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# Investigating the role of the host community with regards to public participation when establishing a new mine in Lehurutshe, South Africa

Submitted as 50% of the Master of Management

**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study delves into the critical role of the host community in the public participation process concerning the establishment of a new mine. The research examines the dynamics between the mining company and the community within the context of engagement protocols and regulatory requirements for public involvement. Using semi-structured interviews and document analysis, this study explores the perceptions, experiences, and expectations of the host community in relation to the mining company's public participation initiatives. A total number of ten participants were interviewed.

Results from the study highlight significant gaps and shortcomings in the mining company's efforts to involve the host community. Responses per question were collated according to stakeholders who took part in the process to assess legitimacy, trust, and decision-making processes. The findings indicate a lack of transparency and legitimacy due to ineffective communication, and minimal efforts to incorporate community concerns and inputs into the decision-making procedures. Consequently, the absence of meaningful engagement has led to heightened tensions, mistrust, and a sense of disenfranchisement among community members.

This study underscores the importance of legitimacy, trust, and inclusive public participation in the early stages of project development, emphasizing the need for mining companies to adhere to regulatory requirements and ethical practices in engaging with the host community. The findings suggest a re-evaluation of the approach to community engagement in the mining sector, advocating for proactive measures that prioritize mutual dialogue, respect for community perspectives, and the integration of local knowledge in decision-making processes. In conclusion, the research underscores the pivotal role of the host community in the establishment of a new mine and calls for a fundamental shift towards more robust, legitimate, and inclusive practices that genuinely incorporate community voices in shaping the trajectory of mining projects.

**DECLARATION**

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Governance) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| Acronym | Description |
|---|---|
| CSR | Corporate Social Responsibility |
| DMRE | Department of Mineral Resources and Energy |
| MPRDA | The Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2002 |
| SIA | Social Impact Assessment |
| SLP | Social Labour Plan |

# 1 CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

## 1.1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on the matter of public participation of host communities in the sphere of mining projects, both within South Africa and globally (Meissner & Everingham, 2021). This heightened attention stems from host communities taking a more proactive stance in asserting their interests and rights compared to earlier times. This shift encompassed concerns such as employment opportunities, alongside emerging challenges like handling social transformation. Host communities now find it more feasible to draw attention to their concerns, rally supporters, and direct scrutiny toward governmental bodies and mining corporations.

This study intended to investigate the role of public participation when a mining company seeks to start a new mining project. Its overarching objective was to comprehend and identify underlying causes contributing to conflicts between host communities and mining corporations. Over the past decade, there has been a discernible surge in global enthusiasm within the mining sector pertaining to initiatives aimed at public participation (Bobbio, 2019). This surge was, in part, motivated by diverse governments' endeavours to overhaul the mining industry, fostering substantive engagement with the anticipated outcome of alleviating conflicts between host communities and mining entities. (Fung, 2015; Tahvilzadeh, 2015).

An investigation conducted in 2013 revealed a notable escalation in conflicts between host communities and mining companies since the year 2000, particularly in the context of the initiation of mining projects (Andrews, et al., 2014). In accordance with the findings of this investigation, Latin American nations experience the highest incidence of mining conflicts, comprising 46%, followed by African nations at 24%, and Asian countries at 17%. Notably, South Africa emerged as the primary country within the African context in terms of mining-related conflicts (Andrews, et al., 2014). Scholars suggest that the methodologies employed in public participation processes may generate conflict between mining companies and the host community. This contention arises from the perception that the process is more akin to dispensation rather than fostering meaningful engagement that considers the concerns and perspectives of the host community (Fung, 2015; Monno & Khakee, 2012).

Research on policy design indicated that public participation frequently emerges as one of the procedural tools available to policymakers in the formulation of policies (Howlett, 2019). This means public participation is a tool that is used to include participants such as host community members to form part of the policy network. However, during the apartheid era in South Africa, decision-making processes were characterized by the exclusion of most of the populace, a phenomenon notably mirrored in the mining sector where the establishment of new mines proceeded in the absence of public participation from host communities (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg, 2013; Williams, 2006).

Prior research revealed that the enactment of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2008 within the South African mining sector has catalysed a pronounced scholarly and practical interest in the mechanisms of public participation (MPRDA, 2002). Key stakeholders, including but not limited to the South African Chamber of Mines, Mineral Council South Africa, Community-based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the Department of Minerals Resources and Energy, have assumed pivotal roles in steering the narrative surrounding public participation. This discourse aims not only to cultivate a sense of shared comprehension but also to proactively forestall potential conflicts in the intricate landscape of mining governance (Beierle, 2002; Pring, 2001; MPRDA, 2002).

The study aimed to add to current knowledge by closely examining how people get involved in public discussions and exploring the complex interactions within the local community, when a new mining project is being set up. A recent legal adjudication has shed light on disputes between host communities and mining enterprise and has shown the pivotal role of the host community when developing new mining operations*: Meepo v Kotze and Others*; *Baleni and Others v Minister of Mineral Resources and Others*, *Maledu and Others v Itereleng BakgatlaMineral Resources (Pty) Ltd. and Another* (SAFLII, 2018). This investigation revealed increased complexity associated with public participation within the mining sector, which is attributed to emerging regulatory frameworks. In such instances, host communities have articulated dissent, resorting to legal recourse by contesting mining corporations. The crux of their objection hinged upon the absence or misapplication of due processes in public participation (SAFLII, 2018). Their contention suggested that the granting of mineral rights by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, if undertaken without

requisite procedural adherence, jeopardizes the host community's entitlement to the land (Meissner & Everingham, 2021). It is important to note that in many cases, these lands hold a pivotal significance for the host community's sustenance, serving as the locus for agricultural cultivation and livestock grazing integral to their livelihoods. Substantive change requires addressing the fundamental issues that lead to the breakdown of public participation between host communities and mining companies (Meissner & Everingham, 2021).

Imposing penalties for non-compliance or lacklustre engagement, while offering incentives for exemplary community involvement, serves as a powerful mechanism to instil accountability among mining entities (Campbell, 2012; Hilson, 2012). Simultaneously, fostering community empowerment initiatives, such as educational campaigns and accessible information channels, equips local populations with the knowledge and agency to actively partake in decision-making processes pertaining to mining ventures. Magidi and Hlungwani (2023) suggest that transparency becomes paramount in compelling mining corporations to disclose their community engagement plans and outcomes. Furthermore, emphasizing the necessity for comprehensive Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) conducted in consultation with host communities ensures that potential ramifications are identified, mitigated, and incorporated into project strategies before commencement.

Convening structured dialogues among stakeholders; government representatives, mining entities, and community leader offers a platform for addressing concerns, negotiating agreements, and fostering collaborative relationships.

### 1.2 Public participation process

Bobbio (2019) suggests that the concept of participation to be inherently flexible, encompassing a spectrum where engaged citizens may be numerous or few and possessing varying degrees of power. This view is illustrated by Arnstein’s ladder of participation which underscores the importance of recognizing the depth and nature of citizen, host communities’ involvement in initiatives rather than superficial forms of participation (Arnstein, 1969). This means that participation may manifest in various formats, span short or extended durations, and pertain to issues of high or low significance. While scholars agree that participatory processes may involve the direct

inclusion of individual citizens or exclusively incorporate representatives from associations or organized groups, (Bobbio, 2018, Howlett, 2019; Walker, McQuarrie, & Lee, 2015). There are, however, diverging views and little evidence to say whether public participation has evolved into a widely embraced principle.

Moreover, the distinction between a stakeholder forum and a participatory tool is subjective, contributing to a nuanced overlap between associative and participatory democracy (Hisschemöller & Cuppen, 2015). Given this background to public participation processes and the host communities, it is important to realise that interventions are required to guide mining companies and host communities. Furthermore, preceding literature indicated that historically, mining companies across the world were particularly neglectful of their duty to engage host communities when undertaking mining projects (Campbell, 2012; Hilson, 2012). The research remains relevant today to understand the reasons behind high tensions between mining companies and their host communities.

The dearth of information provided to host communities for effective participation in public processes may give rise to misinterpretation, mistrust, and miscommunication, thereby fostering an environment conducive to heightened protests and opposition to mining endeavours within the host community (Dibakwane & Masutha, 2020). This study has unveiled a potential deficiency in the ability of mining companies to adequately engage host communities, thereby diminishing their role in crucial decision-making processes. Through an empirical exploration involving policy implementers, this study underscores the imperative for host communities to be intricately woven into policy considerations at various junctures of the policy cycle. Diverse stipulations embedded within the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 mandates that individuals holding or applying for mining rights are obligated to inform or engage with landowners or communities impacted by their operations (MPRDA, 2002). These provisions notably encompass Section 5A(c), which expressly prohibits any prospecting or mining activities within a specified area without prior notification to the landowner or lawful occupant of the concerned land (MPRDA, 2002). Essentially, this statutory provision serves to safeguard the rights of landowners or legitimate occupants, affirming their authority to influence the feasibility of mining activities to be established or conducted upon their land. Moreover, it facilitates public participation by furnishing pertinent information and affording

impacted individuals or host communities the platform to partake in discussions or consultations pertaining to the proposed mining activities. Additionally, sections 16, 22, and 27 intricately delineate requirements dictating that applicants seeking rights or permits must engage in consultations with landowners, lawful occupants, as well as any party with a vested interest or affected by the proposed activities (MPRDA, 2002). These legislative provisions underscore a vital regulatory framework aiming to ensure meaningful engagement and acknowledgment of stakeholders' concerns in the realm of mineral and petroleum resource utilization.

From the researcher’s perspective, these stipulations signify a positive step towards recognizing the importance of community engagement and stakeholder involvement in resource extraction processes. They reflect an evolving understanding within legislative frameworks of the significance of not only addressing the economic imperatives of mining but also acknowledging the social and environmental implications inherent in these activities. However, the effectiveness of these provisions heavily relies on their implementation and enforcement. While the statutory requirements exist to ensure consultation and notification, the practical application and adherence to these regulations by mining entities may vary (Magidi & Hlungwani, 2022).

This clearly indicates that social license is just as important as the mining license. The challenges inherent in public participation processes between mining companies and host communities represent a complex and multifaceted landscape deserving scholarly examination. From an academic standpoint, these challenges often stem from a confluence of social, environmental, economic, and political factors, creating intricate dynamics that significantly impact the efficacy of engagement efforts.

### 1.3 Research Setting

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the research site selected for this study. Located in the boundary line of Moshana and Swartkopfontein, the chosen site holds particular significance due to its small-scale farming, rich cultural traditions and being one of the underdeveloped rural communities with dependency ratio averaging at 90%. The researcher employed rigorous selection criteria to identify a site that best aligns with the objectives of the research, considering factors such as two host communities are

involved, the mining activity with proven resources and reserves being halted Manganese (2020), and public participation processes. The chosen site not only offers a rich context for exploring the study's research questions but also serves as a representative example of public participation processes in the mining industry.

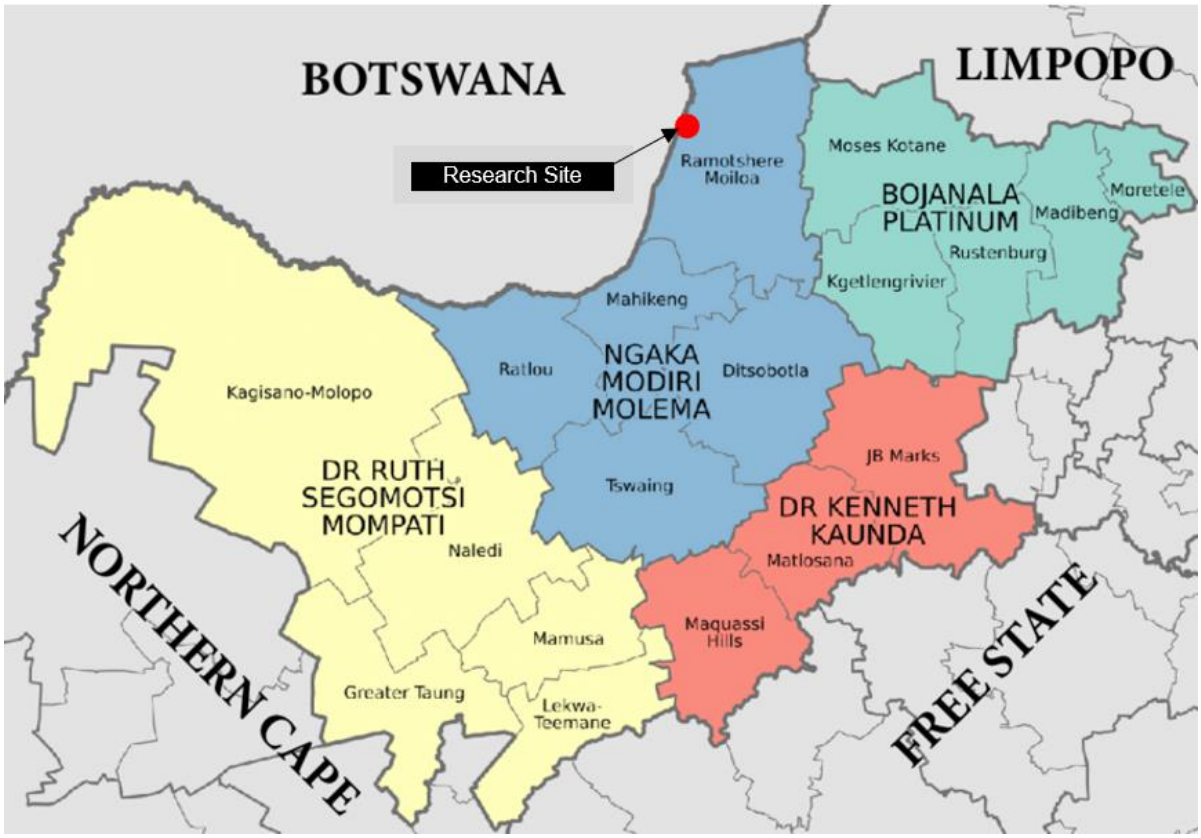


*Figure 1.1: North-West Districts Map showing research site* (Mogogana, Olorunfemi, & Oladele, 2018)

A research setting depicts the geographical location in which a study is being conducted. In reference to this study, the research setting was situated in Ngaka Modiri Molema district in Ramotshere Moiloa municipality. The research site is within the shared boundary of two villages namely, Moshana and Swartkopfontein located in the North-West province of South Africa. The economic activities in the villages of Moshana and Swartkopfontein are agricultural related with mining activities at a nascent stage. As a result, there are no records to quantify the contribution of Moshana and Swartkopfontein to the North-West province GDP (Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality, 2022).

Moshana village predominantly consists of members of the Batswana tribe and holds numerical superiority and infrastructural amenities compared to Swartkopfontein with 10 133 inhabitants compared to 873 (StatsSA, 2022). For example, some of the

existing or available infrastructure in Moshana, including schools, clinics, and tribal facilities (houses, office, and mini hall) for meetings. In the context of population demography both Moshana and Swartkopfontein have low population density in both villages which has been attributed to labour migration to mines and factories (Badat 2013). The literacy level in Moshana and Swartkopfontein looking at high school and higher education according to Statistics South African report of 2022 showed that 16.3% and 2.7% for Moshana and 10,2% and 0.4% for Swartkopfontein respectively (StatsSA, 2022). Swartkopfontein is primarily inhabited by the Xhosa tribe, but the choice language of communication is predominantly Setswana.

The figure below provides a visual representation of the locality plan for the Moshana and Swartkopfontein districts. These communities are situated approximately 100km northeast of Zeerust town and roughly 10km from the Botswana border, specifically near Ramotswa, as shown in Figure 1.2.

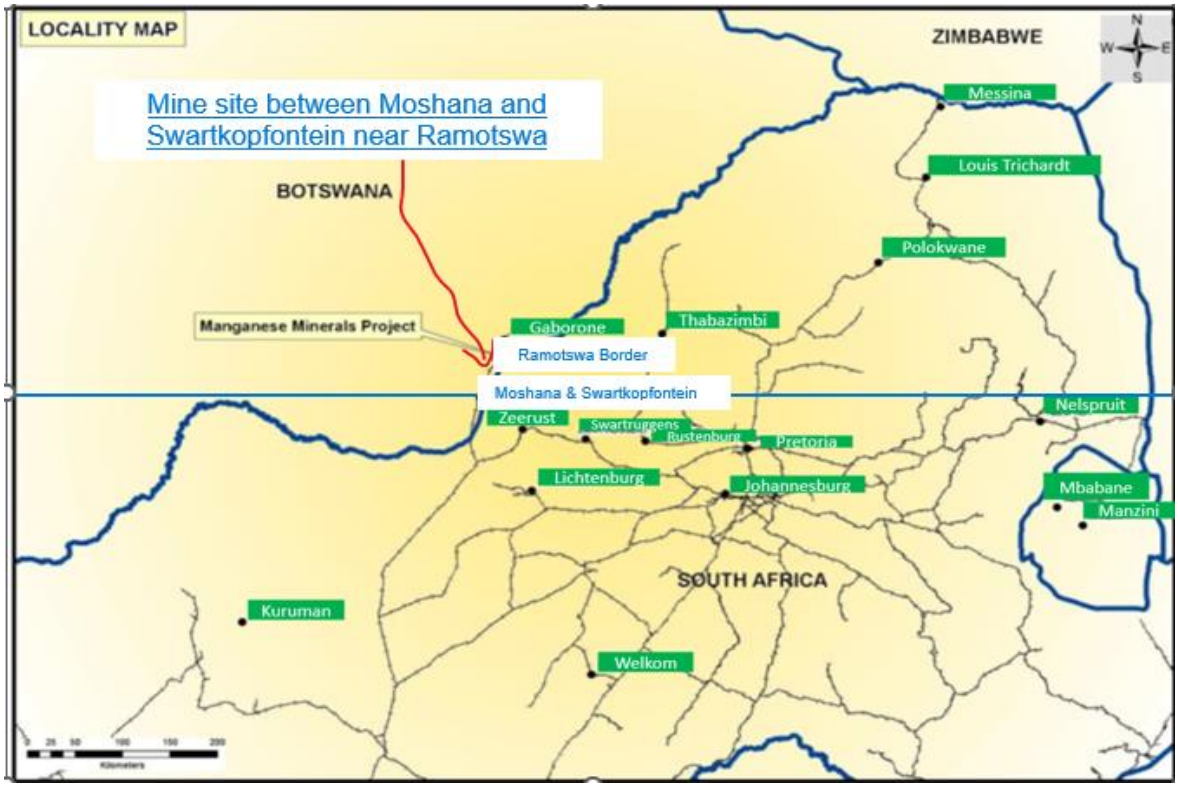


*Figure 1.2: Locality map of Moshana and Swartkopfontein* (CapitalPrimeBusiness, 2020)

The pivotal role of the mining industry in the South African economy is widely acknowledged Moeng (2019), yet this importance is not without its associated drawbacks. The role played by mining companies in host communities is a well-researched area from reconnaissance permit, prospecting, exploitation of the resource

to rehabilitation (s14 MPRDA). A contrast exists however, when it comes to the role of host communities. Mining, as an inherently intrusive activity, results in substantial pollution and exerts a profound impact on expansive tracts of land. The perpetual quest for novel mining sites invariably encroaches upon agricultural domains and pristine biodiversity areas, often inhabited by communities, farmers, or individuals. Moeng (2019) cautions that host communities in immediate proximity to a mining operation frequently encounter an array of challenges, including but not limited to:

- The expropriation of grazing or ploughing land.
- Pollution or depletion of water in rivers and boreholes.
- Soil and crop contamination, and inhalation of polluted air.
- Potential hazards posed by open pits and ground shafts, endangering both people and animals.
- Non-rehabilitation of mined areas.

Figure 1.3 shows the drilling activities at Swartkopfontein mine, according to the community members these are some activities that were already ongoing as public participation processes were underway.

*Figure 1.3: Moshana and Swartkopfontein Manganese Project*

Scholars have highlighted the discrepancy between policy mandates and their implementation, raising concerns about the actual execution of community engagement and development initiatives by mining companies.

In 2019, a mining right was issued to Manganese Minerals which is valid until 2036 (Manganese Minerals, 2020). Interviews conducted by the researcher with the host communities and the representatives of the mining company revealed that mining operations were disrupted by constant protests leading to the mining company ultimately halting operations indefinitely.

## 1.4 Problem Statement

The study's research sites were Moshana and Swartkopfontein villages, nestled near the Ramotswa border of Botswana. Formal education is sparse and basic amenities are limited (Badat, 2013; Nkgothoe,2022). Frequent community protests may indicate that there is a problem with public participation processes when mining companies establish a new mine. According to Andrews et al., (2014), most disenfranchised host communities approach the courts for intervention about how mining companies conduct public participation processes. The stakeholders' guideline for public participation in the mining sector prioritized fostering mutual understanding and trust through public participation processes. Its primary aim was to mitigate potential conflict arising from mining's environmental impacts encompassing biological, physical, social, economic, cultural, and historical dimensions. There is a need to assess the actual engagement that occurs between mining companies and their host communities, by taking a closer look at the process. Creswell & Creswell (2018) suggest that the significance of a study resides in its potential to contribute to the current knowledge base within a specific discipline. Consequently, this research aimed to offer constructive advancements, including actionable suggestions for fostering meaningful participation processes characterized by trust and legitimacy between mining companies and their host communities.

This research intended to share the pivotal role undertaken by host communities in the establishment of a new mine within the regional context. Notably, such a study has remained unexplored within the South African context (Sandlam, Chabalala & Spaling, 2019).

The existing studies mainly investigated public participation guidelines, political opportunity, community protests, environmental impact and legal cases are prevalent topics, and not the role played by the host community (Boyco, 2020; Hansen, 2014; Pape, 2021; Ramoshaba, 2019). This gap has not been investigated clearly in the

literature, where a qualitative case study is conducted to investigate how the host community participates in the process of starting a new mine. This gap necessitates a study to develop a framework centred on the role of trust as a mediating variable in the relationship between legitimacy of mining companies and the role of public participation by host communities.

## 1.5 Research Purpose

The purpose of the study is to explore the role played by the community in public participation process when establishing a new mine at Moshana and Swartkopfontein, by investigating the mediating role of trust in the relationship between legitimacy and public participation. This was done using semi-structured interview questions.

## 1.6 Research Questions

1.1.1. Main research question:

What is the role played by the community in public participation process when establishing a new mine in Lehurutshe, North-West Province?

1.1.2. Sub-questions:

(a) What factors influence the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes within the context of mining projects?

(b) How does trust between mining companies and host communities evolve throughout the phases of public participation processes?

(c) What are the perceptions and experiences of different stakeholder groups regarding the effectiveness of public participation processes in fostering trust and legitimacy?

## 1.7 Delimitations

Due to budgetary and time constraints, as well as the focussed area of study involving a case study of Swartkopfontein mine, the results of this research cannot be generalised. Furthermore, this was not a broad public participation study of how mining companies and their host communities engage in public participation process. Instead, the focus was two host communities, Moshana and Swartkopfontein.

## 1.8 Outline of the study

Chapter 1 introduced and contextualized the study concerning public participation processes. It explained the research problem, the selection of the mining operation and host communities study location, articulated the study's purpose, outlined research questions, delineated delimitations, justified the study's focus. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of existing academic literature that surrounds the study. Chapter 3 provides an intricate depiction of the qualitative research strategy, while Chapter 4 expounded upon the data analysis methodologies and detailed the study's findings and patterns. In Chapter 5, a comprehensive discussion ensued, elaborating on the interpretation of the study results, and juxtaposing them against existing literature. Certain pivotal findings were corroborated by other studies to address assumptions and bridge gaps within this research. The conclusive Chapter 6 synthesized the study's results into actionable recommendations for legislative and practical enhancements. These proposed improvements aimed to fortify public participation processes, fostering trust and legitimacy to mitigate opposition from host communities towards mining projects.

## 1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive exploration of the study's contextual background concerning public participation processes. It underscored the prevalent challenges posed by the absence of meaningful engagement between mining companies and their host communities, emphasizing the identified gaps pertaining to trust and legitimacy. The subsequent chapter delves into an extensive review of existing literature related to analogous studies to further enrich the understanding within this research.

# 2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This literature review chapter will explain the concepts and inter-relationship between engagement, stakeholders, trust, and legitimacy within the context of mining companies and host communities. Numerous scholars have explained the concepts of stakeholder engagement, public participation, consultation, and deliberation (Bobbio, 2019; Marshall, 2016; Walker, McQuarrie & Lee 2015). In addition, this chapter will synthesise two theoretical frameworks: Sarah White's Typology of Participation and Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation. The choice of these two theories is due to their relevance to the study.

## 2.2 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement entails diverse interactions with specific individuals or vested entities based on expertise for the purpose of decision-making activity (Stocker et al., 2020). For stakeholder's engagement, the intention is to ensure that extensive consultation on specific issues through dialogue are conducted to achieve a consensus (Kujala, Sachs, Leinonen, Heikkinen, & Laude, 2022). There are several processes of stakeholder's engagement, and this includes public participation. Others are consultation and collaboration (Stocker et al., 2020), In contrast, public participation accommodates a broader targeted audience in which the procedure of engagement is often associated with creating awareness and public involvement in promoting initiatives or enforcement of decisions (Fung, 2015). The detailed explanation of public participation will be presented in Section 2.4. Consultation denotes the act of soliciting input, while deliberation entails exhaustive discussions aimed at reaching consensus decisions (Marshall, 2016). The consultation and deliberation processes collectively constitute a continuum of engagement in which participants are engaged in distinct levels of involvement and collaboration in the processes of decision-making.

The challenges attributed to stakeholder engagement include resistance to proposed changes, resource constraints as well as lack of trust (Jagers, Matti, Poelzer, & Yu, 2018; Ramoshaba, 2019; Kilajian & Chareonsudjai, 2021). To address these challenges, studies have identified the adoption of a multidisciplinary approach that

integrates perspectives from disciplines such as law, sociology, environmental studies, and economics. The integration of these perspectives is to ensure that inputs based on expertise is guaranteed. For instance, the study conducted by Ramoshaba (2019) indicated that the inclusion of legal experts in stakeholder's engagement mitigated against legal crisis. As for the involvement sociologist and economists, Rice et.al. (2022) demonstrated the understanding people and fairness in resources allocation resulted in the ease of engagement among stakeholders.

### 2.3 Host communities

Cole and Broadhurst (2020) defined host communities as a conglomeration of people located within a geographical location and with mineral-rich territories, In this context, host communities are considered to be susceptible to direct impacts of environemntal degredadtion due to continuous exploration, in the form of mining activities. The attributes of a geographical location being refrred to as host community is often related to the status including the existence of natural resources hence economic activties. Consequently, central to the definition of host community provided by Cole and Broadhurst (2020) is that in most cases thehost communities expect ethical and responsible business (operational practices) from coorporate entities especially mining companies (Sandlam, Chabalala & Spaling, 2019). For instance, in reference to South Africa, one of the requirment prior to mining companies operating within a host community is the mandatory legal, authorization and operations from the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) and the approval from the host community. This dual approval procedures especially the latter requirement has necessitated significant investments by mining companies, promote robust relationships between mining companies and host communities and lastly create and establish trust among different stakeholders within the host communities (Rice et al., 2022). The intricate dynamic interplay between the host community and the mining company plays a pivotal role in shaping their mutual perceptions and interactions.

The establishment of new mines and the initiation of mining operations has the potential to yield positive impacts on host communities (Magidi & Hlungwani, 2022). This positive influence is manifested through the provision of resources and support aimed at sustaining essential services for the well-being of the community (Cuartero-Enteria, 2018). Contrary to this perspective, Siyobi (2015) contends that initiatives

falling under the purview of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) predominantly align with business objectives and often neglect the socio-economic concerns of host communities, with only a limited number of mining companies effectively implementing Corporate Social Responsibility programs. In South Africa, it has been reported that host communities often express displeasure through protests action against the introduction of mining projects and the basis for this displeasure has been attributed to insufficient engagement in the form of public participation (Ramoshaba, 2019). As a mitigation strategy against the challenges in host communities, the South African government established the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) with a mandate to mining right holders to actively contribute to Mine Community Development (MPRDA, 2002). This requirement aims to foster trust by identifying community development needs and formulating a host community development program. The program is obligated to be disseminated in a minimum of two local languages, ensuring transparency in fund distribution, governance, and organization. Critics argue that these directives are more theoretical than practical (Reed et al., 2018; Greenhalgh, Hinton & Finlay, 2019). Also, the South African Mining Charter and Social Labour Plans (SLPs) provides a conduit for restorative justice as a regulatory framework designed to enhance access to social services, improve infrastructure, and bolster educational opportunities (Balanay & Yorobe, 2014). This underscores the notion that while mining activities may introduce disruptions to the ecosystem of host communities, these disruptions are not always entirely detrimental.

In recent years, studies have suggested that the conflicts between host communities and mining organisations emerge prior to the commencement of construction activities (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023; Bobbio, 2019; Bundy, et.al, 2018). It was indicated that the conflicts are often due to the perception among community members that resource exploitation occurs without corresponding benefits for the host community (Jagers, Matti, Poelzer, & Yu, 2018; Kilajian & Chareonsudjai, 2021; Ramoshaba, 2019).

Resistance and objection are more prone to occur when individuals perceive decisions to be formulated without their active participation (Kilajian & Chareonsudjai, 2021). While literature has effectively explained guidelines for public participation, notable success in the application of these frameworks is discerned primarily in developed regions where stakeholders demonstrate effective communication capacities

(Pavloudakis, Roumpos, and Galetakis, 2012). In the context of developing nations, a contrasting situation prevails, marked by a scarcity of literature addressing the involvement of host communities in public participation. A discernible incongruity is observed in the processes of public participation, yet a limited number of scholars have undertaken the endeavour of guiding host communities in fostering substantive engagement with the public sphere (Kakee, 2020).

Several concerns are expressed during interactions with host communities. For instance, environmental concerns in the forms of land use conflicts, ecosystem degradation, and resource depletion has been reported (Kilajian & Chareonsudjai, 2021). Host communities' fears regarding the long-term ecological impacts of mining activities can catalyse opposition and complicate the development of consensus between stakeholders. Legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms aimed at facilitating public participation may encounter limitations in enforcement, effectiveness, or inclusivity, impacting the legitimacy of engagement efforts (Magidi & Hlungwani, 2022). Moreover, historical distrust stemming from past experiences, lack of transparency, or instances of unmet promises can contribute to heightened tensions and hinder constructive dialogue.

### 2.4 Public participation: An overview

Public participation (PP) is defined as the engagement of individuals or groups in the decision-making processes of proposed ventures, projects, interventions, or policies (Dibakwane & Masutha, 2020). This involvement stems from the recognition that the outcomes of the proposed intervention may have consequential impacts, either positive or negative, on the environment, livelihoods, homes, and communities of those involved (Kakee, 2020; Meissner & Everingham, 2021; Preston, 2014). The various existing definitions of PP are indicative of the lack of consensus on this concept (Boyco, 2010; Dibakwane & Masutha, 2020; Dube, Mguni & Tschudin, 2021; Quick & Bryson, 2022). For instance, the impact of public participation has been reported in the context of the environment, livelihoods, homes, and communities thus the public participation plays an integral role in shaping the outcome of these initiatives (Kakee, 2020; Preston, 2014; Meissner & Everingham, 2021).

Public participation becomes an efficacious process when stakeholders collaboratively establish objectives geared towards mutual benefits (Schmidt & Guerra, 2018). Effective communication from the project owner, clarifying the project's objectives, and ensuring that all pertinent stakeholders comprehend their roles in the process contribute to this effectiveness. Illustratively, the Social Labour Plan Mining Community Toolkit serves as an empowering resource for host communities and mine employees, enabling them to comprehend Social Labour Plans (SLPs) and actively participate in pivotal decision-making processes while also holding mining companies accountable.

Public participation processes between mining companies and host communities, particularly concerning issues of trust and legitimacy, represent a critical focal point in contemporary discussions on sustainable resource extraction (Conde & Le Billon, 2017; Visser, 2018). The Mining Health Council of South Africa has embraced the core values of the International Association for Public Participation to formulate guidelines governing public participation in the mining sector (Diliza, 2002). This adoption reflects a commitment to fostering transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in mining-related decision-making processes, aligning with international best practices in public participation.

Taylor (2017) suggests that trust constitutes the cornerstone in fostering constructive relationships between mining companies and host communities. However, historical grievances that have eroded public trust among stakeholders has been influenced by asymmetries in power dynamics and perceived lack of transparency often erode trust. For instance, Kilajian and Chareonsudjai (2021) study explained that the erosion of trust can manifest in various ways, including skepticism towards the intentions of mining entities, suspicion regarding promised benefits and apprehensions about environmental impacts. In order to addresse these challenges, Taylor (2017) mentioned some mitigation strategies which include transparent communication, genuine efforts towards community engagement, and fulfilling commitments made to the affected communities. Although the consultation provisions outlined in the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) do not explicitly necessitate the consent of host communities as landowner, lawful occupier, or any interested and affected party, a significant implication arises from the obligation to provide notification for access following the granting of a mining right (MPRDA, 2002). Consequently,

holders of these rights typically engage in negotiations to establish a land use agreement, which inherently dictates the terms for access and includes elements of consultation within its practical framework. The absence of a mandate for explicit consent in the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) consultation provisions is an intriguing aspect deserving of scholarly attention. While the legislation does not explicitly require consent, the practicalities of obtaining access to land post-right allocation necessitate negotiations and agreements (MPRDA, 2002). These agreements, often involving land use terms, serve as a pivotal instrument through which elements of consultation and engagement are incorporated into the operational framework between host communities.

Studies revealed several challenges associated with public participation (Fung, 2015; Dibakwane & Masutha, 2020). These challenges have been identified to include power dynamics and its associated asymmetry especially between the different entities. In addition, other challenges that are related to public participation are institutional barriers (legal structure), citizenship inclusivity, political interference, non-alignment vested interests (private organisations and host communities) factors (Marzuki 2015). For instance, the effect of power dynamics is such that host communities are frequently marginalized or lacking comparable resources (Conde & Le Billion, 2017). This power dynamics can hinder genuine participation and negotiation thus potentially lead to an unequal distribution of benefits and can amplify community grievances (Walker, McQuarrie & Lee 2015; Marshall, 2016). Furthermore, cultural differences, language barriers, and divergent understandings of development goals and priorities can impede effective communication and mutual comprehension between mining entities and communities. These disparities may result in misunderstandings, misaligned expectations and ultimately hinder the establishment of trust and collaboration necessary for successful engagement (Conde & Le Billion, 2017).

### 2.5 Legitimacy and trust

Legitimacy and trust are crucial elements that influence the effectiveness and sustainability of engagement between the mining company and the local community(Magidi & Hlungwani, 2022). Legitimacy, as explained by Schmidt and Guerra (2018) and Mäntysalo et al. (2015), is identified as a concern in public participation because it influences planning and environmental governance.

Legitimacy underscores the safeguarding of policy development, implementation and decision. The emergent emphasis on legitimacy and trust in the context of mining-related participatory processes has resulted in paradigm shift toward recognizing the imperative nature of community involvement and consent in resource extraction activities (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023; Bobbio, 2019). Legitimacy and trust signify a departure from mere compliance with legal mandates toward the establishment of genuine, transparent, and equitable interactions between mining entities and affected communities (Taarup-Esbensen, 2020). According to Magidi and Hlungwani (2023), it is important to foster legitimacy and trust between mining entities and host communities through pivotal elements such as transparency, accountability, and the equitable distribution of benefits. In reference to the study by, Taylor (2017) it was reported that the impact of procedural fairness and active community engagement bolsters perceptions of legitimacy within the framework of public participation processes. However, literature acknowledges the inherent challenges embedded in nurturing and preserving these foundational elements thus highlighting the need for nuanced comprehension and systematic exploration (Quick & Bryson, 2016).

Public participation mechanisms within the mining industry have notably become pivotal in the context of legitimacy and trust (Thompson & Walker, 2019). Nevertheless, the study by Moffat & Zhang (2014) underscore the intricate and multifaceted nature inherent in cultivating and upholding trust and legitimacy. Legitimacy relates to the perceived fairness, legality and adherence to ethical standards by mining companies in their interactions with host communities (Thompson & Walker, 2019). However, according to Cole and Broadhurst (2020), the challenges associated with legitimacy often arise from perception. For example, communities perceive mining operations as lacking legitimacy due to perceived injustices, insufficient compensation, or inadequate consideration of local values and concerns (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023). This means that the legitimacy of public participation processes can also be undermined by discrepancies between formal legal requirements and the practical realities experienced by affected communities.

The concept of centralized transparency was examined in the study by Magidi and Hlungwani (2023). This concept promote and advocate for open and transparent communication channels among stakeholders (host community and mining

companies). The mechanism for transparent communication requires the disclosure of information by mining companies regarding operations, impacts, and benefit-sharing schemes creates an environment of trust, accountability and respect. In addition, this form of information disclosure safegaurds and strengthens commitment to achieving set goals hence enables a conducive environment to fostering collaborative relationships with affected communities.

Smith and Brown (2018) discussed legitimacy by highlighting its role in ensuring procedural fairness and community engagement. Procedural fairness in this context encompasses the equitable treatment and the adherence decision-making processes. Studies have demonstrated the multi-faceted dynamics of trust and legitimacy within the mining industry's public participation processes. (Bobbio, 2019; Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023).It is noteworthy to indicate that the active engagement of local communities in decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and inclusivity, thereby enhancing the perceived legitimacy of actions and decisions made by mining companies.

These insights offer invaluable guidance for mining entities, policymakers, and stakeholders seeking to establish sustainable and mutually beneficial engagements in resource extraction activities.

## 2.6 Theoretical framework

This study is situated within the overarching theoretical frameworks of Sherry Alderstain’s ladder of participation and Sarah White’s typology of participation. These frameworks are grounded in the comprehension of the degree to which public perceptions of legitimacy, authority, and principles of good governance shape community engagements (Shier, Méndez, Centeno, & Arróliga, 2014). The Sherry Alderstain’s ladder of participation and Sarah White’s typology of participation serve as foundational constructs for comprehending the diverse competencies of host communities and other stakeholders. It is imperative for public participation processes to undergo evolution to align with the evolving needs of host communities particularly in the context of mining operations.

### 2.6.1 Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

Arnstein (1969) conceptualizes citizen participation as a metaphorical ladder comprising eight ascending rungs (therapy and manipulation, placation, consultation and informing, citizen control, delegated power and partnership) that are broadly categorized into three overarching areas namely; non-participation, degree tokenism and degree of citizen power.

#### *2.6.1.1 Non-participation*

In this phase, characterized by manipulation and therapy, stakeholders seeking to initiate a project employ deceptive tactics to create an illusion of citizen empowerment. Manipulation involves misleading citizens into believing they have decision-making power, while therapy entails framing citizens as problematic and implementing programs aimed at addressing perceived issues, further obscuring their genuine participation.

#### *2.6.1.2 Degrees of Tokenism*

This category encompasses informing, consulting, and placation, wherein actions are taken merely as tokens to demonstrate a semblance of participation. Arnstein underscores that such tokenistic measures lack meaningful engagement, often involving the use of jargon and providing citizens with limited influence without clear delineation of their roles and responsibilities.

#### *2.6.1.3 Degrees of Citizen Power*

This category encompasses partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. In these stages, citizens are afforded genuine opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes. Partnership entails collaborative engagement, with citizens making suggestions and having a certain degree of authority. Delegated power involves the transfer of decision-making authority to citizens, while citizen control represents the highest rung, wherein citizens not only actively participate but also possess the authority to hold other stakeholders accountable.

Figure 2.1 below depicts Arnstein's Ladder of Participation which underlines the significance of transcending mere symbolic actions and attaining substantial citizen engagement in the context of host communities and the initiation of a mining

project. This involves conferring authentic decision-making authority, cultivating collaborative efforts, and ensuring an equitable redistribution of decision-making power in a democratic manner.

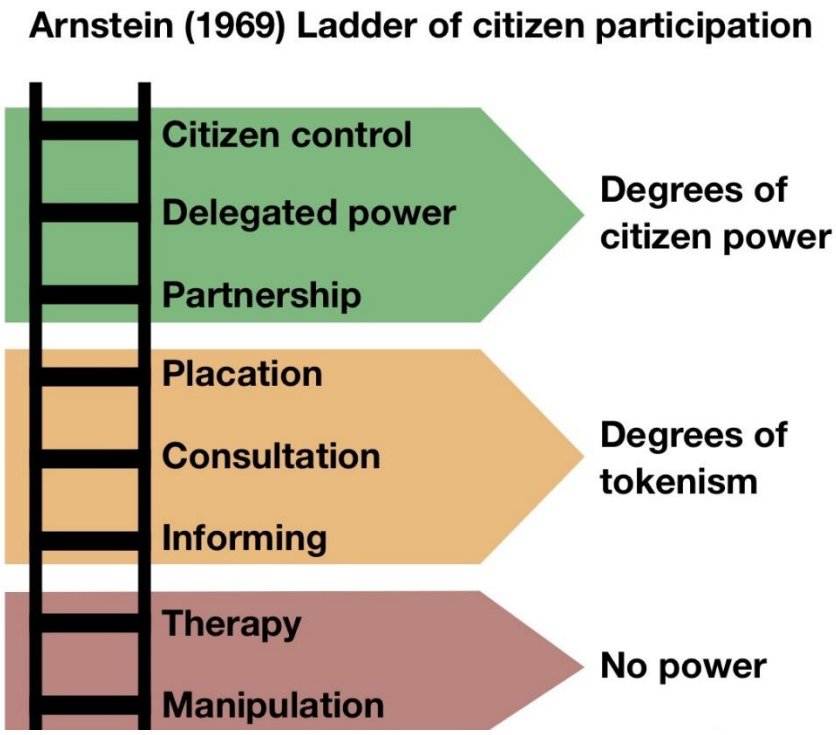


*Figure 2.1: Arnstein's Ladder of Public Participation (WordPress.com)*

At the lower levels of Arnstein's participation ladder, non-participation may manifest if the mining company resorts to manipulation or therapy when engaging with host community members. This involves tactics where stakeholders deceive the community into thinking they have decision-making authority or implement programs portraying the community as problematic without authentic involvement. The middle rungs, characterized by degrees of tokenism like informing, consulting, and placation, may see the mining company providing project information without genuinely incorporating community input. Consultation might be a symbolic gesture, with community opinions having limited impact, and placation involving symbolic gestures that appease the community without genuine engagement. The higher rungs, encompassing partnership, delegated power, and citizen control, represent more meaningful forms of participation. In a mining project, this would involve active collaboration with the community in decision-making processes, joint planning, delegated power for community governance, and citizen control entailing a significant community role in project decisions.

### 2.6.2 Sarah White's Typology of Participation

White (1996) suggests that public participation is inherently a political process, characterized by intricate dynamics that delineate the distribution of power, the involved stakeholders, and the manner in which the process unfolds. The author underscores that these dynamics encompass a complex interplay among actors, wherein the potential for powerful entities to either challenge or solidify their dominance is evident. Additionally, White (1996) distinguishes and shares four distinct forms of public participation: nominal, instrumental, representative, and transformative. In examining these forms, White (1996) expounds upon the disparities in perceptions that manifest between actors possessing greater power and those with comparatively less influence. The delineation of nominal participation implies a nominal inclusion of less powerful actors, instrumental participation suggests their involvement for specific ends, representative participation involves acting on behalf of less powerful stakeholders, and transformative participation entails a more profound and equitable alteration of power dynamics. White's framework thus provides a nuanced understanding of the nuanced power relations within public participation processes, contributing to the scholarly discourse on the political intricacies inherent in such endeavors.

Nominal participation is characterized by the utilization of less powerful actors to confer legitimacy upon proposed interventions or project plans. In this scenario, individuals or groups with diminished influence are featured but are not genuinely involved in decision-making processes. Consequently, those lacking substantial power fail to realize any discernible positive change or impact because of their nominal inclusion. Instrumental participation on the other hand represents a form of involvement wherein the community is excluded from decision-making processes. Instead, the community is utilized for their skills and expertise to advance the objectives of project owners who wield greater power. In this framework, the community's role is instrumental, serving the agenda of those in a position of greater authority without providing substantive input into decision-making.

Representative participation necessitates the presence of a community representative, or group tasked with communicating the views and desires of the community. This representative entity assumes the responsibility of safeguarding the community's interests. While this model acknowledges the need for representation, it

does not inherently empower the broader community in the decision-making process. In contrast, transformative participation focuses on empowering all involved parties without marginalizing those with lesser power. This approach seeks to engender a more egalitarian and inclusive decision-making process, fostering a sense of empowerment among all stakeholders. Transformative participation aims to transcend traditional power differentials, promoting a collaborative and empowering environment for all participants. This is illustrated in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Sarah White's Typology of Participation (Khanal, 2009)

| **Form** | **Top-Down** | **Bottom-Up** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nominal | Legitimation | Inclusion | Display |
| Instrumental | Efficiency | Cost | Means |
| Representative | Sustainability | Leverage | Voice |
| Transformative | Empowerment | Empowerment | Means/End |

Figure 2.2 shows public participation conceptual framework to be explored by the reseacher for this study which is instrumental in shaping the dynamics of host communities' involvement in a new mining project. By emphasizing legitimacy and trust-building, the framework contributes to the empowerment of host communities, ensuring that their role is meaningful, and their interests are taken into account, thereby promoting a more sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship between the mining industry and local communities.

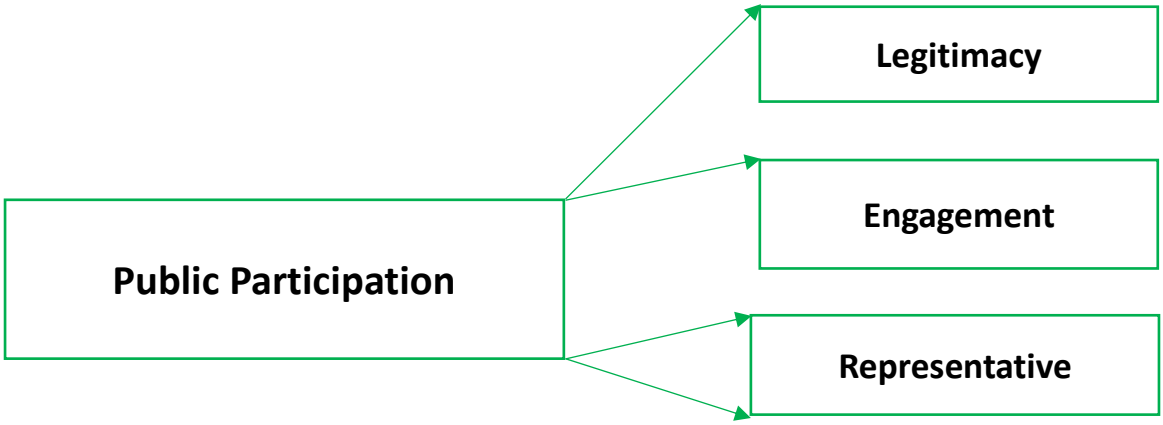


Figure 2.2: Public participation conceptual framework for the role of host commuities

### 2.6.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.2 will encompass the pathway for this study.  stakeholders in the context of initiating a new mining project in host communities. Also, the conceptual framework aims to emphasize the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust among stakeholdersas as a cornerstone for successful collaboration between the mining company and host communities (Gudowsky & Bechtold, 2013). For this study, public participation as a construct will be used as an outcome in relation legitimacy, engagement and representative as a conduit for equity, inclusivity and decision-making process. This is because when public participation process is perceived as legitimate, and stakeholders trust that their concerns and perspectives are genuinely considered, it fosters a positive relationship and enhances the likelihood of cooperative engagement. The perception of legitimacy in the context of public participation process from interview responses of mining company represenatives and host communities' will offer insight into the value-added inputs, transparency and accountability (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023).

The use of public participation framework can help mitigate conflicts and tensions that often arise in the context of resource extraction projects (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023; Bobbio, 2019). By building trust and legitimacy, the framework contributes to a more harmonious relationship between the mining company and the host communities, creating an environment conducive to collaborative problem-solving and sustainable development.

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on public participation, host communities, trust, and legitimacy *inter alia*. Some researchers suggest that a thorough framework and strategy could be formulated to assess decisions taken by mining companies concerning their alignment with overarching objectives, the potential impact of specific activities on all affected stakeholders, more especially their host communities (Magidi & Hlungwani, 2022).

Insufficient public participation processes represent areas of deficiency necessitating focused attention in addressing accountability for environmental, social, and governance aspects concerning mining projects. This report constitutes a pivotal stride in advancing initiatives aimed at enhancing public participation, by systematically gathering foundational data regarding the current state of involvement among principal stakeholders. The subsequent chapter will delve into the interview inquiries aimed at discerning public participation perspectives from both the mining company and the host community members, employing a qualitative methodology as previously determined.

# 3 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The chapter outlines the methodological procedures utilized in this study. In this chapter, the research method (qualitative) and the research philosophy (constructivism) are explained. Additionally, the research strategy, design, setting, study population and sampling technique, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations as well as the researcher's positionality that underpin this chapter are delineated.

## 3.2 Research Philosophy

This research adopts a constructivist approach. Constructivism is a research philosophy that showcases how reality is construed by individuals based on their experiences and interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Constructivism acknowledges that reality is subjective and shaped by associated external factors such as cultural, social, and historical contexts. In relation to this study, the use of constructivism as a research philosophy is to understand the nuanced perspectives and interpretations of host community members within the mining locations and how stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes related to mining projects being executed within the host community. By adopting constructivism for this study, the researcher's extensive understanding of the complexities and diverse viewpoints within the host community is enhanced (Mann & MacLeod, 2015). In addition, the choice of constructivism for this study provides an insight on the dynamics of public participation in the context of the mining sector operations within a host community.

## 3.3 Research Strategy

Daniel (2014) describes research strategy as a comprehensive framework guiding the execution of social research. The research strategy for this study is qualitative research. This type of research strategy prioritizes the utilization of texts (words) for data collection and data analysis procedures. It therefore implies that a non-numerical study is being embraced hence compared to quantitative research strategy which adopts the use of numerical data sources (Strijker, Bosworth, & Bouter, 2020).

The differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies are such that there are variations in research paradigm, research design, data collection, sampling technique and data analysis instrument including the roles of theory, epistemological orientations, and ontological perspectives (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). The ontological standpoint of qualitative research strategy is constructivism which posit that the social world is not an objective reality but is constructed by its inhabitants (Bleiker et.al, 2019).

The ontological perspective contends that social reality is shaped by individuals and their interactions, rather than being influenced solely by external factors or the inherent properties of the physical world (Creswell & Creswell 2018). For instance, qualitative research strategy adopts inductive approach compared to quantitative research which is typically a deductive in its approach because it often focuses primarily on theory testing (Skinner, 2020). Unlike quantitative research, which typically starts with a hypothesis to be tested, this study is a qualitative oriented and it begins with an exploration of the phenomenon of interest which is public participation by stakeholders.

The choice of a qualitative research strategy in this study reflects a commitment to exploring the intricacies of human experiences and social phenomena through an inductive, interpretivist, and constructionist lens, highlighting the subjective nature of reality as shaped by individuals within their social context.

### 3.4 Research Design

Research design refers to the plan or structure that guides the process of conducting a research study, indicates the detailed procedural adherence such as the selection of participants among others (Creswell & Creswell 2018). By implication, research design serves as a roadmap that delineates the activities and methods to be employed during the study. It encompasses the methodological framework and strategies employed by the researcher to address specific research questions or objectives. (Dantzker and Hunter 2012; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Research design can be qualitative or quantitative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Quantitative research design adopts a generalizability process in which respondents are clustered in a generalized outcome (Creswell & Creswell 2018). For a qualitative research design, it does not accommodate the generalization of results thus it is guided by individualized perception or opinions. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)**.** This is a case study qualitative research design as it focuses on understanding the dynamics of public participation in the establishment of a new mine in the communities of Swartkopfontein and Moshana.

By adopting a case study approach, the researcher can acquire in-depth knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of the host community members involved in the decision-making process surrounding the mining project (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The boundaries of the case study are defined by the geographical locations of Swartkopfontein and Moshana. Within these boundaries, the researcher aims to explore various aspects of public participation including community engagement processes, stakeholder interactions, and the impacts of the mining project on residents. Through careful boundary setting and focused inquiry, the case study provides a rich and comprehensive understanding of the role played by the host community in the establishment of the new mine.

### 3.5 Population and Sampling

According to Van Grootel (2019), the term "population" encompasses the targeted group in a study. For this study being qualitative research, the population being studied consists of the host communities comprising of two tribal groups: the Bahurutshe Batswana in Moshana and the amaXhosa in Swartkopfontein. Also, the population consist of the management team mining entities including the intended new mine in Swartkopfontein. In quantitative research, the population refers to the entire group of individuals, cases, or phenomena that the researcher is interested in studying by using a larger and wider sample with the aim of generalizing findings. In qualitative research, the concept of population is more fluid and may not be explicitly defined in the same way as in quantitative research.

Sampling in research denotes specificity of the targeted subgroup from which the researcher intends to collect data. Instead of aiming for generalizability to a broader population, qualitative researchers often focus on understanding the perspectives,

experiences, and meanings of a smaller group of individuals or cases (Ahmad et.al., 2019). In contrast, qualitative research typically uses smaller sample sizes with the emphasis being placed on depth rather than breadth, to enable the researcher to uncover detailed insights from a smaller number of participants. Sample sizes in qualitative research are often determined based on principles of data saturation, where data collection continues until no new insights or themes emerge from the analysis (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). The sample size for this study was eight host community members and two mining company representatives.

The different types of sampling for qualitative and quantitative research are random sampling, non-probability sampling, probablity sampling, purposive and snowballing among others (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). In the sampling process, the researcher utilized two distinct methods namely, purposive sampling and snowballing sampling. Participants were selected based on their ability to provide detailed descriptions and their willingness to articulate their experiences, enriching the researcher's comprehension. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique, involves the researcher selecting participants based on the relevance of their roles to the study's objectives (Saunders, 2011). In this context, individuals were chosen who held legitimate roles within the public participation committee or were recognized community leaders. Additionally, the researcher employed snowball sampling, also known as chain referral, wherein one interviewed person introduces the researcher to others who meet the predefined criteria (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). This method facilitates the expansion of the sample size through interconnected referrals, providing a more comprehensive perspective within the defined population.

### 3.6 Study Participants

Ten interviews formed the basis of this study which was comprised two representatives from the mining company, sixfrom the host communities and two from tribal house leadership. All interviews were transcribed and subjected to analysis during the data processing phase. The selection of participants did not hinge on demographic factors; rather, emphasis was placed on their active involvement in public participation processes. It is noteworthy that during the study, the host community participants expressed ongoing engagement in project-related meetings. However, the two representatives from the mining company have since transitioned to

new positions within different organizations. A concise profile of each participant is provided below, ensuring confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms.

The chosen sample size of ten participants in this study, encompassing representatives from both the mining company and host communities, provided a diverse range of perspectives. While not focusing on demographic specifics, the study prioritized individuals actively engaged in public participation processes when the mine was started, ensuring relevance and depth in the data collected. Amos (2018), suggests that the dynamic nature of the mining company representatives' employment transitions underscores the evolving landscape of stakeholder involvement, potentially affecting the ongoing dynamics of the project engagement processes. However, the continuity in host community participation highlights their sustained interest and commitment to the project's discussions and decisions. The summaries provided contribute to maintaining anonymity while outlining the breadth of perspectives captured within the study. To avoid using random names that coincidentally represent some of the people who were part of the public participation process but not of this study, the following pseudonyms are used:

Mining company representatives are referred to as MC1 (Mining Company 1) and MC2 (Mining Company 2). Host community representatives are referred to as HC1, HC2, HC3, HC4, HC5, HC6, and lastly, tribal house leaders are referred to as (Tribal House 1) TRH1 and TRH2 (Tribal House 2).

### 3.7 Data Collection procedure

As a qualitative study, the data collection procedure utilized for this was conducted using semi-structured interviews as data collection tool (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Unlike qualitative data collection too, a quantitative research study requires the use of unstructured interview as its data collection tool (Bryman, 2012). This data collection tool provides the researcher with detailed narrative from the participants and thereby assisted in the identification of unique nuances of each participant’s perspectives. The foremost step in data collection procedure for this study was to develop the interview questions, guidelines as adapted from the studies of (Mnguni, 2018; King, Feltey & Susel, 2015) and subsequently modified to suit the purpose of this study. The modification entails adapting existing guidelines from

relevant studies and then adjusting them to align with the specific objectives and focus of the current research study by reviewing the interview questions used in previous studies for relevance.

This was done with the research objectives and research questions in mind, ensuring that the interview guide questions align with these objectives. A review of the interview guides used in previous research that are relevant to the study to understand their structure, content, and the types of questions asked. The researcher reviewed which questions from the existing interview guides were relevant to the study. These may include questions that address similar themes or concepts to those you aim to explore. However, the researcher could not find exact questions and had to modifying existing questions. This meant adapting the wording, phrasing, and structure of the questions to better fit the study's context and research objectives. Considering that the participants speak Setswana and isiXhosa languages as mother tongues, thus the modification was necessary to ensure clarity and relevance. The researcher developed new questions, to address unique aspects of the study or research objectives. These questions were necessary to provide insights into your research topic. The researcher then considered the order in which questions would be asked. Questions were arranged in a logical sequence that facilitates the flow of the interview conversation. Start with broad, introductory questions before moving on to questions about public participation process, decision-making, legitimacy, and trust. The researcher then finalised the guide.

Understanding the dynamics of legitimacy and trust in public participation processes when a company starts a new mine in an existing community is crucial for fostering constructive relationships between the host community and the mining company as well as ensuring the project's long-term success. The interview guide featured questions about community perceptions of the company's intentions, transparency, and information sharing practices, assessing whether community members felt adequately informed and engaged throughout the process and similar questions were posed to the mining company representatives. Fairness and equity considerations are also paramount, with investigations into the inclusivity of engagement mechanisms and the mitigation of power imbalances. Additionally, the interview questions served to gain an understanding into the anticipated impacts of the mine on community well-being and livelihoods, along with historical trust dynamics and the role of governance

and regulation, provides essential context for evaluating legitimacy and trust perceptions. In the case of this study, the modified interview guides are presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, each of the appendix is assigned to the host community and another for the mining company representatives respectively.

The number of participants in qualitative research is not predetermined but is influenced by several variables or parameters to be investigated and they include research questions and research objectives. Throughout the data collection phase, participants were given the liberty to choose their interview venues. Consequently, each participant was interviewed at their selected location while mining company participants were interviewed via phone, representatives from the host community were interviewed either at their residences or at the school hall where the public participation process was held. This choice was influenced by connectivity issues, hindering the researcher's ability to contact participants upon arrival.

The interviews were conducted solely by the researcher in English although participants were given the option to use their preferred language, all opted for English. Notably, community representatives chosen for the interviews were individuals with higher education levels, believed to comprehend the process well and advocate for the community's needs. Despite English not being their native language, their proficiency was notable due to their educational and professional status. Conducting interviews in English facilitated direct transcription without translation, except for instances where participants briefly used another language, mainly for humour, and these segments were not transcribed. The duration of the interviews spanned from approximately 30 minutes to an hour, with an outlier exemplified by an extended one and half hour’s session involving a mining company representative. Notably, the interviews unfolded in a direct face-to-face manner, with one interview having been conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams with the video on thereby fostering a nuanced and immediate exchange of information. Consent was sought with each participant who, upon approval, willingly subjected themselves to the recording of the interviews via a dedicated recording apparatus used to transcribing afterwards. This meticulous process aimed at capturing the richness of verbal discourse for subsequent transcription. It is noteworthy that all participants unequivocally assented to the recording of the interviews, demonstrating a conscientious commitment to the research study. The interview data was privately stored to avoid data compromise.

## 3.8 Data Analysis

Creswell & Creswell (2018) recommend a simultaneous approach to data collection and analysis in qualitative research. This is to enable the researcher to refine questions and further explore views and perceptions derived from the data collection process. This approach was adopted as thoroughly as possible during the study's data collection phase. Interviews were transcribed, and initial analyses were conducted to identify emerging patterns for further exploration in subsequent interviews. Qualitative data was analysed using an inductive approach. Inductive analysis involves examining the data to identify emerging themes indicative of relationships between variables (Gray, 2014, Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach entails interpretive inquiry, where the researcher derives meaning from what they observe, hear, and comprehend.

Thematic data analysis process was employed to examine and interpret themes within the dataset.  encompassed preparing the data for analysis, conducting various analyses, generating, presenting, and revising the data, as well as interpreting and making sense of it. Thematic data analysis is often described to be a basic method for identifying themes in transcribed data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This iterative process involved continuous reflection, data interrogation, and memo writing throughout the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher made use of a free trial Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) called Atlas.ti. The benefit of using Atlas.ti was for the mechanical part which is the formal structure of coding and generating themes without the exercise consuming a lot of time and being labour-intensive (Ahmad & Newman, 2010). In ensuring that the researcher is not distanced from the data and does not relinquish the power of conceptual part of analysing the data to Atlas.ti software, the researcher became familiar with the data by making notes on areas of interest discussed by host community members and mining company representatives. The researcher spend time listening to audio recordings and reviewing the data for potential codes which would lead to themes.

The handling of data obtained from interviews from the host community members and mining company representatives was amalgamated by integrating information from

audio recordings and verbatim notes, gathered during these interview sessions. Comprehensive coding led to the development of parent themes, sub-themes, descriptions, and illustrative quotes derived from emerging themes. Initially, nine (9) distinct themes emerged, which were subsequently condensed into six overarching themes. An indicative thematic analysis ensued, involving the examination of participant statements, identification of commonalities, and the development of themes and sub-themes.

The concept of data saturation is a unique attribute in data collection and as applicable in qualitative research is when the responses from participants indicate non-emergence of new themes emerge Qualitative research underscores the significance of context in data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this study, the exact number of interviews was not predetermined. Ten interviews were conducted in total, two representing the mining company and six from the host communities (three from each area, Moshana and Swartkopfontein). By the fourth interview, minimal new information emerged, but additional interviews were conducted to confirm data saturation. The subsequent interviews confirmed the gathered information, signalling data saturation, prompting the researcher to conclude the interviewing phase and commence data analysis.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in qualitative research are important to ensure the overall ethical conduct of the study (Arifin, 2018). This means the researcher must ensure the protection of participants through the application of appropriate ethical principles and integrity in data collection and analysis. In a qualitative study, ethical considerations have a particular resonance due to the in-depth nature of the study process. For this study, the ethical clearance was granted by Wits Ethics committee (Appendix C) before starting the research. Maintaining respect towards all participants Creswell & Creswell (2018), the researcher refrained from imposing personal views while remaining relatable. In adherence to ethical considerations, the research purpose of the study was transparently explained to all participants to foster an environment that is conducive to participants sharing their experiences freely.

The researcher ensured anonymity by removing any identifying information such as names and house numbers. Pseudonyms to participants were used instead and recorded in Microsoft word transcripts. Furthermore, no names were mentioned in the audio records, however, participants sometimes referred to the researcher with either the researcher's name or surname. All the data is safely stored and secured in a folder that requires a password known by the researcher only.

Informed consent was obtained from participants, and it was clearly communicated that they were entitled to withdraw from the study at any time. Considering the sensitive nature of the subject matter, participants were encouraged to volunteer information without being coerced. The researcher had to travel 750 km to the research site and thus interviews were conducted over a period of four (4) months which provided flexibility to participants and accommodate their availability. For example, the scheduling of interviews was conducted through the methodical recruitment of participants, wherein contact was established, and appointments were meticulously arranged. The interviews took place within discreet and personalized settings, strategically determined based on the participants' convenience, both temporally and spatially.

### 3.9.1 Limitations and Positionality

The researcher is not an employee of the mining project and has no relations with the participants of the study. The study was conducted using Swarkopfontein and Moshana as a case study but will not make generalisations of other host communities across the country. The researcher was aware fro the commencement of the study that the project is currently halted and there might be difficulties in getting hold of all the management team. The researcher used contact details on the project scope to get hold of management. The researcher assumed sole responsibility for the entirety of the data collection, data capturing, and analysis processes. Motivated by the concept of Africa Rising and a belief in rural development as a means to achieve this, the researcher aims to provide assistance to host communities in comprehending their role in public participation processes when a new mine is established. The researcher's academic background, encompassing a qualification in mining and an imminent qualification in management and governance, positions them as an ideal

candidate for conducting this study. This academic foundation contributes valuable insights and expertise to the exploration of the research objectives.

## 3.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provided a comprehensive exploration of the research methodology, covering elements such as the research strategy, design, sample size determination, data collection procedures, and the thoroughness applied in the subsequent analysis. Additionally, a detailed exposition of the ethical considerations was presented, underscoring the measures taken to safeguard respondents from potential harm or breaches of confidentiality. The forthcoming Chapter 4 will subsequently present the acquired results.

# 4 CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter detailed the methodology procedure in this study, outlining the utilization of interviews for data collection and explaining the process of data acquisition and transcription into written format. This chapter contains the responses of the two groups of interviewees, host community members including tribal leaders and mining company representatives. The answers are presented according to each group, and they are outlined in terms of themes. The initial set of findings outlines the perspectives of both the host community members and mining company representatives regarding their perceptions of public participation processes. The second set of results examines the existence of trust between the two groups. The third set of responses evaluates the level of legitimacy perceived between the two groups. This chapter provides the evidence that will underpin the discussion of findings in Chapter 5.

## 4.2 Data Presentation

Individually transcribed interviews underwent initial scrutiny to comprehend the perspectives of each participant. Each interview transcription received dedicated scrutiny to capture the unique viewpoints and contributions of individual participants. This initial analysis aimed to grasp the nuances and individuality in the responses, laying the foundation for broader themes and patterns to emerge.

The subsequent step involved synthesizing these individual perspectives to identify overarching or prevalent themes across the interviews. This strategic approach not only highlighted commonalities but also accentuated the diverse ways in which participants constructed and articulated their viewpoints on the subject matter. The emphasis of this chapter lies in presenting the identified dominant themes prevalent among the participants.

## 4.3 Presentation of interview responses to answer research questions.

In order to draw a comparison, interviews were conducted with the representatives from the two host community members and mining company representatives to answer the research sub questions starting with the main research question. It is

important to note that short extract of responses were taken to distill the essence of participants' views while reducing redundancy and verbosity.

### 4.3.1 Main research question

*What is the role played by the community in public participation process when establishing a new mine in Lehurutshe, North-West Province?*

The interviews were conducted with the aim of understanding the role played by the host community with regards to public participation as it is essential for sustainable development ad responsible resource development. The responses revealed that the presence of factors that are interconnected, reinforcing the notion that public participation requires a holistic approach that is essential for building and maintaining the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020)

When requested to describe the term public participation, the mining company representative without hesitation answered as follows:

> *Public participation is about involving the public with regards to anything that must happen in their land. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

When probed to elaborate, the respondent proceeded to add that they believed public participation can break or make a mining project successful. This clearly illustrates the importance of host communities' role to be part of the decision-making process with regards to activities in their land. However, with this belief, it was interesting to realise that all the host communities' representatives only knew there was going to a be a mining project when there was already activity in the area with big vehicles and strange people in their midst.

> *We knew about the mining project after we saw mining trucks and equipment and people started talking but no one knew what was happening. (HC4, June 17, 2023)*

> *The Chief told us there were people who came to complain about the mine. At the time, we did not know that they wanted to mine, we thought they wanted to check if they could find something to mine. (HC2, July 29, 2023)*

When asked to explain how the public participation process was conducted, the mining representatives answered as seen below:

> *…there was no order. Some community leaders and some people who wanted to be part of the project. From the onset of process (public participation process), our (mining company) goal was to facilitate an open exchange of ideas and concerns between the company and the host community. We deliberately avoided imposing any structured order to ensure that all viewpoints could be expressed freely and without constraint. (MC1, June 24, 2023)*

There was also a perception from the mining company that some of the host community members failed to engage in a respectful manner and were unreasonable.

> *…during the public participation process, it became evident that some community members lacked order in their demands and expectations. While we value their input, it's essential for all parties to approach discussions with a sense of organization and mutual respect. (MC2, June 25, 2023)*

However, host community members also indicated levels of dissatisfaction with the way the mining company conducted the process.

> *Hai…I think they started this thing in a wrong way. They were supposed to talk to us and also talk to the other tribal house so that we know exactly what to expect. Now they just surprised us. (HC1, May 27, 2023)*

When asked to explain what surprising them meant, the community member explained that the fact that they only knew of the mining activity when they saw mining trucks, mining equipment and mining employees already working on the site was not a good way for the mining company to let the community know they were mining in their land without engaging even the tribal house leaders. The community member went to explain that in rural villages, particularly in traditional or indigenous communities, like Moshana and Swartkopfontein, there is a deep respect for the hierarchy and statuses of chiefs or kings. Traditional leaders according to this community member play significant roles in governance, decision-making, and maintaining social order within their communities. This view was also pointed out by Valsecchi, (2008) citing that chiefs and kings are often seen as custodians of cultural heritage and values. This implies that chiefs and kings are believed to embody the

community's identity and history, and their roles are deeply intertwined with cultural practices, rituals, and ceremonies. Makhanikhe, (2022) adds by suggesting that respect is necessary to show to traditional leadership to promote social cohesion and unity within rural villages. The hierarchical structure helps maintain order and harmony by providing a framework for resolving conflicts and addressing communal needs. It is therefore not surprising that some community members during the interview revealed that conflicts arose with some community members accusing the chiefs or the tribal house leaders to have known but not informed the community about the project.

> *I worried because the discussion started with complaints and people blaming the chief. They thought the chief knew all the details and not telling the people. (HC5, June 18, 2023)*

The tribal house leaders also indicated that their people in the beginning did not trust them, assuming they knew about the mining project and had more details.

> *In an area like this, you see. People don't work, the just farm and that's it. So, when something like this happens, people always believe there is nothing that happens in the land without the chief knowing, they believed we got some money from the mining company and allowed them to come here, when in fact none (tribal house) of us knew until they (mining company) were here. (HC3, June 15, 2023)*

Drawing on these insights, it is noteworthy that conducting public participation processes require respect for fostering positive relationships, building trust, and in the case of this study this would also ensure sustainable development of mining projects in collaboration with host communities. Failure to do so can lead to a range of negative consequences that undermine the project's success and social license to operate.

The views of the mining company representatives provided insight that there were stakeholders from the host communities. The views indicated that stakeholder identification and engagement was challenging for the mining company.

> *…the company had previously engaged community leaders and we were given the green light. However, it turned out those were not the right leaders…We had numerous meetings at a certain high school*

*and ultimately a consensus was reached, and we started exploration (MC2, August 14, 2023)*

A similar view is seen from other host community representatives when asked who the people involved in public participation processes were:

*There are two tribes here. In the beginning we would meet with the mining company separately and there were so many fights then but after some time, we met with the other tribe and agreed to meet at the same time and we formed a committee (HC1, May 27, 2023)*

When probed about what the fights were about, the participant answered as follows:

*Money issues, apparently some people thought other people especially from the chief's side got money from the company. Also, the mine is on the boundary and the two tribes were struggling to agree on who must lead the talks with the mine people (HC1, May 27, 2023)*

When asked about suggestions or thoughts to improve the public participation process, the responses indicate that the processes were marred with challenges and thus undermining the effectiveness.

*…that was one volatile situation. I think from our side, we took a long time to get the key stakeholders, there were a lot of times we would engage with people only to learn later that they were not legitimate members of the tribal house…we also offended the community in the beginning by having females as part of the delegates to engage the tribal leaders when we were just starting (MC2, August 14, 2023)*

The tribal house representative had this to say in response to suggestions for improving the public participation process:

*They must take people serious, be honest and do things right. That mine caused a lot of issues between the community and the chief. It also caused issues between the two tribes. Remember, nobody at all knew about this mining company. We didn't even know whether we had gold or silver, nothing. (TRH1, July 30, 2023)*

The data gathered at this point indicated that stakeholder identification was inadequately executed, and the public participation process commenced amidst

mutual distrust. Community members perceived a lack of transparency or legitimacy in the engagement process and tensions escalated, fostering an environment of suspicion and mistrust. Accusations directed towards tribal house leaders of collusion with the mining company further exacerbated these dynamics, casting doubt on the integrity of local leadership and the fairness of decision-making processes. It is evident that such circumstances underscore the pivotal role played by the host community in the public participation process concerning the establishment of a mine on their land.

#### *4.3.1.1 Sub-questions:*

**Sub-question 1:**

*What factors influence the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes within the context of mining projects?*

Various scholars indicate that evaluating the legitimacy of public participation necessitates a discerning appraisal of the equitability, inclusivity, transparency, and efficacy inherent in the procedural facets (Renn, Webber & Wiedemann, 1995; Mnengwane, 2014; Nkosi, 2017). This implies that true public participation is conducive to sensible decisional processes, thereby fostering the cultivation of trust among engaged stakeholders. Furthermore, transparency is noted to be key when it comes to legitimacy (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023). The researcher asked questions about the decision-making process to enquire if it was open and visible, if it was explained how decisions were made and the cause-effect of those decisions, representatives answered as follows:

> *There were so many challenges from onset and most if not all of the people there do not have an understanding of how a mining project works, they all just thought it was to benefit them. (MC2, August 14, 2023)*

The statement highlights several key issues regarding the role of the community in public participation suggesting that the community members lacked a fundamental understanding of how a mining project operates. This suggests a gap in communication and education regarding the nature and implications of such projects. Without this understanding, community members may not fully comprehend the potential benefits and risks associated with the project.

When whether the decision-making process was open to scrutiny and if the

information was accessible and presented in was the representatives answered as follows:

> *The company answered questions they had and even brought specialists…minutes of the meeting were also printed and given to the leaders. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

When the researcher asked about the role of specialists, this is what the response:

> *We brought safety officers and a mining engineer to explain how we would mine. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

This sentiment, however, was not shared by the community members. The community members believed no sufficient time was given to have proper discussions and in most instances the mining company representatives failed to answer questions and would either ask that issues and demands be written down and would be escalated which never happened.

> *I just know that a lot of people were not happy because we could not tell the company anything, they wanted us to write our demands and never even gave anyone answers. (HC5, June 18, 2023)*

> *Sometimes they would answer some questions, other times they were in a rush to go back to where they came from, I think they were from Joburg. So, they would tell us pieces and pieces. (TRH1, July 30, 2023)*

> *I went to their meetings, but those meetings were a waste of time. They (mining company) could not answer some of the questions were had, they would say they will ask the people higher than them. (HC5, June 18, 2023)*

> *I think from the two meetings I attended, people didn't have enough time to think and ask the right questions… when you open a mine, you cannot meet people for a few minutes and go, that's what they used to do. (HC5, June 18, 2023)*

The data revealed that the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes within the context of mining project between the Manganese project owners and the two host communities was influenced by a myriad of interrelated factors that shape stakeholders' perceptions of fairness, transparency, and effectiveness. The extent of inclusivity and representativeness in the engagement process significantly impacts legitimacy, with stakeholders evaluating the degree to which diverse voices are heard

and considered (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023). Additionally, the transparency of information dissemination and decision-making procedures plays a crucial role, as stakeholders assess the accessibility and comprehensibility of project-related information.

#### *4.3.1.2 Sub-question 2:*

*How does trust between mining companies and host communities evolve throughout the phases of public participation processes?*

The researcher sought to investigate the dynamic evolution of trust between mining companies and host communities over the various stages inherent in public participation processes. The inquiry aimed to share the factors influencing the development, sustenance, or erosion of trust between these stakeholders throughout the distinct phases of engagement. Through a comprehensive examination of the interplay between mining enterprises and host communities within the context of public participation, the study aimed to contribute a nuanced understanding of the temporal and contextual dimensions shaping the trust dynamics in this complex relational landscape. The researcher asked how the mining company shared their intentions, if they made any promises to the host community and if they afforded the host community an opportunity for real input.

> *The intention was to mine Manganese and empower the community. We never stood a chance to show we intended to deliver our promises, those people (the host community) were always angry about something and there were a number of times where they had conflicts amongst themselves. (MC2, August 14, 2023)*

When the host community was asked if they perceived the mining company to keep its word and capable of delivering on its promises as well as afford the host community an opportunity to have real input, this is what they had to say:

> *Remember most people here do not have jobs, some were happy about the mining project, especially the young people, but they failed to hire them when they started mining (TRH2, July 29, 2023)*

> *I don't think they can be trusted; they just wanted a mine to be an easy lotto without considering the community (HC5, June 18, 2023)*

When asked to elaborate on the issue, the participant indicated that in the beginning, the mining company promised the community jobs but were not able to deliver.

> *I cannot say if the company can be trusted or not because everything was happening so fast but I think they had our interests at heart (HC3, June 15, 2023)*

When asked to elaborate on the issue, the participant referenced the promises that were made by the company to hire locals, help build schools and a hospital.

*Figure 4.1: The school hall where the mining company met with the host communities.*

When asked on views as to why the mining project was stopped, the host community members had this to say:

> *The leaders failed the people; the people did not know what was happening and they were not happy so they would strike now and then to get answers. (HC6, Jun 25, 2023)*

The responses show that trust between the mining company and the host communities reflected the ongoing dynamics of engagement, communication, and relationship-building inherent in the public participation process. In the pre-engagement phase, trust was fragile, as both parties assessed each other's intentions and credibility based on initial communication efforts. As the engagement progresses into the information-sharing phase, trust did not to develop as the company failed to demonstrate transparency, openness, and responsiveness to

community concerns, thereby failing to build credibility and to lay the foundation for constructive dialogue. Throughout the consultation and collaboration phases, trust did not deepen as the company was not able to provide answers and feedback to the host community members. This meant that the company was not able to incorporate local perspectives into decision-making processes, and to demonstrate a commitment to mutually beneficial outcomes. Drawing on Conde & Le Billon, (2017) view that participation processes serve as pivotal junctures in discourses surrounding sustainable resource extraction, poor consultation and collaboration is a hindrance. These interactions between stakeholders hold significant weight in determining the effectiveness and ethicality of resource extraction practices. They offer an opportunity for dialogue, negotiation, and collaboration to ensure that the interests and concerns of all involved parties are adequately addressed. Trust and legitimacy play crucial roles in these processes, influencing the degree of cooperation, transparency, and accountability exhibited by both mining companies and community representatives. As such, understanding and addressing issues of trust and legitimacy are essential for fostering constructive engagement and achieving sustainable outcomes.

#### *4.3.1.3 Sub-question 3:*

*What are the perceptions and experiences of different stakeholder groups regarding the effectiveness of public participation processes in fostering trust and legitimacy?*

> *The community never really had a chance to meet those people (mining company). It was just a selected few from the community…what is needed is proper consultation and not this thing of theirs. It's like they took us by surprise, no preparation at all (HC5, Jun 18, 2023)*

> *They must have more young people in these processes and also seek help from the government and other people who work in the Rustenburg and Gauteng mines from here. They know mining and not just speak to people from the tribal house. (HC4, Jun 17, 2023)*

The mining company shared the sentiment of failure to do proper stakeholder identification and engagement which limited the opportunity to have a diverse group of stakeholders involved in the process.

> *I believe the company could have done robust engagements and broader stakeholder mapping to engage people more and make them understand the project better.* (MC2, August 14, 2023)

When probed to elaborate, the representative indicated that meaningful engagement and stakeholder mapping are essential for securing and maintaining social license to operate. Actively involving stakeholders in decision-making processes, the company would have demonstrated respect for local interests and values, thereby gaining trust and support from the community. However, due to the area being far and people coming late to meetings, it was not always easy to address issues that were raised in one setting, which made the community members doubt their legitimacy.

The data so far reveals that there was no meaningful engagement between the mining company and host communities. Furthermore, the host community believes the level of transparency and accountability was very low, and the unwillingness of the mining company to be co-decision-makers by genuinely considering and responding to community members' input.

### 4.4 Presentation of themes

The presentation of the research findings is molded by the examination and interpretation of transcripts. This analytical process facilitated the uncovering of nuanced patterns and meanings inherent in the language used, contributing to a richer understanding of the role played by the host community members.

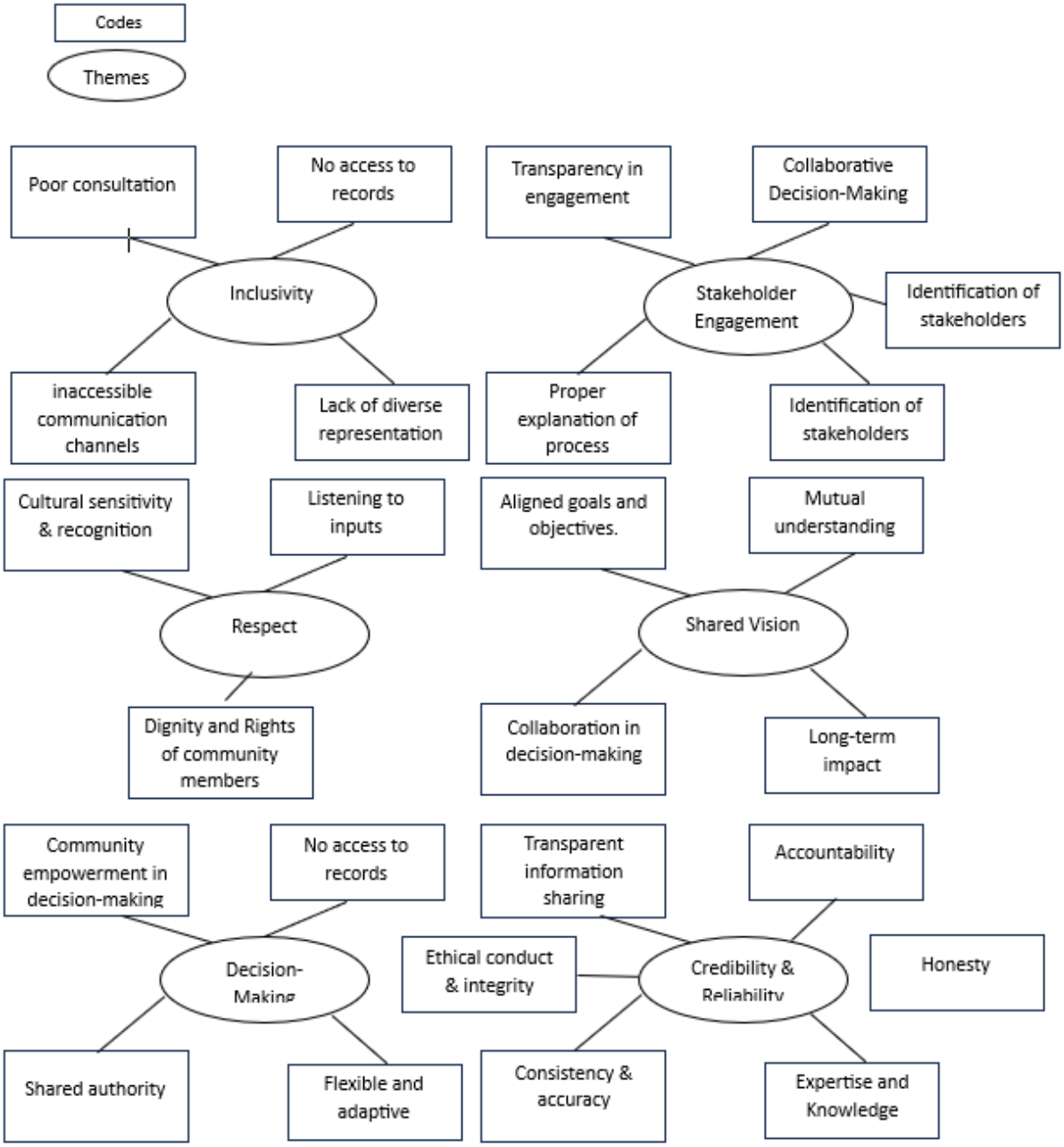


*Figure 4.2: The clustered codes forming themes from excel.*

The identified themes are contextualized within the broader scope of this study, which scrutinizes the involvement of host communities when a mining company initiates a new mining project. Direct excerpts extracted from the interview transcripts substantiate the recognition of these themes. Some quotes appeared across multiple themes, employed due to their relevance to various thematic discussions. Before the presentation of the discerned themes, an initial section concentrates on the engagement of participants in public participation processes. This contextual setup

serves to provide a comprehensive framework for the subsequent analysis and understanding of the identified themes.

### 4.4.1 Inclusivity

Inclusivity is considered and attribute of public participation and refers to the extent to which all relevant stakeholders are involved in the public participation process, ensuring that diverse perspectives and voices are heard and considered (Van den Berg et.al, 2019). Using Atlas.ti, coding qualitative data from interviews revealed patterns and examples of inclusive practices, such as lack of outreach efforts by the mining company to host community members, in the same vein, mining company representatives indicated that host community members were uncertain about who needed to be included in the process. De Freitas & Martin, (2015) suggest that diverse representation in decision-making forums, and accessibility of information and resources. These findings highlight areas of strength and areas needing improvement in promoting inclusivity and enhancing trust in the public participation process. This is seen in the response by the mining company representative in defining public participation as a process that ensures inclusivity of diverse stakeholders.

> It ensures that a diverse range of voices is heard, including those who might be directly affected by the mining decisions. *(MC2, August 14, 2023)*

A contrast to this is however noted when the host community was asked if they were included in the decision-making process and afforded a real opportunity for input.

> *not too much, also because it was a few people attending the meetings. (HC5, Jun 18, 2023)*

When asked to elaborate on the poor attendance, the community member remarked that in most instances, the community members were not aware that a meeting would take place or would find out late. When the committee was formed, the community then relinquished power to the committee to attend and advocate for the rest of community members and come back to give feedback.

Fung, (2015) suggests that ensuring inclusivity of stakeholder voices requires parties to engage in transparent and participatory processes. This may involve conducting thorough impact assessments, consulting, and collaborating with community members. Decision-making processes that lack inclusivity may result in outcomes that disproportionately benefit certain groups while disadvantaging others. This can perpetuate existing social, economic, and environmental inequalities.

### 4.4.2 Stakeholder enagagement

Stakeholder engagement involves actively involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, seeking their input, feedback, and collaboration throughout the project lifecycle (Quick & Bryson, 2022). Using Atlas.ti, the data identified perceptions of the engagement process, levels of satisfaction, perceived influence, and trust in between the host community members and the mining company. Coding data yielded a stakeholder engagement theme. This enabled the researcher to uncover insights into the factors that contribute to trust and legitimacy, such as transparency, responsiveness, and opportunities for meaningful participation between the actors. When asked about the public participation process and stakeholders involved in the process, the following answers were recorded:

> *I believe the company could have done robust engagements and broader stakeholder mapping to engage people more and make them understand the project better. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*
>
> *We had numerous meetings with the tribal house before actually involving other community members. Then we also engaged the municipality. After some time, the tribal house recommended that we speak to certain people, and we were later told that there is a committee formed to help us discuss issues and benefits. (MC2, Aug 14, 2023)*
>
> *There was no order. In meetings with the company and with our people. (HC5, Jun 18, 2023)*

Effective stakeholder engagement fosters collaboration and cooperation among diverse groups (Stocker et.al, 2020). When engagement is poor, opportunities to leverage local knowledge, resources, and expertise may be missed, hindering the development of sustainable solutions. Furthermore, without input from diverse stakeholders, proposed solutions may overlook key concerns or fail to address underlying issues effectively. This can lead to suboptimal outcomes and may necessitate costly revisions or interventions in the future.

### 4.4.3 Decision-making

Quick & Bryson, (2020) define decision-making as a process of making choices or reaching conclusions based on input, analysis, and deliberation, often involving multiple stakeholders. The codes leading to this theme enabled the researcher to identify patterns that shed light on the effectiveness and perceived fairness of decision-making practices between the mining company and the two host communities. When being asked whether the decision-making process made open and visible to the host community, the responses were recorded as follows?

> *Not as much as we wanted. We still don't have some answers. (HC3, June 15, 2023)*

When asked to elaborate on some of the questions the community asked, this was the response.

> *We wanted them to tell us how many people they would hire and they said they will speak to their bosses and come back to tell us, they never did. When we asked how long, they would mine that hole, they also could not tell us. We asked so many things and they did not know most of the time how to answer us. (HC3, June 15, 2023)*

*For the same questions on the openness and visibility of the decision*-making process, the mining company answered as follows:

> *I believe it was because the company allowed them time to ask questions and to discuss amongst themselves and voice their concerns. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

Stocker et.al (2020, suggests that when stakeholders perceive decision-making processes as unfair or biased, trust in institutions and authorities can erode. This can undermine the legitimacy of decisions and impede their implementation, leading to further dysfunction and discord between the host communities and the mining company.

### 4.4.4 Credibility and reliability

Factors such as transparent communication, evidence-based decision-making, and adherence to ethical standards contribute to credibility and reliability (Dube, Mnguni & Tschudin, 2021). The researcher analysed the data to identify the mining company representatives and the host community members' perceptions of the credibility and reliability of the public participation process.

Does the host community believe the mining company to be capable of delivering on its promises?

> I think most of them did not trust the mine, especially after not hiring the people*. (HC3, June 15, 2023)*

How did the mining company demonstrate to the host community that the mining company is capable of delivering on its promises?

> *We never stood a chance; those people were always angry about something and there were a number of times were they had conflicts amongst themselves. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

Did the host community believe the mining company to have their interests at heart?

> *No, they just wanted to come make money. (HC4, June 17, 2023)*

> *Most of the things they told us the company promised when we attended meetings, the company never did. Like fix the roads. They never did. (HC1, May 27, 2023)*

It appears from the data that they were promises made during the public participation process by the mining company which were consistently broken or not followed through on. Failure to deliver on promises undermines trust and reliability. Furthermore, participants indicated that the process restricted access to participation and failed to engage a diverse range of stakeholders leading to the view that the lacked credibility. If the process appears to be biased toward a particular outcome or if stakeholders feel that their views are being manipulated or misrepresented, credibility and reliability are compromised.

### 4.4.5 Shared vision

The answers provided by the mining company and the host community members indicate that there were issues with regards to the intended objectives and benefits of the project. Shared vision involves the development of a common understanding and collective goals among stakeholders, guiding decision-making and actions toward a desired future state. Some of the responses recorded with regards to the public participation process were as follows:

*I think generally mining projects in a rural community such as that one can pose a lot of challenges as most people do not have an understanding of the benefits and when people lose their grazing land, it becomes hard to convince them otherwise. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

*In all truth, I don't know because I only saw five of the people from the company the time I went to the hall. I was sitting at the back and struggled to understand some things. (HC2, July 29, 2023)*

*We wanted to uplift the community by providing employment opportunities and fixing the main road from town into the main village. (MC2, June 25, 2023)*

It is evident that the mining company and host community members demonstrate minimal willingness to collaborate with one another to find common ground or develop mutually acceptable solutions. Instead, they focused on advocating solely for their own interests without considering broader objectives. Communication channels were fragmented, this is seen where the host community members would discuss amongst themselves about issues, they were dissatisfied with from the mining company side. stakeholders communicating primarily within their own groups or factions rather than engaging in open dialogue with others. This fragmentation can hinder the development of a shared vision.

### 4.4.6 Respect

Respect involves acknowledging and valuing the dignity, rights, and perspectives of all stakeholders involved in the public participation process (Idang, 2015; Eze, 2017). In various African cultures, there are traditional norms and customs regarding gender roles and communication etiquette. The data revealed that, for the two tribal groups it is considered disrespectful or inappropriate for a woman to directly address a man, particularly if he is older or holds a higher social status.

*They sent us three ladies and two men, we were shocked. (TRH2, July 29, 2023)*

*Respect is very important. You can't go to people's house, and you just do what you like. Tell them the truth and ask them first how they do things so that you don't step on their toes. (TRH1, July 30, 2023)*

*The company did not respect us. You know the way they did things and how they spoke to us, they did not respect us. In the end we just decided it was not good to have them here. Respect is very important. You can't go to people's house, and you just do what you like. Tell them the truth and ask them first how they do things so that you don't step on their toes. (HC4, June 17, 2023)*

*They always took most decisions, one day at the meeting the was this guy who spoke fast an told us that the company knows engineering and mining, so they took best decisions for us. I did not like that. Nobody did. That day, huh we knew they were not serious.no respect.*

*We removed women from our side, and we didn't ask them to do the same out of respect for the tribal aunts. That showed we cared to listen and respond accordingly. When the project started, I believe we were not afforded enough time to operate and deliver on the promises because of community protests affecting the project. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

*The community in general used to claim they were not given the respect they deserve, their animals were not considered for and the mine would damage their land and grazing field. They were forever striking for this or that. (MC2, June 25, 2023)*

Effective public participation process involves establishing ground rules for respectful dialogue, facilitating opportunities for all stakeholders to be heard, and addressing power dynamics that contribute to disrespectful behaviour. This means that if there's a need for any criticism, it must be delivered in a constructive or respectful manner, and not focusing on attacking individuals but rather addressing the issues at hand. It appears that the mining company was consistently dominating the host community with regards to decision-making processes without consulting or respecting the input of host community members, which undermines trust and cooperation. Additionally, it appears that mining company failing to honour agreements or commitments to the host community such as hiring some of the locals and fixing roads during the participation process, demonstrated a lack of respect for shared agreements and collaboration.

### 4.5 The participants' construction of public participation

There is notably a divergent approach when it comes to public participation from the participants representing mining companies and those from the host community side. The construction of public participation stems from their subjective experiences yet

the latter's perception is informed by the ways in which dominant social discourses such as tribal leadership and culture construct the position of a how people engage. Through the lens respect women are not supposed to spearhead decision-making processes. The discussion of culture and respect was illustrated when apparently in the beginning the mining company included women to address tribal leaders which was deemed to be disrespectful. This can be seen in the following extract:

> *They (mining company) started the engagement on a wrong foot by bringing women here to talk to us (men). There are certain discussions and things that are inappropriate or disrespectful when initiated or led by them (women). We (host community), we believe men are heads of the households and must be respected to take decisions.(TRH2, July 29, 2023)*

> *When they (mining company) came here, we expected all of us to be included and made aware of the process beforehand. But we were shocked to see strange people with machines on our land.(HC4, Jun 17, 2023).*

This statement gives the impression that inclusivity means all host community members without gender descrimination. Failure to do proper stakeholder identification engagement is also cited to have contributed to poor consultation and decision-making.

> *The issue of trust is not just directed at us, when we were on pre-feasibility phase, there was a tribal war of who is supposed to be chief and rule the other village, as a result, we had multiple engagements with stakeholders presenting different and conflicting views at times in different settings because they did not want to be in the same hall. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

> *In the beginning, it was challenging to address concerns related to fairness and equity in the distribution of benefits, impacts, and resources resulting from decisions made by different groups. (MC1, May 27, 2023)*

The extracts above highlight multifaceted challenges that impede effective collaboration and sustainable development. Such deficiencies in the participatory

process can lead to various adverse outcomes impacting both the mining company and the affected communities.

The ramifications of these deficiencies can be substantial, potentially culminating in social unrest, demonstrations, legal conflicts, project interruptions, or even the termination of projects (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023; Bobbio, 2019; Bundy, et.al (2018). Moreover, these hurdles pose a barrier to sustainable development initiatives by impeding the formation of mutually advantageous partnerships and constraining the adoption of accountable, community-centered practices. Addressing these issues necessitates a joint endeavor from both the mining company and the host communities. Establishing trust through open and clear communication, cultivating authentic inclusivity by ensuring the representation of diverse perspectives, enhancing engagement practices that facilitate meaningful discourse, and establishing robust feedback mechanisms are pivotal measures for surmounting this challenge (Magidi & Hlungwani, 2023). Ultimately, effective public participation mandates a commitment to nurturing trust, transparency, inclusivity, engagement, and feedback, aiming to achieve outcomes that benefit all stakeholders involved.

The responses from the host community participants seem to indicate that the mining companies failed to acknowledge or address the concerns, needs, and rights of the host communities, leading to a feeling of disrespect. This disrespect was also exarcenated by having women head engagement sessions which is seen as disregarding cultural, environmental, or social values important to the community.

The participants from the host community express discontent with their subordinate position, evident in their resistance reflected in their discourse. Their language underscores a reluctance to perpetuate and endorse the dominance of corporations within their communities. This sentiment is articulated through statements such as:

> *While job opportunities from mining are beneficial, the potential loss of grazing fields and the health risks to our livestock are concerning; They(mining company) may bring money but also bring problems They mining operations may bring improvements but also have the potential to disrupt basic things such as our roads due to big trucks and we only have one road. (HC6, Jun 25, 2023)*

These statements vividly illustrate the participants' reluctance to be complicit in the perpetuation of their community's powerlessness brought about by external forces such as mining corporations. Their expressions reflect a refusal to shoulder responsibility for the disempowerment of their community.

Mining represetatives held the view that they were careful not to overcomit or promise the communities a lot which is where the breakdown of trust started;

> *Past negative experiences with mining companies based on what they (host communities) read or see on the news can lead to them(host community) not trusting us(mining company); they started protesting when we were prospecting and that caused problems before the public participation process began, maybe we should have engaged earlier. (MC2, Aug 14, 2023)*

The interview responses takes us back to the conceptual framework formulated in chapter 2 where Sarah's typology and Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation provide insightful perspectives on public participation and engagement. Linking these frameworks to issues such as poor public participation, lack of trust, legitimacy, inadequate stakeholder engagement, and transparency identified from the interview extracts offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges within these domains.

The correlation between Sarah's typology and Arnstein's ladder is the explanation of the intricate relationship among inadequate public participation, trust deficiency, legitimacy concerns, insufficient stakeholder engagement, and transparency issues. When public engagement strategies align with the lower levels of both frameworks adopting traditional or managerial models and exhibiting tokenistic or non-participatory approaches a mutual reinforcement of associated challenges emerges. In these instances, the weaknesses identified in Sarah's typology, such as limited decision-making power for stakeholders or mere information dissemination without meaningful consultation, interplay with Arnstein's ladder's lower rungs. Here, stakeholders' perception of being manipulated or having minimal influence amplifies the lack of trust and legitimacy, further hindering their engagement and transparency in the process.

The fusion of these frameworks highlights the necessity for a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and communicative models of participation, akin to the higher echelons

of Arnstein's ladder and Sarah's communicative model. These models advocate for authentic engagement, active dialogue, and shared decision-making, fostering an environment conducive to building genuine trust, bolstering legitimacy, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and fostering transparent processes in public participation endeavors. Such a transition demands a fundamental reconfiguration of participation strategies, prioritizing inclusive platforms that elevate community voices and facilitate collaborative decision-making. By ascending to the upper tiers of both frameworks, public participation processes can foster mutual trust, validate the legitimacy of decisions, encourage robust stakeholder engagement, and ensure transparent practices, ultimately contributing to more effective and acceptable outcomes for all involved stakeholders.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The findings from the interview data reveal discrepancies in the initiation of public participation processes by mining companies. These gaps are primarily attributed to delayed engagement by mining companies and their challenges in identifying key stakeholders due to conflicts of interest observed within the host communities, among other contributing factors. The data underscores a delay in the commencement of public participation initiatives by mining companies. Moreover, these entities encounter impediments in assembling crucial stakeholders to participate in the process. This difficulty arises primarily due to conflicts of interest that manifest within the host communities. Furthermore, the perceived sincerity and responsiveness of mining companies and regulatory bodies to community concerns and feedback contribute significantly to legitimacy perceptions. Contextual factors such as historical relationships, power dynamics, and socio-economic disparities also shape perceptions of legitimacy, with stakeholders considering the historical context and broader socio-political landscape in their evaluations. Ultimately, the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes in mining projects emerges from the complex interplay of these multifaceted factors, highlighting the importance of holistic and context-specific approaches to stakeholder engagement and governance in the mining industry. The discussion of results and findings will be discussed next

# 5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

## 5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the study's outcomes were presented, showing distinct themes derived from the interviews. This subsequent chapter seeks to amalgamate these findings with pertinent literature and theoretical frameworks, thereby fostering a comprehensive comprehension of the varied themes identified. Aligned with the theoretical underpinning of this research, the primary objective was to scrutinize the involvement of host communities when a mining company initiates a new project. This chapter serves to address the main research question along with its associated sub-questions, emphasizing their correlation with the reviewed literature.By intertwining the empirical findings with established theories and scholarly discussions, this chapter endeavors to offer a holistic perspective on the identified themes. Through this synthesis, a nuanced understanding of the roles, perspectives, and interactions of host communities within the context of new mining projects will be explained, consolidating the study's contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

## 5.2 Challenges with public participation when starting a new mine

When host communities experience internal conflicts that impact public participation in the establishment of new mines, it adds a layer of complexity to the process (Adomako-Kwakye & Mensah, 2023; Bobbio, 2019; Bundy, et.al (2018). In such situations, the role of host communities becomes particularly significant in influencing the outcomes of the engagement with mining companies. Fung, (2015) and Tahvilzadeh, (2015) internal stakeholders need to firstly resolve any existing conflicts prior to engaging with external stakeholders. In the study, the mining company representatives revealed that stakeholder identification took long because some of the community members kept misrepresnting themselves for personal benefit. This sentiment is reinforced by revelations from the community members sharing that there were issues within the community with regards to royalhood and legitimate royal members, This view suggests that if these issues were resolved prior to enagagements the mining company, the community would have internal cohesion which would have enhanced the community's ability to present a unified voice and negotiate effectively.

The interviews conducted indicated that the start of a new mining project was marred by complex challenges related to engaging host communities in public participation. These obstacles require a comprehensive approach for effective resolution. Foremost among these challenges is the deficiency in inclusivity and depth of interaction between mining companies and the host communities. Evidently, participation processes between the mining company and the host communities lacked authentic involvement and failed to encompass the diverse voices within the community, resulting in perceptions of tokenism or superficial engagement (Arnstein, 1969; Bobbio, 2019, White, 1996). This lack of genuine inclusivity severely undermines trust , fostering skepticism and discontent among the community members.

Another critical hurdle in the public particpation process is the insufficiency and opacity of information provided to the host communities (Gudowsky & Bechtold, 2013). The host communities members indicated that with regards to documentation, they were made to sign attendance registers and the mining company appointed a dedicated person from the company side to take minutes. There were no other documentation furnished with regards to the minerals to be exploited or any information about the mining company shareholders, owners or management. Magidi and Hlungwani, (2023) suggest that transparency stands as a cornerstone for trust-building. However, mining companies frequently fall short in adequately disclosing crucial project details, potential impacts, and strategies for mitigation. Quick and Bryson, 2022 echo this sggestion by suggsting thatthis deficit in information exacerbates mistrust, leaving communities feeling uninformed and excluded from decision-making processes that profoundly impact their lives and local environments.

Furthermore, the timing and manner of community engagement significantly influence the success of participation processes. In the study, host community members revealed that the mining company was reluctanct to engage but were eager to commence mining operations. Delayed or hurried involvement further deteriorates trust and legitimacy (Bobbio, 2019). When the mining company ultimately made time to engage, the communities felt disrespected because of failure by the mining company to obeserve cultural protocol. Not being afforded the opportunity to have a real input to the project led to the communities perceiving their contributions as mere formalities after pivotal decisions have already been made by the mining company, this heightened dissatisfaction and prompted resistance.

Equally significant are the prevalent power imbalances between mining companies and host communities. The communities  perceived unequal power dynamics, feeling marginalized in negotiations and excluded in decision-making processes. The mining company cited that the community had no knowledge of mining and engineering and thus it made sense to This imbalance impedes the establishment of authentic partnerships and undermines the acknowledgment of community perspectives and needs during project planning.

To address these challenges effectively, a paradigm shift is imperative, advocating for participatory, inclusive, and transparent approaches (Andrews, et.al, 2024). This meanns the mining compnay would  have to initiate  community engagement from the project's inception, fostering genuine dialogue, ensuring fair distribution of power, offering comprehensive and accessible information, and demonstrating a sincere commitment to incorporating community input are pivotal steps. Such measures are crucial in overcoming these challenges and cultivating resilient, mutually beneficial relationships between mining companies and host communities.

Frequent community protests often signal underlying issues in the public participation processes undertaken by mining companies during the establishment of new mines. Andrews et al. (2014) highlight that disenfranchised host communities frequently resort to legal intervention, seeking redress concerning the manner in which mining companies execute their public participation processes. Cole & Broadhurst (2020) assert that the legitimacy of public participation plays a pivotal role in determining the success or failure of mining projects within the territories of host communities. Adding to this discourse, Dube, Mnguni, & Tschudin (2021) emphasize that inadequate meaningful engagement contributes to the perception among host communities that mining companies lack transparency. They further indicate that when legitimacy is established in public participation between host communities and mining companies embarking on new projects, disruptions such as recurrent protests or project halts are less likely to occur. These scholarly perspectives underscore the critical relationship between the efficacy of public participation, the establishment of legitimacy, and the level of trust between mining companies and host communities. It highlights the pivotal role played by transparent and meaningful engagement processes in mitigating community discontent, fostering legitimacy, and averting disruptions that might impede the initiation or progress of mining projects.

## 5.3 The mediating influence of trust in the correlation between legitimacy and public participation

This research study aimed to scrutinize how host communities engage in the public participation processes surrounding the initiation of a new mining venture. Specifically, it aimed to discern the extent to which legitimacy which is likely associated with the perceived fairness, credibility, and appropriateness of the participatory initiatives directly influences public participation, and how trust potentially mediates this relationship. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in questioning, enabling participants to elaborate on their viewpoints while ensuring a degree of consistency across interviews. This methodology helped to uncover nuanced aspects of trust, legitimacy, and public participation, exploring how these elements interplay within the context of the mining project establishment.

The study in employing rigorous interview techniques, involving probing and open-ended questions focused on understanding the role of host community by affording them an opportunity to voice their perceptions of the legitimacy of the public participation processes, the level of trust engendered by these initiatives, and the actual extent and nature of their participation in decision-making. Furthermore, by utilizing a semi-structured format, the researcher encouraged participants to express their opinions freely while allowing the researcher to probe deeper into specific areas of interest or divergence.

## 5.4 The role played by the State in public participation process

The oversight and regulation of the country's mineral resources fall under the purview of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, which encompasses entities such as the Mining Health and Safety Council, the Mining Qualifications Authority, eleven (11) Regional Managers, the Mineral and Petroleum Board, the Safety in Mines Research Advisory Committee, the Mining Occupational Health Advisory Committee, and the Mining Regulation Advisory Committee (Esterhuyse, Kemp & Redelinghuys, 2018). The Minister of Mineral Resources, in conjunction with the Department, assumes the responsibility of ensuring the proper management of mineral resources within the nation.

Decisions regarding mining permissions and locations are vested in the Minister and the Department, who determine the entities authorized to engage in mining activities

and the specific locations where such activities may transpire. Prior to the commencement of any mining-related endeavors, requisite approval must be secured from the Minister or Department, a delegation facilitated through Regional Managers. The authorization process, governed by the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2002 (MPRDA), mandates the acquisition of rights or permits to conduct mining activities.

This primarily emphasizes the regulatory and oversight role of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy and the Minister in granting permissions and permits for mining activities. However, this does not negate the crucial role of host communities in the broader context of responsible and sustainable mining practices. Engaging with and obtaining the support of local communities is recognized as a best practice in the mining industry.

In practice, the engagement of host communities is a critical aspect of responsible mining practices, and many countries, including South Africa, recognize the importance of community involvement. Typically, mining companies are expected to nit undermine th role of host communities conduct stakeholder consultations, including engagement with local communities, as part of the permitting process (Magidi & Hlungwani, 2022). This involvement may include discussions on the potential impact of mining activities, addressing concerns raised by the community, and incorporating feedback into the decision-making process.

The regulatory framework often requires mining companies to demonstrate that they have engaged with and obtained the consent or approval of affected communities before mining activities commence. Community participation may also be considered in environmental impact assessments and social impact assessments, which are integral components of the permitting process.

Achieving substantive change necessitates a comprehensive approach to tackling the underlying issues responsible for the breakdown of public participation between host communities and mining companies companies (Meissner & Everingham, 2021). This requires identifying the root causes that hinder effective collaboration and dialogue between these stakeholders.

At the heart of the matter lie fundamental challenges that impede constructive engagement and mutual understanding. These challenges could encompass a range of issues, such as disparities in power dynamics, lack of transparency in decision-making processes, insufficient mechanisms for meaningful community involvement, and a history of unfulfilled promises or grievances companies (Meissner & Everingham, 2021).

### 5.5 The role played by the host community in public participation process

The responses from the host community participants indicate that the community's role in the public participation process during the establishment of a new mine in Moshana and Swartkopfontein involved fundamental and complex activities, especially when participants express dissatisfaction regarding trust issues, perceived lack of legitimacy, and exclusion from decision-making processes. When community members feel estranged due to distrust, perceiving inadequate legitimacy in the actions of the mining company and being sidelined from crucial decisions, it poses significant challenges to the efficacy and ethical integrity of the entire public participation process (Monno & Khakee, 2012).

Fung, (2015) suggests that in instances where community members have concerns about mistrust, often stemming from perceived lack of transparency and insufficient feedback from the mining company, their involvement becomes fraught with skepticism. When communities believe they are not privy to transparent information or are denied active participation in decision-making, it engenders a sense of being excluded, fostering sentiments of disillusionment and disengagement.

In such scenarios, the community's involvement in public participation tends to become strained and contentious (Monno & Khakee, 2012). Their lack of trust in the mining company's actions and intentions, coupled with feelings of being marginalized or unheard, can result in strained relationships, community protests, or even legal disputes. This effectively hampers the constructive collaboration needed for effective public participation.

The absence of transparency, insufficient feedback, and exclusion from decision-making processes act as impediments to establishing a credible and participatory engagement framework (Quick & Bryson, 2022). This indicates that trust and legitimacy are foundational elements in fostering meaningful and ethical community

involvement. Without these components, the public participation process risks being perceived as tokenistic (Arnstein,1969; White, 1996), exacerbating community discontent and undermining the overall success and sustainability of the mining project.

On the other hand, the  host community members appeared to be self-sabotaging, according to the miing company representatives issues such as unreasonable demands and holding the mining company at ransom by striking when the two parties failed to reach a consensus made the process complicating , eroding trust and hinderig the success of effective public participation process. The community's role in the public participation process during the establishment of a new mine became significantly challenged when these multiple factors hindered a cohesive and effective engagement. In situations where the mining company asserted that community representatives presented conflicting expectations, and lacked clarity on key stakeholders, and experiences internal conflicts or discord, the role of the community in the public participation process becomes convoluted and problematic.

When the mining company perceives or claims that community representatives are presenting conflicting or divergent expectations, it complicates the engagement process. This situation may arise due to diverse voices within the community, each advocating for different priorities, leading to confusion or misunderstandings during negotiations or discussions. This scenario may undermine the company's ability to align with community needs and expectations, hindering the development of mutually beneficial agreements or partnerships.

Additionally, when the community is not clear on identifying key stakeholders or representatives, it can create ambiguity and disarray in the participation process. The lack of a unified voice or coherent representation within the community can impede effective communication and decision-making between the community and the mining company (Berni, 2017). This ambiguity may lead to challenges in understanding community priorities, resulting in misalignment or failure to address crucial concerns. Moreover, internal conflicts or disputes within the community further exacerbate the complexities of public participation (Fung, 2015; Tahvilzadeh, 2015). In-fighting or discord among community members can significantly disrupt the consensus-building process, hinder constructive dialogue, and impede the formulation of collective

community positions or demands. Such internal divisions may hinder the community's ability to present a cohesive front or engage in negotiations effectively.

In such intricate situations, effective public participation becomes difficult. The community's role in the process becomes fraught with challenges due to conflicting expectations, internal disorganization, and discord (Bundy, et.al (2018). Resolving these challenges necessitates comprehensive mediation and facilitation efforts aimed at fostering clarity, cohesion, and unity within the community, thereby enabling a more effective and cohesive engagement with the mining company. Thus it appears the role played by the host community is divergent to public participation processes.

### 5.6 Relation to literature survey and conceptual frameworks

The perceived legitimacy of public participation processes within mining projects can be influenced by various factors. Transparency and information sharing are pivotal; the extent to which mining companies disclose project details and decision-making processes significantly affects perceived legitimacy (Dube, Mnguni, & Tschudin , 2021. Furthermore, De Freitas & Martin, (2015), suggest that inclusivity and representation play a crucial role, as ensuring diverse voices within the community feel adequately represented bolsters legitimacy . Timing and sincerity of engagement are key factors; genuine engagement efforts initiated early in the project planning phase positively impact perceived legitimacy.

Additionally, the quality of interaction between the mining company and stakeholders is crucial (Marzuki, 2015). Meaningful dialogue, active listening, and respect for community opinions can enhance legitimacy, while dismissive attitudes may undermine it (Quick & Bryson, 2016). Addressing power dynamics and decision-making is essential; allowing meaningful influence in decision-making processes helps bolster perceived legitimacy. Consistency, feedback and follow-up are vital in reinforcing legitimacy; commitments made during engagement sessions should be followed through to strengthen trust.

Moreover, ethical conduct and accountability are critical in interactions between the company and stakeholders. Upholding ethical behavior and being accountable in engagements are fundamental to maintaining trust and legitimacy. These factors collectively shape the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes in mining projects. A genuine, consistent, and inclusive engagement, considering these aspects,

is essential to enhance the legitimacy and credibility of such processes. Sarah's typology and Arnstein's ladder offer frameworks that align with the factors influencing perceived legitimacy in public participation within mining projects. Understanding these factors through the lenses of these frameworks allows for a more comprehensive assessment and improvement of participatory processes, ultimately enhancing their credibility and authenticity.

## 5.7 The evolution of trust between mining companies and host communities

The responses from both sides share a sentiment that trust develops through consistent and sincere efforts by mining companies to engage with and address the concerns of host communities at various stages of the public participation process.

Host communities play a pivotal role in negotiating with mining companies. They should strive to reach mutually beneficial agreements that address the concerns of the community, ensuring fair compensation, environmental protection, and social benefits (Bobbio, 2019). Furthermore, establishing and preserving trust necessitates an ongoing dedication to transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to ensure the legitimacy and prosperity of mining projects within host communities (Kilajian & Chareonsudjai, 2021). Initially, trust is cultivated by the company's initiatives involving the community during early planning, actively seeking their input, and displaying genuine concern for their interests and opinions.

As the process progresses, regular and transparent communication channels established during public engagement sessions play a vital role in bolstering trust. Actively listening to community grievances and providing transparent and honest responses form the bedrock of trust-building endeavors. Moreover, ensuring diverse representation within the community and empowering their meaningful involvement in decision-making processes contributes significantly to strengthening trust. This recognition of varied perspectives and needs fosters a sense of legitimacy within the engagement process.The company's commitment to honoring the commitments made during these engagement sessions and integrating community feedback into plans further solidifies trust. It's imperative to fulfill promises made during the engagement phase to fortify credibility and maintain trust. Additionally, providing accessible and accurate information regarding project implementation, potential impacts, and

mitigation strategies remains crucial. Sharing detailed progress reports and impact assessments contributes significantly to nurturing and upholding trust within the community.

Communities need to be well-informed about the potential benefits and risks associated with mining activities (Marzuki, 2015). This requires access to transparent and accurate information, enabling the community to make informed decisions during the engagement process. Host communities should be aware of their legal rights and the regulatory framework governing mining activities. Understanding the legal context empowers communities to advocate for their interests within the bounds of the law.

According to the participants, trust is clealry built through sustained efforts by mining companies that prioritize genuine engagement, transparent communication, and accountability at every stage of the public participation process. By actively listening, incorporating community input, and providing accessible information, mining companies can establish and reinforce trust, ensuring the legitimacy and success of mining projects within host communities.

### 5.8 Legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms

Recent court rulings seem to indicate that the effectiveness of legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms in South Africa in fostering trust and legitimacy in public participation processes concerning mining projects depends intends to clarity, enforcement, inclusivity, and responsiveness to community needs (De Freitas & Martin, 2015; Van den Berg, et.al, 2020). The robust implementation of these mechanisms will ultimately contribute positively by ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability. However, since the law is ever-evolving, there will be inadequacies or lack of enforcement that can potential hinder trust-building efforts and legitimacy within public participation processes.

### 5.9 The role played by the host communities in public participation

Examining public participation in contexts where respect is lacking, it's insightful to reference Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation and Sarah White's typology of participation (Arnstein, 1969; White, 1996). Arnstein's ladder illustrates various levels of citizen involvement, ranging from mere tokenism to genuine citizen power. In situations devoid of respect, as indicated by both parties, participation often remains

confined to the lower rungs of the ladder. In the study host communities can be said to be relegated to the bottom rungs, where participation was merely symbolicwith no real input. On the other hand, the mining company are the dominant decision-makers where they engaged in activities such as public meetings or consultations without genuinely valuing or incorporating community input. This lack of respect for community perspectives is cited by the host community to breed resentment and disillusionment, hindering effective collaboration and problem-solving.

Similarly, Sarah White's typology offers valuable insights into how the lack of respect impacts public participation. At the most basic level, tokenistic participation might occur, where the community is merely informed about decisions without genuine opportunities for dialogue or influence. In this study the process was characterized by low levels of respect and pointing to tokenism being particularly prevalent, with the mining company as decision-makers appearing to engage with the community solely to fulfill procedural requirements rather than to authentically address concerns (Conde & Le Billon, 2017). Even when efforts are made to consult with the community, they might be superficial, with decision-makers failing to genuinely consider or act upon community input.

## 5.10 Conclusion

The role played by the host community during the commencement of a mining venture intertwines significantly with the concept of trust. This element assumes a pivotal mediating role, particularly in the nexus between legitimacy and the public participation process when a mining company initiates a new project, sparking community protests attributed to perceived inadequate consultation. This intricate relationship underscores the interdependence among legitimacy, public participation, and the pivotal influence of trust.

The legitimacy of public engagement procedures fundamentally hinges upon the perceived fairness, inclusivity, and transparency of these interactions. Communities regard a process as legitimate when they perceive that their input and concerns are genuinely considered and integrated. Trust emerges as a linchpin factor that bolsters or undermines this perceived legitimacy, operating as a cornerstone of community-company relations.

When community protests arise due to perceived deficiencies in the consultation process, trust takes on the role of a mediator between the perceived legitimacy of the engagement and community perceptions (Conde & Le Billon, 2017). Trust significantly shapes how the community gauges the legitimacy of the consultation exercise. When a foundational level of trust exists, it can positively sway community perspectives on the legitimacy of the process, even in cases where the initial consultations were viewed as ineffective. Conversely, a lack of trust amplifies perceptions of illegitimacy, leading to heightened dissent and challenges in embracing the credibility of the engagement process.

Host communities have a role to play in finding out whether a mine has been granted a prospecting right, mining permit or mining right. The law requires the regional manager or anyone appointed by the Minister to accept the appictation from the mining company and to put up a notice in the regional office of the department and publich in the local newspaper within fourteen (14) days of accepting. This however, is something that none of the host community members have knowledge of from the responses received in the interviews. The host communities had no idea how the mining company obtained land and from whom. Moshana and Swartkopfontein are both over two hundred kilometres from the DMRE regional office which is in Rustenburg. There are no local newspares for both areas, this clearly indicates a barrier for these host communities to see any such notice and respond to the invitation to send comments as interested and affected parties within the stipulated thirty (30)days (s10,69 MPRDA.

The allowance for the host community to challenge a decision to grant a permit or right to appeal the decision to the Minister or the Director General at the Department of Mineral Resources or take the decision for review to the court is also impractical in this case where the host communities only became aware of the mining project once the process had advanced to where the mining permit was already granted.

The community has a right to ask the mining company for important documents such as the Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) (Que,et.al, 2019). SLPs detail the mining company’s plans to contribute to the development of surrounding communities in terms of the MPRDA. In this case, it appears that the mining company had made promises to the community, an example was that some members of the host community were going to be employed however, this was not written anywhere except

on the meeting minutes. The host community also has a right to see Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA): which are required to evaluate the possible environmental impacts of a proposed project, inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts (NEMA, 1998).

# 6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In concluding the study, the level of trust established between the community and the mining company during the consultation process significantly influences the perceived legitimacy of the engagement. Trust acts as a linchpin, shaping community perceptions and acceptance of the engagement's credibility, underscoring its pivotal role in navigating the complexities of public participation in mining projects.

Drawing on the responses of the interview questions as well as the insights gained from reviewing literature, it is possible for mining companies to foster a culture of trust, transparency, and legitimacy within the public participation process, thereby creating more harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships with host communities during the establishment of new mining projects.

This can be done in numerous ways including starting engagement with the host community during the earliest phases of project planning is imperative. This step ensures the establishment of an enduring and meaningful dialogue, persisting throughout all project stages. Setting up mechanisms for continuous communication and feedback channels is essential. These systems facilitate regular updates on project advancements, enabling transparent information sharing. This continuous dialogue helps in fostering trust and maintaining an open line of communication between the mining company and the community.

Incorporating a diverse array of voices, including marginalized groups, is necessary for a more holistic and fair representation (Que,et.al, 2019). This is key to achieve comprehensive representation within the engagement process is crucial, however, with regards to inclusivity, mining companies must be cautious of cultural and traditional beleifs of the specific host community to avoid offending them. Facilitating platforms for various community members to express their concerns, ideas, and needs is pivotal. This approach fosters a sense of legitimacy through diverse and inclusive engagement

The role of host communities in a new mining project is significantly influenced by the trust and legitimacy established through the public participation process. Legitimate engagement ensures that the concerns, needs, and aspirations of the community are adequately addressed. It also empowers host communities by providing them with a

platform to voice their opinions, contribute to decision-making, and actively participate in shaping the outcomes of the project.

**Sub-question 1:**

*What factors influence the perceived legitimacy of public participation processes within the context of mining projects?*

The study revealed that transparency and openness in communication play a pivotal role. It was evident from the data that the host communities expected information to be accessible regarding the project's objectives and not just attendance registers and minutes of the meetings. The host communities also expected the discussion about potential impacts, and decision-making processes to ensue but this never happened. Fairness and inclusivity are also crucial; in as much as the host communities found the mining company to be disrespectful by bringing women with to come discuss about the project and demanded the removal of female representatives from the mining company without ascertaining the role and expertise of these women. Additionally, the timing and depth of engagement matter; host community members perceived processes as less legitimate because they were not involved from the project's inception. They only saw mining equipment and activity at the site and believe they were never afforded a real opportunity for meaningful input throughout its lifecycle. Trust is fundamental as host community members needed to trust that the process is sincere, that promises made will be kept, and that decisions will be made in the public interest rather than for private gain.

**Sub-question 2:**

*How does trust between mining companies and host communities evolve throughout the phases of public participation processes?*

Evidently from the data obtained, trust between mining companies and host communities underwent a dynamic evolution throughout the various phases of public participation processes. There was excitement and concerns when the process started with the hope of job creation and infrastructure development. However, because trust remains delicate in public participation, when the mining company

failed to deliver on their promises to fix the roads which the community believes were damaged by the heavy mining machinery the trust eroded. This was further in the host community's view, exacerbated by the failure of the mining company to hire any of the locals citing lack of experience, knowledge, and expertise of the host company. In the same vein, the mining company indicated that there were perceptions of insincerity as the host community members were unable honestly engage and kept changing key stakeholders as well as making unreasonable demands.

**Sub-question 3:**

*What are the perceptions and experiences of different stakeholder groups regarding the effectiveness of public participation processes in fostering trust and legitimacy?*

The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of public participation processes in fostering trust and legitimacy depends on the degree to which the process is conducted, concerns are addressed and there is a common goal among stakeholders with regards to the mining activity at hand. There are varied perceptions and experiences regarding the effectiveness of public participation from stakeholders. The study revealed that mining companies did not initially consult with any of the community members including the tribal house leaders. The host communities initiated the engagement by going to the mining site and demanding a meeting with management which only happened two weeks post the commencement of the mining activity. This suggests that the mining company may perceive public participation as a regulatory requirement and only keen to engage as a means to gain community acceptance and ultimately social licence to operate. However, they mining company soon found that it became challenging to balance the community demands with project goals, leading to tensions and skepticism about the process's efficacy. Host communities, on the other hand, viewed the process as a platform to voice concerns and assert their rights, expecting meaningful engagement and tangible benefits from mining activities in the form of employment opportunites and dommunity development. The host community's perceptions of effectiveness are shaped by factors such as transparency, inclusivity, and the extent to which their input influences decision-making.

**Main research question:**

*What is the role played by the community in public participation process when establishing a new mine in Lehurutshe, North-West Province?*

In an attempt to answer the main research question, it is important to reflect on the purpose of the study, which was to was to examine the community's role in the public participation process concerning the establishment of a new mine in Moshana and Swartkopfontein. The study focused on investigating the mediating role of trust in the relationship between legitimacy and public participation. Through interviews, it was found that trust levels were low among the community members, and they perceived the public participation process as lacking transparency and legitimacy. Consequently, this lack of trust and perceived illegitimacy led to the community members halting the mining operation. The Moshana and Swarkopfontein communities indicated from the interviews conducted that the mining company failed to provide clear and accurate information about the proposed mining project, including its potential impacts on the environment, economy, and social fabric of the area. The mining company representatives somewhat share the sentiment is acknowldging that more robust public participation process could have been employed with an improved stakeholder identification and mapping. Moreover, the process lacked ffective communication channels to facilitate dialogue between the mining company and the host community. Meetings dates, time and venue were not communicated ahead of time to allow enough participation from all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the data revealed that the Moshana and Swartkopfontein host communities did not play an effective role in the public participation process when Manganese Minerals company established a new mine. The data suggests that host communities' participation remained at the lower rungs of the ladder. They were informed about decisions and consulted in an obligatory manner, following the initiation by the tribal house leaders. The study also revealed that the host communities' input may not have been genuinely considered or incorporated into the decision-making process. The study indicated a failure of the public participation process to facilitate genuine dialogue, collaboration, and empowerment among community members. Factors such as unequal power dynamics, lack of access to information, or insufficient opportunities for engagement may have contributed to the community's limited involvement.

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## 8. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

**Interview Guide**

Semi-structured interview

(Where necessary, the researcher will probe based on the participant's answer)

MINING HOST COMMUNITY

**Background**

- Tell me a little about your role in the community.
- How long have you been in that role?

**B: Public Participation**

- When did you know about the mining project?
- When was the community informed?
- Who from the mining company informed the community and how was this done?
- What were your reaction and the community's reaction when they heard about the mining project?
- Were there any meetings held and what was the frequency of those meetings?
- Who were the representatives from the host community?
- Can you explain to me how the community was engaged and how they participated?
- What made the mining project stop?
- Looking back on your experience with the mining company what is needed to improve the methods you used in public participation processes,

**General follow-up questions**

B. Transparency

- Was the host community allowed to know how decisions are made and the cause-effect of decisions? How was that done?
- Was the decision-making process made open and visible to the host community?
- How was the decision-making process done and was it open to scrutiny by the host community?

- Is the cause and effect of decisions open?
- Is information accessible and presented in appropriate forms?

**General follow-up questions**

Any additional thoughts you would like to share?

**C: Trust**

- Does the host community perceive the mining company as a company that keeps its word?
- Does the host community believe the mining company to be capable of delivering on its promises?
- Did the host community believe the mining company to have their interests at heart.
- Did the host community have a real opportunity for input and how was that done?

**General follow-up questions**

From the very beginning these people wanted to just make money and leave, this is why we ended chasing them away.

**APPENDIX B**

**Interview Guide**

Semi-structured interview

(Where necessary, the researcher will probe based on the participant's answer)

**MINING COMPANY**

**Background**

1. Tell me a little about your work, and what you do? What does it involve?
2. Do you have prior experience with public participation?
3. (If answer to no. 2 is yes) Was any of that experience in mining projects and involving host communities?

**A: Public Participation**

4. How would you describe the term "public participation" in your own words?
5. Can you walk me through how the public participation process was conducted before the mining projects were started?
6. What are your thoughts on the importance of public participation?
7. From the mining company, who facilitated the process and how was it done?
8. Could you tell me more specifically about the methods you used in public participation?
9. In your opinion What are some of the strengths of the method(s)/practices you used?
10. Reflecting the methods used by the mining company in public participation, what would you say is needed to improve the methods you used in public participation processes?
11. What is the main reason for the mining project to be halted now?

**General follow-up questions**

Any additional thoughts you would like to share?

B. Transparency

11. Did the mining company explain to the host community how decisions were made and the cause-effect of decisions?
12. How was the decision-making process made open and visible to stakeholders?
13. Is the reason behind decisions open to the host community?

14. How was information made accessible and presented appropriately to the host community?

**General follow-up questions**

Any additional thoughts you would like to share?

**C: Trust**

15. How did the mining company share their intentions with the host community and were there any promises made?
16. How did the mining company demonstrate to the host community that the mining company is capable of delivering on its promises?
17. Did the mining company afford the host community a real opportunity for input?

**General follow-up questions**

Any additional thoughts you would like to share?

## APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

**SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE ETHICS COMMITTEE**
**CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)**

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** **PROTOCOL NUMBER:** WSG-2023-06

| | |
|---|---|
| **PROJECT TITLE** | Investigating the role of the host community with regards to public participation when establishing a new mine in Lehurutshe, South Africa |
| **INVESTIGATOR** | Mpho Nyarela |
| **SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR** | Wits School of Governance |
| **DATE CONSIDERED** | 15 February 2023 |
| **DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE** | Approved unconditionally. |
| **RISK LEVEL** | MINIMAL RISK |
| **EXPIRY DATE** | Date of submission of the project Research Report |

**ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE** 22 February 2023 **CHAIRPERSON** Rekgotsofetse Chikane
Rekgotsofetse Chikane

cc: Supervisor:

**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR**

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

**Signature** **Date** 24/02/2022