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Mining-led Development and Local Politics of Youth Participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area in Limpopo Province, South Africa



By

Popopo Mohlala

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Science, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Geography and Environmental Studies

Supervisors: Dr Sonwabile Mnwana & Dr Alex Wafer

October 2017

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Science at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



5th day of October 2017, in Johannesburg

ABSTRACT

In general, studies on development concur that participatory practice at the local level is influenced by local power relations. The structures of power in local communities are important in the way they determine the extent to which citizens participate in decision-making and development activities. However, there are a few empirical studies examining the impacts of power relations on youth participation in peripheral areas experiencing the rapid expansion of large-scale mining activities. Drawing on detailed ethnographic research conducted in two villages that host Ivanplats's Platreef Mining Project, this study examines how the structures of power in Mokopane Traditional Authority Area in Limpopo Province shape and influence the character of youth participation in mining-led community development decisions and activities. The study adopts Gaventa's Power Cube as its primary theoretical tool of analysis.

The study shows how the youth, as a social category, hardly participate in mining-led community development because the model of participation adopted by local powerholders encourages the marginalisation of young people. Instead of reducing the power imbalances, the model is used to enhance the power of traditional elites over young people. The study also shows that the youth have not passively endured marginalization from decision making processes. Instead, the youth in the study area have actively sought to create alternative networks and spaces of associational life to counter their marginalization from local decision making structures. Young people at local level are resisting their continued exclusion from mining-led community development. They are mobilizing their identity and power to challenge the power of traditional elites over decision-making and demand attention on issues that affect them. The findings of the study provide insights into the emerging power shifts that take place at local level in communities coexisting with large-scale extractive industries. Power imbalances along social divisions like gender, generation and patriarchy fuel social conflicts and struggles for mineral resources in mining communities in various parts of the world. Insights from the research also shed light on local power configurations and contestations around the distribution of mining benefits. These insights are important for policy makers. Evidence on the socio-economic impacts of mining on different social groups and their access to participatory processes can enhance the efficacy of policy interventions meant to create more inclusive mining regimes. Overall, inclusive mining

economies ensure that large-scale investments in this sector uplift local communities through, among other things, the reduction various forms of exclusions and related social conflicts.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dearest mother Mampapeng Mohlala. *Ke a go leboga Bogotjadi á Ngwato le Mologadi*!!!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION **2**

ABSTRACT **3**

DEDICATION **5**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **6**

LIST OF FIGURES **10**

LIST OF IMAGES **11**

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS **12**

GLOSSARY **14**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND **15**

1.1. Introduction 15

1.2. The geographical location and profile of the study area 19

1.3. Research aim and objectives of the study 23

1.4. Research questions 23

1.5. Significance of the study 24

1.6. Definitions of key concepts 24

1.7. Theoretical framework: The Power Cube 26

1.8. Layout of the dissertation 29

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **31**

2.1. Introduction 31

2.2. Mining and community development: Some key arguments 31

2.2.1. Local participation in mining-driven community development 33

2.3. Youth marginalisation 34

2.4. Youth marginalization and agency 37
2.4.1. Violent Resistance 37
2.4.2. Participation in civil society groups 40
2.5. Conclusion 41
CHAPTER 3: THE STUDY METHODOLOGY 43
3.1. Introduction 43
3.2. The study villages 43
3.2.1. Tshamahansi 43
3.2.2. Ga-Magongoa 44
3.3. Gaining access to the research site 45
3.3.1. Accessing the villages 45
3.3.2. Accessing institutions 46
3.4. Qualitative Research Methodology 48
3.4.1. Case study design 48
3.5. Language and Transcription 53
3.6. Data analysis 54
3.6.1. Thematic analysis 54
3.7. Ethical considerations 55
3.8. Limitations 55
3.9. Conclusion 56
CHAPTER FOUR: THE STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 57
4.1. Introduction 57
4.2. Engendering participation 57
4.3. Local participation 61
4.3.1. Community mining committees 61

4.3.2. Public meetings 63
4.4. Mining benefits for the youth 66
4.5. Constraints to meaningful youth engagement 70
4.5.1. Geographical locations of the meetings 71
4.5.2. Intimidation and threats 73
4.5.3. Timing of the meetings 74
4.5.4. Unavailability of transport and composition of the meetings 74
4.5.5. Lack of employment 75
4.5.6. Recruitment 77
4.5.7. Lack of education and work skills 78
4.6. Youth resistance to exclusion 79
4.6.1. Disruption of meetings 79
4.6.2. Involvement in youth groups and grassroots organisations 79
4.7. Discussion of the key findings 82
4.8. Conclusion 90
APPENDICES 108
Appendix A: Information sheet for interviews 108
Appendix B: Information sheet for focus groups 110
Appendix C: Consent Form for Focus Groups 112
Appendix D: Consent Form for Interviews 113

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map showing the Bushveld Igneous Complex in South Africa

Figure 2: Map showing the research site

Figure 3: John Gaventa's Power Cube

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1: The Platreef Mining Project in Mokopane in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Image 2: Public toilets built by Ivanplats next to Ga-Magongoa football ground

Image 3: A tree where public participation meetings used to take place inside the perimeter of the active mine development site

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Amplats	Anglo American Platinum
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BIC	Bushveld Igneous Complex
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DMR	Department of Mineral Resources
DPME	Department Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
JOGMEG	Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation
KFC	Kopano Formation Committee
LED	Local Economic Development Programme
LTLIA	Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act 6 of 2005
MACUA	Mining Affected Communities United in Action
MARTISA	Mining and Rural Transformation in Southern Africa
MAYDO	Magongoa Youth Development Organisation
MIACC	Mokopane Interested and Affected Communities Committee
MPRDA	Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2002
MTA	Mokopane Traditional Authority
MRA	Mogalakwena Residents Association
MLM	Mogalakwena Local Municipality
SLP	Social and Labour Plan

StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SWOP	Society, Work and Development Institute
TLGFA	Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003
PGM	Platinum Group Metals
UN	The United Nations
NYP	National Youth Policy 2015-2020
WOSM	World Organization of Scout Movement
SDP	Skills Development Programme
TYF	Tshamahansi Youth Forum
SAR	Skills and Ability Register
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
WDM	Waterberg District Municipality
SUCA	Surface Lease Cooperation Agreement

GLOSSARY

Kgoro (plural 'Dikgoro')	Meeting place or a village customary platform where important matters concerning the community are discussed publicly. *Kgoro* also refers to traditional court or headman/woman's yard or a village meeting. In this study the words are used interchangeably
Kgoši (plural 'Dikgoši' or 'Magoši')	A Senior traditional leader or chief
Mošate	Royal house or tribal authority
Ntona (plural 'Mantona')	Local traditional leader or village headman/headwoman
Kgotha kgothe	Community mass meeting

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Generally, scholars agree that citizen participation in community development is significantly influenced by local power relations (Gaventa 2006; Cobinnah, 2015; Taodzera, 2015; Culley and Hughey, 2008; Kuponiyi, 2008; Evans 2007; Cornwall, 2008; Mohann and Stokke, 2000). Cobinnah (2015:144), for instance, in his examination of how power relations influence participatory practices in rural development argues that, "participation in development is about power and how it is exercised by different social actors in the spaces created for interactions". What Cobinnah (2015) suggests is that, local structures of power and authority mediate access to participatory arenas and decision making processes in local communities where development programmes are implemented.

What the abovementioned scholar suggests is that local structures of power and authority mediate access to participatory arenas. The extent to which different local groups have access to participatory arenas determines the extent to which they can exert influence in decision making and are vital in determining who enters and does not participatory arenas to exert influence in decision-making. Similarly, Kuponiyi (2008) argues that power structures in communities are important in determining the level of citizen involvement in decision making and development activities. The key argument emerging from these studies is that power relations shape and affect the boundaries of participation in local communities (Gaventa, 2006). As Evans (2007) argues, those actors who wield power in local governing structures may consciously or unconsciously exclude the less powerful, for instance the youth, in decision making processes.

It is also noteworthy that participation in local decision making processes is not always about the distribution of power, but reinforcement of existing power relations. In most instances, the fear of losing power and control on the part of local community leaders and other elite groups mean that these privileged actors may actively resist the transfer of power to marginalized groups through participatory governance processes (see Evans, 2007).

Local configurations of power are very important in the way they mediate participatory processes at grassroots level. Yet there is limited empirical research on the question of how the

local structures and relations of power in peripheral, mining-affected communities mediate participatory decision making processes. The wider literature suggests that different social divisions (gender, generation, ethnicity, etc) are at the heart of various forms of marginalization experienced in peripheral mining communities (Mnwana, 2015). The extent to which different social groups in mining communities have access to decision making processes has increasingly become an important question. People in mining-affected communities mobilize these different social identities in their social struggles for mining-related benefits. Youth marginalization is one of the neglected questions in relation to the wider socio-economic impacts of large-scale mining on local communities. The generational divisions within local communities intensify in the context of local communities hosting large-scale mining investments. Elite capture of mining benefits usually involves the marginalization of the youth alongside other less powerful social groups. This study focuses on South Africa's platinum belt where mining-led community development brings to the fore important questions of power and participatory processes in communities hosting large-scale investments. One of the key arguments in this research is that local power structures and relations shape and influence the character of youth participation in mining led community development.

Scholarly research on the influence of social power on citizenship participation in the context of mining communities is still limited. Some studies which broadly look at the wider socio-economic impacts of large-scale mining on local communities in South Africa have also included the question of social power and citizenship participation. Mnwana's (2012, 2014, and 2015) ethnographic work on South Africa's mineral-rich Bafokeng and Bakgatla communities draws attention to how local development in these communities is fraught with power imbalances and the implications these inequalities have for citizenship participation.

Most of South Africa's platinum group metals[1] (PGM) are found in the Bushveld Igneous Complex (BIC) (see *Figure 1*) which spreads over more than 65 000 km^2, spanning two of the country's most poorest and rural provinces – North West and Limpopo" (Mnwana, 2015a:1). Often referred to as the 'platinum belt', BIC is the largest layered igneous intrusion in the world (Holwell *et al.,* 2006). The area contains more than 80% of world's PGM deposits and "has been

[1] The platinum group metals are six transitional metal elements that are chemically very similar. They are platinum, osmium, rhodium, ruthenium, iridium and palladium

at the heart of South Africa's platinum mining industry since the discovery in 1920" (Capps, 2012:66) and continues to experience rapid mining expansion. The area is on rural lands that fall under traditional authorities and formed part of homelands[2] Bophuthatswana and Lebowa during Apartheid rule. The communities that form part of this platinum-rich complex are ravaged by high levels of poverty, structural unemployment, low levels of education and skills and lack of basic services.

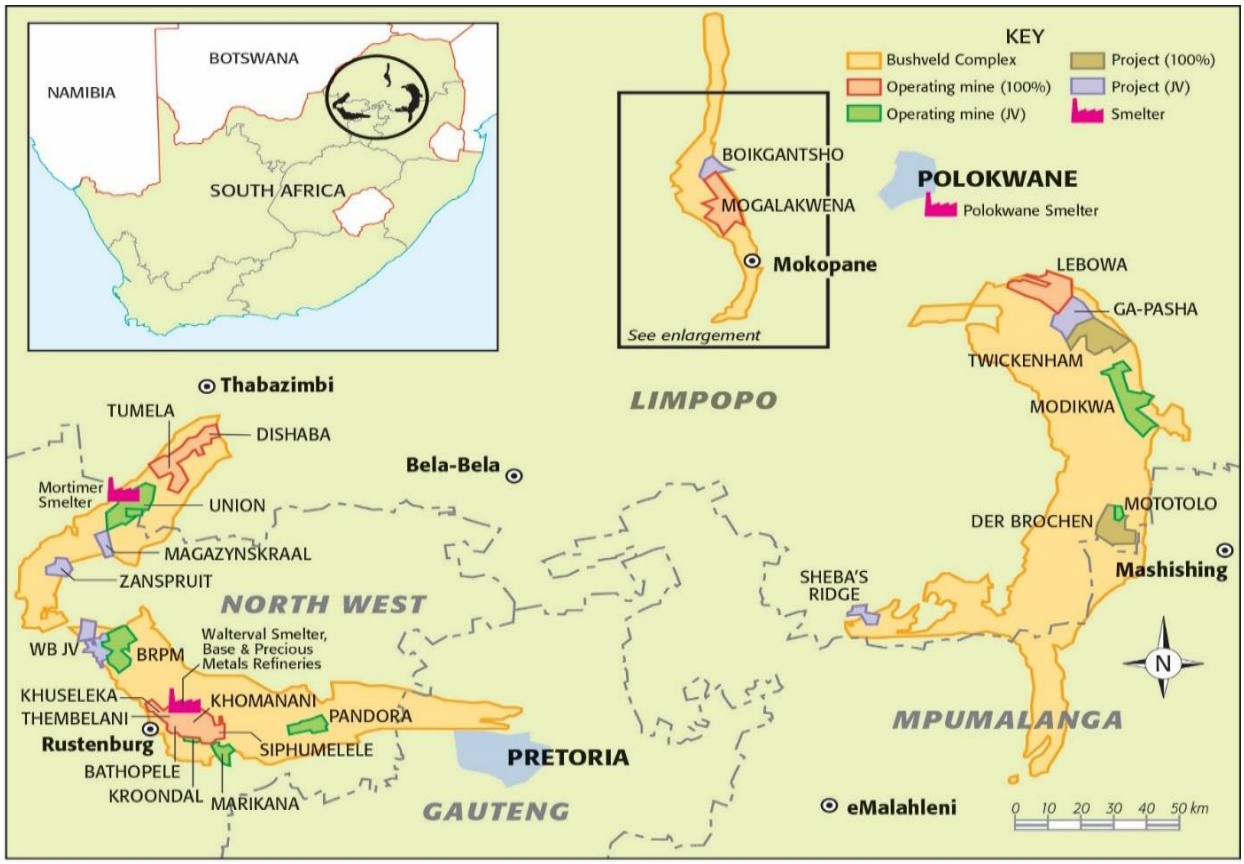

Figure 1: Map showing the Bushveld Igneous Complex in South Africa (Source: Mtero 2016)

[2] The Apartheid Government in South Africa enacted laws that prevented Black South Africans from residing in urban areas. Pieces of legislation like The Self-Governing Territories Act of 1971 provided for the formation of independent Bantustans or homelands (Lund, 2008). In total ten Bantustan areas were created along cultural and ethnic lines in South Africa. They were Lebowa, Gazankulu, Qwaqwa, Transkei, Kwazulu, Kangwane, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Venda and Kwandebele

A review of studies on mining and social change illustrates that power in these communities - including Mokopane Traditional Authority Area which is the chosen location for this study - is organized in favor of traditional leaders and elites who as repositories of tradition are key decision-making players in mining-led development (Mnwana, 2015; 2011; 2014). Traditional leaders continue to play a central role in the governance of rural communities in South Africa. Mining companies across South Africa's platinum belt have been using traditional forms of governance/customary platforms to interact with rural communities. However, traditional authority structures are imbued with power dynamics and inequalities with far reaching implications for local participation in community development (Taodzera, 2015 and Mnwana, 2015a). This top-down development approach which has also been characterized as the "chief-centred model of community participation" (Mnwana and Capps, 2015) significantly advances the power of chiefs while silencing ordinary members of the community (Mnwana, 2012).

According to Mnwana (2012) chiefs use their power to determine whose interests prevail in decision-making and during the implementation of development projects. Most of the above cited empirical studies do not explicitly interrogate the subject of power. Nevertheless, they reveal that community participation in the platinum industry has not gone far enough in enhancing voices of the youth and improving their social and economic conditions. Instead, these studies show that community participation in mining communities has merely strengthened the power of traditional chiefs who are widely seen as the legitimate representatives of their respective communities.

Much of the academic literature on mining and community development in South Africa's platinum belt has not adequately examined the extent to which local institutional powerholders involve the youth in mining-led social and economic development processes. Some studies highlight the role of Section 21[3] companies and traditional power structures in promoting community participation in mining-led community development (Moyo 2012 and Farrel *et al*., 2012). However, this literature generally fails to adequately address the question of youth participation. These studies have not examined the nature of youth participation in decision-

[3] Section 21 companies are non-profit entities formed in terms of South Africa's Companies Act No 61 of 1973 ("the Companies Act"). Such companies or associations are incorporated in terms of Section 21 of the said act 'not for gain'.

making and the constraints young people face in their attempt to participate in mine-driven rural development initiatives. The subject of youth participation is often subsumed under such broad themes as the direct environmental impacts of mining on land, land use; livelihood changes and lack of basic socio-economic services and struggle over customary authority (see Mnwana *et al.*, 2016; ActionAid, 2008; Bench Marks Foundation, 2008 and Skosana, 2013)

It is against this background that this study employs Gaventa's Power Cube Framework as a primary theoretical tool of analysis to examine how the structure of power shapes and influences the character of youth participation in mining-driven community development decisions and activities in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area in the Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.2. The geographical location and profile of the study area

The chosen research site for this study is Mokopane Traditional Authority area under the leadership of Kgoši Lesiba Vaaltyn Kekana. This Ndebele and Sepedi speaking community is situated approximately 8 km north-west of the Mokopane town (previously known as Potgietersrus) on the mineral-rich northern limb of South Africa's BIC **(**see *Figure 1*). The town of Mokopane is part of the Mogalakwena Local Municipality (MLM). This municipality is under the jurisdiction of the Waterberg District Municipality (WDM) of the Limpopo Province (previously known as Northern Transvaal during Apartheid). The area is famous for its abundance of mineral resources and has, in recent years, experienced rapid expansion of platinum mining (Mnwana *et al*, 2016).

Because of its rich endowment in mineral deposits, Mokopane is one of the richest mining areas in South Africa. The decision to conduct this study was motivated by the fact that the area currently hosts one of the biggest platinum mining projects, Ivanplats's Platreef Mining. Ivanplats mine has mineral rights on underground deposits of thick platinum-group metals, nickel, copper and gold mineralization.[4] According to Ivanplats' Managing Director, Dr. Patricia Makhesha: "The Platreef underground mine represents one of the most significant foreign direct

[4] https://www.ivanhoemines.com/news/news-releases/ivanhoe-mines-announces-financial-results-and-review-of-operations-for-the-second-quarter-of-2016 Accessed 30 October 2016

investments into the South African economy in recent years, and constitutes an asset which will yield very significant benefits to the South African economy in general and the economy of Mokopane and the Limpopo Province in particular".[5]

This new mine - now in the construction phase - is owned by a Toronto Stock Exchange Listed company called Ivanhoe Mines (64%), a Japanese Consortium of ITOCHU Corporation and its affiliate, ITC Platinum, together with Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEG) and JGC Corporation (10%) and Ivanplats' broad-based, black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) partners made up of historically disadvantaged individuals and local host communities.[6] The Platreef Mining Project is located on the reef called Platreef and on the farms forming part of MTA area (Digby Wells Environmentals, 2013).



Image 1: The Platreef Mining Project in Mokopane in Limpopo Province, South Africa (Source: Review Online 2017)[7]

[5] https://www.ivanhoemines.com/news/news-releases/ivanhoe-mines-welcomes-ruling-today-by-south-african-judge-in-favour-of-ivanplats-that-overturns-an-interim-interdict-order-issued-last-november (Accessed 10 February 2017)

[6] https://www.ivanhoemines.com/news/news-releases/ivanhoe-mines-announces-financial-results-and-review-of-operations-for-the-second-quarter-of-2016 Accessed 30 October 2016

[7] http://reviewonline.co.za/198370/interdict-set-aside/ Accessed 28 April 2017

The Mokopane traditional authority (MTA) – previously part of the Lebowa homeland during Apartheid - is "characterized by high levels of unemployment especially amongst the economically active youth" (Mnwana *et al.,* 2016:15). Like many mining areas across the continent, majority of the communities are marginalized from mining development and are experiencing social and economic hardships. The MTA area is made up of nineteen villages and the primary governance structure is the institution of traditional leadership constituted in terms of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 (TLFGA) and the Limpopo Traditional Leadership and Institutions Act 6 of 2005 (LTLIA).

Each village has its own *ntona* (headman/woman) and *kgoro* (ward council) that administer all the village affairs and report to *Kgoši* L.V Kekana's headquarters in Vaaltyn (also known as Moshate). Of the nineteen villages, Ivanplats has identified eight villages situated within the farms where its operation is taking place as the most affected communities. For the purpose of this study, I selected two villages in the vicinity of Platreef Mine. They are Tshamahansi and Ga-Magongwa. The decision to conduct this study in the two villages was purely motivated by the fact that they are relatively close to the Platreef Mine and youth constitute the largest segment of the population compared to other age groups in both villages. A detailed description of the two villages is given in *Chapter 3* of this dissertation.

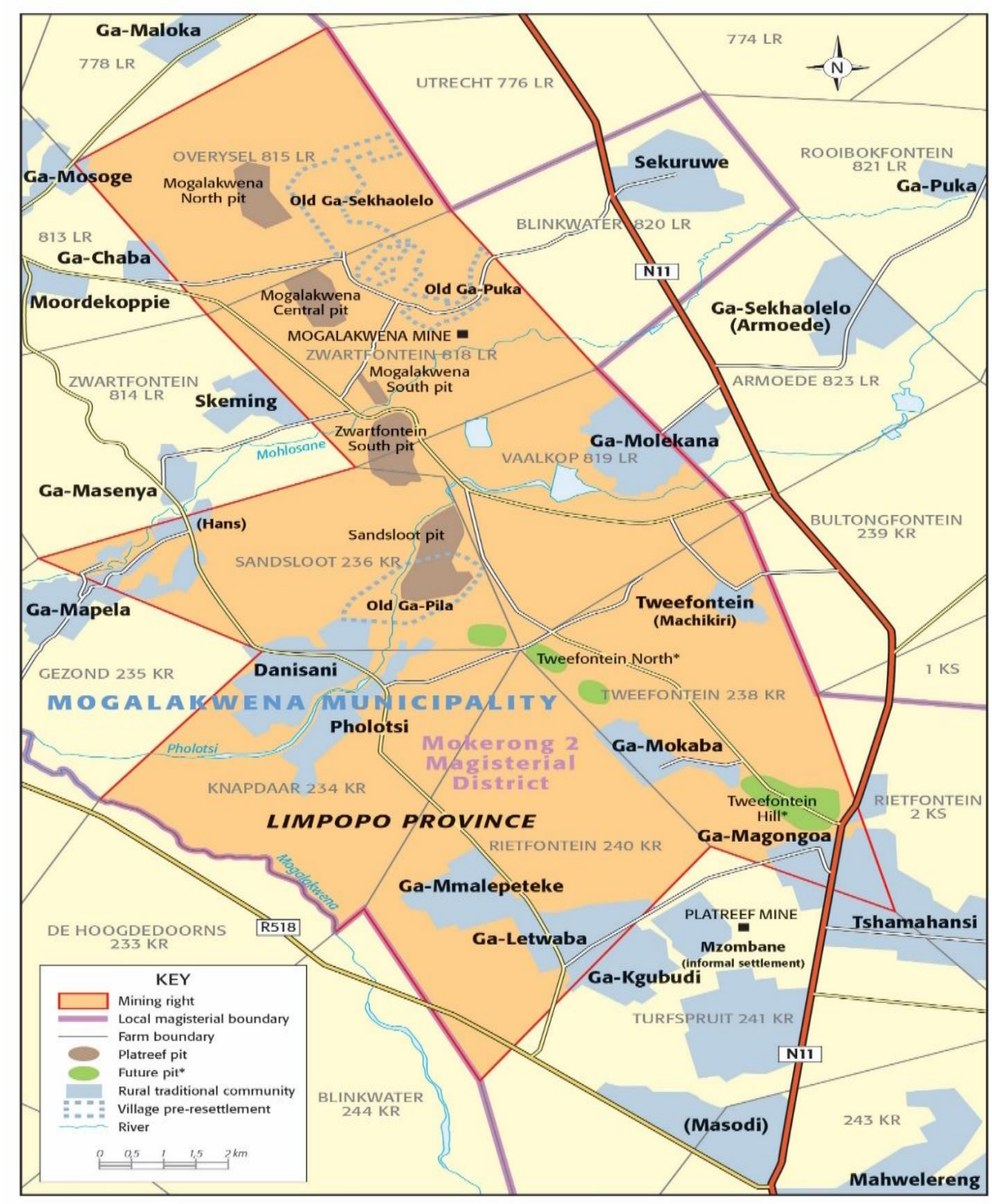

Figure 2: Map showing the research site (Source: Mtero 2016)

1.3. Research aim and objectives of the study

The central aim of this study is to examine how the structure of power in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area in the Limpopo Province shapes and influences the character of youth participation in mining-led local development decisions and initiatives. This central aim was achieved through the following specific objectives:

- To examine the model(s) adopted by local institutional powerholders (including Ivanplats, traditional authority and local municipality) to engender youth participation in community development decisions and activities.
- To interrogate what the modes of engagement reveal about power dynamics and relationships between local youth and the mine and between different social categories in the Mokopane villages.
- To examine the manner in which young people understand their involvement in mining-led community priorities in the Mokopane area and how this understanding influences the character of their participation.
- To investigate how young people respond to the manner in which local powerholders engender youth participation.

1.4. Research questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

- How do local institutional power holders engender youth participation in community development decisions and projects in the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area?
- What does the manner in which local powerholders engender participation reveal about power dynamics and relationship between local youth and the mine and between different social categories in the Mokopane villages?
- How do young people understand their involvement in mining-led community development priorities and how does their understanding influence the character of their participation?

- How do young people respond to the manner in which local powerholders engender youth participation?

1.5. Significance of the study

The findings presented in this study have both theoretical and policy implications. Theoretically, the study contributes towards a better understanding of the various emerging social and economic challenges in relation to South Africa's rural-based, platinum mining industry. The study also enhances our understanding of power and youth participation in the context of mining-led development processes in rural areas. At a policy level, the study will, hopefully assist policy makers in understanding the structural challenges which hinder the full participation of young people in mine-driven local economic development. This is vital in achieving more inclusive and equitable development outcomes.

1.6. Definitions of key concepts

***Community*:** The term 'community' is elusive. Certain people define it in geographic terms or in social terms. Scholars like Maimunah (2009) see community as a group of people with common interest working towards a fulfilment of certain needs living close to each other and interacting on a regular basis. Literature on mining shows that community can consist of people living in the vicinity of mine or affected by mining operation or it can involve a collection of people who are socially, economically and culturally tied to each other (O'Faircheallaigh, 2013). Owing to the geographical location of the study, this study adopts O'Faircheallaigh's (2013) definition of a community to refer to diverse groups/social categories of people residing in a commonly understood location situated next to, or affected by, a mining operation.

***Community development*:** According to Rhonda and Pittman (2009) practitioners and academics define community development in different ways. They argue that practitioners define community development as an outcome while academics think of it as a process. To paraphrase Rhonda and Pittman (2009), community development involves the ability of communities to act

collectively with goal of improving of improving their community physically, socially and economically. Maimunah (2009:203) on the other hand defines the term as "initiatives undertaken by a community in partnership with external organizations or corporations to empower individuals and groups of people…"

Regardless of these sound definitions, studies on mining show that community is understood differently in the industry (Kemp, 2009 and Owen & Kemp, 2012). Muthuri (2007) (cited in Owen & Kemp, 2012) refers to community development as "corporate community involvement" to define activities undertaken by mining companies within mining communities. For the purpose of this study, community development is conceptualized as mining-led community development. This refers to activities undertaken by mining companies and local power holders (municipalities and traditional leaders) using mining revenues and royalties to socially and economically develop communities geographically situated next to their operations.

Youth: The operational definition of youth is rooted in local and national context. Although youth is a diverse social group, generally it is defined as an age-related category. Obaje and Okeke-Uzodike (2013:4) argue that in some societies youths are defined "as people in their late thirties or early forties, who are yet to complete their education, who are unemployed, or who are not in a position to raise a family". The United Nations (UN) - for statistical purposes - defines youth as people between 15 and 24 years of age (United Nations General Assembly 2001). In South Africa, National Youth Policy 2015-2020 (RSA 2015) defines young people as those falling within the age of 14 to 35 years while StatsSA (2016) on the other defines youth as the persons between the ages 15-35 years. Notwithstanding these definitions, studies on youth have criticized this categorical approach for ignoring socio-economic and cultural conditions (Ghimire, 2002 & Wyn & White, 1997).

It is argued that even though young people are often connected by age, they are a diverse social group. As Dawson (2014) shows in her research on the changing nature of political action among youth, the life experiences, education, social, economic and cultural backgrounds are different. Taking into account these different definitions and the diversity of youth as a social category, this dissertation goes beyond the age dimension and loosely defines youth as people who have

not yet established their own homesteads and are still dependent on their parents/guardians or household owners for survival and subjectively understand themselves as young in their local contexts. Throughout this dissertation, 'youth' and 'young people' are used interchangeably.

Youth participation: Generally youth participation in this study is defined as an active involvement of young people in decisions and activities that affect their lives.

1.7. Theoretical framework: The Power Cube

This study employs Gaventa's (2003; 2005; 2006) Power Cube as a guiding theoretical schema for understanding how the structures of power in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area shape and influence the character of youth participation in mining-led community development decisions and activities. As Cornwall (2004) argues, during participatory development power affects the ability of certain citizens to enter and exercise voice in spaces for participation. For Gaventa (2003; 2006) power in participatory practice operates across three continuums of: *spaces*, which centre on how arenas of power are created, *power*, which focuses on the forms and visibility of power and *places*, which focuses on the levels and places of engagement (see figure 3).

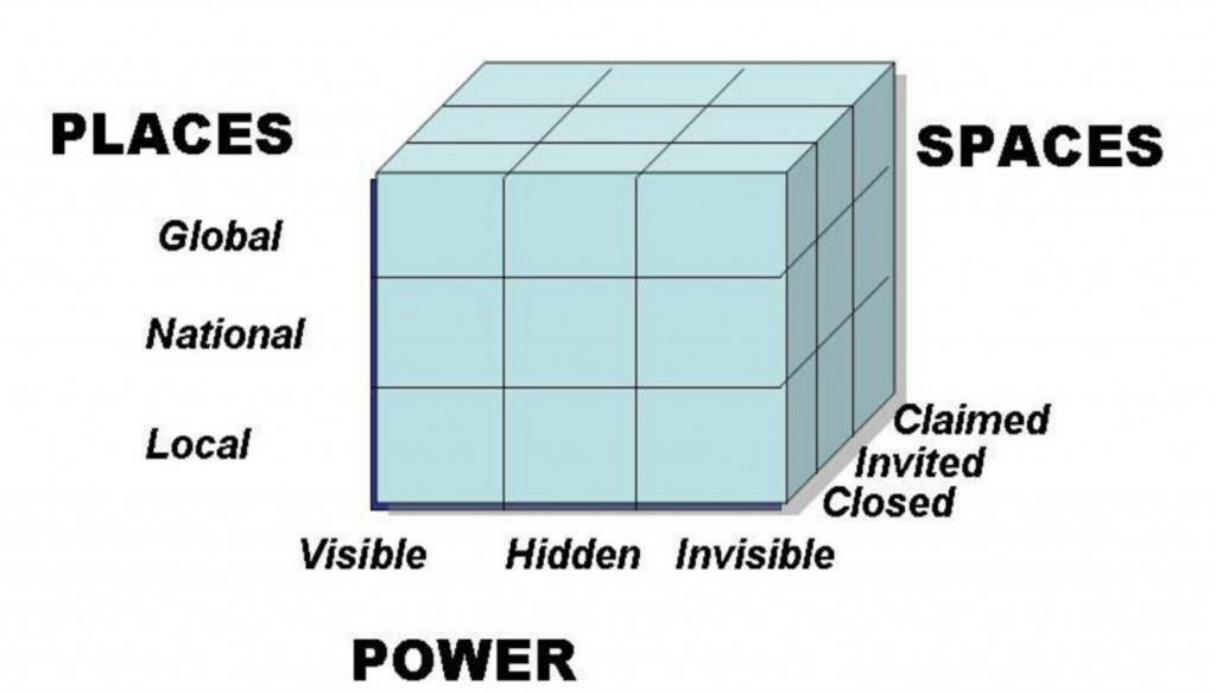

Figure 3: John Gaventa's Power Cube **(**Source: Gaventa 2006:27)

According to Gaventa (2006:26) in order to understand how power shapes the boundaries of participation, we must first understand how participatory spaces are created, with whose interests and on what terms of engagement. As the diagram shows, participation in development takes place in three types of spaces that can be closed, invited, and claimed. In summary, Gaventa (2005:12) argues that in *closed spaces* "decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion". However, Gaventa contends that sometimes efforts are made by powerholders widen participation by moving it from closed spaces and creating to invited or open spaces.

In *invited spaces*, Gaventa (2003; 2005; 2006) people are invited by powerholders to participate in decision-making but they do not get a chance to deliberate on issues and thus do not influence decision outcomes. Lastly, the diagram shows that decision-making can also take place in *claimed spaces*. Gaventa (2005:12) states that these "are spaces claimed by the less powerful actors from or against the power holders in response to perceived domination of closed or invited spaces. Gaventa (2005:12) asserts that these spaces "range from the ones created by social movements and community associations, to those involving natural places where people gather

to debate, discuss and resist outside of the institutionalized policy arenas". The framework also outlines how participation can take place in different places and levels which can be local, national and global.

Moreover, the framework highlights how spaces of participation are pervaded by power relations. It distinguishes three forms of power –*visible*, *hidden* and *invisible*--that reside in spaces and places to shape the process of participation. According to Gaventa (2003) *visible power* refers to power characterized by clear set of rules. This can refer to a power induced by the state through policy and it is out in the open. Visible power brings to attention who participate in decision-making and who emerges victorious.[8] *Hidden power* on the other hand focuses on control over decision making or who sets agenda for participation. Gaventa (2005:15) makes a point that during participation "certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling that gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda".

What Gaventa suggests is that power in participatory decision-making is not always visible as it often takes place behind the scenes to prevent others from participating in decision-making. Thus, the framework shows that power during participatory process may take invisible forms. According to Gaventa (2005:15), *invisible power* "shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation". People with superior resources use this power to marginalize the powerless by manipulating their desires to attain certain decision-making outcomes that favour them (Gaventa, 2003).

Before highlighting how the framework will be used, it is worth noting that at the heart of mine-community engagement in the platinum belt lies the notion of power which is structurally organized in favour of traditional leaders. In many instances, traditional leaders in South Africa's rural areas have pursued the consolidation of their power at the expense of inclusive community development (see, for example, Mnwana 2014; Skosana, 2013; Farrel et al., 2012; Mnwana *et al*., 2016; Mnwana and Capps, 2015; Farrel *et al*., 2012; Taodzera, 2015). These leaders -- whose power is not acquired democratically through elections – have a major influence in the decision-making processes. They have positioned themselves as custodians of rural lands and natural

[8] Put simply, it determines winners and losers in decision-making

resources. In fact, the scholarship on mining and community development on the platinum belt suggest that as custodians of rural lands, traditional chiefs are omnipotent beings who control and mediate engagements between mining companies and traditional communities (Mnwana, 2015; Skosana, 2013 & Farell *et al.*, 2012).

It is against this background that this study investigates how community participation is realized in mining communities. The study investigates the role played by different actors highlighting how the participatory process is influenced by local power dynamics. Basically, this study applies the Power Cube Framework to shed some light on how local institutional powerholders in the MTA area deploy various forms of power in spaces used to engender local participation community affairs. These spaces are important in that they largely dictate the level and extent of youth participation in decision-making on issues related to mining. Besides, the study uses Gaventa's Power Cube Framework to show that power in mining-led community development is not concentrated in the hands of local institutional powerholders only. It gives insight into how young people in the MTA area respond to their exclusion from official spaces of engagement created by local powerholders. The study also gives insights into how the youth in MTA mobilize their power in alternative spaces and this includes participating in grassroots organizations. These grassroots organizations give young people an opportunity to exercise their agency and advocate for their rights in matters that affect them.

1.8. Layout of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured and presented in five chapters.

Chapter One is the introductory chapter and it sets the scene for this study by providing the background to the research the research problem. The problem chapter presents the research the geographical location and profile of the chosen study site, the central and objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, definition of key terms and a brief description of the Power Cube Framework which is the guiding theoretical framework.

Chapter Two of this dissertation presents the literature review. The chapter places the research argument within the broader framework of literature on mining and community development to show its thinness in relation to the research argument. It provides an overview of some scholarly dominant arguments on the role of mining in rural development to understand how companies promote participation to achieve their development goals. The chapter also reviews the current literature to map out the nature and extent of youth participation in mineral-led development. It also highlights the extreme levels of youth exclusion and marginalisation from mining-led community development and connects them to the main research argument. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of the strategies young people use to overcome their marginalization from mining-led community development.

Chapter Three is the methodology chapter and it details how the study was conducted. It presents the study villages, how the researcher gained access to the research site and the methods that were used to address the aim and objectives of the study. The chapter highlights how qualitative research approach with case study design was appropriate for this study. The methods that were used to gather data include focus group interviews, in-depth interviews, observations and analysis of documents. The chapter then moves on to discuss how the research data was analyzed. Among other things, but to a lesser extent, the chapter also touches on the challenges that the researcher was faced with during fieldwork.

Chapter Four is the core chapter of the study and it is dived into two parts. The chapter first draws attention to some key empirical themes/findings that emanated from an analysis of the ethnographic data gathered from Mokopane Traditional Authority area to highlight how the structure of power at the local level influences the character of youth participation in mining-led local development. Secondly, the chapter discusses the key empirical findings of the study in conjunction with different pieces of literature and the guiding theoretical framework.

Chapter 5 is the last chapter of the study and it concludes by summarizing the objectives and the key findings of the study. The chapter also highlights the theoretical and policy implications of this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter attempts to situate the study within the existing body of literature on youth participation, mining and community development. The chapter focuses on how power relations at the local level shape or mediate the manner and extent to which young people participate in mining-led community development processes and decision-making processes. Essentially the chapter explores the literature on mining and community development to understand how local power-holders engender local participation in mining-led community development. These power structures and relations shape are important in the way the shape and constrain youth participation in mining-led community development. Some of the key arguments and debates that emerged from the assessed literature are categorized into broad interconnected themes that include Mining and Community Development; Youth Marginalisation and Youth Marginalisation and Agency.

The chapter reviews previous research and focuses on various key arguments on large-scale mining investments in relation to local community development. One of the overarching arguments in the literature is the importance of the active participation of various social groups in mining-led community development. The chapter also discusses youth marginalization – central theme of this research. The primary focus is on how the local institutional powerholders in various mineral-rich communities promote frequently fail to create spaces for meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes. The last section of the chapter focuses on how people, especially the youth, contest for and reclaim their space in mining-led community development processes. It explores the different pieces of literature on natural resource conflict to show how young people increase opportunities to exercise power and agency in mining-driven community development.

2.2. Mining and community development: Some key arguments

In most countries around the world, mining operations take place mainly in poverty-stricken rural areas with no basic services and poor infrastructure (Alao, 2007; Mnwana, 2014;

Indemudia, 2014). As a result governments around the world obligate mining companies to contribute towards the social and economic well-being of these of the areas in which they operate to mitigate the harmful effects that their operations may have. According to Weber-Farhr *et al* (2001:9) companies need to among other things provide employment opportunities, support small business, invest in basic public infrastructure, improve access to healthcare and education, etc.

Locally, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), specifically section 152, legally mandates local government/municipalities to promote the social and economic wellbeing within their areas of jurisdiction (RSA, 1996). Despite the highlighted constitutional obligation, mining companies (in line with the international practices) are also informed by the country's policy and legislative framework on mining to contribute towards community development in communities adjacent to their operations and labour sending areas (RSA, 2016).

Established in terms of the section 100 (2) (a) of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act No 28 of 2002 (MPRDA) to "redress the imbalances of the past" (RSA, 2015), the Broad Based Black-Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Charter for the Mining and Minerals industry (also called Mining Charter) obligates holders of mining rights to contribute extensively towards the socio-economic development of mining communities and labour sending areas (RSA, 2016). The framework clearly stipulates that in order for mining companies to secure the social license to operate they must "annually contribute a minimum of 1% of annual turnover towards local community development and labour sending areas" (DMR, 2016:9).

To enforce this policy, government compels every holder of a mining right in South Africa to submit a Social and Labour Plan (SLP) outlining in detail the measures they will take to contribute towards the transformation of the mining industry. SLPs detail the socio-economic development interventions to uplift mine workers and host communities. Mining companies are required to develop SLPs before an operating license is issued by the state through the DMR (see regulation 41 of the regulations of the MPRDA). According to Rogerson (2012:109) and Amplats (2014:36) community upliftment and improvement plans must be developed through consultative process with local municipalities and through regular interaction with host communities. In simple language, companies must align their plans with the integrated development plans (IDPs) and priorities of local municipalities. Furthermore, the mining

legislation underlines the inclusion of local citizens in the drafting of the SLP and the implementation of development programmes outlined in the document (DMR, 2016).

As a consequence of the legal obligation, companies in South Africa - like elsewhere across the world have been for years employing strategies like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate Social Investment (CSI) to increase their visibility in local communities and contribute to socio-economic development. However, there is large volume of work that criticizes mining companies for failing to improve the social well-being of rural communities that host mining operations (Kemp, 2009; Maconachie, 2014; Fanthorpe and Maconachie, 2010; Bush, 2009; Mnwana, 2015, Mnwana, 2012; Mnwana & Capps, 2015). For instance, Taodzera (2015:66) argues that while CSI programmes in resource-rich areas have been successful, they have however not always addressed the challenge of community involvement. Advancing a similar argument Poncian and George (2015:166) make a case that many communities in mining areas often do not consider CSR programmes to be adequate. In most instances, such programmes do not respond to the needs and priorities of the communities (Poncian and George, 2015:166). What these studies suggest is that companies have been imposing development projects and as such people are denied opportunity to participate in initial decision-making which involves the identification of local needs.

It is as a result of this failure to address the needs of the surrounding communities that other scholars have criticized CSR and CSI for being a mere tokenism (Idemudia, 2014; Mnwana, 2014; Poncian & George, 2015; Hamann, 2003). For example, Mnwana (2011) points out that mining companies are only interested in maximising profits instead of contributing to social and economic upliftment of the communities are used to manage or save the face of companies instead of helping communities.

2.2.1. Local participation in mining-driven community development

The mining and community development literature emphasizes the importance of meaningful citizen participation in community decision-making (Kemp, 2009; Cronje & Chenga, 2009; Hamann, 2003; Owen & Kemp, 2012; Banks *et al*, 2013; Garvin *et al.*, 2009; Idemudia, 2014 & Gifford *et al.*, 2010). For development to take place, it is argued that mining companies should

demand high level of participation from all the affected stakeholders in decision-making, identification, designing and implementation of community development projects (Kemp 2009).

Reflecting on corporate-community engagement strategies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, Idemudia (2014) argues that the views of all the affected social groups including the elderly, young people, women must be incorporated in decision-making. In South Africa, some scholars argue that participation should be broad enough to include less powerful groups like children, the youth and elderly in all the aspects of development (see Cronje and Chenga, 2009; Hamman, 2009). Hodge (2014:32) also believes local residents should participate in decision-making to achieve a greater control over their lives and receive a fair share of benefits generated from mining operations in their communities.

Moreover, advocates of rural development argue that participation must be inclusive because the success and sustainability of community development depends on the ability of all socio-economic groups to meaningfully influence the decision making (O'Faircheallaigh, 2012 and Phillips and Pittman, 2009). It is evident that rural communities that host mining companies are not homogenous. These studies show that there are competing interests by different social groups in mining-led local economic development. Regardless of this, surprisingly little has been published on how young people participate in community decision-making processes, in particularly how local powerholders engender youth participation in development opportunities resulting from mining operation.[9]

2.3. Youth marginalisation

While some schools of thought advocate for youth participation in community development decision making and activities (see Barnett and Breman, 2006; Checkoway et al., 2005; Checkoway, 1998; Chekoway and Guiterezz, 2006 and Frank, 2006), a review of diverse bodies of literatures on mining and community development indicate that overall youth as an age group, hardly participate in local development engendered by mining companies in their communities (Lahiri-Dutt & Mahy, 2006; Maconachie, 2014; Fanthorpe & Maconachie, 2010; Bush, 2009;

[9] This limitation is addressed in Chapter 4.

Mensah & Osare, 2014; Ikelegbe, 2005;2006; Alao, 2007 & Edlyne, 2011). The overwhelming consensus is that that generally youth in a context of mining is a vulnerable, powerless and voiceless community group that has limited control over its life.

The social exclusion of young people from mining opportunities and decision-making processes is so deep-rooted in most natural resource-rich, West African countries (see Bush, 2009; Fanthorpe and Maconachie, 2010, Ikelegbe, 2005; 2006; Hilker & Fraser, 2009; Edlyne, 2011; Alao, 2007). Empirical evidence from these countries, especially from the mineral rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Ikelegbe, 2006 and Alao, 2007), suggests that regardless of the growing international momentum for inclusive participation in local economic development, young people have little to show in terms improved quality of life and social amenities after decades of oil exploitation and production. It is argued that young people feel socially and economically undervalued and their chances for participation are thwarted by Nigeria's Federal government, multinational companies and traditional chiefs. These different power holders often deny young people the opportunity to effectively participate in community development decision making and projects (Alao, 2007).

Furthermore, Bush (2009) contends that youth from the poverty-stricken, mining-affected rural areas of Ghana are usually excluded by government and traditional power structures. Those who hold power are doing little to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of many young people who remain unemployed and face exclusion in terms of economic participation. Without explicitly accounting for power, the key strength of these studies is that they show that generally participatory decision-making in mining communities is rooted in social, cultural, political and economic power relations.

As in the case with the rest of the world, the evidence of youth marginalisation is also rife in South Africa (Mnwana *et al.,* 2015 & Ndaba, 2010) which over a decade has been experiencing a youth bulge (StatsSA, 2016:viii). Statistical evidence suggests that generally South Africa as a country is characterised by high rates of youth unemployment, joblessness and lack of access to good quality education for young people from poor backgrounds (De Lannoy *et al.,* 2015 & StatsSA, 2016). As a result, in recent years there has been increasing awareness in policy circles of the need to address the youth question in South Africa, in particular the marginalisation of young people from local and national development. Government policies focusing on young

people, for example the National Youth Policy 2015-2020 (RSA, 2015) and StatsSA (2016:viii) make it clear that youth-related policy development and implementation should form part of rural development interventions in order to better meet the needs of rural youth who bear the brunt of marginalisation.

In spite of widespread calls for increased opportunities for the youth in South Africa's mining communities; there is evidence of extreme levels of youth exclusion and marginalisation from decision-making processes and economic benefits. Large-scale mining operations in local communities have not been inclusive especially in terms of extending mining benefits to the youth population (Mnwana, 2012; Mnwana & Capps, 2015; Mnwana *et al.,* 2016). Mnwana's (2012; 2014) ethnographic work on community participation and resource-control in two Northwest platinum–rich communities of Royal Bafokeng and Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela has established that young people are not afforded opportunities to actively participate in key decisions about mining and rural development. This is mainly because mining companies tend to engage traditional chiefs who are assumed to be custodians of rural lands and legitimate community representatives. While these studies do not exclusively focus on the youth question (Mnwana *et al*., 2016; Mnwana, 2015b; Taodzera, 2012; Moyo 2012; Mnwana, 2012) they have managed highlight the adverse impacts of power inequalities in mining communities on less powerful social groups including the youth.

The general focus of these studies is the extent to which power dynamics within the communities limits the ability of marginal social groups to exercise agency in mining-led development (Mnwana, 2012; Mnwana et al., 2016; Taodzera, 2015; Moyo 2012; Farrel et al., 2012). It is apparent that traditional leaders take decisions of behalf of the communities they represent. Despite this, little is known about how young people participate in community development in the Mokopane area where mining companies are continuing to expand their operations. Therefore one crucial question that needs to be asked is: how does the structure of power in rural areas that hosts large scale platinum mines shape and affect the manner and extent to which youth participate in mining-led community development decision making and activities?

2.4. Youth marginalization and agency

A number of studies on mining and conflicts reveal that in the context of widespread youth exclusion from the official decision making spaces and economic opportunities; young people always mobilize their power and create new spaces aimed at advancing their needs and causes (Hilker and Fraser, 2009 & Van Gyapo and Obed-Odoom, 2013). According to studies (e.g. O'Faircheallaigh, 2012 & Van Gyapo and Obed-Odoom, 2013) failure to include all people in participatory development often causes serious conflict and perpetuates instabilities.

Locally, StatsSA (2016: viii) argues that in the context of growing youth population, when youth are marginalised from development activities, youth bulge becomes a demographic time bomb. However, the contest for inclusion in development process by youth has often taken violent form in many mining communities, particularly across the African continent (Maconachie, 2014; Fanthorpe & Maconachie, 2010; Bush, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2005; Ikelegbe, 2006; Hilker & Fraser, 2009; Mensah & Okyre, 2014; Edlyne, 2011; Alao, 2007; Ukeje, 2001). The next sections review how youth mobilize their power as a group to break barriers to inclusion in development decision making and activities.

2.4.1. Violent Resistance

Some scholars, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, have shown that youth-led conflict and violence as a response to the general lack of inclusive development has become a common feature of company-community relationships (Alao, 2007; Ikelegbe, 2006; Farthorpe and Maconachie, 2010; Hilker and Fraser, 2009; Mnwana *et al*., 2016 and Mnwana & Capps, 2015). The inability by youth to participate in mining-driven development has contributed to the escalation of conflict and violence. The dominant argument in these studies is that in a situation of powerlessness, violence becomes a bargaining weapon of negotiating (Ukeje, 2001; Hilker and Fraser, 2009).

According to Hilker and Fraser (2009:26) in contexts "where youth feel that power structures in place exclude and marginalize them…violence often provides an opportunity to have a voice, lead, make an impact and to gain control over their lives". A similar argument is advanced by

Von Holdt *et al.,* (2011:27) who argue that people often use violence to force the powerful to acknowledge the dignity and legitimacy of the powerless and hear their collective demands.

Empirical research suggests that violence and conflict are so prevalent in the rural localities of Sierra Leone. Studies on natural resources management and conflict from Sierra Leonne (see Maconachie, 2014; Fanthorpe and Maconachie, 2010) illustrate that in the absence of opportunities young people end up resorting to violence and conflict in desperate search for empowerment and to get gain attention from mining companies and traditional leaders. The youth have been at the forefront of violent rights-based lobbying around the adverse impacts of mining. As Bebbington *et al.,* (2007:2889) argue that involvement in lobby groups agitating for violence is seen as a "vehicle through which the concerns of the poor and marginalised are given visibility".

The perpetuation of instabilities by youth is also one of the challenges Ghana's mining regions have been faced with. Studies (see Mensah & Okyere, 2014) have also found that young people in Ghana's Obuasi Municipal area have been demanding change by stopping mining operations through violent measures. Additionally, Bush (2009:60) has found that in their push for participation in local community development, young people directly attacked traditional leaders for colluding with mining companies and benefitting from mining at their expense.

The use of violence as vehicle for public participation has also been found to be a great concern in the rural localities of Nigeria where mineral exploitation and production has not translated into improved quality of life for the youth (Edlyne, 2011; Alao, 2007 & Ikelegbe, 2006). In his analysis of the youth militancy and militias in the context of economic and resources crisis Ikelegbe (2006) goes into length to show how lack of avenues for articulation among the youth in mineral resources development has pushed young people to challenge the communal and traditional leaderships. He argues: "there has been violence against elders and chiefs and other youths who are suspected of collusion with multinational corporations" (Ikelgbe 2005:217).

In addition, scholars have established that insufficient youth participation in the distribution of mineral wealth has in certain instances led to disruption of oil production, kidnapping and abduction of workers among other things (Alao, 2007; Ikeledgbe, 2006 & Ikelegbe, 2005). According to Alao (2007) youth in Nigeria have been using violence as a strategy to compel

concessions in respect to self-determination, regional autonomy and employment of local youth. Similarly, Ikelegbe (2006) argues that youth have been using violence to assert their place and roles in their communities and oil economy. From these studies it is clear that there is a broad agreement among scholars that youth participation in violence and conflict provides young people with spaces to influence decision making and benefit from natural resource development. These arguments are relevant to this study as they address the question which deals with how young people respond to the manner in which local institutional powerholders engender participation in development.

In South Africa, a number of studies have also found that in their quest for a right to be heard in mining-led local development process youth have been using violence as a vehicle for participation in decision-making and development activities (Mnwana, 2011; Capps & Mnwana, 2015; Mnwana *et al.,* 2016). Mnwana (2015) suggests that frustration and growing youth dissatisfaction about lack of participation in decision-making and socio-economic benefits generated by mining operations has perpetuated local tensions on the platinum belt.

Moreover, in their investigation of the impacts of platinum mining in Mokopane's rural communities, Mnwana *et al.*, (2016:28) have also established that youth exclusion is "the key driver of grassroots anger and resistance" in mining communities. This is supported by Amplats (2015) when they argue that youth disillusionment about lack of representation in decision-making structures and lack of employment opportunities is what in most cases give rise to large-scale community protest which leads to disruption of production and damage to mine property. Although these studies draw attention to the tactics that the powerless use to challenges the powerful in the context of widespread exclusion from mining-led development, one a limitation with them is that they are focused on Mapela area where Anglo American Platinum has been mining for over twenty-five years. What about MTA where Ivanplats is constructing one of the largest underground mines which covers a vast area of land? Do young people also use violence as a vehicle for participation in mining-led community development? Clearly it is still unknown how youth in this platinum-rich community respond to the model adopted by local institutional power structures to solicit community views about mining operation in their area. This empirical gap is addressed in Chapter Four.

2.4.2. Participation in civil society groups

According to Cheney *et al.,* (2002:22) it is common that in a situation of power imbalances "powerless individuals often create their identity as a community group in opposition to or conflict with groups that are more powerful than themselves". For Gaventa (2006) such kinds of structures perform significant task in amplifying the voice of the excluded groups against the dominant interests because they create social space for their inclusion in the development process. Gaventa (2006) further makes a case that when decision making spaces are closed, that provides opportunity for the marginalised groups to claim their space or find alternatives for exercising their voice.

While there is little detailed research outlining how organisations are used as alternatives for participation in mine-led community development in South Africa's platinum rich rural communities, evidence emanating from the existing literature focusing on South Africa's platinum belt suggests that marginalised youth also create conditions for their participation in mining-led local development. For instance, in his ethnographic research Mnwana (2012) found that in cases where there is insufficient youth participation in mining-led community development young people who feel disenfranchised from decision-making processes and economic opportunities sometimes form or join groups to overcome their exclusion. It is evident that in mining communities civil society organisations are the most effective means through which young people mobilize their power to confront their structural marginality. And this connects to the question on how young people respond to the model of engagement adopted by powerholders. However, this begs one to ask if whether young people in MTA area are also at the forefront of rights-based lobbying around matters that affect their lives. What strategies do they use to realize their full participation in decisions that affect their lives or demand attention on issues that specifically affect them?

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature relevant to the study to map out how the structure of power at the local level shapes and affects the manner and extent to which young people participate in mining-driven community development decisions and activities. The chapter has specifically explored the literature to understand how local power-holders exercise their power to engender youth participation in mining-led community development and how youth participate in decision-making. Moreover the aim was understand how young people understand their involvement in mining-led community development and how their involvement influences the manner and extent to which they participate in decision-making. While mining companies have been championing community development, it is still unclear which methods or tools do they use to involve local people, particularly young people.

The major dominant theme that emerged from the literature review is youth marginalisation. Despite the growing youth bulge in mineral-rich countries, there is a strongly-held common view amongst scholars that youth as a social category hardly participate in local decision making processes and development activities engendered by mines in their communities. They remain marginal actors who end up as passive recipients or beneficiaries of mining development projects as their destiny remains entirely outside its own control. The marginalisation of young people in South Africa also happens despite attempts by government to grapple with the problem of youth economic marginalisation, in particular rural youth. Furthermore, even though there is little explicit and in-depth research on the impact power structure on youth participation in decision-making processes and development programmes, it is however evident from the existing studies that the most fundamental problem that seems to marginalise young people from mining-led development is power relations, such as the dominance of traditional leaders and community elders within the arenas created for participation.

Again, and interestingly so, the empirical literature sources highlighted in this chapter illustrate that although youth are marginalised from participatory decision-making, marginalisation creates spaces for them (young people) to mobilise their power to challenge the existing power relations in their communities. All the studies reviewed indicate that power relations are at work in

mining-led communities. Thus, taken together the key broad themes highlighted in this chapter show that it is important to appreciate the nature of power relations in society and the extent to which they may foster inclusion and exclusion as well as their impacts on development outcomes. The next chapter is the methodology chapter and it details the whole process of data collection.

CHAPTER 3: THE STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter details how data was collected to examine how the structures of power in the MTA area in Limpopo Province shape and influence the character of youth participation in mining-led community development decisions and activities. The chapter is organised as follows; firstly, it presents a detailed description of the study villages. It then outlines how the researcher gained access to the research site. The chapter further discusses and justifies why the researcher adopted a qualitative methodological approach with case study design to investigate how youth participate in mine-led local development decision-making and activities. The discussion on methodological approach delves into the qualitative data collection tools that formed a core part of the investigation. This includes focus group discussions, in-depth semi-structured interviews, analysis of documents and direct observations. The chapter also reflects on the challenges that the researcher encountered in collecting data for the study.

3.2. The study villages

The chosen study villages, Tshamahansi and Ga-Magongoa are located in the northwest of the Mokopane area on the N11 national highway (see figure 3 in Chapter 1). The two villages share a boundary and are both closest to Platreef Mine. The section below gives a brief description of the villages.

3.2.1. Tshamahansi

Also known as *Tlhokametsi* 'Without water' in English, the village of Tshamahansi is situated on the east of the Platreef Mining Project within the farms Turfspruit 241 KR and Rietfontein 2 KS. Tshamahansi was established in 1966 Tshamahansi in 1966 and shares a boundary with Ga-Magongoa village. Tshamahansi is mainly consists of Xitsonga speaking people coming from different areas. According to the StatsSA (2011) census data, the total population in this village

is approximately 14 274. The youth which is the target population of this study constitute 38.5% of the population, meaning the population is predominantly young.

The households in Tshamahansi are scattered in three sections under three *mantona*: Matjeke, Baloyi and Hlungwani. Most of the people depend on government monthly social grants as their main sources of income. The village still lacks basic services with water being recognized as a scarce resource. Most of the municipal taps in Tshamahansi are dry and households buy water or ask from those who have drilled boreholes. Besides, water scarcity majority of the households in this village do not have access to adequate sanitation. They rely on pit latrine toilets for sanitation purposes.

3.2.2. Ga-Magongoa

The village of Ga-Magongoa also occupies the farms Turfspruit 241 KR and Rietfontein 2 KS and is situated relatively close to Platreef Mine. The village was established in 1966 and falls under *Ntona* Magongoa. Currently this small village is scattered in three zones. IsiNdebele is the most spoken language in the village. However, the language is used interchangeably with Sepedi which is the most spoken language around the Mokopane area. In terms of the population demographics; evidence reveals that the Ga-Magongoa population is largely comprised of a high cohort of young people. According StatsSA (2011) census data the village has an estimated population of 2107 people, with youth making 36.4% of the population.

Despite being relatively proximate to the mine, Ga-Magongoa village is still lagging behind in terms of service delivery. Almost all the households do not have access to running water and sanitation. They rely on boreholes and use pit latrine toilets. This economically deprived village has over the past decade experienced the effects of mining more than any other Mokopane village.[10] In early 2000 local residents were removed from their land where farming was undertaken by Ivanplats. Thus, subsistence farming in this community has been the main source of livelihood over the years.

[10] The Platreef Mining Project is undertaken on land where Ga-Magongoa residents used to farm.

3.3. Gaining access to the research site

According Johl and Rangathan (2009:49) it is always important for researchers to think about how to go about gaining access when conducting research because in most instances researchers face difficulties. In order to collect data from the villages and institutions I needed to first gain access. Access to research sites was sought in two ways which are described below.

3.3.1. Accessing the villages

Negotiating access to the villages was easy for the researcher as he was already familiar with the research site having worked in Mokopane for two months as a research assistant for Society, Work and Development Institute's (SWOP) Mining and Rural Transformation in Southern Africa (MARTISA) project. His involvement in the MARTISA project allowed him to form relationships and rapport with mining activists from different villages including those under Mokopane Traditional Authority. So when he embarked on this study – being aware of local tensions in the area – he did not attempt to seek official access to respondents from local traditional leaders. This was to avoid being caught in village politics and putting lives of respondents at risk. The researcher made use of a gatekeeper in line with Johl and Rangathan's (2009:42) assertion that "often in the early access process, it is important for the researcher to have someone of the community to vouch for his presence". That said, the gatekeeper who is a youth activist in the area introduced the researcher to youth leaders from Mzombane[11] village who later introduced the researcher to Ga-Magongoa residents and leaders of grassroots organisations. A meeting was set up for the researcher to formally introduce himself and brief his prospective participants about the purpose of the study and why their village has been chosen.

At a meeting which was made up of eleven people, the researcher issued participants with information sheets briefly outlining the purpose of the study (see the appendix A and B) and each person was given platform to ask. It must be highlighted that the researcher's fluency in Sepedi language, understanding of the cultural beliefs and norms of the research site, together with my interpersonal and verbal communication skills worked to his advantage. All the people who were

[11] Mzombane is on the mining affected villages. All the activists from the mining affected villages know each other.

at the meeting voluntarily declared their availability people to take part of the study. Moreover, these people became important in facilitating the researcher's entry into the villages to recruit more potential participants.

Put simply, the exercise allowed the researcher to establish trust and rapport with participants. Emphasizing the importance of trust and rapport in qualitative research, Janesick (2000:384) argues that "by establishing trust and rapport at the beginning of the study, the researcher is better able to capture the nuances and meanings of each participant's life from the participant's viewpoint". In this study, it can be argued that building relationship with participants at the beginning of the study became vital in allowing me to easily enter and exit the two villages without fear. Having identified the participants in the two communities, the researcher started to make calls and set-up interviews with all the identified stakeholders.

3.3.2. Accessing institutions

For interviews with institutions, access was sought in different ways. With traditional power structures, the researcher personally visited their offices to ask them to take part in the study. However, there were few complications when it comes to negotiating access with *mantona* from two study villages. In Ga-Magongoa the researcher managed to meet with the two *mantona* claiming to be legitimate leaders. In a meeting with the first *ntona* whom the researcher accessed through his wife (the resarcher met his wife in one of the households in Ga-Magogoa Zone 1), he complained about researchers failing them for a number of times as a community.

He argued that researchers come to his community to get information from them and upon completion their research they dump them. Due to this lack of trust and confidence in researchers the *ntona* refused to take part in the study. In line with a moral principle of voluntary participation, the researcher respected *ntona*'s decision not to take part in the study. The other *ntona* who happened Ivanplats' employee during the course of fieldwork, was also approached but due to his busy schedule and work commitments he could not declare his availability to be interviewed. This inability to access village leaders limited me from getting their perspective on the topic under investigation.

In Tshamahansi, similar challenges were experienced when trying to access traditional power structures.[12] Initially the researcher tried to approach *Ntona* Baloyi but members of his council told refused to be interviewed. They argued that researchers from Wits University had come to them before doing a similar research. In Matjeke section, their *ntona* passed on before the start of fieldwork and as such the researcher did not make any attempt to approach them. Regardless of the limitations at village level, the researcher managed to interview Mokopane Traditional Council members together with Kgoši Lesiba Vaaltyn Kekana.

With the Mine Company, municipality and government departments, the researcher emailed letters to relevant stakeholders within these institutions to seek official permission to interview individuals. All the letters that were sent to institutions had the university's letter head and were approved by supervisors and Wits University's ethics committee. Out of the four institutions that letters were sent to, only MLM and Ivanplats replied telephonically. However with Ivanplats the researcher encountered difficulties as they took time to reply.

Fortunately, while waiting for the company officials to respond, the researcher managed to meet the company's Head of Transformation, Sello Kekana, at a seminar where he was presenting at Wits University's Geology Department. After the seminar, the researcher introduced himself to the speaker and verbally briefed him about his study. The mine official then requested the researcher to resend the letter of access to him so that he could facilitate access to his company. With his help, the researcher was successfully granted an interview with the company's senior manager for community relations.

With the municipality, the researcher managed to interview the divisional head for local economic development (LED), business development officer and divisional head for planning. But accessing national government institutions was difficult. Despite numerous attempts to get hold of officials from the Department of Mineral Resources, one could not secure an interview with them. When the researcher first contacted them, they referred me to their regional office in Polokwane but due to financial constraints at that time, he then asked to interview the national office in Pretoria and they acceded. Be that as it may, the unending email exchanges between researcher and the department did not yield any results. Similar constraint was encountered with

[12] It had already been indicated that Tshamahansi is divided in three sections and has three headmen.

the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) in the Presidency. They could neither respond to the researcher's emails nor answer my calls.

3.4. Qualitative Research Methodology

Noor (2008) argues that the choice of research method in any study is dependent on the nature of the problem under study. This study adopted a qualitative research approach with a case study design for deeper and critical analysis of how youth participate in mining-driven community development decision making and activities in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area. According to Creswell (2014:4) qualitative research is useful in "exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". Qualitative research methodology in this study involved questions about human experiences and realities that were studied through contact with individual participants in their own environments, generating rich descriptive data (Neuman, 2000 & Maxwell, 1998). This data helped the researcher to understand how youth participate in mining-led community development decision-making and activities.

3.4.1. Case study design

To address the purpose and objectives of the study great depth the study research used a case study of Mokopane Traditional Authority Area. The decision to collect data in this area was based on the fact that the area hosts a mining project (*see Chapter 1*). The research took place in two villages (Ga-Magongoa and Thamahansi) in the vicinity of Ivanplats' Platreef Mining Project between July and September 2016. Noting the strength of case study, Yin (1994) argues that case study allows for in-depth probing of previously unresearched phenomenon. Flyvbjerg (2001:82) concurs that a case study gives the researcher an advantage to "close in" on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold. But some scholars like Gable (1994) have criticized case study designs for not allowing researchers to make general conclusions.

Be that as it may, the approach enabled the researcher to go into study context to examine the manner and extent to which youth participate in mine-driven community development in great depth. The Mokopane Traditional Authority Area gave me an opportunity to understand the research problem from multiple perspectives through sustained contact with my research participants. As described by Amaratunga *et al.* (2002) case study research is a heterogeneous activity that covers a range of research methods and techniques. The heterogeneity of this approach was vital in ensuring that the weakness in each single data collection method was compensated by the counter-balancing strengths of other methods as argued by Amaratunga *et al.* (2002).

Besides, case study approach did not only eliminate weaknesses in data collection methods, it also increased trustworthiness of data. It allowed the researcher to cross-check and validates the data to avoid inconsistencies. Simply put, the researcher adopted case study approach to enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings. The section below describes and explains research data collection tools for this study; that is focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, observations and analysis of documents.

3.4.1.1. Focus group discussions

According to Kitzinger (1995:299) "focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data". Kitzinger (1995) further argues that group interviews are the quickest and convenient way researchers may use to collect data from several people simultaneously. So in order to get a quick overview of how young people participate and understand their involvement and how their understanding influence the character of their participation in mine-driven community development decisions and activities in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area, the researcher commenced fieldwork data collection with focus group interviews . A total of two focus group discussions were conducted with a purposively selected sample of young people in each village using semi-structured interview schedules.

The groups consisted of not more than ten participants. Having small groups helped the researcher to overcome the challenges of facilitation. In Ga-Magongoa the length of the interview was 2hr 15 minutes while in Tshamahansi it lasted for 2hr 46 minutes. The two

interviews were conducted in Sepedi in neutral locations where everyone felt comfortable. In Tshamahansi the interview took place at a school and in Ga-Magongoa at one of the participants' homes. While the aim was to ensure equal gender representation, the researcher experienced challenges. Some female participants could not avail themselves on the day of the interviews. In Ga-Magongoa the group was made up of seven participants (two males and five females) while in Tshamahansi it was made up of eight participants (five males and three females) who were all members of Tshamahansi Youth Forum. Besides gender imbalances, the researcher was faced with the conundrum of protecting the identities of participants. However, the participants indicated that they did not want to remain anonymous because they knew each other.

Notwithstanding the complexities experienced, focus groups enabled the researcher to gather information about a range of ideas and feelings on a problem under investigation, in particular how youth participate in mine-driven development decisions and activities and the constraints that hinder their participation. Even though Fatemeh (2004:656) argues that focus groups "illuminate the differences in perspective between groups of individuals", in this study provided a shared understanding on the barriers that militate against youth involvement in decision-making process about mining development. To be specific, group interviews enabled the researcher to understand community power structure affects and shapes youth involvement in decision making. During the discussions a tape recorder, with permission of participants, was used to record the interviews. This gave the researcher opportunity to pay full attention on the interaction between the participants without an added pressure of writing down everything they were saying.

3.4.1.2. In-depth semi-structured interviews

According to Boyce and Neale (2006:2) "in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular idea, program, or situation". The researcher deliberately adopted a semi-structured interview schedule to allow myself to be flexible in my approach to different informants while still covering the same data collection (Noor, 2008). Besides, by designing the interview questions in a semi-structured form, the

researcher allowed participants to speak broadly on the issue being investigated while giving himself with a room for further probing.

Following focus group interviews with the local youth, a total of nineteen in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposively selected sample of key informants to supplement the data gathered through focus groups and explore the topic under investigation in great depth. According to Diem and Moyer (2010) key informants are individuals or groups who are knowledgeable on community issues and can provide data that cannot be obtained from ordinary community members. In this study key informants included members of Mokopane Traditional Council including *Kgoši* Kekana, officials from Mogalakwena Local Municipality officials, official from Ivanplats, youth activists, leaders of community-based organisations and elderly people.

For interviews with key informants, the researcher adopted a bottom-up approach and the interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase of the interviews was conducted with community elders and youth activists in their homesteads. The interviews with youth activists allowed the researcher to gain deeper insight into how local power dynamics and power relations hamper youth's participation in mining-led development decision-making and activities. In addition, one-on-one interaction with the activists helped in understanding how youth mobilize their identity and power to overcome their exclusion from mining-led community development. Interviews with community elders on the other hand were worthwhile in enabling the researcher to understand power dynamics within the institutionalized participatory platforms used by powerholders to interact with local residents on issues related to mining operations in their area.

The second phase of the interviews was with local power-holders (the traditional council, officials from the Mogalakwena Local Municipality and an official from Ivanplats) in their offices. Interviews with these institutions enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights and cover some of the gaps that arose during focus group discussions and interviews with elders and youth activists. In particular, these interviews enabled the researcher to understand the model(s) local institutional powerholders adopt to engender youth participation in decision-making about mining operation and local development projects. As with focus groups, a tape recording device was used to record all the interviews to avoid missing some of the important points that could not

be written down and for transcription purposes. Each interview ranged from one to two hours and followed an interview guide that was developed prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

3.4.1.3. Non-participant observation

According to Given (2008:561) non-participant observation "is a relative unobtrusive research strategy for gathering primary data about some aspect of the social world without interacting directly with its participants". During this exercise researcher or researchers avail themselves on the spot, but act purely as an observer (Dewalt *et al.,* 2011:23). To address the limitations of the data gathered through FGIs and in-depth interviews and ensure quality control, the researcher attended a mining dialogue hosted by Oxfam South Africa in Mokopane town.

At this dialogue representatives from different organizations including Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA), Mokopane Interested and Affected Communities Committee (MIACC), Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA) and Kopano Formation Committee (KFC) were all present. Others travelled as far as from Sekhukhune and Mpumalanga to share challenges they face from mining companies in their areas. The main aim of the dialogue was to develop an action plan on how mine-host communities should participate on issues related socio-economic upliftment.

In addition to mining dialogue, with permission from Kgoši Kekana, the researcher attended a traditional court at Mokopane Traditional Council headquarters in Vaaltyn. At this traditional court, *kgoši* together with his council were dealing with community disputes. The role of the researcher during both the mining dialogue and the traditional court was that of an outsider or bystander (non-participant observer). The direct observation of the mining dialogue helped to gain better understanding of the environment in which participants live, their socio-economic living conditions, tensions and how they interrelate with each other. On the other hand, the observation of the traditional court helped to get firsthand information on the hierarchical patterns of interactions and power inequalities embedded in *kgoro* as a cultural space for community participation in decision-making. In particular the observation of the court gave insight into how power is organized in a rural setting and how it influences participation and

non-participation of different social categories in decision making. Throughout this process a note book was used to document events as they were unfolding.

3.4.1.4. Document analysis

Noor (2008) argues that in research documentary evidence is vital in cross-validating information gathered using other strategies because often what people say may be different from what people do. To corroborate data gathered from focus groups, in-depth interviews and observations, the researcher also reviewed and evaluated documents obtained from participants during fieldwork, Ivanplats's SLP, annual and media reports dating back to 2000 when the mine first entered Mokopane area, newspaper articles, minutes of public meetings and letters.

Even though writers like Greenstein (2003) point to the weakness of this data gathering method by arguing that some documents might sometimes not be credible, in this study documents were rich sources of data and therefore played a vital role. To overcome the weaknesses of this exercise, the researcher made sure that data generated from review of documents connect with data gathered through the abovementioned research methods. The analysis of documents was instrumental in helping one dig deep into the history of mining in Mokopane and how Ivanplats' interaction with local communities has changed overtime. Moreover, documents were useful in giving background information on company- community conflict.

3.5. Language and Transcription

Most of the interviews were conducted in Sepedi which is one of the local languages in Mokopane in addition to Xitsonga and IsiNdebele. However, the list of questions on the researcher's interview guide was in English. The researcher's competency in Sepedi allowed him to build trust and rapport with participants fairly easily.[13] More importantly, the linguistic competence allowed the researcher to avoid risks of misinterpretation and minimized the loss of meanings of certain words that sometimes cannot directly be translated in English. Because of this, accurate meanings of words and idiomatic expressions were easily captured.

[13] Sepedi is the researcher's first language.

3.6. Data analysis

Writing about data analysis in research, Pope *et al.* (2000) argue that the analysis qualitative data is one of the most challenging stages of qualitative research methodology. They argue that qualitative research methods generate large amount of textual data that makes analysis laborious. To overcome this challenge, the process of data analysis in this study happened alongside data collection. This allowed for the refining of interview questions and development of new avenues of inquiry (Pope *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, refining questions allowed the researcher to seek relationships between themes that were emerging as the research process was unfolding.

3.6.1. Thematic analysis

Upon completion data collection, all the interviews were transcribed. Afterwards transcription, the researcher went through the process of data reduction in order to closely identify themes and focus on what is meaningful (Fatemeh, 2004). The breakdown of data into manageable portions involved listening to interview recordings and reading through the interview responses and observational field notes many times to ensure that important information was not ignored. As Huberman and Miles (2002:313) argue, this time consuming and labour intensive process does not only allow an analyst to gain an overview of the richness, depth and diversity of the data, but also helps to identify patterns and themes that can be grouped together to help answer the research questions.

After the exhausting processes of familiarization, the researcher was able extract relevant opinions and perception from the raw data. The opinions and perceptions were then pieced together into common themes relevant to the to the research questions. After grouping the data into themes, one then started to draw relationships between themes using different highlighters. The key relationships that appeared were connected back to the research questions and became essential in writing up the findings of this study. In this study the richness of the data gathered during fieldwork is held onto through the use research participants' original words.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Before the commencement of this study, ethical clearance was sought from Wits University's Ethics Committee. So throughout the study I upheld high ethical standards to ensure that the rights of research participants are respected and protected. Prior to commencement of each interview, the researcher verbally re-explained the purpose of the study and the overall procedure to each individual participant as stated in the information sheet. The information sheets in some cases were translated in Sepedi to allow participants who did not understand English to make an informed decision about taking part in the study. Afterwards, the researcher sought written informed consent of the interview by issuing consent forms which all the participants willingly signed (*see Appendix for the consent forms*).

All the participants were given right to decline to participate or withdraw from the research process at any given time without explanation. All those who participated did so voluntarily and did not demand any form of payment from the researcher. During the study participants were assured that all data obtained from them would be kept strictly confidential to ensure that it is safe from any unauthorized access. All participants were asked if they would like their identities and responses to be treated as anonymous in the research report. And all of them except those from institutions did not want their names to be revealed. The researcher has therefore preserved the privacy of participants by anonymizing all the information collected from them.

3.8. Limitations

According to Yin (1994) it is common for researchers to encounter problems when conducting the whole processes of data collection. This study was not immune to limitations. As indicated earlier in the section about gaining access to the research site, attempts to interview *mantona* from the two chosen study villages were unsuccessful. Interviews with these leaders could have allowed the researcher to understand the role the leaders play in arranging and convening public participation meetings in their communities. In addition, the researcher encountered access barrier in my attempts to secure interviews with the officials from government. Emails were sent

to the relevant people in the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) which responsible for youth policy in South Africa, but there was no reply. The emails were followed by number of phone calls that went unanswered. Similar problems were encountered with the Department of Mineral Resources in Pretoria. Nothing fruitful came out of the numerous email exchanges between the researcher and people from the department's communication directorate.

3.9. Conclusion

The chapter has provided a detailed description and discussion of how the whole research process was conducted. It discussed the qualitative research methodology and the data collection tools that were used during fieldwork. The chapter has also given a detailed description of the two chosen study villages – Ga-Magongoa and Tshamahansi - and their location within the MTA area. Furthermore, in this chapter the researcher has also described how participants were identified and challenges that the researcher encountered during fieldwork. The chapter has moreover shown how the researcher dealt with ethical issues during fieldwork. In the next chapter, the methods and techniques for data collection and analysis are discussed. Chapter 4 presents, analyse and discuss the research findings based on research conducted in the MTA area.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This important chapter focuses on the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area to examine how the structure of power at the local level shapes and influences the character of youth participation in mining-led community development decisions and activities. This chapter presents the key empirical findings that emerged from an analysis of detailed ethnographic data collected from the MTA area. Firstly, drawing from interview data the first section of the chapter looks at the model that local institutional powerholders use to engender local participation in its rural development projects and programmes. Secondly, the chapter shows young people in the MTA area hardly participate in mining-led community development decisions and the distribution of the mining benefits by discussing the key constraints that militate against youth involvement in decision-making regarding mining operation in the Mokopane area. Thirdly, the chapter reports on the various strategies/tactics that young people employ to overcome their structural exclusion from mining-led development. Finally, the chapter discusses the key empirical findings of the study through the Power Cube lens and in conjunction with the literature.

4.2. Engendering participation

As discussed in the preceding chapters, in terms of the MPRDA (Act 28 of 2002) holders of a mining right are expected to contribute towards the socio-economic development of the areas in which they operate. The results of this study indicate that after receiving its mining license in May 2014, Platreef mine has been making special efforts to contribute towards the socio-economic development of MTA communities adjacent to its Platreef operation through the implementation of SLP projects (Ivanplats, 2016) with the main focus being on poverty reduction, job creation, basic infrastructure development, skills development and training.



Image 2: Public toilets built by Ivanplats next to Ga-Magongoa football ground (Popopo Mohlala 2016)

It was discovered that the mining company uses a top-down mode of engagement to facilitate interaction with local residents about mining development. For example, evidence from interviews conducted with local youth revealed that when initiating local participation in its rural development projects and activities, Ivanplats followed a traditional protocol which involves sidestepping community members and engaging directly with the traditional power structures. This was confirmed by the official from Ivanplats when she said:

> "To promote local participation, most of the time we would go to the traditional council. For instance we would write to say Magongoa traditional council, can we please see your people on heritage mitigation, and then they would write back to us to say come on Sunday. The headmen would then notify the community that on this date Platreef would be here to meet with you. We would then go to their weekly *kgoro* meetings to talk to community members. That's one option that we have" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

It is obvious from this excerpt that the reason behind the adoption of this top-down method of engagement was because the Platreef Mining Project is undertaken within local communities where respect for hierarchical authority is of paramount importance. This was confirmed by the mine official who argued it was imperative that they approach traditional leaders because development activities cannot be delivered without the approval of traditional power structures which are the custodians of land in rural areas:

> "[We] directly approached the chief because we are in a rural environment where the governance structure is the institution of traditional leadership and the municipality. Even though we do sometimes work with the municipality by briefing the ward councillors of the affected villages about the development programmes, we use *kgoši* and *mantona* to facilitate and convene public participation meetings. Like I said, overall the governance structure on the ground level is traditional leadership" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

These sentiments were echoed by members of the Mokopane Traditional Council in an interview in which *Kgoši* L.V Kekana was also present. They pointed out that it is a customary protocol that when investors enter traditional land, they must first liaise with traditional power structures as custodians of land, custom and cultural values to get their consent before they could decide to engage with their subjects at a village level:

> "It is people who come to me [*kgoši*] with development ideas and they ask if I may grant access to a part of my village for them to realize that development. The *kgoši* will write you [the investor] a letter that you will take with you to the appointed representative – that being the *ntona* – in the area of interest to confirm that you have presented yourself before *mošate*. You will then be presented to the village a mass meeting where you will get a chance to address any concern or hopes they might have" (Interview, Mokopane Traditional Council. 15/09/2016)

Despite the above, many of the youth who participated in this study found the decision by the mine company to primarily work with traditional leaders problematic. They pointed out that this approach reinforced the existing power structures as it empowers traditional leaders to exercise

dominance over young people. For example, in a group interview in Tshamahansi one youth argued:

> "It is this procedure of mining houses approaching the traditional authorities upon arrival in communities which is the problem. The traditional council members are convinced that this land belongs to them. They tell you the mining representatives came to them and not to us [young people] for negotiations…" (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

Criticizing the procedure, another participant said:

> "I have a problem with their chosen way of engaging with community members because they went to the *mantona*, let's say for example Matjeke [one of the headmen in Tshamahansi] and they got the buy in from those people. If the influential people agreed to their plans, there was nothing that ordinary community member could do to stop them…" (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

Officials at the MLM also raised concern regarding the manner in which the company fosters local participation. They argued that mining companies operating in their area overlook the larger community and only consult with traditional leaders instead of consulting with different constituencies or social groups within the broader local community:

> "Regarding the development of our area, the challenge that we have is that when mining companies arrive in this are they liaise directly with traditional authorities. I am sorry to say this but those people are very greedy and want all sorts of things to be given to them as some sort of tribute. They sign things without the communities they serve…" (Interview, Mogalakwena Municipality. 26/08/2016)

The evidence presented in this section illustrates how the success of participatory process in the MTA area is dependent on the identification of community leadership. But what structures do local institutional powerholders use to engender participation in decision-making? The section below addresses this question.

4.3. Local participation

4.3.1. Community mining committees

This study found that when Ivanplats first entered Mokopane in 2000, it requested *kgoši* and his *mantona* from all the mining-affected villages to elect committee members to act as community representatives in all the interaction between the company and local communities. The decision according to some of the interviewees was motivated by the fact that it was going to be practically impossible to involve all the local residents of Mokopane in decision-making. Nevertheless, interview data revealed that the committees were not a true reflection of the Mokopane population as they lacked youth representation. According to youth participants the committees were dominated by the community elders who also doubled as traditional council members together with *mantona*.

Furthermore, it was found that the role of the committees was to attend meetings with the mine and then convene mass community meetings to report back. In spite of this, evidence from the ground suggests that this process of engagement was never open and transparent. This suggests that young people did not know what was going on and how decisions that affect them were being made. Local leaders were basically arbitrarily taking decisions about local economic development issues that affect young people without their involvement. During a group interview in Tshamahansi one youth who was once a secretary of the collective traditional council that was coordinating the affairs of the three *mantona* under a single umbrella argued:

> "They meet with the mine officials without the knowledge and blessings of the community and discuss things we know nothing of in our name. This affects our employment opportunities as the youth since the mine policy on engagement with communities is reactionary" (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

Furthermore, the youth pointed out that mining committee members and traditional leaders were conflicted because they were receiving monthly stipend from the mining company:

> "It is an open secret that the mining committee and our *mantona* receive monthly payment from the mine. The mine makes available R30 000 for them every month

> and it is shared among these committee members" (Youth Interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

The issue of monthly payment also came out strongly in Ga-Magongoa where one youth activist said:

> "All this money from the mining company goes straight into their private pockets in the name of the community on whose behalf they leased out their communal land to the mining company" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28.07.2016)

This presupposes that Platreef exercised its financial power to ensure that the actions of the local leaders undermined the interests of the people they claimed to represent. The engagement process was manipulated by the institutional powerholders to skew decisions in their favour. Consequently, many young people in the study area hardly considered the mine committees as legitimate community representatives. These committees pursued narrow interests which were inimical to the welfare of young people. In Tshamahansi some of young people accused their local leaders of being old, susceptible to corrupt practices and out of touch with the modern way of doing things:

> "They are out of touch with the way things are done and the unscrupulous nature of the modern business models. Most of the people who double up as the traditional council and mining committee are forty years and older. Honestly, these people have come to the night of their day and don't know anything their children want. We are the ones who will be living in the future they are deciding. I don't believe there is anyone who has articulated the voice of the youth in those committees on mining. These old people are comfortable with whatever kickbacks that they get from the mine"." (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

Arguably, it was always going to be impossible for the committee members to represent the interests of the communities while they were materially beholden to the company. The interview data revealed a growing youth discontent with their underrepresentation in community decision-making bodies. For instance, in Tshamahansi some of the youth argued that the institution of

traditional leadership must entirely be phased out because it is driven by greed instead of the will of the people:

> "I think traditional leadership should be phased out entirely. They are taking us nowhere. They come from relatively poor backgrounds themselves just like us but they have that added feeling of entitlement to authority and power over others." (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

The above excerpt shows that young people have lost trust in traditional leadership structures which are patriarchal and privilege seniority.

4.3.2. Public meetings

Besides engaging the surrounding communities through representatives, the study has found that Ivanplats has also been engaging regularly with local residents through regular public participation meetings arranged by traditional leaders. According to the respondents, as a result of *mantona*'s involvement most of the time the mine would use *kgoro* as a platform to inform communities about the programmes and services it wanted to bring. Evidence from this research suggests that that the platform of *kgoro* as a key decision-making space was hardly open to a large number young people. This participatory arena did not allow many young people in Mokopane to have a say in decisions that affect their lives. In an interview, the mine official revealed that they chose to engage communities through the customary platform of *kgoro* because it is the most cost effective model for the mine. The use of traditional authority community gatherings (*kgoro*) also allows the mine to interact with members of the community on its own terms and to exert influence in decision making:

> "…when we go to the *kgoro* I do not hire a tent. They [community members] have their own sitting arrangement. So I just come with my pamphlets or whatever and talk to people. But the challenge is, when I am going to the public venues to accommodate people who do not go to a *kgoro*, I must hire a tent and PA [public address] system. One method that works for us is going to *dikgoro* because there is discipline and order and you are able to express your views without any disruption. During decision-making, we are not hung up on people

> agreeing with us all the time. In a *kgoro* setup even when they don't agree with what you are saying, they would disagree in a civil manner. But you would get the message loud and clear that these people are not agreeing with us on points A, B and C" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

In spite of the above, interviews with young people revealed a growing dissatisfaction regarding the non-neutrality of *kgoro* as a participatory space. In both villages young people argued that the existing power relations, such as the dominance of community elders within this key decision-making space became major hindrance to youth involvement in decision-making.[14]

Meetings at "neutral venues"

As a result of growing concern about the effectiveness of *kgoro* as democratic space for youth participation, interviews conducted with mine officials revealed that Ivanplats was pushed by local youth and community activists to review its engagement process. The local youth sought to widen participation beyond the conventional participatory arena like the *kgoro*. Their main aim was to allow local people especially the youth to play a more active role in community-level decision-making about mining operation in their area. In response to the demand, in November 2014 the company decided to move meetings from village wards to public spaces to allow young people to express themselves freely. It was found that meetings between Ivanplats and Ga-Magongoa residents were moved from *kgoro* to the open space within the mine perimeter.

[14] This finding is explored in detail in the section on constraints to effective youth participation



Image 3: A tree where public participation meetings used to take place inside the perimeter of the active mine development site (Source: Popopo Mohlala 2016)

In discussing how they went about opening up spaces for participation, the mine official interviewed during this study reported that they would announce to stakeholders by putting an advert in the *Bosveld* local newspaper and distributing pamphlets stating the day they would visit a particular village:

> "When we go to a neutral venue [to engage with local residents] we would disseminate information about the meetings through the media. Sometimes we would distribute pamphlets or even put an advert in a local paper like Bosveld to say on such and such a date we are coming to this particular community for heritage mitigation or whatever process that we would be working on. Then we go and put a tent in a village and call the people and have a meeting" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

However, unlike meetings at *kgoro* where villagers would not mix with residents from other villages, information from the interviews suggests that Ga-Magongoa residents had to mix with

people from Kgobudi village.[15] And this, according to youth participants created a huge contestation between villagers who would compete for influence and attention. It was also established that other public meetings were also held at Mmadikana sport ground next to the Mokopane Traditional Council Offices in Vaaltyn village. In Tshamahansi participatory meetings were also held at the sport grounds. In spite of Ivanplats' efforts to create conditions for the voiceless and powerless to form part of the mine-community engagements, evidence from interviews with youth revealed a number of constraints that militated against youth involvement in decision making. These constraints will be explored in great depth latter in the following sections.

4.4. Mining benefits for the youth

Skills Development Programme (SDP)

As part of their way of promoting youth participation in mining-led community, Ivanplats has established a cadet training programme to equip local population neighbouring its operation with educational skills that will enhance their employability. According to Ivanplats' (2016) community commitment scorecard[16] the company has managed to train over 300 people in portable skills like plumbing, electrical engineering, carpentry, bricklaying, etc. Despite this, it emerged that this human capital investment is failing to meet the needs of young people.

During the study youth participants expressed their misgivings about this capacity building programme. They were concerned that the programme was not equipping young people eager to work in the mine with core skills that will help them secure employment with the mine. As a result, there was a widespread belief that the training programme was just "a staged exercise to appease the outside world" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016). Lambasting the programme, one participant said:

[15] Kgobudi is one of the mining-affected villages
[16] Scorecard refers to an annual reporting matrix submitted by mining companies in respect of the BBBEE Charter for the South African Mining and Minerals industry (Mining Charter)

> "I want them to train us with useful skills. What is currently going on at Masodi is hardly sincere imparting of skills to the youth. The education must cater to modern demands and guarantee graduates an edge in the labour market" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

They further claimed that people who participated in the programme are still waiting for their graduation certificates:

> "Those courses they are offering now it is best we not speak of them as such because our brothers and sisters who have taken part tell us discouraging tales. They are only given slips after which they themselves are supposed to foot the bill to complete their courses elsewhere. Without that, they do not get their certificates. When they speak in the media it sounds as if they are doing this great thing for us but that is far from the truth" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

The above paragraphs reveal that the widespread exclusion of the youth from participatory decision-making processes is an enduring feature of local governance structures. Youth exclusion is further exacerbated by the failure of mining-led community development programmes to be sensitive to pre-existing power imbalances and contestations. Mining communities in the platinum belt are plagued by high rates of unemployment especially amongst young people. In the case of Mokopane, the failure of mining-led development programmes to be more inclusive and participatory is worsening the economic conditions many youth from impoverished backgrounds.

Scholarships and bursaries

In addition to SDP, information gathered during the study reveals that Ivanplats was also offering bursaries to academically inclined local youth to further their studies in institutions of higher learning. However, the overwhelming majority of young people interviewed during the study argued that majority of academically deserving youth from the host villages were not benefiting from the initiative. For instance, youth in Tshamahansi revealed during interviews that

they have been applying for the bursary scheme without any success. In Ga-Magongoa there was a perception that the bursaries are accessible to those who their relatives work for the mine:

> "They are also going around advertising their tertiary education bursary opportunities. There is an unlikely chance that one can get that bursary if they don't have relatives working at Platreef. Most of the young people whom I know personally, who are recipients of those bursaries are related to people working in the mine. When they talk about opportunities publicly, it is just playing into the hopes parents that indeed the mine is doing something for their children" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2017)

From this excerpt it is clear that the bursary scheme is being used to improve the company's reputation instead of benefitting deserving local youth who want to further their studies. During the study an elderly woman from Ga-Magongoa also spoke about her son who was expelled from university while pursuing studies in engineering due to lack of funding. She said:

> "Two of my children passed Grade 12 convincingly enough to qualify for bursaries but they did not receive them. We have this Platreef here but it is not helping in any way, hence I don't see any use with their so-called bursary scheme, I don't even know if really the bursaries they speak of actually exist" (Interview, Ga-Magongoa. 17/08/2016)

During fieldwork the researcher came into contact with the student who was expelled from university. He was working for one of the local stores to put food on the table. In an informal conversation, the young man spoke at length about how his situation was exerting a tremendous pressure on his family. He indicated that his single mother of five could not afford to take him back to university. Notwithstanding Ivanplats' efforts to contribute towards the development of human capital, the inaccessibility of its bursaries is diminishing the hopes young people who had high expectations of benefiting from the massive mining investment in their community.

Educational Exchange Programme

According to the mine official who was interviewed during the study, Ivanhoe Mines Limited (Ivanplats' mother company) has facilitated a partnership between University of Limpopo and Laurentian University in Canada to create mechanized mining skills pool in Limpopo Province. This is part of the broader initiative of providing local youth with opportunities in mining-driven development. Explaining the purpose of the educational collaboration, the mine official said:

> "The purpose of the partnership is to help the University of Limpopo to develop their geology department, because we have all these mines mushrooming in this province but we don't have a proper geology department at that university. We as a company have taken it upon ourselves to help them do that by buying laboratory equipment that will make their geology department meet the required standard" (Interview with Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

The mine official added that the main goal of this educational investment is to bridge the skills gap and enhance youth employability in the local communities and the country at large. It emerged during the study that two students from the University of Limpopo (UL) are doing postgraduate studies at Laurentian University. According to the company official in 2017 they will be sending two candidates from their company to pursue Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) studies in Canada.

While the educational collaboration is aimed at equipping young people with skills required to contribute to local development, it was found that young people were not aware of this this capacity building programme. This was also confirmed by the mine officials in an interview when she indicated that young people in Mokopane are still short of details because the company is still developing communication material which will help to disseminate information about educational opportunities available through the mine (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016). This finding suggests that local youth are excluded from the programme because they lack information. In this sense, it can be argued that the programme is failing to capacitate rural youth to engage in mining-led local economic development.

Entrepreneurship Training Programme

Another method of involvement that Ivanplats was found to be using to promote youth participation in its local economic development activities is a youth-targeted entrepreneurship training programme. It was established that the company's enterprise and supplier development department has initiated a ten month youth development programme to assist young entrepreneurs from its surrounding communities with basic entrepreneurial skills. As reported in Ivanplats (2016) Community Commitment Scorecard the main aim of the programme is to help young people improve their livelihoods through enterprise development. This will equip young people with alternative skills instead of being solely dependent on the mine for jobs.

Evidence from the ground suggests that only ten young people were participating in this youth-targeted intervention programme. Interviews with some of the youth who were part of the programme suggest that the intervention is creating positive change in their lives. For example one youth participants explained:

> "Truly speaking the programme has been empowering. My involvement in it has helped me develop new business skills and significantly improved my standard of living. I have established my own business" (Interview, Tshamahansi. 01/09/2016).

It is clear from this reply that the intervention is enabling the marginalised youth to actively participate in the economy. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the vast majority of young people in Mokopane continue to find themselves at the margins of large-scale mining investment in their area because this opportunity remains beyond their reach.

4.5. Constraints to meaningful youth engagement

It emerged during the study that young people in Mokopane faced certain constraints in their attempt to effectively participate in mining-led community development decision-making processes and programmes. This section examines in great depth the constraints/barriers that affected youth participation.

4.5.1. Geographical locations of the meetings

This seemed to be true in Mokopane villages where the use of village courtyard (*kgoro*) as an official space of engagement and lack of transfer to power from community elders to young people constrained youth participation in decision making. During fieldwork majority of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with Ivanplats's strategic approach to community engagement, in particular the engagement through regular community meetings at *dikgoro* which were not youth-friendly. A critical challenge for the youth was that even though *dikgoro* in Mokopane are inclusive of different age groups, the spaces were hardly open to young people who wanted take part in decision-making.

In both villages youth participants argued that even though they wanted to exercise their agency during meetings where issues about mining development were discussed, participation in decision-making was limited to adult members of the community. Thus, youth were confined to the position of spectator. In Ga-Magongoa young people relayed stories about how during meetings traditional leaders and community elders would invoke their seniority to prevent young people from airing their views and exerting their influence on decision-making:

> "That space is not inclusive at all. If you are young, then you leave the elders to deliberate over issues. That is the overwhelming perception. If you try to conscientise them on an issue, they start demeaning your upbringing and engage in such other petty coercive tactics. If you raise your hand to be heard, they will not afford you a chance" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

Even more troubling for the youth was that even their own parents would thwart their attempts to play active part in decisions that affect their lives:

> "If we dared raised our hands to offer input, we would be told that we don't you deserve to say a thing. We were even oppressed by our own parents who were in the dark and perhaps they wanted to appease their leader… so we found it hard to understand their behaviour" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

This excerpt clearly spotlights the hierarchical nature of *kgoro* as an official space of engagement. It is obvious that power in the communities lie solely with adults and community

leaders and their presence during meetings where issues related to mining are discussed affect the ability of young people to exercise voice during decision-making. It may therefore be argued that traditional leaders and community elders fail to transfer their power to young people to enable them to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect them. As a result of the discrimination during decision-making, youth were of the view it was inappropriate for the mine to use *kgoro* as a key decision-making space or as an official space of engagement:

> "I don't believe it was a neutral ground from which you could hold meetings of such a nature. *Kgorong* is a place where traditional court is held to resolve community matters" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

Furthermore, the youth detailed their concerns about the openness and transparency of meetings at *kgoro.* They argued that sometimes mine officials and traditional leaders would take decisions at the higher level and thereafter impose them on the community. A young activist from Ga-Magongoa had this to say:

> "With Ivanplats, there were already youth elements who were not happy from the onset with how they seemed to throw their weight around, which signaled whatever talks they held with us were a mere formality and the decisions already been ratified by the chief and his aides. *Kgoro* in that wasn't a space where those allegations could be shared because conveners are the accused. It was a mistake for the mine to hold such meetings there" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

The dissatisfaction with *kgoro* was confirmed by one of the mine officials in an interview wherein she revealed that there was a call in the villages about meetings taking place in an inclusive space:

> "…we often get criticized for going to *dikgoro* as you know in the villages there are those who go to *dikgoro* and those who don't go. So we get criticized that sometimes you cannot always go to *dikgoro*, you also need to go to neutral venues so that anybody can come" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

It is obvious from the above statements that during scooping the mine officials failed to take proactive steps to check the adequacy of *dikgoro* as official space of engagement. Put

in simple language, the mine failed to recognize power dynamics during participatory decision-making.

4.5.2. Intimidation and threats

Furthermore interviewees in both villages claimed that during meetings traditional leaders and community elders would also intimidate and threaten young people who seemed to be outspoken during decision-making. According to one youth activist who had attended most of the meetings in both Ga-Magongoa and Tshamahansi, although there was burning desire on the side of the youth to get involved in decision making, local chiefs would intimidate and threaten them:

> "Young people were scared to ask questions because traditional leaders were present at that meeting. They [chiefs] were threatening those who were asking valid and challenging questions. They would ask who are you and why are you asking those kind of questions." (Interview, Youth activist. 13/08/2016)

Similar stories were told in Tshamahansi where local power holders could not open a platform for youth to ask sensitive questions because they were seen as disrespectful and troublesome.

> "As young people we do demand to have a say in decision-making processes but we are not being listened to. When you ask sensitive questions, traditional council expels you from the meeting. I believe there should be an open dialogue where sensitive questions can be asked. Most of our leaders are old and they will not be here in years to come" (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

From such responses, it evident that one of the root causes of youth marginalisation in the rural communities is the unequal power relationships. Clearly young people in Mokopane find themselves in cultural situations that prevent them from assuming responsibilities as active citizens. They do not enjoy the same power, voice and social status as adults during decision-making.

4.5.3. Timing of the meetings

In Tshamahansi young people argued that their participation was constrained by the timing of the meetings. They reported that Platreef Resources officials and the traditional leaders would deliberately hold meetings during school hours when youth could not attend:

> "These mining houses used to have meetings with our parents during school hours knowing very well that inquisitive minds would not be present" (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

4.5.4. Unavailability of transport and composition of the meetings

As indicated earlier, new spaces for citizen participation were created after dissatisfaction was expressed about the use of *dikgoro*. Many of the youth and elders who were interviewed reported that they were happy with the decision by Ivanplats to move meetings to neutral venues. They argued that while they saw neutral venues as an avenue for the marginalised to have a greater say during participatory decision-making, they however did not anticipate that the location and composition of the meetings would also hamper their participation. In a focus group discussion in Ga-Magongoa, the youth indicated that the locations of the meetings were not accessible to them because of transport:

> "Now, because the new venues are at some distance away from the village, especially the *mošate* venue, there was transport organised to ferry community members to those venues. The person in charge of handling the transportation of people was close to those at *kgorong* (*ntona*'s place) and would deliberately leave behind young people who were known to be informed and outspoken about their rights as resident during decision-making. The pickup spots where people boarded the vehicles were manned by proponents of Platreef Resources to disadvantage the people who were aware of the abuse of to silence those who outspoken" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

Some of the youth went even further to argue that, even though they were happy with the mine's decision to allow people to take part in decisions that affect their lives in an open platform, it was wrong for the mine to engage them in a setup where they had to mix with people from other villages. They argued that it became difficult for them to influence decision making in a mixed setup:

> "The meetings were not a success as issues from the different villages would be competing for influence and attention" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

4.5.5. Lack of employment

Lack of employment was identified as one of the factors affecting youth participation in mining. Even though young people in Mokopane expected to benefit economically after Platreef Resources destructed their livelihood when it started sinking son the land where it was their parents' crop farming fields, it emerged during the study that generally young people continue to bear the brunt of poverty and unemployment as there are no income-generating opportunities. None of the youth who participated in this study worked for the mine during the course of the research. In Ga-Magongoa some of the unemployed youth argued:

> "We still live our lives just the way we used to before this mine came to the neighbourhood. The company's big investment is yet to benefit us in terms of employment. We still depend on our domestic worker parents and our grandparents' old age grant as the sources of income in our households" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

Interestingly, respondents in Tshamahansi complained that despite the massive mining investment in their area, they still migrate to cities in search of employment opportunities:

> "Although we have gone to school with the hope of one day working for the mine, we still have to go all the way to Polokwane [the capital city of Limpopo Province] for job opportunities. This estranges some of us from the exciting prospects of the local economy. I want to be near my place of employment and

> my family and for that to happen the mine must employ me" (Youth interview, Tshamahansi. 05/08/2016)

Others argued that even when they get employed they are only offered dead-end/menial jobs with no progression into permanent jobs:

> "The problem we have with the mine [Platreef] is that residents of nearby villages are only being used as expendable, temporary labour... When the real job opportunities come up, we see a lot of people who do not reside in the affected villages win those occupations" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

The responses by youth reflect the high expectations that unemployed youth had about mining. It is apparent youth in both villages saw mining as an avenue to create jobs and take them out of the poverty cycle. In this way the lack of livelihood opportunities suggests that the mine is failing to create opportunities for the youth to engage in mining and earn a living. But, information gathered during fieldwork suggests that the lack of opportunities is in stark contrast to the promises made by the mine during scooping. It was reported that the mine promised to prioritize local labour in its recruitment strategy. Nevertheless, this was dismissed by the mine official in an interview when she said:

> "They [youth] want permanent employment but we don't have permanent jobs. Note that we are still building the mine. For as long as we are still building the mine, the nature of the jobs would be temporary. It is only when we get to the production that we will start having what you call permanent jobs" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

While it is understandable that during construction few job opportunities are created, on the other hand, it young people will continue to face exclusion in terms of labour market participation even when the mine becomes fully operational. Ivanplats' (2013:81) Social and Labour Plan (SLP) clearly states that "the mine intends to employ 2116 people at height of production in 2021". This small smaller workforce will largely be a result of mechanization which leads to reduction in employment.

But, be that as it may, some the youth argued that the root cause of their exclusion from economic opportunities was their exclusion from decision-making during the formulation of the SLP. They claimed that Ivanplats never approached young people to discuss the social and economic implications of its presence in the community, particularly its plan on how it will absorb local labour during the construction and mining phases. As a result, youth strongly claimed that had they been consulted about their needs and concerns, things would have turned out different:

> "If the consultation process had happened, we could have picked up any trickery on the part of the mine to endorse the tribal resolution which gave the document [SLP] authority. They wouldn't have submitted it to the DMR and they would be without a mining license as we speak" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

They further stressed that had it happened, consultation "would have been a perfect setting for the tabling of questions like the one the benefits which the mine would be offering for operating in their midst" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016).

4.5.6. Recruitment

Several respondents including young people, community elders and Mogalakwena municipal officials revealed that one of the reasons for low youth participation rate in the labour market is the recruitment strategy used by mining companies operating within their jurisdiction. Even though in an interview with the mine official, she argued that when there are vacancies in the mine the first pot of call is the directly affected villages as per SLP requirement, the youth, community elders and Mogalakwena municipal officials accused the mine of deliberately excluding qualified local youth when they recruit its workforce.

Interviews with municipal officials revealed that mining companies deliberately exclude local residents from employment opportunities by advertising their jobs in papers which are not within the reach of locals:

> "They [mining companies] claim there are no locally qualified people while they advertise their vacancies on national papers which do not have a reach into local communities and not the local paper" (Interview, Mogalakwena Municipality. 26/08/2016)

Young people in Tshamahansi also narrated how they have been excluded from jobs in the mine. They explained that they registered their qualifications on the company Skills and Ability Register (SAR)[17] hoping to get employed but they are never chosen when there are positions in the mine. In a focus group discussion, one youth explained:

> "We are eager to work for the mine and we have uploaded our educational qualifications on their skills database. Whenever we apply we are told that we do not have the required educational qualifications and work skills. That is not true. I know about five engineers from my village who want to work in the mine but they do not get employed" (Interview, Mokopane. 03/09/2016)

4.5.7. Lack of education and work skills

During this study lack of education and skills within the communities were cited as some of the reasons behind exclusion from the jobs available in the mine. For instance, in an interview with the official from Ivanplats, she argued that one of the main reasons for low youth participation rate in their economic opportunities is low levels of education and work skills in the host communities:

> "We are sinking mine shafts and the job requires people with specialised skills. How many people have shaft sinking skills in the surrounding communities? These skills are not available in the communities. We cannot just higher people. It is a dangerous thing and we have to again comply with DMR requirement. If we just sent young people who are not knowledgeable and skilled to sink shafts, and then get injured or die, we would be held liable by the government" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

[17] Ivanplats has collated a skills database on which locals register their CVs.

In Ga-Magongoa, very few of the young people (two out of seven) who took part in the study had completed or passed grade 12. However, the same cannot be said about Tshamahansi where the levels of education were among the participants were relatively high. All the ten participants who took part in the study had completed secondary and tertiary education. But, the challenge was that the skills they possessed did not match those required by the mine company.

4.6. Youth resistance to exclusion

Data gathered during the study suggests that youth have been mobilizing their power using various strategies to counter their exclusion from decision making processes. The section below explores in great detail some of the strategies youth in Mokopane employ to break barriers to their inclusion in participatory decision-making processes.

4.6.1. Disruption of meetings

To get the attention of local powerholders youth in Mokopane have been violently disrupting public participation meetings in their communities. According to participants in 2016 some youth activists have violently disrupted four of the mine-community engagement meetings. Some of the meetings got violent to a point where police had to be called. In Tshamahansi youth respondents argued that they resort to violence because the mine only lends its attention to their voices when they are disruptive. Despite this, evidence from interview with the mine official suggests that when youth violently disrupt meetings, the mine ends up moving meetings back to *dikgoro* which are hardly accessible to local youth.

4.6.2. Involvement in youth groups and grassroots organisations

Group interviews conducted with local youth revealed that many of the youth who feel marginalised from decision-making bodies in Mokopane are members of the youth formations and grassroots organisations that were formed with the aim of ensuring that communities participate in all mining processes in Mokopane and receive maximum benefits from the investment in their area. In 2014 youth from Ga-Magongoa established an organisation called

Magongoa Youth Development Organisation (MAYDO). In similar vein, in Tshamahansi youth exclusion led to the formation of youth participatory forum called Tshamahansi Youth Forum (TYF). When asked to comment about what led to formation of MAYDO, a former MAYDO leader in Ga-Magongoa argued:

> "We realized that nobody took us seriously as the youth during community engagements with the mine officials. The decisions which are taken will affect us and so we felt this organisation would enable young people from different backgrounds, whether in school or already matriculated, absorbed into tertiary institutions or not, academically inclined or not to play active part in decisions that will eventually affect their lives" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

The above excerpt shows that young people in the Mokopane area see themselves as major role-players whose views should be incorporated in mining-led development. It became evident in an interview with young people and the mine official that youth groups at the community level play an instrumental role in opening up new arenas for youth participation beyond the boundaries created by local powerholders. It was found that the mine company has legitimized youth structures in communities where youth have organized themselves. During an interview, the official indicated that engagement between the mine and young has mainly taken place through the youth structures:

> "In communities where young people are organized we do engage regularly with young people. They do invite us sometimes to come out and address their membership in terms of what is available opportunity wise in things like bursaries and other things that matter to them as young people" (Interview, Ivanplats. 01/09/2016)

As it has been highlighted, young people are also members of some of the inclusive grassroots movements. The organisations include Kopano Formation Committee (KFC), Mokopane Interested and Affected Communities Committee (MIACC) and Mogalakwena Residents Association (MRA), Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA). While some community members and even *Kgoši* Kekana labelled these organisations opportunistic and

accused them of misleading the communities, youth participants believed that organisations are the most effective space through which the alienated become fully participative in the affairs of their communities. In Ga-Magongoa one female youth participant who is active in these organisations argued that they have found space to exercise influence on decision making and skew things in their favour:

> "Platreef has come to our land in search of opportunity but we are not benefitting from their activity in our community. We are trying to win them over through engagements with them as Kopano. There are some in the community who are still in the dark but we as the youth of Ga-Magongoa think we have found a vanguard to convey to the mine where we stand" (Youth interview, Ga-Magongoa. 28/07/2016)

The above highlight that the poor state of youth participation in decision-making processes and development activities was a matter of great concern for the youth. Thus it can be argued that the participation of young people in grassroots organisations illustrates a desire on their side to get involved in decision-making on matters that affect their lives.

The study has also found that with the financial and legal assistance of international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), KFC and MIACC have been leading some of the community protests against Ivanplats in their area. But, it was found that the organisations have been doing so without support of the larger community because the turnout of their marches had always been small. Many of the youth who are powerful actors in these organisations indicated that even though organisations create space for participation in the development process, there has not been any meaningful change resulting from their involvement in these organisations. Instead of seeing change, some of the youth reported that they have been receiving death threats from unknown people. A 28 year old KFC member said:

> "We have been receiving death threats from unknown people. There was even an attempt to assassinate two of our comrades. As I am speaking the matter is in police's hands" (Informal interview, Ga-Magongoa. 15/09/2016)

It is clear from the above excerpt that the quest for alternative spaces for participation by the youth in the local communities is not without challenges.

4.7. Discussion of the key findings

Participation in mining-led community development in the Mokopane Area

Although proponents of participation (for example, see Mansuri and Rao, 2013) hold that participation development must be "bottom-up" to reduce power imbalances between the powerful and the powerless, a closer analysis of the study findings suggests that local institutional powerholders in the Mokopane utilize a top-down approach to youth participation in mining-led community development. One important empirical finding that emerges is that Ivanplats uses traditional governance structures as the channel through which it convenes regular meetings with local residents to disseminate information and solicit their views as part of carrying out its community development objectives. The results indicate that decision to channel participation through community power structures was prompted by the fact that the mine operates within an area where respect for customary authority is of paramount importance. This top-down creation of participation is to large extent in accordance with the Local Governance and Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act 177 of 1998) which empowers traditional leaders to play an active role in decision-making of their rural areas.

Section 81 of the abovementioned act provides that traditional leaders must be consulted on decision on any matter that directly affects areas under their jurisdiction (RSA, 1998). These findings are thus much in common with those from other mining contexts on the platinum belt where local chiefs control the interaction between mining companies and local people (Mnwana 2012; Taodzera 2015; Moyo 2012; ActionAid, 2008). As Mnwana (2015a) argues: "Local chiefs, as assumed custodians of communal resources, have become mediators of mineral-led development and mining deals". Furthermore, the top-down model of participation confirms the narrative that when promoting participation, it is vital that one identifies the leadership structure because the initiation and success of community action programs largely on the involvement of leaders (Hasab-Elnaby, 1988). In an area like MTA wherein power rests heavily in the hands of traditional leaders, arguably the top-down mode of engagement indicate how the structure of power at the local level plays a crucial role in controlling how participation is engendered.

Another finding was that Platreef mine, replicated a pattern of community engagement adopted by mining houses in the neighbouring platinum-rich remote community of Mapela (see

ActionAid, 2008; Moyo, 2012 & Farrel *et al.*, 2012; Mnwana *et al*., 2016), and empowered the community leadership to elect or appoint representatives to act on behalf of the community in all the mine-community interactions. This finding is in accordance with Lowe *et al.*'s (1999) contention that sometimes it is impossible to involve the whole community in the planning of local development project.

Ineffective Youth Participation: Power Relations at Play

While advocates of mine-community development underline participation of all socio-economic groups as one of the most crucial elements in community development activities (Banks *et al*., 2013, Garvin *et al*., 2009; Indemudia, 2014, O'Faircheallaigh, 2012, Cronje and Chenga, 2009, Gifford *et al*., 2010), the results of this study show that young people in the Mokopane area are excluded from full participation in mining-led community development. The results draw attention various factors that results in ineffective youth participation in decisions that affect their lives.

For example, the analysis of the company's methods of engagement show how lack of representation in community leadership structures inadvertently affected youth participation in decision-making regarding mining operation in their locality that participation. It was found that community leadership structures which were supposed to ensure effective communication between Ivanplats and communities were dominated by community elders and traditional leaders. The study findings suggest that participation through representation was not open and transparent as it involved financial expectations and corruption.

The study has found that instead of advancing the interests of the larger community, in particular youth, community representatives used their positions and ties with the mining company to push their own interests. As such, these findings support Botes and van Rensburg's (2000:49) assertion that that in development "there is always the danger that decision making at community-level may fall into the hands of a small self-perpetuating clique, which act in its own interest with disregard for the wider community". Drawing from the theoretical framework, Power Cube, the exclusion of young people from the leadership structures suggests that participation was a closed space for young people.

Moreover, the results spotlight how youth fail to participate in decision-making because of how *kgoro* as widely used space for participation function as a site for subordination of young people's voices. While some advocates of youth-adult partnership in development like Mullahey *et al.,* (1999) posit that it is imperative that parents respect ideas, concerns and abilities of young people by establishing partnerships with them in participatory development, the results highlight how young people faced ambivalence from community elders and traditional leaders when they attempted to participate in meetings where issues regarding mining operation in their area were discussed. They indicate that traditional elites threaten and intimidate young people who were outspoken during decision-making. Such kind of behaviour (of powerholders towards young people) illustrate how the spaces (*dikgoro* to be specific) into which young people are invited are shaped by unequal power relationships. More particularly, this elite domination of participation draws attention to the character of power in rural communities endowed with mineral resource. It is crystal clear that decision-making power within *dikgoro* is concentrated in the hands of *mantona* and village elders and they use that visible power to suppress youth voices. This finding support Cornwall's (2002:8) argument that sometimes spaces made available for participation may be discursively bounded to permit only limited citizen involvement, colonizing interaction and stifling dissent.

Studies have shown that by their very nature, *dikgoro* in the Mokopane area as public platforms are dominated by *mantona* and their councils made up of community elders (see Ecekrt *et al.*, 2001). This suggests that the top-down creation of participation serves to deepen the existing unequal power relations. Instead of breaking the power of traditional elites undoubtedly local participation is used to preserve and expand the power of powerful institutions over young people. As such the finding confirms an argument that invited participatory arenas often preserve and expand the power of the status quo rather an opportunity for citizenship and exercise of agency (Panderis 2012; Gaventa 2005; Tsekoura, 2016). But, despite their participation rendered tokenistic by local powerholders, it can also be argued that by availing themselves to meetings amid the structural challenges indicate that young people are not apathetic. Clearly participation in mining-led community development is of considerable importance to young people. They (youth) understand themselves as competent community members who should have control over their futures.

Furthermore, congruent with Evans (2007:702) who found that young people do not have influence in many contexts that they find themselves, the results show that even though local institutional powerholders made efforts to allow young to exercise power and agency in mining-led community development by moving meetings from less open spaces (*dikgoro*) to open space (for example, sport grounds), participation in decision-making continued to be limited for young people. It was found that apart from lack of parental support during meetings, powerholders would also hold meetings during school hours when young people are not available in their communities. Another interesting finding is that the mine decided to hold meetings in afar venues limiting the spaces for youth participation due to a lack of transport. Using the Power Cube approach, these results moreover spotlight how participation in mining-led community development also takes place in closed space.

The social exclusion of youth from participatory spaces also confirms WOSM's (2003:9) assertion that young people sometimes do not participate in decision-making because the structures and processes by which decision making occurs in communities are designed by and for adults. In similar vein, the findings support Hilker and Fraser's (2009:4) argument that sometimes youth are excluded from decision-making because they grow up in communities with rigid, conservative power structures, patronage networks and intergeneration hierarchies which exclude them from participating in decisions that affect their lives.

However, on the other hand, the findings challenge the overly optimistic narrative that in development certain groups are often excluded from participation because they do not see themselves as group that can bring change (see Checkoway *et al*., 2003; Checkoway, 2011 and Cornwall; 2008). It is crystal clear that youth in the context of mining-led local development are marginalised because the company's major modalities for fostering community participation (which are regular community meetings) appear to fail to reform the community power structure to enhance the chances of young people to enter participatory arenas and engage in decision-making as full citizen. For this reason, it can be argued that the results are in contrast to analyses that see participating as a means of sharing power (see Low *et al.*, 1999) and the transformation of the unjust decision-making structures (Gallagher, 2008). They spotlight how participation is about the consolidation of the already-dominant structures of power thereby confirming the widespread contention that community power structure; dictate the level of citizen's participation

in its decision-making and development activities (Evans, 2007; Cobbinah, 2015; Kuponiyi, 2008).

Exclusion from mining benefits

Moreover, as was revealed by other studies (see, for example Mnwana *et al*., 2016), this study also found that youth exclusion in the Mokopane area does not only manifest in social terms, but also in economic terms. The results show that the vast majority of young people in Mokopane are disconnected from most of the local economic opportunities and development services brought by mining in their area. While the recent research does not explicitly highlight why young people find themselves in the periphery, this findings indicate that youth exclusion from decision-making processes is not without consequences. A deep analysis of the results show that youth find themselves in the periphery because local powerholders reached decisions that led to the provision youth-targeted local development programmes without soliciting their views. What one is highlighting here is that, local institutional powerholders promoted local participation in a manner that precluded possibilities to youth engagement decisions that influenced the distribution of economic benefits.

It was discovered that young people did not participate directly in the formulation of SLP which guides the implementation of local economic development initiatives as revealed in the literature review (*Chapter 2*). Findings such as these suggest that the company's youth-targeted local intervention programmes did not come as a result of the needs identified by young people during public participation processes. It is as a result that there is a growing perception among the youth that the implementation of the capacity building programmes is purely a public relations exercise confirming the widespread narrative that CSR and CSI activities in most mining communities are a mere tokenism as discussed previously in *Chapter 5*.

On the other hand, the findings of this study show that mining communities are characterised by a high and growing levels of unemployment among the youth because of low levels of education and work skills in the communities. That being the case, majority of young people still depends on their parents for survival and this affect their transition to adulthood. Findings like this one suggest that the mine is failing to absorb the growing number of young people from the affected

villages because of the mismatch between labour demand and supply in the mining communities. However, as indicated, one can argue that this is a direct consequence of youth exclusion from decision-making processes.

Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter 1, Ivanplats will use a highly mechanized model of mining which required a highly skilled small workforce to operate the machines. Findings such as these thus have much in common with those from mineral-rich communities where young people operate at the margins of formal economy because they lack technical skills that can help them secure jobs in the mine (see Mnwana *et al.,* 2016 and Mensah *et al.,* 2009). Moreover, these findings talk to the widespread economic problem the South African economy and labour market is faced with. As Reddy *et al.*, (2016:87) note the "South African economy and labour market is characterised as one where there is a demand for high skill, but a surplus of low-skilled workers".

With the increasing levels of technology in the mining sector, it can be argued that life for the majority of the uneducated young people who are currently unemployment in the Mokopane area is likely to remain in misery for a very long time, more particularly if the mine fails to create income-generating activities for them. While the findings show that Ivanplats is driving the inclusion of young people in the labour market through youth-targeted local intervention programmes, they also indicate that the interventions are not commensurate with the demands of young people who want to be equipped with skills required by mechanized mining technology. In light of this, one can argue that had efforts been made to increase young people's visibility and voice in decision-making, youth related socio-economic like lack of education and skills taken a centre stage and capacity building programmes which are in line with the needs of young people would have been introduced.

Still on economic participation, the findings of this study to a small extent diverge from the existing scholarly research that attributes lack of opportunities for gainful employment only to skills crisis. In contrast these results indicate that the high rates of unemployment among the youth in the mining villages have to also be seen against the background of the methods the mining company uses to recruit its workforce. The findings clearly show that 'qualified' young people are at the margins of large-scale mining development because the mine recruits people from communities which are not affected by mining operation.

Contest for power and influence

Using the Power Cube Framework, an in-depth analysis of the findings suggests that participation in mining-led community development is not only a claimed and closed space for young people but also a claimed space. While one would expect youth to disengage from the development process, especially owing to continued exclusion from the formal participatory processes and oppression by powerholders, like their counterparts in mining-communities across sub-Saharan Africa, young people in Mokopane do not accept their continued exclusion from the development process. The findings show that young people are mobilizing themselves and participating in civil groups to gain influence and power over mining-led development decisions and benefits. Such actions illustrate Diouf's (2003) assertion that in situations in which young people are excluded from the arenas of power or influence, they form a subcultural group that share some common social characteristics to oppose the existing power structures that marginalize them thereby increasing the voice and power of young people in decision-making.

The findings indicate that civil society groups play vital role in driving youth inclusion in mining-led community development outside the formalized spaces of engagement set by local powerholders. It was revealed that Ivanplats does engage with young in communities where young people have organised themselves to demand attention on issues that matter to them. Taking this into consideration, one can argue that the findings of this research are consistent with the argument that mobilization in participatory practice plays a crucial role in enabling the marginalised and excluded groups to enter and engage in participatory arenas (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Gaventa, 2005).

On the other hand, despite the assertion that exclusion from participatory spaces often "undermines feelings of identity, belonging and self-worth manifesting in powerless…" (Penderis, 2012:10), the quest for inclusion in participatory decision-making by youth challenges WOSM's (2003:9) contention that in many societies young people have been raised to be relatively passive, to not question authority or stand up for their rights. The empirical findings clearly show that exclusion from full participation opens up new arenas for young people to reclaim their democratic right and power in decision-making. Therefore, their insistence to exercise agency and power in the face of power dynamics within institutionalized participatory

spaces suggests that young people recognize themselves as key decision-makers whose should be given space to independently express opinions on issues that significantly affect them.

Another important deduction that can be drawn from the findings is that in as much as youth involvement in action groups provides platform for young people to realize full participation and responds to power imbalances, it also endangers their lives. During the study some of the youth participants alleged that there have been attempts to assassinate some of their colleagues who are active in grassroots resistance against mining. While the research failed to establish the people behind the planned assassinations, this finding exemplifies the violence associated with the struggle for acquisition of power and control over decision-making between young people, community elders and local institutional powerholders in the context mining.

As is the case in many mineral-rich communities across the sub-Saharan Africa (see Chapter 2), this case shows that a contest for youth inclusion in mining-led community development decision-making process also does take a violent form. The analysis of the research findings brings to attention collective violence as one of the tactics marginalised youth use to increase their visibility and voice in participatory development. It was found that through their involvement in civic organisations, the disillusioned youth have been playing a big role in leading violent disruption of community meetings organised by the mine to allow those marginalised from the invited and closed spaces to have a greater say in decision-making.

Drawing from the Power Cube, it can be argued that violence in the mining communities creates new space for young people to voice issues that are of concern to them. It functions as a claimed space in that it enables youth to challenge the structures of power and authority that leaves them in a subordinate position in the whole development process. Therefore, it may be argued that the violent actions by local youth support the dominant argument that when faced with marginalisation from decision making; youth often turn to violence in search of a voice (Ikelegbe, 2005; 2006; Hilker & Fraser, 2009; Ukeje, 2001).

However, in stark contrast to what was found in countries like Nigeria and Sierra Leone (Alao, 2007 and Maconachie, 2014), for instance, where violence has created new spaces for youth in engagement in local development, this case shows draws attention to the complexity of violence as a strategy for inclusion in decision-making. The findings highlight how local institutional

power holders are able to navigate violence by moving meetings back to less open spaces. A possible explanation for this might be the Platreef mine is still under-construction and youth-led has not been extreme like in the Mapela area (see Mnwana *et al.*, 2016 and Amplats, 2016) where violence halted mining operations a few times.

Moreover, even though the implicit argument among scholars (e.g. Hilker and Fraser, 2009; Mensah *et al.*, 2009; Ndaba, 2010; Ikelegbe, 2006; Bush, 2009) is that in a context of widespread youth marginalisation from gainful employment young people indulge in illicit economic activities like small-scale illegal mining, local drugs trade, prostitution to earn a livelihood, this study was unable to show alternative livelihood opportunities for young people. This it can be argued that is largely due to the fact that the mine is not yet fully operational and communities have also not experienced an influx of migrant workers.

Taken together, the responses to structural marginalisation presented in this section illustrate that inasmuch as rural areas characterised by unequal power relationships, power during decision-making is a highly contested subject. It is contested by different social categories that want to emerge winners in decision-making. The mobilization of youth identity and power for inclusion in this case suggests that that power in rural areas that host platinum mines is not only about control over decision-making or how it is exercised by the powerful to prevent people from participating in decision-making process; rather it is also exercised by the excluded groups/powerless to take part in community decision-making processes.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed the findings of the study and has therefore shown that the structure of power in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area influences the character of youth participation in mining-driven community development decisions and activities. In particular, the chapter examined the various methods that local institutional powerholders in the MTA area employ to promote youth participation in achieve their rural development objectives. Through an analysis of focus group discussions and key informant interviews the chapter has drawn attention to has how community leadership in the Mokopane play an important role facilitating and arranging meetings between Ivanplats and local communities to achieve its

development objectives. The chapter also highlighted how the top-down creation of spaces is riddled with power inequalities that inadvertently result in young people being unable to participate as full citizens in the affairs of their communities. Finally, the chapter drew from an analysis of interviews to show how youth exclusion from mining-led local development is opening up new spaces for youth participation outside the formalized spaces created by local institutional powerholders thereby increasing opportunities for youth to exercise power and agency in decision-making and development programmes. The following final chapter draws conclusions by summarizing the objectives, the methodology and the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study is based on an in-depth analysis of empirical data gathered over a period of two months during 2016. The study focused on two rural communities in the vicinity of Ivanplats's Platreef Mining Project, in MTA. Using the Gaventa's Power Cube as primary theoretical tool of analysis the study examined the structure of power at the local level and how it influences the character of youth participation in mining-led community development decisions and activities. The study brings to the fore key issues in relation to local community participation in mining-led community development within peripheral communities. Broadly, these findings also speak to the nature of participatory processes in rural South Africa where communities are often marginalized from key decision making processes

The study closely examined local institutional powerholders in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area, especially the nature of youth participation in community development initiatives. Findings from this research give insights into power dynamics and relations between youth and local institutional powerholders. The study also shows how different social categories in the Mokopane villages close to Ivanplats' Platreef Mining Operation are excluded from key decision making processes. The research also shows how local youth understand their involvement in mining-led community development process and how their understanding shapes and influences the character of their participation. Finally by the research shows the different ways young people in Mokopane respond to and contest the top-down model of participation used by local powerholders to promote youth participation in decision-making processes and activities.

Some of the key findings in this research are the role of traditional leaders in mining-led development programmes. The undemocratic nature of the institution of traditional leaders in South Africa is widely documented. This has wider implications for the nature of development in South Africa's rural communities which are under the authority of traditional leaders. The failure of mining to generate benefits for marginal groups like the youth is also a key finding of this research. Young people constitute the majority of the unemployed populations in rural South Africa. However, mining has not generated enough employment and other economic benefits for the youth in Mokopane. The research also demonstrates that young people have not been passive

victims of exclusionary decision making processes in their communities. Instead, they have actively contested and resisted their marginalization by creating alternative spaces to counter chiefly authority and the powerful mining corporation. This contestation has also included the formation of grassroots organizations and creating alliances as well as other networks to generate support and strengthen their cause. In the following paragraphs I flesh out the key findings of the thesis.

The predominance of the institution of traditional leadership: One of the key empirical findings that emerged from this study is that among the various decision-making structures, the institution of traditional leadership is very important in terms of proximity to local communities. Mining-led community development programmes in rural South Africa are implicated in these local power dynamics. In the MTA area, Ivanplats uses traditional governance structures as a channel through which it creates spaces for youth participation in mining-led community development. The realization of more democratic and inclusive development programmes in rural South Africa is largely dependent on the extent to which local communities are part of decision-making. Their felt needs and aspirations should be at the centre of any development interventions. Yet, this study has shown the predominance of the institution of traditional leadership in decision-making processes limits the extent to which community development programmes are inclusive and democratic. The institution of traditional leadership has largely remained exclusive by privileging the needs of rural elites while the needs of marginal of marginal social groups have not been accorded enough attention. One of the social groups affected by these exclusionary practices is the youth.

Lack of participation in decision-making has largely enabled by post-apartheid legislative developments. Some of the key interventions that came with came with the new democratic dispensation have been key in consolidating the authority of traditional leaders in rural communities. These include the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 (Act 41 of 2003), the Traditional Courts Bill (B15-2008) and Local Governance and Municipal Structures Act 1998 (ACT 177 0F 1998). Instead of creating more democratic spaces for the involvement of local communities in key decisions that affect them various pieces of legislation have consolidated the power of traditional leaders and other rural elites. For instance, the Local

Governance and Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act 177 of 1998) empowers traditional leaders to play an active role in decision-making processes of their rural areas. Section 81 of the abovementioned act provides that traditional leaders must be consulted on decision on any matter that directly affects areas under their jurisdiction (RSA, 1998).

Exclusion of youth from mining benefits: StatsSA (2011) population data shows that youth constitute about 34% of the population in Mogalakwena Local Municipality. This area is characterised by high levels of unemployment and youth are a huge proportion of the unemployed population at 52% (StatsSA, 2011). Despite the fact that the population of the MTA area is comprised of a growing cohort of young people, development projects in mining communities have not been inclusive in terms of accommodating the needs of the youth. Young people in the MTA area are the most affected in terms of the exclusion from the labour market and this is reflected the unemployment statistics. They find themselves in an inferior situation socially, culturally and economically because they are rarely given the opportunities to equitably participate in decision that affect their lives.

The study has shown that irrespective of the massive mining investment in their area, the vast majority of young people in the MTA area are still trapped in poverty and unemployment because most of the mining benefits remain beyond their reach. Drawing from an analysis of interviews conducted with local youth, the study revealed that local institutional powerholders are failing to equip young people with technical skills that can enable them to take advantage of the employment opportunities available in the mine.

Alternative spaces for youth participation: Findings from this research seem to confirm the widespread argument often expressed by scholars on participation in South Africa (see Sinwell, 2009; Miraftab & Wills, 2005; Katsaura, 2015) that when formal participatory spaces exclude their needs and priorities, citizens sometimes employ various strategies to exert influence and power over the development process. In the Mokopane communities the constrained democratic space in rural politics has adversely affected youth participation in mining-led community programmes. However, the study has shown that youth have not passively endured marginalisation from process of community participation in corporate decision making and distribution of mineral wealth. The youth in the MTA area are resisting their systematic exclusion from the development process and thus are challenging the power of traditional elites.

Young people actively participate in grassroots organisation and cultivate networks with NGOs in their quest to circumvent the often undemocratic traditional leadership structures. The quest for alternative spaces of participation by the youth shows that young people are not merely passive but have agency and capacity to contest for more democratic decision-making processes.

Main contributions of the study and recommendations

This detailed ethnographic study has theoretically contributed towards a better understanding of the emerging empirical challenges and social dimensions of rural-based platinum mining industry in South Africa. The study has uncovered some major complex challenges within mining communities that reduce the space in which youth voices are heard during participatory decision-making. The study brings to the fore the wide range of socio-economic and political influences that are playing out in an uneven way between different social categories gunning to have influence over development decision and the distribution of mineral wealth. Inasmuch as the structure of power at the local level affects the ability of certain citizens to enter participatory arenas to exercise their voice (Cornwall, 2004; Gaventa, 2004); this case has provided insights into the emerging power shifts within platinum-rich rural communities.

Through Power Cube lens, the study has demonstrated that power in mining-led community development does not always serve a purpose of preventing certain social categories from taking part in decision making, rather creates conditions for the powerless to reduce the power imbalance between them and the powerful. This study had revealed how participation in mining-led development in South Africa entails a complex interplay of different dynamics of power. Thus theoretically, the study has managed to highlight that participation is not always entail a sharing of power as it results in winners and losers.

Finally, findings from this study contribute to the body of evidence which policy makers may draw on to formulate interventions in relation to the reform of rural power structures. The reform of rural power structures is priority area for policy intervention since it is integral to improving the social and economic well-being of young people living in communities that host large-scale platinum mines. What is needed, the study suggests, is for mining companies or implementers of local economic development projects to stop treating mining communities as homogenous

entities. More attention needs to be paid to power dynamics within the platforms they use to engender community participation. Moreover, mining companies should consider engaging youth as a standalone social category when promoting public participation instead of subsuming their participation under their larger communities. Addressing power imbalances or engaging youth as standalone social category, (one believes) will open space for young people to equitably participate in decision-making and identify issues that affect and concern them. Over and above all, this move will eventually quell abate the intergenerational conflict within the communities and therefore create a cohesive society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information sheet for interviews

School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa Enquiries: **GEOGRAPHY:** TEL: +27 11 717-6503 FAX: +27 086 651 6366
ARCHAEOLOGY: TEL: +27 11 717-6045 FAX: +27 086 651 6366 http://www.wits.ac.za/geography/

MSc Research Project
****** INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEWS******

Project Title: Mining-led Development and Local Politics of Youth Participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area, Limpopo, South Africa
Student / main researcher: Popopo Jonas Mohlala

My name is Popopo Mohlala and I am a Master of Science student studying Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting research examining how power structure shape and affect the manner and extent to which young people/youth participate in mine-driven community development, specifically the extent to which local power-holders engender youth participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area in Limpopo Province. This research is being supervised by Dr Alex Wafer from the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies and Dr Sonwabile Mnwana from Society Work and Development Institute (SWOP) division, University of the Witwatersrand.

Participation in this study will involve an individual interview which will last for one hour on average and will be audio-recorded. Please note that involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and you have the right to decide not to take part at any time and there will be no penalty for that. You will not receive any financial benefit for taking part in this study. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you agree to take part in the study. If you decide to withdraw at any time, your wish will be granted. The information you give me in the interview will not be connected to you (unless you grant me permission to reveal your

identity when I write up the report). The information collected during the interview will be pooled for the dissertation project and I promise to keep the interview results safe from unauthorised access.

Should you have any questions, I will be happy to explain everything in great details. Please contact me or my supervisor at:

Student Name: Popopo Mohlala
Email: pjmohlala@gmail.com

OR

Principal Supervisor Name: Dr. Sonwabile Mnwana
Email: Sonwabile.Mnwana@wits.ac.za

Appendix B: Information sheet for focus groups

School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa Enquiries: **GEOGRAPHY:** TEL: +27 11 717-6503 FAX: +27 086 651 6366
ARCHAEOLOGY: TEL: +27 11 717-6045 FAX: +27 086 651 6366 http://www.wits.ac.za/geography/

MSc Research Project
****** INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUPS******

Project Title: Mining-led Development and Local Politics of Youth Participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area, Limpopo, South Africa

Student / main researcher: Popopo Jonas Mohlala

My name is Popopo Mohlala and I am a Master of Science student studying Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting research examining how power structure shape and affect the manner and extent to which young people/youth participate in mine-driven community development, specifically the extent to which local power-holders engender youth participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority area in Limpopo Province. This research is being supervised by Dr Alex Wafer from the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies and Dr Sonwabile Mnwana from Society Work and Development Institute (SWOP) division, University of the Witwatersrand.

Participation in the abovementioned study will involve you being interviewed as part of a group of youth. The focus group interview session will last for 1H30 on average and will be audio-recorded. Please note that involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and group participants have the right to decide not to take part at any time and there will be no penalty for that. The group or individual participants will not receive any financial benefit for taking part in this study. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you agree to take part in the study. If you decide to withdraw at any time, your wish will be granted. The information you give me in the interview will not be connected to you as I will not ask for your real names. The information collected during the group interview will be pooled for the dissertation project and I promise to keep the interview results safe from unauthorised access. When I write up the research report, appropriate and practical methods will be used for preserving the privacy of the participants' identities by using pseudonyms.

Should you have any questions, I will be happy to explain everything in great details. Please contact me or my supervisor at:

Student Name: Popopo Mohlala

Email: pjmohlala@gmail.com

or

Principal Supervisor Name: Dr Sonwabile Mnwana

Email: Sonwabile.Mnwana@wits.ac.za

Appendix C: Consent Form for Focus Groups

Title of research project: **Mining-led Development and Local Politics of Youth Participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area, Limpopo, South Africa**

Name/s of principal researcher/s: Popopo Mohlala
Nature of the research: Academic Research
Duration of the interview: 1H30

Please tick

	Yes	No
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study (attached to this form). I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and had these questions answered to my satisfaction		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and this may not prejudice me		
I understand that there are no financial benefits to be obtained from my involvement in this study		
I agree to participate in the abovementioned study		
I agree that you do not use my real name in the final report		
I agree that the information I share with the researcher will be kept in strictest confidence and will not be shared with third parties		
I consent to this interview being recorded		

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date:_____

Appendix D: Consent Form for Interviews

Title of research project: **Mining-led Development and Local Politics of Youth Participation in the Mokopane Traditional Authority Area, Limpopo, South Africa**

Name/s of principal researcher/s: Popopo Mohlala
Nature of the research: Academic Research

Please tick

	Yes	No
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study (attached to this form). I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and had these questions answered to my satisfaction		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and this may not prejudice me		
I understand that there are no financial benefits to be obtained from my involvement in this study		
I agree to participate in the abovementioned study		
I agree that you use my real name in the final report		
I agree that the information I share with the researcher will be kept in strictest confidence and will not be shared with third parties		
I consent to this interview being recorded		

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date:_____