes. It was found that, despite disadvantaged educational background by most of the current

breed of parliamentarians the majority of the parliamentarians were able to use a variety of information sources, including electronic sources. An interesting finding was that the utilization of oral sources as opposed to print and electronic sources for information accessibility and use was insignificant. This finding contradicts with the study done by Thapisa (1996) that concluded that parliamentarians in Botswana depend highly on oral information sources for information acquisition. The utilization of personal assistants to fulfill the role of information intermediaries was unusual, as these individuals are not trained information providers or professionals. The role and effectiveness of these information providers require further research. The use of the parliamentary libraries as a priority information service was found to be relatively low. This is alarming since these libraries are funded through public funds to support the legislative process. However, the low utilization of these libraries does not mean that the libraries are irrelevant as they still offer a wide array of services, including provision for electronic information searches. It should be noted that aggressive transformation, marketing and user-education could save these libraries from irrelevancy.

The study achieved all its objectives, though the assumptions was disproved, as it was shown that the parliamentarians were well educated, and were able to utilize a variety of information sources, services and systems to satisfy their information needs. Problems relating to direct access to the parliamentarians resulted in a low response rate, which could potentially influence the outcome of the study. However problems with low response rates seem to be common in most studies done amongst parliamentarians, both locally and internationally.

8.4 Recommendations

8.4.1 Information mediums/formats

With the advancement of technology the same information is currently available in a variety of formats. Parliamentarians have very specific preferences for formats in which they would like to access or receive information. Having to utilise a format which they are unfamiliar with, or do not want to use, can form a barrier between

them receiving and accepting the information. It is therefore important that they be informed that format choices are available in some cases.

On the other hand a huge amount of information is only available in one specific format, and likewise the parliamentarian should be aware of the fact. It is recommended that librarians take cognizance of the preferences expressed by parliamentarians, and that they strive to provide materials in the preferred format. If no choice of format is available the parliamentarian should be advised of the fact. It is recommended that the parliamentary libraries provide all the hardware and equipment necessary to utilise the different formats, so as not to inconvenience the user. Training in the use of the hardware should be provided as the need arises.

8.4.2 Maintenance and evaluation of parliamentarians' own information sources

Preference to use sources accumulated by, and/or accessible to the parliamentarian within his/her own work environment, such as the office or home seems to be the most popular trend.

The use of an information environment close to the information seeker is not new. However, the quality of the information sources, especially the printed information sources used raise concern, as the parliamentarian is not trained to determine the authoritativeness, correctness, currency and comprehensiveness of a specific source. It can be assumed that, based on their busy schedules and lack of knowledge of the information source, it would not be a priority to check each source, or to weed out irrelevant materials. The result could be an unsystematic and unorganised collection of information sources that could probably provide relevant, or not so relevant, information. The quantity of information sources available could also be a contentious issue, as information on an issue is seldom comprehensively and objectively covered in one source. For a parliamentarian to make an informed decision, information from a wide variety of information sources needs to be gained. Preferably, such information should be screened by an expert to consider its authority and validity as an information source on a specific topic.

The problem of quality and quantity are compounded when electronic sources, such

as the Internet are utilised. By accessing the Internet, which is available to the majority of parliamentarians, the legislator faces the challenge of finding relevant information from the massive amount of information pages available. Lack of skills to exploit the source effectively, the time involved in searching, as well as slow transfer rates, raises questions about the effectiveness of searches done by parliamentarians – especially when trying to retrieve information timeously.

It is therefore recommended that parliamentarians receive regular workshops enabling them to evaluate and maintain their own information sources regularly. Since the parliamentarians do not have the time to attend information sessions concerning the issue, the electronic medium can be used to send short, but eye-catching messages, informing them on issues concerning the development and maintenance of a collection of information sources. Librarians could even contemplate, depending on the availability of staff members, offering an advisory evaluation service where parliamentarians can request expert assistance in the maintenance of their own collections.

8.4.3 Searching strategies

The strategy chosen to retrieve, access and utilise information in many instances determines the success of such an information search. The conceptual model has indicated that different search strategies are utilised by the parliamentarians.

Based on the observations made in the model it is recommended that parliamentarians be made aware of the pitfalls of relying strongly on their own information sources as a method of finding information. Pitfalls include aspects such as the amount of time and effort spent on locating relevant information sources, and outdated and invalid information. Parliamentarians also need to be sensitized about their dependence on untrained and unskilled information provision staff such as the PA to do their information searches for them. Depending on the nature of the information need, especially if it concerns analysis and interpretation, it is unlikely that the PA can effectively manage and provide information in such a manner that the parliamentarian can reap sufficient benefit. Based on the supposed lack of skills and training it can be assumed that the authority and currency of some of the sources used by the PA can

also be questioned. It is therefore recommended that the parliamentarians be informed by way of seminars, workshops or newsletters on their e-mail or Intranet about the value of using professional information providers as appropriate gatekeepers. What should be highlighted is the fact that professional information providers are normally qualified and skilled staff, able to navigate the information environment extensively, with the ability to filter out irrelevant information. It is also recommended that the professional information providers actively market their skills and services to individual parliamentarians. As shown in Fig. 6 it is recommended that the role of the PA (PA2) be minimised in favour of the utilization of the PL or PR. This should be encouraged by means of pro-active and personal/dedicated information services.

It is recommended that the time saving aspect of having skilled staff searching for information should also be brought to the attention of the parliamentarians. To convince parliamentarians of their value the professional intermediaries should strive to provide services of such high standard that they would become the preferred option. These services can also include pro-active information services, where the parliamentarian is made aware of forthcoming issues and presented with precise information even before asking for it. This will entail a close working relationship and good communication between the intermediary and the parliamentarian. As this is labour intensive work it is recommended that a librarian be assigned to certain parliamentarians or parliamentary units or committees to closely liaise with them. It is however also recommended that should such a system be introduced, the librarians communicate with each other on a regular basis in order to avoid duplication of information services.

Alternatively, as the close convenience of the PA probably mitigates towards their continued utilization as information providers it is recommended that the PAs be trained/workshoped and mentored by qualified intermediaries to become effective information providers, filters and knowledge managers. This could result in enhanced information services to parliamentarians, enabling them to effectively participate in parliamentary activities. It is also recommended that qualified intermediaries (PL and PR) be encouraged to link up, or network with PAs on a regular basis, offering assistance when needed. Parliamentary librarians could also include PAs in, for

example, Internet training classes to enhance their information seeking, analysis and evaluation skills using an electronic information source.

8.4.4 Internet accessibility and utilization

Despite the widespread Internet connectivity, this source of information still seems to be under-utilised. This is ascribed to many factors such as unfamiliarity with the source and its searching techniques, technological problems, or problems concerning computer literacy. As this information tool is becoming a major role-player in the information environment it is recommended that:

- the parliamentary libraries make it one of their niche services to provide *information searches on the Internet, or any other electronic source. Results* can be filtered and e-mailed to the user.
- the parliamentary librarians provide a training service whereby all interested parliamentarians and PAs can be trained on an ongoing basis on searching techniques.

With such a service the parliamentary library can add value to their already existing information provision services.

8.4.5 Technological problems

Technological problems concerning issues like slow downloading of websites, small bandwidth, and unreliable servers and so on, were raised. These issues need to be addressed, as parliamentarians and information specialists within the parliament need immediate access to electronic information, and also need the ability to communicate to each other concerning information needs. The e-mail function has also become a very useful tool for information provision, and as such should be able to support uninterrupted communication.

Though technological issues are not normally the domain of the parliamentary library, it is recommended that the library consult with the technical staff concerning the importance of technologically advanced information systems. It is also recommended

that the library staff liaise with parliamentary structures that can influence decision-making on technological issues so as to be able to negotiate with influential support for their causes.

8.4.6 Expansion of library staff

With the current workload staff in the majority of the parliamentary libraries is not coping with all the demands made on their time. Some parliamentary libraries, such as the Library of Parliament, Cape Town and the KwaZulu/Natal Provincial Legislative Library, are understaffed, making it difficult to deliver value-added services. It is recommended that library staff base negotiations for more staff members on a proper Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The analysis should emphasise the value that they could add to already existing services, as well as more innovative services that can be offered to the benefit of the parliamentarians.

8.4.7 Access to PCs with the ability to do electronic information searches within the parliamentary libraries

Though most parliamentary libraries do provide access to PC's, allowing for electronic searches within the library, it in most cases is not enough to support all users, especially in those institutions where PC's are not available to all parliamentarians. To encourage parliamentarians to come to the library to make use of their facilities it is recommended that enough facilities be provided in the library, so as not to inconvenience users by having to wait for PC's to become available. As these PC's are available in the library it can concurrently be used to do training of the users. It's close proximity to skilled information searchers also allows for interaction between user and librarian as the librarians are on hand to assist with research problems.

8.4.8 Marketing of the library services

Effective marketing of services seems to be a problem in many of the parliamentary libraries, resulting in poor support of services. It is recommended that aggressive marketing tactics be used. It is important that the parliamentarians be made constantly

aware of the existence of the parliamentary library and the services it can offer. Especially services such as the availability of daily newspapers, press-cutting service, Internet searches, and pro-active info packs should be brought to their attention on a regular basis. As methods of trying to get parliamentarians to attend seminars, information tours and so on do not seem to be particularly effective, the utilization of the electronic mediums should be investigated. It is recommended that short informative eye-catching messages on library services and facilities be posted via e-mail on a regular basis. Alternatively reminders can be posted on the Intranet, if it exists. It is also recommended that a short video clip about the library be made and played on TV sets available in public spaces like parliamentary cafeterias.

8.4.9 Marketing of non-partisan information and research services

Researchers are well-qualified searchers of information. Because of their research background, they are well equipped to retrieve information from a variety of information sources and systems. In contrast with Party researchers, dedicated research units, as well as those affiliated with parliamentary library services, provide non-partisan information services, and could thus be relied upon to provide objective information retrieved from a variety of information sources and systems. It is therefore recommended that the parliamentary library services should market this aspect of their activities, especially as this allows parliamentarians to make unbiased decisions.

It is also recommended that the research units do pro-active information searching and advertise the availability thereof via the Intranet, e-mail, or via printed documents such as eye-catching brochures or leaflets. Where possible, researchers can be allocated to a group of parliamentarians to do specific searches for them. This personal approach can lead to the building of better relationships between the parliamentarian and the researcher. Should this approach be followed, a note of caution should be sounded, as it could lead to much duplication of information searches. Within such a scenario, all results of information searches should be made available on a database for notification and easy access to the researched information.

8.4.10 Participation by parliamentarians in collection development

Parliamentarians do not seem to participate actively in the collection development process. As they are the primary users of the collection, this is a situation that needs urgent attention. It is recommended that parliamentarians be informed about their right to participate in the building of the collection. Sending acquisition lists to the librarians are not enough to get them involved in the collection development process. It is recommended that lists of probable choices for the collection be circulated regularly, asking for input from the parliamentarians. It is recommended that these lists be circulated in both print forms, and in electronic format, with the possibility pf indicating on both these lists their recommendations.

8.4.11 Expansion of information networks by parliamentary libraries

Though limited internal networking does take place, very little networking activities seem to take place externally. The building up of information networks with knowledgeable firms, organizations, contacts and so on is essential, especially in an environment where information needs are so diverse and pressing as in the parliamentary environment. It is recommended that parliamentary libraries actively build on expanding both internal and external networks for easy access to a multitude of information sources.

8.4.12 Development of niche areas

For the parliamentary library to become a preferred information service it needs to establish itself in the minds of the parliamentarians as a service that provides services which other information services do not provide. An example of such niche areas could be in the area of providing personalized information services for specific parliamentarians. The nature thereof should be such that it adds value to the parliamentarian in his working environment, for example by doing verified electronic information searches, an activity which he/she does not always have the time, skills or expertise to execute effectively. In this instance the parliamentary staff will have verified information for correctness, authority and currentness. This information can be posted by e-mail to the parliamentarian, or can be available to all parliamentarians

via the Intranet. Should a specific question be asked often, the answers can be kept in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on the Intranet. Alternatively, verified links to websites that can provide answers to questions can be provided. These links can also be made permanently available to all parliamentarians via the Intranet. Though the Library of Parliament in Cape Town is currently doing this, the provincial parliamentary libraries should be encouraged to follow suit, and continually be on the outlook for useful websites to add to the existing ones.

Should the libraries have the necessary expertise and funding available it is recommended that they embark on an electronic question and answer information service based on the model of the Parliamentary Library in China (Ku 2001). Parliamentarians need information at all hours of the day, and cannot always wait for the library to open to pose their questions. By running a 24-hour electronic information service, requests can be posed at any time. A system like this would enable a librarian or researcher to search for, and answer questions from home via the Inter- or Intranet, thus not necessitating the library to be physically open at all hours.

8.5 Further research

Legislative libraries mostly serve a much-specialised clientele. Many people operate on the fringes of the parliamentary environment such as lawyers, parliamentary advisors and so on. Research should be done to determine their information needs, and how best to provide services and access to parliamentary information sources to this group, taking into account that many decisions are made on their recommendations to Parliament or individual parliamentarians. Research of this nature should also include other groups that could possibly need access to parliamentary sources.

The role or duplication of roles of the various intermediaries (PA, PL, and PR) used to solicit information need to be researched. Parliamentarians probably do not question the sources used to solicit the information and decisions are made on what these intermediaries provide to the parliamentarian.

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ADDENDUM 1

Questionnaire for Parliamentarians

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF PARLIAMENTARIANS; QUESTIONNAIRE

Please be assured that your responses will not be disclosed to anyone else in a form that would permit identification of your personality, your constituency or Ministry. A report of this survey will be placed in the Parliamentary Library. Thank you for participating.

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking your answer in the correct box.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

1.1 Male	
1.2 Female	

2. Highest educational level achieved

2.1 Postgraduate degree	
2.2 Undergraduate degree, e.g. B.A.	
2.3 Diploma	
2.4 Certificate	
2.5 Matric	
2.6 Grade 10	
2.7 Grade 8	
2.8 Grade 5 –7	
2.9 Grade 1 – 4	
2.10 No schooling	

3. Political affiliation

3.1 African Christian Democratic Party	
3.2 African National Congress	
3.3 Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging	
3.4 Azanian People's Congress	

3.5 Democratic Alliance	
3.6 Federal Alliance	
3.7 Freedom Front	
3.8 Inkatha Freedom Party	
3.9 Minority Front	
3.10 New National Party	
3.11 Pan African Congress	
3.12 Other (Specify)	

4. Are you a:

4.1 Parliamentary member	
4.2 National Provincial Council member	
4.3 Provincial Parliamentary member	

5. Position held in Parliament

5.1 President	
5.2 Deputy President	
5.3 Cabinet Minister	
5.4 Deputy Minister	
5.5 Chairperson of Parliamentary Committee	
5.6 Parliamentary Committee member	
5.7 Ordinary Parliamentary member	
5.8 National Council of Provinces member	
5.9 Provincial Premier	
5.10 Provincial MEC	
5.11 Provincial Parliamentary member	
5.12 Provincial Council member	
5.13 Speaker	
5.14 Whip	

6. Which province do you represent?

6.1 Eastern province	
6.2 KwaZulu/Natal	
6.3 Gauteng	
6.4 Mpumalanga	
6.5 Northern Province	
6.6 North West province	
6.7 Free State	
6.8 Northern Cape	
6.9 Western Cape	
6.10 None	

7. Do you have access to a Personal computer connected to the Internet that can assist you with information searches?

	Yes	No
7.1 At home		
7.2 At the office		

INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEARCHING STRATEGIES

8. When do you need information the most?

8.1 During a parliamentary session	
8.2 During the break in the parliamentary session when you return to your constituency	
8.3 After the parliamentary session	
8.4 All the time	

9. How often do you seek for information in order to assist you in participating in the parliamentary processes and activities?

9.1 Daily basis	
9.2 Weekly basis	
9.3 Monthly basis	
9.4 Seldom	
9.5 Never	

10. For what reason do you need information? (Please tick most appropriate option)

	Often	Seldom	Never
10.1 To help me participate in the debates in Parliament			
10.2 To help me understand/give a background to what is being discussed in Parliament			
10.3 To help me prepare a Bill			
10.4 To help me clarify concepts or information in a Bill that is not clear to me			
10.5 To help me prepare for a parliamentary speech			
10.6 To broaden my own knowledge on a given topic			
10.7 To assist me in planning projects, e.g. Health care projects, traffic projects, etc.			
10.8 To enable me to organize events			
10.9 To be able to answer questions posed to me in Parliament			
10.10 To prepare answers for inquiries from constituents			
10.11 To be able to converse with colleagues/ staff from other Parliaments/ organizations/governmental institutions on matters of mutual concern			
10.12 Others (specify please)			

11. Who does this information search for you (tick all the option you use)

11.1 Yourself	
11.2 Parliamentary Librarian	
11.3 Research assistants in the Parliamentary Library	
11.4 Your personal assistant	
11.5 Private information broker	
11.6 Other (specify please)	

12. If you search for the information yourself which sources do you use to retrieve it (Please tick most appropriate option)

	Often	Seldom	Never
12.1 Books			
12.2 Journals			
12.3 Newspapers			
12.4 Magazines			
12.5 Governmental publications			
12.6 Search the Internet			
12.7 Search digital libraries on the Internet*			
12.8 Search virtual libraries on the Internet**			
12.9 On-line databases on the topic of interest***			
12.10 Electronic journals on the Internet			
12.11 Electronic newspapers			
12.12 Government departments			
12.13 NGO's			
12.14 Parliamentary library			
12.15 Public library			
12.16 Embassies			
12.17 National archives			
12.18 Parliamentary colleagues			
12.19 Individuals in the private sector			
12.20 Individuals in the public sector			
12.21 Chiefs/Induna's			
12.22 Other (specify)			

* **_Digital libraries_ are databases that provide full-text documents in electronic form.**

** **_Virtual libraries_ are "libraries" on the Internet, which allow you to look at the books/journals on screen, as if you are actually in the library itself.**

*****_Database_ is a computerized list of sources/titles available on a specific topic**

13. If using a computer to find information on topics that can assist you to function optimally as a Parliamentarian, please provide either the website address or the topics of the sites accessed:

	Electronic source	Website address or topic
13.1	Search Engines	
13.2	Hosts. (Websites giving access to a number of databases)	
13.3	Databases (a computerised list of sources/ titles available on a specific topic)	
13.4	Websites /Topics	
13.5	Electronic journals	
13.6	Digital libraries (databases that provide full-text documents in electronic form).	
13.7	Virtual libraries ("libraries" on the Internet, which allow you to look at the books/journals on screen, as if you are actually in the library itself.)	

14. What problems, if any do you experience when trying to find information using the computer?

....

....

....

15. On which topics do you need information (tick all those applicable)

15.1 Administration

15.2 Agriculture

15.3 Arts

15.4 Community services

15.5 Correctional services

15.6 Culture and monuments

15.7 Drugs and narcotics

15.8 Education

15.9 Finances and banking

15.10 Governance

15.11 Health

15.12 Housing and construction

15.13 Journalism and mass media

15.14 Justice

15.15 Land and surveys

15.16 Law and order

15.17 Local government

15.18 Minerals and energy affairs

15.19 Natural resources

15.20 Police services

15.21 Politics

15.22 Regional/provincial matters

15.23 Safety and security

15.24 Scientific developments

15.25 Tourism

15.26 Trade

15.27 Transport

15.28 Veterinary services

15.29 Water affairs

15.30 Other (specify)

16. If information were provided to you in which format(s) would you prefer to receive it?

16.1 Printed	
16.2 Orally	
16.3 Digital format, e.g. on your computer via e-mail	
16.4 In visual form e.g. video	
16.5 In sound form	
16.6 Others (specify please)	

INSTITUTIONS USED TO FIND INFORMATION

17. Which institutions or facilities do you use to obtain your information source (tick all those applicable)

17.1 Use my own personal sources	
17.2 Use the Parliamentary Library	
17.3 Use another local library/institution that have the relevant information	
17.4 Use my own personal computer	
17.5 Use the personal computer available in the Parliamentary library	
17.6 Contact international organizations for the relevant Information	
17.7 Contact the other parliamentary library services in South Africa	
17.8 Contact international parliamentary library services who Might have the relevant information	
17.9 Other (specify please)	

18. If contacting national and international organizations, please list their names, e.g. WHO, IMF etc.

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19. How often do you make use of the Parliamentary Library services

19.1 Often	
19.2 Seldom	
19.3 Never	

20. For what reason do you use the parliamentary Library services?

20.1 To read on topics of interest	
20.2 To find information needed in my work	
20.3 To consult with a research assistant	
20.4 To read newspapers/magazines	
20.5 To relax	

21. Does your institution have research assistants available that can assist you in finding information?

21.1 Yes	
21.2 No	

22. If "yes" how often do you make use of their services?

22.1 Often	
22.2 Seldom	
22.3 Never	

23. Is this service affiliated with the parliamentary Library?

23.1 Yes	
23.2 No	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION – IT IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED.

Please return to your legislative library

Or alternatively:
Please post/ fax/ email your responses to:
Mrs. Janneke Mostert
University of Zululand
X1001, KwaDlangezwa 3880
South Africa
Email: Jmostert@pan.uzulu.ac.za
Fax: 035 - 9026082

ADDENDUM 2

Questionnaire for Parliamentary libraries

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The aim of the research is to determine, and document, the status of Parliamentary libraries/research services in South Africa.

A. BACKGOUND INFORMATION

NAME OF LIBRARY:

....

1. Brief history of the Library and/or Research Service.
When it was founded?

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....

What lead to its creation?

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Short description of the physical building housing the library, distance from the Legislature, communication media being used between the library/ Research Service and the parliamentarians etc

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Major developmental periods since its founding

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Any additional information:

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For the following questions please tick the applicable answer(s) in the block provided.

2. Does your information system consists of:

2.1	Only a library service	
2.2	Only a research service	
2.3	Both	
2.4	None of the above	

3. If the research service does not fall under the jurisdiction of the library, under what department does it fall? ....

4. How many staff members work in the:

4.1	Library	
4.2	Research service	

5. How many of the staff are trained as librarians, or have a Library and Information Science qualification?:

5.1	Library	
5.2	Research service	

B. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY LIBRARY/RESEARCH SERVICE

6. Indicate [✔] the services and products available in the library/research service

	Services and products	**Library**	**Research service**
6.1	Reference service		
6.2	News/reading room		
6.3	Newspaper clipping service		

6.4	Lending service		
6.5	Inter-Library Loan service		
6.6	Translations		
6.7	Compilation of bibliographies		
6.8	Publication of acquisitions lists		
6.9	Access to on-line databases/CD-ROMs		
6.10	Access to the Internet		
6.11	Access to off-line CD-ROMs		
6.12	Access to audio materials		
6.13	Access to audio-visual materials		
6.14	Running of a Current Awareness Service		
6.15	Providing a Selective Dissemination of Information Service		
6.16	Photocopy service		
6.17	Indexing of periodicals		
6.18	Provision of information packs on specific topics		
6.19	Provision of information service		
6.20	Research studies on specific topics		
6.21	Do public opinion polls		
6.22	Do surveys on specific topics		
6.23	Provision of information and analysis thereof		
6.24	Provision of comments on Bills		
6.25	Provision of expert opinions		
6.26	Provision of background papers on specific topics		
6.27	Provision of reports on policy issues		
6.28	Overviews of issues discussed in Parliament		
6.29	Other (please specify)		

7. Please provide detail on special services e.g. newspaper clippings, translations, audio-visual service, video services etc. For example, explain how it is done, for whom, how often, when etc.

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8. What problems do the library experience in delivering information services to the Parliamentarians?

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9. Indicate the size of the collections:

	Information sources	Number of copies
9.1	Books	
9.2	Newspaper subscriptions	
9.3	Journal/Serials subscriptions	
9.4	Electronic journal subscriptions	
9.5	On-line databases subscribed to	
9.6	Databases on diskettes/CD-ROMs	
9.7	CD-ROMs	
9.8	Newspaper clippings	
9.9	Pamphlets	
9.10	Videos	
9.11	Cassettes	
9.12	CDs	
9.13	Other (please specify)	

10. Do you have a reading room(s) for parliamentarians?

10.1	Yes	10.2	No

11. If "yes" how many? ....

12. Is/are the reading room/s in the main Parliamentary building?

12.1	Yes	12.2	No

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13. How often do Parliamentarians use this facility?

13.1	Very often	
13.2	Often	
13.3	Seldom	
13.4	Never	

14. Please elaborate you answer above. ....

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15. Other than Parliamentarians, who else does the library serve/network with?

		Serve	Network
15.1	Ordinary citizens		
15.2	Committee members		
15.3	Parliamentary staff		
15.4	Other legislatures in South Africa		
15.5	Local bodies/organizations		
15.6	Ministries		
15.7	Academics		
15.8	Researchers		
15.9	International bodies/organizations/parliaments		
15.10	Other libraries in South Africa		
15.11	Other (please specify) `		

16. If networking with International bodies/organizations/parliaments, please list them, and also explain the nature of your contact, e.g. ILL, exchanging information sources etc.

Name of body/organization/parliament	Nature of contact

(If more space is needed please add to the list on a separate sheet of paper)

17. How do you advertise/market your services and products?

....

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....

....

....

(Please include any examples of brochures/pamphlets used to advertise/market the services)

18. Are there any restrictions to the use of any of your services and products?

18.1	Yes	18.2	No

19. If "yes" please state these restrictions....

....

....

....

....

20. How often do Parliamentarians make use of your library's services? If possible please provide statistical indications of amount of materials circulated in the past year, ILL requests handled, reference requests handled etc. (if statistics are unavailable just tick the appropriate services)

		Often	Seldom	Never	Statistics for past year
	Service utilization				
20.1	Materials circulated/borrowed				
20.2	Inter-library Lending requests handled				
20.3	Translations done				
20.4	Information (reference) requests				
20.5	Information and analysis requested				
20.6	Other (specify)				

21. How do parliamentarians prefer to receive information from the library/research service? Please rate the options on a scale of 1-5 (**1 = very high preference and 5 = very low preference**)

	Communication mode	1	2	3	4	5
21.1	Face-to-face					
21.2	Telephonically					
21.3	Book form					
21.4	Report form					
21.5	As an abstract					
21.6	In an illustrated form					
21.7	E-mail communication					
21.8	Audio-visual form					
21.9	In a visual form only					
21.10	In audio form only					
21.11	As a display/exhibition					
21.12	Facsimile					
21.13	As a Selective Dissemination of Information service					
21.14	Other (please specify)					

C. DEVELOPMENTS IN AUTOMATION

22. Do you have computers in your library?

22.1	Yes	22.2	No

23. How many computers in your library are utilized by:

23.1	Parliamentarians	
23.2	Library staff	
23.3	Research assistants	
23.4	Researchers	

24. Are the computers networked?

24.1	Yes	24.2	No

25. Does the parliament have a network to which the library/research service is connected?

25.1	Yes	25.2	No

26. If "yes" which network? ....

27. What are main functions of the computers available in the library?

27.1	To provide Internet access to staff	
27.2	To provide Internet access to Parliamentarians	
27.3	To provide access to on-line/electronic information services to staff	
27.4	To provide access to off-line/electronic information services to staff	
27.5	To provide facilities for staff to do their library/research service	
27.6	To provide facilities for Parliamentarians without access to computers in their offices/at home to do their work	
27.7	To provide e-mail/communication facilities for staff/researchers	
27.8	To provide e-mail/communication facilities for Parliamentarians	
27.9	To provide facilities for the researchers to compile their documents	
27.10	Others (specify)	

28. If Parliamentarians have access to computers in the library, in you opinion, how often do they use these services for the purpose of information seeking?

		Often	Seldom	Never
28.1	Internet			
28.2	On-line/Off-line electronic sources, e.g. databases, CD-ROMS			

29. What other use do you make of technology?

29.1	Faxing	
29.2	Imaging technology e.g. scanning	
29.3	Library networking	
29.4	Others (specify)	

D. IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LIBRARY/RESEARCH SERVICE IN YOUR LIBRARY

30. Please provide details on the following:

Recent developments?

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New products and services?

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Management   structure   or   style,   e.g.   Participative,   Authoritarian   etc.?

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Other items of interest?

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Speculation about the future of your library or research service?

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....
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

ADDENDUM 3

Observation schedule

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

SECTION 1

OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

1. Location of the library within the institution. Visibility.....................................

....

2. Description of the library building ....

....

3. Maintenance? ....

4. Direction posters? ....

....

5. Landscaping/upkeep of the exterior inviting? ....

....

SECTION 2: INSIDE THE LIBRARY

6. First impressions ....

....

7. Posters/directions informing/directing users about/to services..........................

....

8. Guidelines available as to utilization of services ....

....

9. Adequate furniture/lighting for effective utilization of the services? ....

....

10. Adequate space for housing the collection and for storage ....

....

11. Are services mainly self-service or are staff readily available to render

    assistance to users/...

....

12. Status of the collection? ....

13. Organisation of information sources? ....

....

14. General observations about staff appearance, attitude and morale ....

....

ADDENDUM 4

Letter of introduction

University of Zululand

Department of Library and Information Science

06/06/2002

SECRETARY TO PARLIAMENT
Mr. S. Mfenyana
P.O. Box 15
Cape Town
8000

Dear Mr. Mfenyana

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT AMONGST PARLIAMENTARIANS

I refer to my letters dated 22 February 2002 and 10 April 2002, and the responding letter from your office dated 26 February 2002 (a copy of which will be included in this letter).

As previously explained the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Zululand, is currently undertaking a research project to determine the information needs of Parliamentarians and the role of the Parliamentary Libraries in supplying in these needs. In my original letter to your office I have asked permission to do a research project amongst the Honourable Parliamentary Members. It is an acknowledged fact that Parliamentary Members need lots of information to be able to cope efficiently with their daily activities. With this research we aim at establishing exactly what information the Honourable Members need, how they would like to receive it, and how they see the role of the Parliamentary library in the process of providing in their information needs. With this information in hand we hope to be able to communicate it to the Librarians in the Parliamentary Library to act upon, if necessary. We also envisage using this information in our curriculum when training our students to work in special libraries.

The method that we envisage to use is to distribute questionnaires amongst the Honourable Members, which they can answer in their own time. A self-addressed envelope will be included with the questionnaire, which the Members can use to return the questionnaire to the Department of Library and Information Science. If given permission, a research assistant will distribute the questionnaires directly into the internal mail boxes of each Member, or if this is not an acceptable option to you, we would respectfully request that a contact person be made available to us, who could assist us by distributing the questionnaires into the mail boxes.

Using this method of gathering the information we do not interfere with the daily activities of the Members, and they can react in their own time. We have planned to conclude the research by mid-year, and are therefore anxiously waiting for a response from your Office. I include a copy of the questionnaire for your perusal.

Your sincerely

B.J. Mostert
Snr. Lecturer: Department of Library and Information Science

ADDENDUM 5

Permission for research

FREE STATE LEGISLATURE

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

Monday, 10ᵗʰ June 2002

Mrs. B.J. Mostert
University of Zululand
Department of Library and Information Science
Private Bag X1002
Kwadlangezwa
3886

Dear Mrs. Mostert

Re   **RESEARCH PROJECT AMONGST PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENTARIANS**

The matter above refers!

Your letter dated 27ᵗʰ May 2002, is herewith acknowledged with pleasure and its contents noted. I had pleasure to inform you that it has been agreed that the research project your institution aims to undertake, can continue. You are therefore advised and notified that you may send as soon as practicably possible the questionnaires as indicated in the communiqué directed to us on the 27ᵗʰ May 2002.

Please take note that our office will be central in co-ordination of this project on the part of the Free State Legislature and any future communication should be directed to our office. On behalf of the Free State Legislature I humbly apologise for any delay and inconvenience that may have arise in the process.

Thanking you in advance for your understanding and co-operation

Yours faithfully,

Khathatso Moletse
PA to the Chairperson of Committees