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Community Participation in the Heritage,Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism Programme

Simelane, Immigardht Brunnhilldah Hlengiwe

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Community Participation in the Heritage,Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism Programme

Immigardht Brunnhilldah Hlengiwe Simelane

A research report submitted to the faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public Development and Management).

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ABSTRACT

Community participation in development projects is always advocated for but rarely practiced meaningfully. Narrow interpretations of participation that amount merely to job creation and skills transfer are prevalent and persist in spite of the changes in the policy context and in institutional arrangements meant to afford communities a platform to influence decisions and the direction of development in their locality. Historically, communities living adjacent to nature reserves have been dispossessed of their land, marginalized and alienated in the activities of the reserves.

This qualitative case study sought to investigate challenges relating to community participation in Songimvelo Nature Reserve, a tourism development project which is part of the Heritage, Greening Mpumalanga, and Tourism Flagship Programme of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government. The objectives of this development project are to integrate nature conservation with socio-economic development through sustainable tourism ventures, in a Community Public and Private Partnership (CPPP) context. Data was collected through semi- structured interviews. The techniques used to ensure validity were member-checking, researcher reflexivity and triangulation. Interpretive data analysis was done.

The findings of this study indicate that major challenges relating to community participation emanated after the validation of the land claim for a community of claimants. Prior to the land claim, government‘s approach to the management of the reserve was unilateral and paternalistic. The imminent change of land ownership has implications for the role, the rationale the intensity, the levels of participation and the patterns of participation for all the stakeholders. The challenges vary from conflicting values and ideals on land use, uncertainty, mistrust, and the need for new institutional and structural arrangements for the management of the reserve. The Songimvelo development project is evidence of how meaningful community participation is contingent to what rural communities can contribute in the development project. It requires more than indigenous knowledge or change in policy for communities to be acknowledged as key stakeholders and for them to influence decision making.

Future research on the reserve could be conducted on the benefits, the effectiveness and new challenges of the new partnership in the Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) context, post the signing of the settlement and co- management agreements.

DECLARATION

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

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Immigardht Brunnhilldah Hlengiwe Simelane

April 2011

DEDICATION

To my mother, Cecilia Nqobile Happy Sibanyoni.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

What a faithful God have I, faithful in every way. It is with a deep sense of love and appreciation that I attribute success in the writing of this dissertation to the support from my loved ones, my husband Knox, and my kids Sandile, Akhona and Ucebile.

I am grateful to the Mpumalanga Provincial Government for funding my studies. To my supervisors Dr Phillip Wenzel and Stephen Porter, thank you for your tireless guidance and support to ensure this dissertation is quality work. A word of gratitude goes to the participants in the study, for their time, insight, and their willingness to assist.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BEE	**Broad-Based Economic Empowerment**
CAP	**Community Action Planning**
CBNRM	**Community Based Natural Resource Management**
CMC	**Co-management Committee**
CPA	**Community Property Association**
CPPP	**Community Public Private Partnership**
DEAT	**Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism**
DEDET	**Department of Economic Development, Environment & Tourism**
DLA	**Department of Land Administration**
FIFA	**Federation International Football Association**
IDP	**Integrated Development Plan**
LED	**Local Economic Development**
LFA	**Logical Framework Approach**
MEC	**Member of Executive Council**
MoU	**Memorandum of Understanding**
MTPA	**Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency**
MTGS	**Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy**

PCM	**Project Cycle Management**
PLA	**Participatory Learning Action**
PPP	**Public Private Partnership**
PRA	**Participatory Rural Appraisal**
SNR	**Songimvelo Nature Reserve**
S-MTFCA	**Songimvelo-Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation Area**
SGRCMC	**Songimvelo Game Reserve Co-Management Committee**

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Chapter 1: Introduction and background

1. Introduction

The advent of democracy in South Africa laid foundation for participatory development. This is evidenced in policy documents and the country's legislative framework such as the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994) the Constitution (1996), the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (2000), which all advocate for people driven development, and the decentralization of power and resources to local government. There is acknowledgement that community development occurs at grassroots level where communities can presumably participate meaningfully in their own development. Development practitioners as argued in Plummer (2000) advocated for a move away from top down, technocratic, blue print approaches to development towards participatory development approaches.

Institutional arrangements to ensure that participatory development is practical and tangible took form in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP), Local Economic Development (LED) programmes, Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to cite a few examples. The IDP established in the local sphere of government, is viewed by Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:133) not only as a tool for planning but as a philosophy, and a new approach to planning which emphasises community participation in development efforts and closer working ties between the local, provincial and national spheres of government.

1.1 Background

This is a qualitative case study on challenges relating to community participation in the Heritage, Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism (HG&T) flagship programme of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government launched in 2008 in the Songimvelo Nature Reserve(SNR). The objectives of this flagship programme are to preserve Mpumalanga's environmental and heritage resources and promote sustainable tourism in the pursuit of

socio-economic development. The flagship approach to service delivery is a fairly new model of implementation of high impact programmes in the province. This flagship programme is being implemented throughout the province and its custodian is the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET) and its tourism agency the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA). The Greening Mpumalanga, Heritage and Tourism project is part of the reviewed Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy (MTGS) 2008. The provincial government's objective on reserves and parks is, as stated in the Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy (2008:104) to "manage biodiversity and deliver tourism and recreational services to visitors to the nature reserves". This strategy can be encapsulated mainly in three concepts namely: conservation, commercialization and beneficiation and it aims to integrate nature conservation with socio-economic development for the benefit of the rural community residing adjacent to reserves.

This study will focus on a tourism subproject at the Songimvelo Nature Reserve (SNR). Songimvelo is a Nguni word meaning we preserve/conserve our natural resources. This nature reserve is in the Mpumalanga Province. It is situated along the Swaziland boarder between the towns Barberton and Badplaas and it forms part of the Songimvelo-Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation Area (S-MTFCA). Songimvelo was proclaimed a nature reserve/ protected area in the Government Gazette no. 448, dated 4 March 1983 because of its scenic beauty and its rare species of fauna and flora.

1.2 Problem statement

Communities residing near nature reserves are seldom meaningfully involved in the development and management of the reserves near them. The Tourism White Paper (1996:9) cites various factors that constrain community participation in tourism development projects, these vary from context to context. This trend continues even though the Tourism White Paper (1996) advocates for community participation, and states as one of the guiding principles that tourism development should be government-led, private sector driven and community-based. The rural community of Songimvelo is no exception even though they have a validated claim to the land on which the nature the

reserve lies. This community of claimants is entangled in a struggle with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) on issues of ownership, job opportunities, beneficiation and co-management of the reserve.

1.3 Purpose statement

This study seeks to investigate challenges relating to community participation in the government-driven tourism subproject of the Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism Programme. This study intends to research what the levels and intensity of community participation by the community of Songimvelo in the Heritage, Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism (HG&T) project, is and why.

The concept of community participation is interpreted differently in different contexts; and is laden with conceptual and practical difficulties (Emmet, 2000; Khanye, 2005; Kotze, 1997) this has often deprived communities of meaningful or authentic participation in development projects and programmes in their locality. Davids *et al.*, (2005:113) argue that community participation has a smack of window dressing and "has become just another catchword which everybody advocates but few put it into practice."Despite the policy changes community participation in projects remains narrowly defined through all the phases of a project Plummer (2000), this limits communities from influencing the direction of their own development.

The rationale for community participation in projects is presented as a dichotomy of participation as a means to an end and participation as an end in itself. Oakley (1999:7) in (Davids *et al.,* 2005) argues that participation as a means is passive participation concerned only with efficiency, effectiveness and achievement of project goals with minimal concern for the community whereas participation as an end in itself is active participation aimed empowering communities to take control of their development. Mngxali (2006:9) argues participation as a means is indicative of unequal power relations between the target community and those who have brought the development initiative, the community is mobilised only to work in a project whose goals have been predetermined.

On the contrary participation as an end suggests a transformation in power relations with communities empowered to have a measure of control in their development.

1.4 Research questions

- What are the institutional arrangements for community participation in the various stages of the project?
- What are the challenges for community participation in the various stages of the project?
- What have been the effects of community participation on the projects' performance in the various stages?

1.5 Conceptual framework

1.5.1 Community Participation

Institutionalising and formalising community participation is made complex by the concept itself. Community participation is an arena of control, competition conflicts and power struggle amongst and between various interest groups. Rural communities have, Chambers (1983:2-6) argues are mostly been vulnerable to tyranny, where outsiders determine the agenda of development. Chambers (1983:2-6) further argues against outsiders determining the development agenda of rural communities on the ground that outsiders know very little if anything about rural reality because their experience of rural life is based on limited hurried visits to the rural areas and loaded with biases and professional arrogance.

A number of typologies are used to show the intensity and levels of participation by locals in their development. These levels lie in a continuum from non-participation to what could be considered authentic participation. Informing and consulting communities is not authentic participation as their input is not incorporated in decisions taken. Authentic participation is encompassed in Arnstein's public control typology and Pretty's typology of self-mobilisation where communities have assumed a measure of control in directing development in their locality.

Fig 1.1 Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

8	Citizen Control	Degree of citizen Power
7	Delegated power	
6	Partnership	
5	Placation	Degree of Tokenism
4	Consultation	
3	Informing	
2	Therapy	Non- participation
1	Manipulation	

Arnstein (1969:217)

Fig. 1. 2 Typology of participation

7	Self mobilisation
6	Interactive Participation
5	Functional Participation
4	Participation by material incentives
3	Participation by consultation
2	Passive Participation
1	Manipulative participation

Pretty (1995) in Robinson (2002:31)

The objectives of community participation are presented in Davids et al (2005:117) as a dichotomy of participation as a means and participation as an end. The former focuses mostly on the task and reflects more concern on the project output. The latter emphasises the people and the need for their empowerment. Parfitt (2004) argues that these approaches can be complementary rather than contradictory, and project implementers should reconcile the two broad objectives in a project. Participation as a means regards those who bring development projects and programmes as experts in a discrete area, whilst participation as an end acknowledges that communities have knowledge that can be of use to the project and can play a major role.

Fig 1.3 A comparative analysis of the means /end dichotomy

Participation as a means	Participation as an end
Implies the use of participation to achieve some predetermined goal or objective	Attempts to empower people to participate in their own development more meaningfully
Attempts to utilise existing resources in order to achieve the objective of programmes / projects	Attempts to ensure the increased role of the people in development initiatives
Emphasises achieving the objective rather than the act of participation itself	Focuses on improving the ability of the people to participate
Common in government programmes where the main concern is to mobilise the community and involve them in improving the efficiency of delivery system	Finds relatively less favour with government agencies. NGO's in principle agree with the viewpoint
Participation is generally short-term	Participation is a long-term process
Participation as a means, therefore appears to be a passive form of participation	Participation as an end is more active and dynamic than participation as a means

Kumar (2002) in Davids et al (2005:117)

1.5.2 The concept of community

Among the challenges of community participation in projects is the difficulty of defining the concept - community. Mngxali's (2006:10) cautions that it is a flawed assumption to think there is a community. Community comprises of various groups of class gender race, ethnic origin and different customs to cite a few. The heterogeneous nature of communities present a challenge in development projects, as establishing a social structure representative of all the interests is near impossible. Chambers (1983:18) cautions against what he terms "person bias" and argues that outsiders, who bring development projects to rural communities, tend to consider certain groups within a community at the expense of others.

Projects can be biased towards and be dominated by males at the expense of their female counterparts, or by the educated at the expense of the less educated. Vulnerable groups within a community tend to be marginalised and excluded in development projects. The concept of community implies power relations within communities and should be viewed as such in development projects.

The changes in technology and in global and virtual economies have to a large extent cancelled the limitations of geographic boundaries between countries and communities. Emmett (2000:503) who argues that:

"development interests are wider than a community, and no community is so isolated that it does not have to contend with the power of larger structures, market forces and policies over which it has little control, restricting the definition of communities to geographic boundaries excludes relations and interactions that transcend the boundaries of that community".

The development of rural communities takes place within the macro economies of the global context. The definition of a community cannot therefore be a narrow one in development projects. Proper management of community participation in development projects implies inclusion and power to influence decision making by communities. Community participation if well managed can ensure the attainment both the project

objectives and the empowerment of communities. Community participation when well managed eliminates the contradictions that arise on emphasising community participation as a means at the expense of community participation as an end. Community participation reconciles bureaucratic approaches to participatory approaches in development projects and programmes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents a literature review on challenges to community participation in development projects. These challenges emanate from conceptual difficulties and practical challenges in the implementation of community participation through the life cycle of a project. The discussion looks into the concept of participation, the concept of community, objectives for community participation, strategies for community participation, contextual factors determining community participation in projects and challenges of community participation in the various phases of a project.

In democratic countries like South Africa, community participation is regarded as a characteristic feature of good governance. Community participation in development programmes and projects is imperative as these are seen not only as vehicles for service delivery but as "mechanisms for policy implementation" Van Baalen & De Coning cited in (Cloete *et al*,.2006:215). Planning mechanisms such as the Community Planning Action (CPA) discussed in Plummer (2000:42) emphasise community participation throughout the life cycle of a project and "sees people as the main resource for development initiatives and not simply as objects or beneficiaries of development efforts".

The devolution of power and resources to the local sphere of government, the adoption of plans and planning processes like the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in local governance are indicative of the change in approach to development. The Municipal Systems Act (2000:36) states that municipal planning must be developmentally-oriented. This can be achieved through the Integrated Development Plan as the master plan that involves the entire municipality, its citizens and the other spheres of government in finding the best solutions to achieve long-term development and improve the quality of life of the locals.

The core components of the IDP discussed in the Municipal Systems Act (2000:38) require a municipality to base the plan on a long term vision for development and an

extensive analysis of the existing conditions, needs and available resources for development. A number of advantages of the IDP as a planning approach are mentioned by Mngxali (2006:7) as:

> "the IDP helps local municipalities use resources effectively and focus on the most important needs of the community, it is an effective tool in speeding up service delivery through its identification of the least serviced and most impoverished areas where municipal funds can be spent.
>
> It is an instrument to attract additional funds to municipalities which is more likely to happen when private investors see that there are clear development plans and it promotes co-ordination between local provincial and national government – this if done effectively could further integration of government plans".

The IDP embodies a shift from a paternalistic, technocratic, top-down approach towards a participatory, bottom-up approach. Although seen as key, community participation in development programmes and projects is fraught with challenges. The ensuing discussion looks into the various challenges.

2.1 The concept of community participation

Literature attests to the indiscriminate use of the concept of community participation. A number of writers **(**Davids *et al.,* 2005; Eversole, 2003; Paul, 1987) argue that community participation is defined differently in different contexts and the intensity and level of community participation varies. This has led to narrow, unauthentic and manipulative practices in the name of participation. Paul (1987:20) of the World Bank defines community participation as "whereby people act in groups to influence the direction of development programs". Kotze (1997:62) shares the same view that "participation must be assessed in terms of the measure of influence people exercise over development activities affecting their lives". He further argues that "merely taking part in externally designed and managed activities, using facilities provided through a

development project does not in itself represent participation, being hired to work in a labour intensive project without having any say over project activities, is also not participation".

Oakely *et al.,* (1991) cited in Simanowitz (1997:128) explains, "real participation involves equality in decision-making throughout the project cycle i.e. assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation". International Fund for Agricultural Development (2008:1) states that "participation applies not only to primary stakeholders, it means giving space to grassroot organizations, banks, private enterprises and others as implementing partners. The role of project management becomes one of facilitation rather than one of steering from a central decision-making position. The above arguments indicate clearly that participation is meaningful only if the communities are positioned strategically to influence decision-making and their voices are heard in all the phases of the project. Davids *et al.*,(2005:112) lists the principles for meaningful participation as outlined in the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation as:

- Sovereignty resides with the people, the real actors of change.
- The legitimate role of government is to enable the people to set and pursue their own agenda
- Those who would assist the people with their development must recognise it is they who are participating in support to the peoples' agenda not the reverse.
- To exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities, people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable.

Despite the various project design and management approaches like the Project Cycle Management (PCM) and the Logframe approach (LFA) which emphasise comprehensive stakeholder identification, mapping and analysis, meaningful participation remains an

illusion. According to Kapoor (2002) even processes like the participatory learning and action (PLA) and the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) though acclaimed as enhancing community participation leave much to be desired as they do not grant communities guaranteed power to influence decision-making.

A variety of typologies has been developed to explain the intensity and levels of community participation and the degree or measure of influence communities have in development projects and programmes. Arnstein's (1969) and Pretty's (1995) typologies cited in Davids *et al.*, (2005:118) and in Robinson (2002:31) illustrate the levels and intensity of participation. These levels as shown below lie in a continuum from non-participation, to participation as tokenism to a high degree of public control and influence.

Manipulation The public is part of powerless committees, participation is a public relations vehicle for the powerful (non-participation).

Therapy Instead of focusing on the programme or project, the public's attitudes are shaped to conform to those in power (non-participation).

Informing A one-way, top down flow of information in which the public is informed of their rights, responsibilities and options (tokenism).

Consultation The public is free to give opinion on relevant issues, but the powerful offer no assurance that these opinions will be considered (tokenism).

Placation A few "handicapped" members of the public are appointed to committees while tokenism is still the main motivation for the powerful.

Partnership Power becomes distributed through negotiations between the public and those in power (degree of public control and power)

Delegated power The public acquires the dominant decision making authority over a particular plan or programme (degree of public control and power).

Citizen Control The public has the degree of power necessary to govern a programme, project or institution without the influence of the powerful (degree of public control and power).

Paul (1987:44) cited in Khanye (2005:52) makes an important observation that "different types of community participation may co-exist within one project". Participation may therefore not be as neat as outlined in the typologies. It is important to note that the levels of intensity in participation may vary in the various phases of the project. Susskind (1983) cited in Ventriss (1985:435) deepens the discussion on community participation and highlights three patterns of participation, namely, paternalism, conflict, and coproduction: "Paternalism is when governmental decision making is centralised and participation is discouraged, whilst conflict is when governmental decision making is also centralised, but citizens openly confront the authorities over control of policies, then co production when decisions are made through face-to face negotiations between decision-makers and communities". Coproduction is portrayed as an important part of power sharing and it necessitates a social knowledge transfer between the citizens and administration whereby both parties gain important information about serious problems affecting the community. The question becomes what needs to happen for communities and development drivers to attain this level of coproduction.

Plummer (2000:57) insists that community participation should be appropriate, beneficial, and evolving and explains what each of these descriptive mean.

Appropriate participation

- Developed in relation to socio- economic and cultural factors
- Developed in relation Community and municipal institutional context
- Developed and agreed with community
- Developed where possible around existing community initiatives and opportunities

Beneficial participation

- Aimed towards increased community decision making
- Aimed towards increased capacity, skills access to information
- Developed to involve all groups within the community particularly women and marginalised groups
- Meeting municipal objectives

Evolving participation

- Develop participation to suit changing context and capacities and changing roles
- Developing greater trust, confidence and experience
- The emergence of empowered community members

2.2 The concept of community in community participation

For a project to ensure successful community participation, participation has to be formalised and institutionalised, a process mostly fraught with challenges. A few flawed assumptions about community participation are highlighted, first by Mngxali's (2006:10) who argues that it is flawed to think there is a community. The challenge is on the definition of the concept of community.

Wenzel (1996:45) writes, “at one level the answer to the question of who is community can simply be answered as people in the same geographic area, people who share the same interest or a service community”. The limitations of such definitions is highlighted by Emmett (2000:503) who argues that “development interests are wider than a community, and no community is so isolated that it does not have to contend with the power of larger structures, market forces and policies over which it has little control, restricting the definition of communities to geographic boundaries excludes relations and interactions that transcend the boundaries of that community”. This research will establish challenges to community participation presented by factors beyond the geographic limitations of the project.

The concept of community also speaks to interests groups in communities and their various and often conflicting interests that more often than not influence project performance. Communities are not homogenous, and the concept of participation has implications of contested space, dominance, and subordination. The heterogeneous aspects of communities, varying from class, race and gender among others present a challenge to community participation in projects. Power relations within communities and between a community and the developing agencies are a critical factor. Chambers (cited in Kapoor, 2002; Cornwall, 2003) argue that it could be that the reality that counts is that of a dominant group and decisions are a mere reflection of the ideas of a few instead of the larger section of the community advantaged by power relations within the community.

Khothari cited in Khanye (2005:42) writes of three different types of tyranny in community participation, these are tyranny of decision making and control, where participatory development facilitators override legitimate local decision-making processes , tyranny of the group in which local group dynamics may simply result in participatory decisions which entrench the interests of those already in power and tyranny where participation may have closed out other methods which have certain advantages that participation alone does not offer. Plummer (2000:34-35) and Cornwall

(2003) articulate gender aspects in participation, and how these result in the marginalization of women in projects and programmes. It is not only women who are vulnerable to marginalization from participation but the youth and people with disability. Policy in South Africa insists on the inclusion of these designated groups in projects of development. According to Davids *et al.,* (2005:43) the two critical aspects in participation are inclusivity and representativeness.

Various types of community representativeness are summarised by Meyer and Cloete (2000:104-109) in Davids *et al.,* (2005:124) into four broad categories of, involvement of legitimate democratically elected political representatives, leadership of legitimate organizations, individual opinion leaders and direct involvement of the community. The question is how practical is it to achieve the ideal of inclusivity and representativeness because a range of questions remain a challenge, such as:

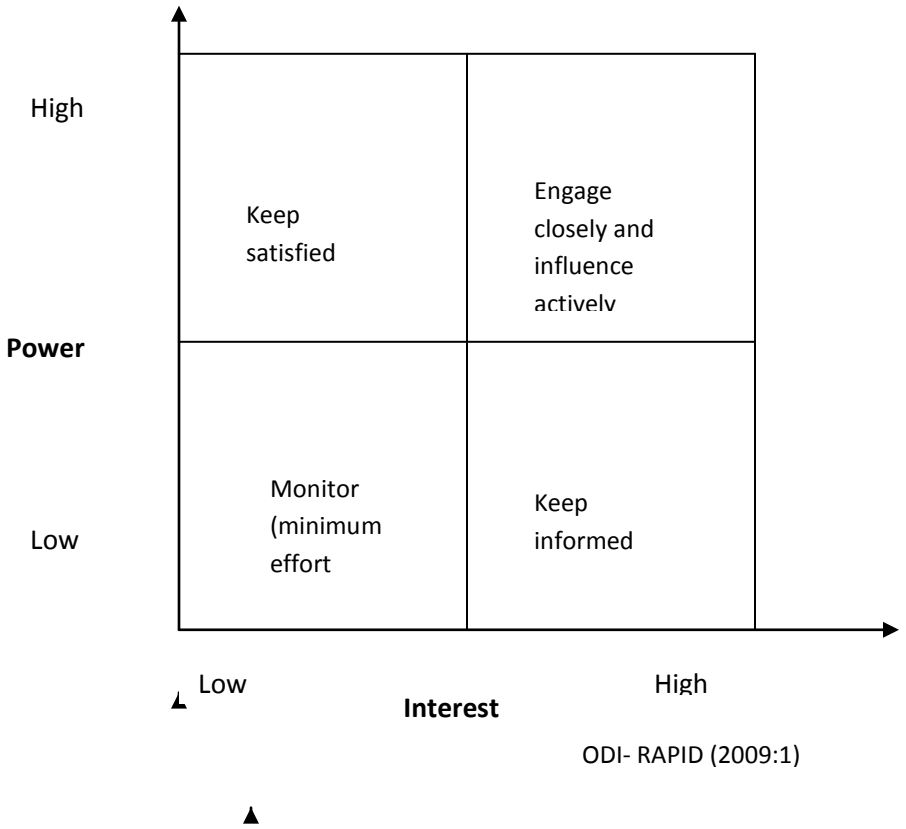
Who are the authentic representatives of the community? Do the political representatives actually represent the community interests? How are the interests of those not representing the majority accommodated? Is this a legitimate organization to represent the community interest? The importance of reviewing stakeholders through the project life cycle cannot be underestimated as these may change over time in the life cycle of a project so may their interests and degree of influence. It is constant review of the stakeholders that can make the achievement of the ideal of inclusivity and representativeness possible.

Stakeholder mapping and analysis are techniques used to ensure that all groups directly or indirectly affected by a project or programme are identified and managed accordingly. Gawler (2005:18) categorises stakeholders into primary, secondary opposition, marginalised. Stakeholder analysis helps in establishing, the potential roles of each of the stakeholders can play, the contribution they can make, the potential risk they may present to the project success, their limitations, their influence and power in financial social and

political terms, their interests, needs and priorities and their stake. These factors determine how project drivers will manage stakeholders in a project.

The Overseas Development Institute (2009:1) presents in a grid how stakeholders can be managed. Stakeholders with high power and high interest falling on the top right quadrant have to be actively engaged as they not only present opportunity but also a threat to the development project if they are not engaged fully and meaningfully. These usually have social, political, and or economic power. The less likely to oppose or even participate are stakeholders on the bottom left quadrant with minimal interest and minimal power. Stakeholders with high power but less interest on the top left quadrant have to be kept satisfied as they are a potential force in influencing the direction of the development. Stakeholders with high interest and less power have just to be kept informed on developments in the project.

Fig 2.1 Stakeholder Analysis



ODI- RAPID (2009:1)

An interesting set of questions presented in a pun by Abrahams (2007) can be used in the analysis of stakeholders in what he terms the stakeholder dilemma. These questions are who are the holders, who holds, who holds what, what is the stake “steak” for each holder, who suffers, who gains, what are the consequences of non-delivery. It is important to note these set of questions speak to the underlying, and the not so obvious power struggle that determine patterns and partners of participation in development projects. These questions express that some stakeholders are more important than others, other voices are heard more than others in decision-making and some because of their influence based on power they hold, benefit and others do not. Bargaining power and influence on decision-making depend mostly on contribution in terms of economic and or political power. Rural communities usually fall victims of development projects as they are usually not economically empowered to influence the direction of development. Political awareness on rights has however saved a number of rural communities from exclusion and exploitation.

Emmett (2000:503) contends that it is a flawed assumption that “there is a community which is able to participate in the development project or programme”. It cannot be taken for granted that communities have capacity and the competences required to participate in the various stages of the project’s life cycle. Various skills and competences are imperative for communities to be able to meaningfully participate in their development these would include to cite a few examples, leadership, institutional knowledge, negotiation skills conflict resolution technical knowledge, participatory skills and financial management skills. A very critical argument is raised by Wenzel (1996:56) “a state of being socially and economically empowered is a prime requirement for actual engagement in participative exercises”. These are conditions most rural communities cannot meet, making them, it is argued here, more vulnerable to manipulation than urban communities.

2.3 Approaches used for community participation

Approaches used for community participation can be indicative of the degree of meaningfulness of community participation in a programme or project. Some of the

approaches merely serve public relations function. Public meetings and public hearings for example serve merely to consult or inform communities of a project or programme without giving them control over the decision-making process. Narrowing participation to mere information dissemination can be detrimental as communities may choose to show apathy counter the project goals and objectives. Innovative methods of community participation offer more impact on decision-making, lead to empowerment and offer a platform for higher level of impact and control. The move towards a developmental local government has led to the creation of legislation and policy that is supportive to participation and creates opportunities for participation.

This includes the IDP as discussed in earlier sections, Private Public Partnership (PPP) outlined in the National Treasury Guidelines for PPP in local municipalities (Government Gazette 2005) The Local Economic Development (LED) approach discussed in Blakely and Bradshaw (2002) which is based on local initiatives and driven by local stakeholders. It involves identifying and using local resources ideas and skills to stimulate economic growth and development and the Community Private Public Partnership (CPPP) The CPPP concept is explained in (Fabricus Matsiliza and Sisitka (2003:23) as one form of Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) whose rationale is :

> "to link resource rich-communities to relevant state and private investors in the sustainable utilisation of natural assets, in an effort to revitalise depressed rural economies. Focus areas are: agro-biodiversity, aquaculture, tourism, small-scale mining, agri-business and forestry." It is further argue that "CPPP facilitation ensures that projects are community owned, with spin-off benefits for further development and poverty alleviation, while maintaining private sector commercial interests".

Strategies to enhance dialogue and participation in South Africa have also been initiated by government in structures like community trusts and in gatherings such as Izimbizo and

Indaba. What determines success is commitment particularly by government to take input raised by communities into consideration such that these influence decision-making.

2.3.1 Success factors and community participation in projects

Success factors also referred to as quality factors by the European Commission (2001:24), are critical determinants of project performance and project sustainability. Meaningful community participation is implied in each of these success factors for project success and project sustainability. A project according to Gawler (2005:11) is said to be sustainable "when it continues to deliver benefits for an extended period after the main part of external support has been completed." It is important for project or programme drivers to take cognizance of the importance of ownership of project by locals. Ownership speaks to the extent to which, primary, secondary beneficiaries, local communities and other stakeholders feel part of the decision-making processes and their "voices are heard". Plummer (2000: 42) argues for Community Action Planning which advocates for participation by communities in the project and how such an approach promotes ownership.

This ensures a high degree of commitment to the project and creates legitimacy for the project. It is important to note that participation has to be authentic for the project to warrant ownership and a level of legitimacy within the local communities. Project drivers cannot assume a big brother role: instead they have to work with communities, with existing institutions and around existing initiatives within the communities. Community participation has to happen as early as possible in a project and run through all the stages of a project. Ownership of a project by local communities increases chances for "survival" and sustainability for a project, as communities would take guard of resources, infrastructure, and whatever other interest relating to the project including accountability by government officials. Ownership of a project by communities ensures the project remains in line with the needs of the communities and it remains relevant.

Grounding a project or programme into local reality is about taking into cognizance first the socio-cultural factors of the local communities. Korten (1980:502) emphasises that

“what is needed for success is a high degree of fit between the programme design and beneficiary needs, program outputs and organisational competence”.

Those who initiate development projects have to conduct a situation analysis to understand the traditions, religious beliefs, indigenous knowledge and practices of local communities, any disregard for these can be regarded as dehumanizing by the local communities and lead to apathy and lack of cooperation by communities. The project also has to take into account aspects of equality of access and equitable distribution of benefits for groups that are more often than not marginalised in communities. Aspects of gender equality for example have to be addressed, and so other marginalised and vulnerable. A project should reduce inequalities in terms of participation and access to project benefits.

Grounding in local reality also means using appropriate technologies, European Commission (2001:24) appropriate given the technical, human and financial resources of the people who will use and maintain them maximise local labour and materials. The technologies applied must be of affordable costs, within the local conditions and capabilities. Local communities must be able to maintain whatever technological infrastructure for them to sustain the benefits the project has and be able to continue using these technologies even after the withdrawal of the project drivers. Communities must be able to use the methods, equipment and infrastructure and maintain these by themselves after the project finalization.

Meaningful participation presupposes the necessary capabilities and capacity to participate. Conducting an audit at an early stage can help in the identification of gaps and ensure that capacity building is incorporated in the project plans and budgeted for. Building institutional capacity in will ensure good governance is enhanced as participants will have the ability to manage human and financial resources. Good governance practices will lead to efficient and effective use of resources which would translate into the project achieving its set objectives and goals within the more often than not limited resources, within time and with a higher degree of accountability by the institutions and

individuals. Korten (1980:480) advocates for a social learning process in projects, which result in learning to be efficient, learning to be effective and expansion.

Building institutional and individual capacity for the local communities is sure to increase chances for the sustainability of a project as communities will be capable to manage and maintain on their own, all the resources, infrastructure that the project has created for them. Building capacity will ensure the project is managed with the local community not on their behalf by project drivers. The importance of cost effectiveness and efficient use of resources in projects is of paramount importance. Gawler (2005:12) emphasises the need for adequate use financial resources on projects as many projects and programmes fail because of inadequate operational costs, or because costs have escalated during the operations. Capacity building at institutional, individual and community level can contribute positively to the management of project resources during implementation and post the finalisation of the project.

Sustainable financing mechanisms for a project or programme have to be developed. Community participation in this regard cannot be underestimated as they can assist in sharing the project costs. Non–profit organizations in communities can play a major role in this regard. Development projects are meant to improve the lives and quality of life for local communities. A development project has to address the needs of local communities and present opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in local and even global economies. A project can only be regarded as viable and worth investing resources, time and energy into it if it creates benefits and opportunity for local communities to participate in the economies locally or even globally.

Rural communities have always been in the margins and poor, development projects have not only to alleviate poverty but present opportunity for inclusion into the economy. Sustainable development speaks to the protection of our environment resources from destruction by our social and economic activities in pursuit of development. The European Commission (2001:24) emphasise that responsibility towards the environment

and towards future generations cannot be underestimated. Environmental protection in projects is about attempts in mitigating the negative effects of global warming and climate change.

The role of local communities is crucial in that government cannot unilaterally, through legislation, ensure the protection of the environment. Communities have to translate legislation into practice. Furthermore it is local communities that can hold accountable and bring to book any developers who destroy the environment. Socio economic development cannot be achieved at the expense of the environment. Communities have a crucial role to play in this regard.

2.3.2 The objectives of community participation

The rationale for community participation in projects is presented in literature as a dichotomy of participation as a means to an end or participation as an end in itself. (Mngxali, 2006; Davids *et al.*, 2005). The notion of participation as a means is that community participation enhances the efficiency and the effectiveness of a project whereas participation as an end concerns social learning, capacity-building, and empowerment.

Participation as a means it is assumed has a quantitative positivistic aspect with not much regard for the stakeholders except as providers of data. For government it is important that projects do not outrun their costs and timeframes. The quality of the deliverables also is of importance. Emphasis is on results, management by objectives, effective and efficient use of budgets and accountability.

The two goals for community participation have to be complimentary and not critical of each other. Parfitt (2004: 537) contends that these goals are reconcilable and cautions that "the ambiguity becomes contradictory when emphasis is laid on participation as a means, at the expense of participation as an end". To reconcile the means /ends dichotomy as reasons for community participation in projects, Roup (1994) advocates for an eclectic

approach where projects for example are not viewed only from a very technocratic, elitist, positivistic approach emphasizing measurements, results or outcomes but this has to be complimented with a qualitative approach which would afford communities opportunity to participate in all the stages of the project life cycle. Project leaders have to assume their role as facilitators and negotiators not technocrats. Narrow interpretations of community participation can undermine and defeat both these goals in development projects.

The function of participation according to Wenzel (1996: 66) can be summed up into:

- Creation of legitimacy
- Increasing effectiveness and efficiency of state actions by mobilization of local resources
- Strengthening functions of control and regulation
- Initiating social learning processes.

2.4 Community participation in the project cycle

The stages or phases of a project can be simplified mainly into project identification, planning and design, implementation, and project monitoring and evaluation. Cloete Wissink and de Coning (2006:233) however argue that development projects are unlike conventional projects, "the difference is that, unlike conventional projects which mostly adopt the engineer's look, development projects, also known as social development projects seek to combine the delivery of project outputs with the mobilization of local people to take charge of their own development". The outputs for a development project aim to bring developmental change and contribute in the eradication of poverty.

Secondly the methods used by the project managers have the following features: they encourage beneficiaries to participate and take ownership of the project, they ensure short term, medium term and long term goals of the project alleviate poverty in a sustainable and replicable manner, the project is used as a vehicle for training and building the

capacity “softer skills” of the local community and they minimise the negative environmental impact thereby enhancing sustainability.

Atkins and Milne in (Nel 1997:3) cited by Cloete *et al*,.(2006:233) argue that these features in development projects “extend activities, outputs, and timeframes beyond the scope of conventional projects.” Development projects more often than not, continue for longer periods of time. Participation is always advocated for, the objectives for participation and the potential roles that communities can play in projects are also highly rationalised, but more often than not community participation is compromised in the various stages of the project. Plummer (2000:44-45) discusses among other factors, attitudes and perceptions that project drivers have. The project identification stage is sometimes not regarded as the domain for the poor, most projects are identified and initiated by government, and communities merely consulted and informed of the project and possible opportunities for “participation”.

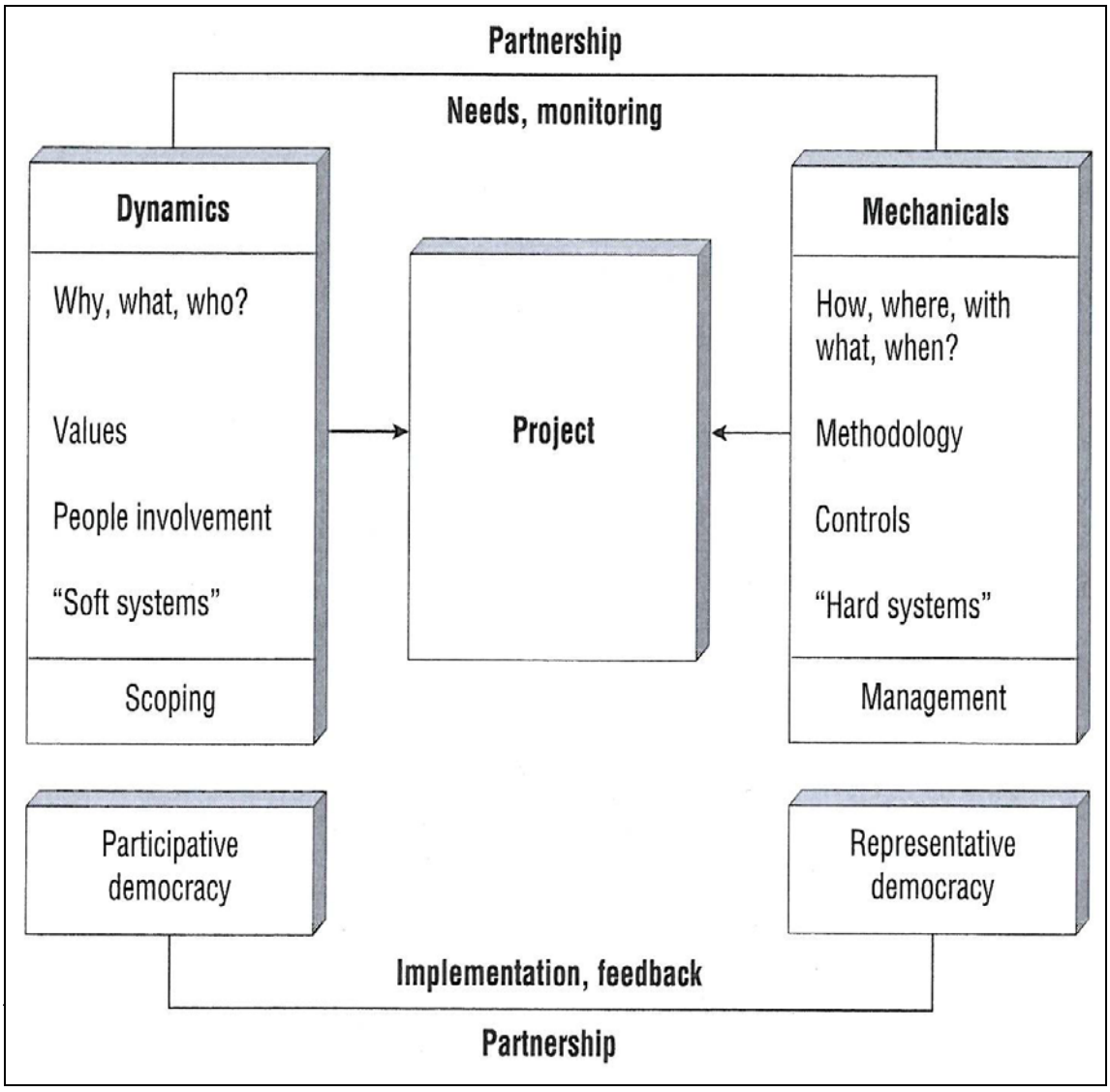
Project design and planning can also be seen in a technocratic engineer look leading to the exclusion of communities. At implementation community participation is usually narrowed to mere labour provision. Opportunities for community contracting, explained in Plummer (2000:47) as “ where communities are encouraged to undertake community contracts where they price, tender, organise, manage and carry out infrastructure improvement works”, are limited by lack of skills, lack of financial capacity and fear of taking risks by emerging contractors in communities.

Brynard cited in Cloete and Wissink (2000:165) outline in the 5C protocol of critical determinants of the failure or success of project implementation. These include the context, content, clients, coalitions, communication, and commitment. Lipsky (1978) cited by Brynard in Cloete and Wissink (2000:173) writes of street level bureaucrats or the frontline workers and explains how due to the degree of influence they have in their communities and their understanding of the context in which the project is happening can either enhance or undermine project performance. Participatory monitoring and

evaluation of projects according to Plummer (2000: 51) is very limited yet it can provide opportunity for redress, knowledge generation, and learning.

Brown (1997) in Cloete *et al*,.(2006:235) suggests three instruments for application in the implementation of development projects to help accentuate community participation, these are, a process model of participation in the scoping of a project, a structure model to enhance participation by facilitating projects with the community and not for the community, and a modified project cycle that puts a contextualizing phase at the beginning of the project and an empowerment phase at the end of the project. Presenting empowerment as a last phase in this suggested modified project cycle is flawed, as empowerment cannot be saved for last, but has to be an integral part of all the phases or stages of the development project. The ensuing diagrams explain the process and structure model respectively.

Fig.2.2 Community and project driver's partnership



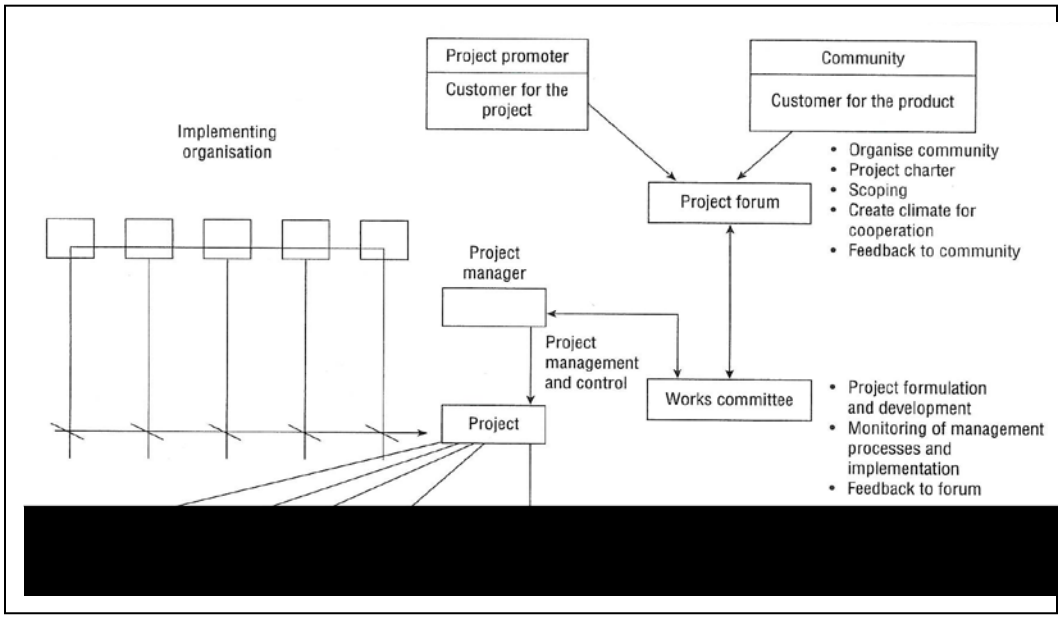
Brown (1977) in Cloete *et al.*,(2006:234)

The suggestion presented by the diagram is on how communities and project drivers can work as a partnership and that the broader community is involved only at the level of scoping of the project. The broader community would be involved in the why, what, who for whom questions and the monitoring of the results .A professional team would be engaged on the how, what and when. Using community representatives at all the so called technical stages seem a reasonable thing to do. Brown (1997 73-75) cited in Cloete *et al.*, (2006:235) argues that "Confusion about the roles of these two subsystems

(partnerships)has led to many project failures in recent times as the general public is not trained to make those technical and managerial decisions required for a fluent and speedy execution of the process".

The process model is characterised by what Brinkerhoff (1991:81-85) cited in Cloete *et al.*, (2006:234) terms a "structured flexibility which combines iterative learning with planned structuring of action that blueprint designs reflect". The structures model as depicted in the diagram below (Fig 2.3) is designed to enhance participation by facilitating projects with the community and not for the community. Such arrangements for participation ensure meaningful participation by communities in all the stages of a project, from design through to monitoring and evaluation. Such arrangements for meaningful participation eliminate debate on whether the local community is client or master of the development in their locality.

Fig 2.3 Structures to facilitate community participation



Brown (1977) Cloete *et al.*, (2006:234)

Communities can through meaningful participation be both master and client of their development and the bureaucracy / democracy dichotomy can be reconciled as argued in Werlin (1989:449-450). The project promoters (government, agencies) become the customer for the project and the local community becomes the client for the product of the project in the management of a project. The question becomes, do poor rural communities always have the specialised human capital or social assets to meaningfully participate in the technical stages, is their knowledge of the contextual factors and their indigenous knowledge count in influencing decisions.

This chapter on literature review has highlighted a number of challenges that usually deter efforts for meaningful community participation in development projects. These challenges vary from situation to situation and include conceptual, structural, institutional and attitudinal and practical challenges in the planning and implementation of such projects. Project performance is contingent on how all these challenges are managed. A project may fail at implementation or even after it has been successfully implemented so not only the project managers need to have the capacity to manage the process but policy makers have to create an enabling environment for community participation and insist that community participation becomes a reality in local communities. Local communities have to identify with the development project to be able and zealous to make the project sustainable. Compromising community participation undermines the achievement of project objectives.

The ideal is not to completely dismiss the blueprint approach to projects but to complement this with a bottom up, participatory approach. Brynard and de Coning (2006:187) argue that “it is not a question of choosing “top” or “bottom” as though these were mutually exclusive alternatives, both perspectives provide useful insights into the implementation process, both demonstrate significant explanatory strengths as well as weaknesses and strengths of both perspectives should be incorporated”.

The similar idea is shared by Werlin (1989:455) as stated in his conclusion: “thus development from below requires development from above, using combinations of hard and soft political power, tight and loose bureaucratic controls and forms of centralisation and decentralisation”.

In summary, Government in South Africa has through policy laid the basis and has established institutional arrangements for community participation in development programmes and projects. Putting community participation into practice is, however, challenged by various factors in various contexts. These factors vary from an attitude of paternalism and technocratic approaches, evident in continued disregard for authentic participation of communities limiting the practice to mere consultation informing, or narrowing participation to job creation and skills transfer to community related challenges such as conflict amongst interest groups, difficulty in forming social structures representative enough of the various interests.

As demonstrated in this literature review, managing community participation properly enhances project performance and guarantees project ownership, legitimacy and increased chances of sustainability. Community participation is about social justice and the call for authentic participation. It is not about replacing bureaucratic approaches with participatory approaches in projects, but it is about combining these approaches. In doing so that the rationale for community participation in projects and programmes which is, delivery of project outputs and empowerment of communities is achieved.

Chapter 3: The research design

This chapter entails a detailed description of and justification for the research design, approach and framework employed in data generation and analysis. It then explains how the validity, reliability and credibility of this study was ensured to enhance its usefulness to various audiences, such as policy makers, project planners, project implementers, and communities in their respective roles in the project. The questions this study sought to answer are: What are the institutional arrangements for community participation in the various stages of the project? What are the challenges for community participation in the various stages of the project? What have been the effects of community participation on the projects' performance in the various stages?

3.1 The research approach and framework

There are basically two broad categories in the approach to research, the qualitative and quantitative approach. Babbie and Mouton (2001:273) tabulate the contrasts between quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Quantitative research is conducted in controlled settings, with selected samples, it is deductive, it gives quantitative descriptions and it seeks to establish generalised laws. The characteristic features of qualitative research are, the research is done in a natural, uncontrolled setting, the research is inductive and not deductive, the research study seeks to understand meanings and interpretations of reality by the subjects of the study, the research seeks thick descriptions of the context and the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection. These features and the basic assumption of qualitative research which is as articulated by Creswell and Miller (2000:125) that, "reality is socially constructed and it is what participants perceive it to be" make it appropriate for this study.

The qualitative approach, according to Mouton (2001:271), assists the researcher get the insider-perspective. Institutionalizing and formalizing community participation is a process fraught with conceptual and practical difficulties Emmet (2000), these affect project performance. The objective of this study was to investigate, explain and ultimately understand these difficulties in Songimvelo from the perspective of all the

social actors involved in this context. It is the people involved in the project who can attest to the existence or non-existence, effectiveness or ineffectiveness of institutional arrangements for their participation in the project, the levels and intensity of their participation and the patterns of participation in the project. It is the insider-perspective that can assist the researcher to understand the challenges relating to community participation in the project.

3.2 The research method and techniques

This study is a qualitative case study. Literature presents a number of definitions of a case study; Denscombe (2003: 30) defines it as "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community". Yin (1994: 13) cited in Kennedy & Luzar (1999:58) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident." Henning (*et al.*, 2004) and Berg (2004) further characterise a case as a bounded system that is delineated on the basis of it being typical, unique, experimental, or highly successful.

The definition of a case study by Denscombe (2003: 30) best fits this study as this study aims to present an intensive analysis and description of the development project in Songimvelo, considering that participation varies from context to context and so the challenges relating to it. The other characteristic features of a case study that make it suitable for this study are mentioned in Babbie and Mouton (2001:280-282) and Kennedy and Luzar (1999:584) as they argue first that a case study is idiographic that is, there is interest and emphasis on contextual data and secondly it gives thick detailed descriptions in its analysis of data. Yin (1994) cited in Kennedy and Luzar (1999:582-583) states that case studies furnish the dimensions of time and history to the study of social life, allowing an examination of stability and change in social patterns. The findings of this study present change over time in community participation, justifying the use of the qualitative case study method.

3.2.1 Data collection

This research conducted semi-structured interviews. Participants were purposefully selected because of their direct involvement in the project and on the basis of their expertise with regard to the project. A letter of consent for participation in the research was sent by the researcher to all the respective offices, as a means to build rapport prior the interview sessions. All the interviews were conducted in the offices of the interviewees.

The reason for that was, offices are a suitable context for immediate access to relevant documents and they provide immediate access for contact of other relevant persons the interviewee may need to consult. The offices provided a good "business" context which kept the conversation focused. A total of thirteen participants were interviewed. The interviews were an hour long to ensure as much information as possible is gathered to compensate for the once off interview. All the participants were interviewed once because of time constraints and the limited scope of the research. The participants included eight government officials, five from the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism's implementing agency the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) in their various roles and expertise, three staff members in the Songimvelo Nature Reserve including the game reserve manager, and five participants from the community of claimants with one a member of the Community Property Association (CPA), a structure representing land claimants.

3.2.2 Data collection Instrument

The data collection instrument used was, semi structured, face to face interviews. The reasons for using these are highlighted in Esterberg (2002:84) that they are less rigid, the questions asked are open- ended allowing a much freer exchange between the interviewer and the interviewees enhancing opportunity for probing, asking clarity seeking questions and example questions. Semi-structured interviews give the researcher latitude to rephrase questions and a degree of flexibility in the sequence of the questions. Semi-structured interviews allow respondents the chance to be experts and to inform the

research. The researcher therefore gained insight on the challenges relating to community participation in the Songimvelo development project from the perspective of the interviewees, their understanding, their feelings and meaning they attach to aspects of the levels and intensity of participation, the rationale for participation, and the patterns of participation.

3.3 Data quality assurance

3.3.1 Validity and significance of the study

The research techniques used to ensure validity, and so enhance the usefulness of this study, were member checks, researcher reflexivity, triangulation and the multiple approach to data analysis. Member checking simply refers to confirming with respondents if data was adequately captured, the researcher concluded all interviews with participants, with a summarised version of the exchanges to confirm data was captured correctly. The second technique, triangulation is explained by Creswell and Miller (2000:126) as a "validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study". This study achieved triangulation by conducting interviews with various participants from government, workers in the reserve, the land claimants and non-claimants. The researcher also disclosed her biases emanating from the long period of work experience with rural communities. Rural communities are vulnerable to manipulation in development projects. Government rarely goes beyond mere rhetoric and narrow interpretations of community participation with rural communities.

Le Compte (2000:152) stresses that for purposes of validity researchers should continuously ask themselves the question "Do I as researcher really understand and describe what I am studying in the same way that people who live it do, did I really get it right?" Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Babbie and Mouton (2001:274) state that "a research is credible if the respondents agree that the researcher has adequately represented their construction of reality". All these techniques for ensuring validity have helped ensure the reliability of this study Goode & Hatt (1952:153) cited in Hammersley

(1987:75) define reliability as “the extent to which the repetition of the study would result in the same data and conclusion”. This study will demonstrate that the findings of qualitative case studies are bound to the context of the study.

The findings of this study will help policy makers, project implementers, government and communities improve their practices with regard to their roles in development projects. The dilemmas in partnership in development projects, the use of government agencies and consultants in projects and what effects it has on South African communities has not been fully explored in literature. MacKay (2007) advocates for evidenced based policy making which helps improve governance. This study provides information that will help improve policy, and ensure good governance as aspects of participation, accountability and transparency become real and tangible. Good policy and good governance will then translate to project efficiency and effectiveness.

The emphases on intergovernmental relations require that national, provincial and local government work together and speak in one voice. This study helped to identify areas of improvement in these relations. This study will help communities reflect on their role in development projects and what they can do to add value to government’s effort on development. Although challenges relating to community participation differ from situation to situation this study presents some lessons on what these challenges could be and how these can be avoided or addressed. Patton & Sawicki (1995:365) argue that project failure can be a reflection of flawed implementation or policy failure. This study unearthed challenges of community participation that impact project success in this changed political and policy context.

3.3.2 Delineation and limitations of the study

This study was conducted in the rural community of Songimvelo. It is a qualitative case study and it used semi-structured interviews for data gathering. This study acknowledged other perspectives on challenges to community participation like the gender perspective discussed in Plummer (2000), but this study did not focus on that. Issues of project outcomes are not explored particularly because the project has barely taken ground. The

Independent Evaluations Group IEG (2007:10) highlights that the maturity of a project has to be taken into account when planning its evaluation, only on mature programmes, five years or more can be evaluated on outcomes and sustainability

The factors that posed limitations to this study are, first it is a case study and generalizations to other cases that seem similar may be unlikely. The project is rolled out in both urban and rural settings throughout the province, but this study focused on one rural community of Songimvelo. Denscombe (2003:39) highlights that case studies by their nature have limited chances of being generalised. Challenges for community participation definitely vary from context to context. Secondly, the project is fairly new, and ongoing, what findings we make now may reflect interim patterns, participants and interim effects of community participation on the project performance. These may change in the project's life cycle. The findings however may serve as baseline information for future studies. This study was limited to using qualitative, methods of research and not quantitative methods like cost benefit analysis. Finally, time constraints limited the study to one rural area and there was no opportunity for a comparative study on rural/rural setting or urban / rural setting. This remains a further area of research in the future.

3.4 Research process and documentation

The research process started with the conducting of a pilot interview. The pilot interviews were conducted with three participants who were not going to be part of the study. These participants were colleagues from work selected on the basis of their acquaintance with and expertise in community projects. They are not involved in the specific project of this research study. These participants were told beforehand that their contribution was not going to be included in the study. The purpose of the pilot was to enhance quality assurance, assist the researcher to hone interview skills, to ensure that the interview questions were clear, understandable and relevant for the purpose of the study. The pilot assisted in the rephrasing of some questions, re-arranging the sequence and the addition of questions. The full-scale interview process started with the interviewing of government officials working for the agency mandated to manage the nature reserves in the province. Subsequent interviews were with staff members working in the reserve, and claimants,

including a member of the CPA. A letter requesting permission to do the interviews was sent to senior management prior to the interviews. This was not only ethical but also assisted in levelling the ground as the letter introduced the researcher and outlined briefly the purpose of the research. This letter also helped build rapport between the researcher and the agency.

To help set a relaxed tone for each of the interviews, and to build rapport, each interview began with the researcher formally introducing herself and giving a brief on the intent of the interview. The intent was briefly explained as the need to understand community participation in Songimvelo as part of the Greening Mpumalanga, Heritage and Tourism programme. The interviewees were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Only numbers instead of names were to be used in the research e.g. Participant One. Permission was sought with each of the interviewees to use a tape recorder, and to complement the tape recording with note-taking. Interviewees were told of their right to make off the record comments and to ask questions.

All the questions asked were open-ended and they afforded interviewees more space to talk and the researcher listened attentively. The interviews began with a grand tour question explained by Spradley (1979) cited in Leech (2002:667) as “a grand tour question asks respondents to give a verbal tour of something they know well”. The first questions in the interview sought respondents to give information on the objectives of the Songimvelo project, who the various stakeholders are and their roles in the project. Further on the interview subsequent questions sought to unearth the participants’ perspective, insight and understanding of the levels of participation and challenges relating to community participation in the project and how these have affected project performance. The researcher rephrased most of the questions to check on the consistency in the answers given.

To ensure understanding the researcher would restate what the respondents had just said using the direct words. To elicit more information the researcher allowed the interviewees to talk freely and probing questions would be asked to make follow up and to seek clarity.

The questions used in probing, not only came from the responses given by the interviewees, but also from aspects picked up in the literature review which were not even mentioned in the conversation. In instances where the interviewee lost focus on the issue discussed, the researcher would gently steer the interviewee back on course with a probing question. Interviewees were also asked example questions to augment responses that were too general. The notes helped the researcher write up not only content but to record all the contextual data and nuances of non-verbal communication observed by the researcher.

The notes also helped the researcher restate the responses given by the interviewee ensuring that the researcher has understood what was said by the interviewee. In closing the interviews the researcher summarised the conversation to clear possible misunderstanding, affirmed confidentiality and requested permission to contact the interviewees in case further information or clarity is required. The analysis of the data was done continuously in the study to avoid being overwhelmed by the data. Interpretative data analysis was done.

The following practical steps adopted from Le Compte (2000) were followed in the analysis. The recordings were repeatedly listened to and the information was transcribed. Information from the complementary notes was included to complement the transcripts. This was done at the shortest time lapse after the interviews to ensure all information was captured speedily and accurately. The transcriptions were thick descriptions of the data and contextual data. All the data collected was then arranged and labelled on the basis of the sources of the data e.g. information from interviews with the various participants The transcripts were read repeatedly to find items.

Information from the various documents was re-read and summarised. This step is what Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004:109) refer to as "getting intimate with your data". The next step entailed packaging the data into sets of items, themes and categories until no new information was found in the data. The final step in the data analysis process was elaboration, where the data and conclusions by the researcher were explained on the basis of literature reviewed. The elaboration and interpretation of the data was not only based on literature review but it also reflected the researcher's findings in the field. In packaging the collected data the following frameworks from the literature review were used, such as: Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation explaining the levels and intensity of community participation, Susskind's (1983), patterns of participation cited in Ventriss (1985:435) and Brown's (1997) society-project management partnership cited in Cloete *et.al.*, (2006:236).The challenges were broadly categorised into project-related, community-related political and institutional challenges.

The main interview questions asked to establish how community participation is institutionalised, the challenges and what effects community participation has had on the project were:

1. What are the objectives of the project
2. How was the local community mobilised and how is the local community represented in the project
3. Would you say the local community has influenced decision making processes with regards to the project? What examples can you give?
4. What challenges has government/ community had in working on the project
5. What effects (positive and negative) has the participation of the local community had on the project performance

This chapter presented a detailed description of and justification for the methodologies employed in data generation and analysis. As qualitative case study, this study has been able first, to elicit interpretations, perceptions and meanings of the stakeholders involved in the project and thus helped explain aspects of community participation in Songimvelo

with regard to institutional arrangements for participation, existing challenges and how community participation has influenced project performance. Secondly the participants have contributed in enhancing the validity, reliability and credibility of this study through for example member checking to enhance its usefulness to various audiences, such as policy makers, project planners, project implementers, and communities in their respective roles in the project.

Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of findings

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the research findings of the study on challenges relating to community participation in the Songimvelo Nature Reserve tourism sub-project of the Greening Mpumalanga, Heritage and Tourism flagship programme. The analysis and interpretation is based on the literature reviewed and on the research questions of the study. The analysis will focus on aspects of institutional arrangements for participation, the challenges relating to community participation and the effects of the challenges on the project performance.

4.1 The institutional arrangements for participation

The ensuing account of events on the Songimvelo Nature Reserve indicates a change in the intensity and levels of community participation and a sequential change in the patterns of participation. Efforts to have functional structures for community participation were not really successful until the validation of the land claims which resulted in the community of claimants being able to mobilise themselves into the Ekuphilen'Kwesive Community Property Association, (CPA) with which the MTPA is negotiating a resettlement agreement.

The reserve manager and Participant Five, a senior government official indicated that there have been community forums that they have worked with and consulted with in the past, but these always became dysfunctional. Community communication and liaison structures like the first Songi-Co forum and the Eastern Songimvelo Liaison Committee which were consulted on issues of natural resource utilization to ensure conservation and sustainability of the reserve, became ineffective. According to the Condensed Management Plan for Songimvelo, Steyn (2003:26) these structures became ineffective "as a result of unrealistic expectations and a shift in terms of focus."

The community staying adjacent to the reserve has therefore for years, as indicated by one of the social ecologist, been expected to protect the environment. Illegal acts contrary to conservation, like tree cutting and illegal poaching were and still are closely monitored by the Wildlife Protection Unit and are punishable by law. Government's concern has

been conservation for reasons implied in this statement by Participant One, a government official who sentimentally expressed the beauty and the potential for economic development in Songimvelo as he stated that *"Songimvelo is not a project, it is an asset, a jewel eyed for investment by both local and international investors."*

Community participation has been limited to nature conservation activities and a few job offers. Sixty percent of the interviewees indicated that the reserve has helped provide job opportunities for the community. These job opportunities vary from game rangers, to social ecologists who are trained from the community members to educate communities on the importance of nature conservation, to clerical work in the reserve.All the interviewees also indicated that government has initiated a few community projects varying from sewing, karate classes for the youth and a traditional medicine center. Participant Eight, a government official working in the reserve indicated that most of the projects, with the exception of the medicinal center are not sustainable as the members of most projects mismanage funds and cannot sustain their projects.

There are a few projects in line with the idea of commercialization either completed or ongoing in the reserve. One such commercialization project funded to the amount of R7, 6 million from the Social Responsibility Fund, of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), now the new Tourism Ministry entailed the development of a new tourist entrance gate with the reception area, office, kitchen, store room and ablution facilities, upgrading and maintenance of existing river campsite, tented camps, swimming pool and a braai area along the Nkomazi river, development of a day visitor/ picnic site and the rehabilitation of the gravel road from the new entrance gate to the day visitor centre. This project was officially launched by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Economic Development Environment and Tourism in February 2009. This project as indicated by the project coordinator *"contributed to beneficiation as local contractors were used in the construction and a total of 150 jobs were created, the project also provided opportunity for skills transfer as artisans were trained among community members"*.

The project coordinator raised concern that the local community does not seem to use the swimming pool and highlighted that there might be a need to review the R25 charged as entry fee, as most members of the community might not afford it. It is important to mention that the reserve manager indicated that the swimming pool was not functional because of technical faults. Participant Nine and Ten from the community of claimants indicated that most people could not afford the R25 entrance fee to the day visitor's center. Two other commercialisation projects are the tented camps in Kroomdraai, and the Komati River Lodge that is being reconstructed after it was burnt down by fire in the past year.

Kotze (1997:62) argues that "participation must be assessed in terms of the measure of influence people exercise over development activities affecting their lives", he further argues that "merely taking part in externally designed and managed activities, using facilities provided through a development project does not in itself represent participation and being hired to work in a labour intensive project without having any say over project activities, is also not participation". Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, explains such levels of participation as non-participation, and mere consultation is regarded as tokenism and not meaningful participation.

The validation of the land claims has not only in a major way forced government to realise the importance of the local community in the process of the development of the reserve but it has also elevated the community to land owners and therefore the primary beneficiaries, with the biggest stake, the land. The CPA according to Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation embodies delegated power and citizen control. Friedman (1993:2) in Davids *et al.,* (2005:125) however warns that "community participation all too often means that the development process is being negotiated with only a section of the community." This implies that though the CPA is delegated with power, it can be naïve to assume it represents the interests of all the claimants.

Davids *et al.,* (2005:112) articulates the principles for meaningful participation as outlined in the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation as:

- Sovereignty resides with the people, the real actors of change
- The legitimate role of government is to enable the people to set and pursue their own agenda
- Those who would assist the people with their development must recognise it is they who are participating in support to the peoples' agenda not the reverse.
- To exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities' people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable.

The community of Songimvelo has been passive recipients or at worst mere spectators as far as the management and development of the reserve is concerned as will be demonstrated in the analysis below. Government has been managing the Songimvelo nature reserve unilaterally accounting only to itself, with the community alienated. The concern raised above is an example of paternalism. Paternalism is defined by Ventriss (1985:435) as "when governmental decision-making is centralised and participation is discouraged". Narrow interpretations of the term continue to deprive communities of meaningful participation. Projects and programmes meant for the development of communities continue to be externally designed and then "parachuted" into communities

Susskind (1983) cited in Ventriss (1985:435) highlights three patterns of participation, namely, paternalism, conflict, and coproduction. The account of events in Songimvelo indicate various other patterns of participation not mentioned in the conventional patterns of participation A slight adaptation of the patterns of participation indicate how community participation in Songimvelo has unfolded over time in a linear and sequential process. beginning with alienation, the process goes through coaxing to collaboration and culminate in coproduction. The coaxing is evidenced in the sessions MTPA holds with the community to workshop them with regards to the proposed co- management plan. Collaboration will happen as soon as the community agrees to the signing of the co-management plan. This can be depicted as shown below;

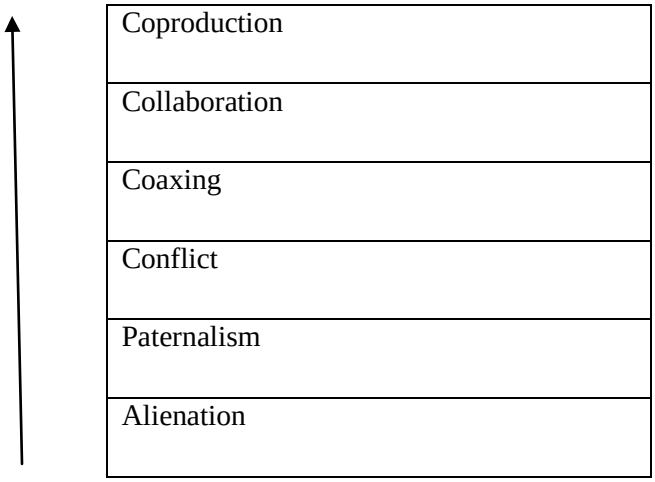


Fig.4.1 Patterns of participation

Although co-production seems imminent in Songimvelo in that there is a draft co-management plan in place and the Songi-Co Forum consisting of four government officials and four members of the CPA , the presumably ideal arrangement for community participation in Songimvelo is clouded with conflict, different interests, ideals, value and uncertainty. The community of claimants has for long been hesitant to get into the deal offered by government. This is evident in the delayed signing of the co management settlement. It remains to be seen if government and the claimants will succeed in this proposed "marriage of convenience." The power, however, is with the claimants.

It is critical to indicate that Participant 4 a government official highlighted that MTPA had hired a consultant to work out a commercialisation strategy for all the reserves and parks in the province and he raised concern about the exclusion of the community in the crafting of the commercialization strategy, stating that *"engaging communities after the strategy document has already been crafted to the end is injustice to communities and this result in the alienation of the community in the process"*.

The ensuing historical account of community participation in Songimvelo as a protected area indicates how non-participation and paternalism are twin occurrences and how community participation is a sequential process through a continuum from non-

participation through tokenism to a degree of citizen control as discussed by Arnstein (1969:127). This process is conflict-laden and requires as Plummer (2000) discusses change of attitudes, change of systems from too much emphasis on bureaucracy to more participatory approaches like the Community Action Planning which emphasise community participation from the conceptualization of projects and programmes through to their monitoring and evaluation

4.2 Challenges relating to community participation

The objectives for full- scale commercialization of the reserve as purposed by the Greening Mpumalanga, Heritage and Tourism in Songimvelo are undermined by a complexity of challenges related to community participation.

4.2.1 Land restitution claims

The very first challenge mentioned by all the participants in the study was that 100% of Songimvelo was under land claims. This has implications for all the stakeholders involved in the development of Songimvelo. The land claim though already validated, has not been finalised pending a few legal processes that have to be followed. The implications of the land restitution claim are that the claimants are now the primary beneficiaries in this development project. The "stakes" have changed with the claimants, as owners of the land. Four government officials from the MTPA indicated how the claimants' newly defined status presumes they have to be a major role player in decisions taken on this development project.

The reserve manager indicated that *"the claimants have already assumed a strong position of making demands and calls for accountability on the MTPA through the Ekuphleni Kwesive Songimvelo Communal Property Association"*. Participant Two and Participant Five a project coordinator and a senior social ecologist respectively attested to the fact that working with the communities has become a challenge and requires more patience from officials, and time to hear what communities have to say. The validation of the land claims has not only in a major way forced government to realise the importance of the local community of claimants in the process of the development of the reserve but it has also elevated the community to land owners and therefore the primary

beneficiaries. With the biggest stake, the land, the claimants have become a force to reckon with and their voice has to be heard and no decisions on the reserve can be taken without their meaningful engagement.

4.2.2 Contradicting ideals

There are glaring indications of differences in the direction of the development of Songimvelo Game Reserve between the government and claimants. It is important to highlight that officials from government tend to downplay these differences whilst the claimants are emotive about the contradictory ideals. The contradictions pertain mainly to land use and the desired future development of Songimvelo. Land claimants interviewed indicated that they reside in the reserve with their cattle, and that they want their land back for livestock farming as that has been their way of sustaining their livelihoods. Participant Twelve a claimant highlighted that the *"claimants at the reserve are setting up new boundaries extending their grazing fields and shrinking the conservation area"*.

MTPA on the other hand is concerned with nature conservation and commercialization of the reserve which seems to government the best route to enhance tourism in the area and to ensure sustainable development of the communities in this protected area. This is evident in some of the statements from three government officials respectively Participant One, dealing with project investments, states that "*The communities need to be educated to understand that farming in cattle is not as lucrative as tourism investment would be, e.g. the profit one could make on game sales is incomparable to what one can get from cattle farming"*. The same sentiment was expressed in the statement by Participant Three, a director in the tourism directorate that *"The community needs to be conscientised, educated to see the bigger picture to see three to four years from now - I trust the gap in understanding is narrowing"*. The other comment by Participant Four an official dealing with enterprise development was, "*Communities do not have what I could term Commercial Intelligence- they do not for instance know the value of game – game sales are far lucrative than cattle farming, communities still need to be taught on these things. I put the blame on government in this regard. Government is supposed to be doing workshops on these issues"*. MTPA hopes for the community to think in the same way

government does, seeing commercialization as the most reasonable and lucrative way to improve the lives of this rural community. This has caused a split among the claimants themselves. The land claim issue is very emotive, how emotive the situation was, was attested to by Participant Seven, a social ecologist who indicated that "*workshops planned for communities turn into heated meetings and debates over issues, there are disagreements and sometimes a feeling of being misrepresented by their leadership, has caused lot of tension among the claimants themselves.*

The tension has not been just amongst the claimants, government itself has not been speaking in one voice. Participant Five stated, "*It is ridiculous how government does not speak in one voice, one government department even fenced-off land and gave it to the community for cattle grazing inside the reserve, and there is competition over prime land between game and cattle.* The game reserve manager indicated that the local municipality was not involved in the project nor was the project part of the IDP. The tensions are a reflection of a difference in values. The MTPA in its strategy wants a shift from primary factor tourism which is driven mostly by natural sites to an investment driven tourism which is strongly profit driven MTGS (2007:9) whilst some of the claimants value their subsistence farming. The existing tensions also arise due to the restrictive conditions of the resettlement agreement which does not allow the claimants to occupy the land, as the land use cannot be changed.The tensions and disagreements attest to Mngxali's (2006:10) assertion that it is flawed to think there is a community, because communities are not homogenous.

One of the conditions set for the resettlement of the land to the claimants is that they establish a body that would represent the community of claimants and get into a co-management agreement of the reserve with government. The Ekuphleni Kwesive Songimvelo Communal Property Association [CPA] has been formed and delegated the power by the claimants. The CPA is chaired by the local traditional leadership.

In line with national prescripts governing land restitution claims in protected areas, a settlement agreement in respect of the Songimvelo Community Land Restitution Claims prescribes in its Annexure C for a Co-Management Plan, Co-management Agreement and

a Co-Management Committee. The national prescripts are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in February 2005 amended 2007 by the then ministries of Agriculture and Land Affairs (DLA) and Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). The committee has been formed in Songimvelo, it is known as the Songimvelo Game Reserve Co-Management Committee (SGRCMC). It is constituted by four members, two from the MTPA and the other two from the CPA. This is the forum through which decisions will be taken on the issues discussed in the Co Management Agreement which among others relate to restrictions on land-use, the beneficiation package, income generation, sharing of revenue, use of biological resource and access to claimed properties. The demands as made by the CPA relate mainly to employment, business opportunities, ownership and co- management and are articulated below:

- The CPA wants to know figures of game removed from Songimvelo either by live capture (translocation or trophy hunting).
- The CPA wants 50% profit share of income from 2006 to 2008 and a 60% profit share from 2009 onwards on the income on Songimvelo.
- Personnel has to be recruited from the CPA on a permanent basis five of the executive committee members have to be paid a salary for their participation in Songimvelo activities such as meetings.
- The CPA wants to be provided with financial statements of Songimvelo from 2005 to date.
- Learnerships available should give preference to members of the claimants.
- Recruitment of personnel for work in the reserve e.g. on field rangers should be 60% from claimants and 40% from the surrounding communities.

These demands are indicative of two issues, first, that the government through its agency has not been accountable to the community of claimants on any of the issues raised. Secondly, these demands indicate a move to some degree of citizen control. This time government is called to be transparent, accountable and ensure justice is done so that the

claimants benefit from all the revenue and profits government collects using the community's resource, the land.

4.2.3 Uncertainty and mistrust

The model proposed by MTPA for the development of the reserve is the Community-Private-Public Partnership (CPPP). Government is lobbying for co- management of the reserve with the community. Neither the resettlement nor the co-management agreement had been signed during the time of the interviews. The imagery used by one official in illustrating the desired relationship between government and the claimants is that of a marriage so that they present a united front "*only after this "marriage" will the private sector be wooed into the partnership completing the proposed CPPP model of partnership"*. It is important for the researcher to mention that MTPA held an investor conference on the 22 October 2009 in the province to market the various parks and reserves to the potential investors to give a profile of the reserves and parks to potential investors. Participant One, a government official indicated that some potential investors have adopted a wait and see approach to avoid taking risk in investing in an uncertain environment whilst other investors go directly to the claimants to present what they can offer, the official added that this *"could be detrimental for communities as they may enter into agreements that may compromise them."* The implication is that government has to continue a redefined role of cushioning and guiding communities and not taking decision for communities.

This state of affairs in Songimvelo does not afford any of the stakeholder's guarantees on what will happen after the land claim is signed and sealed. The MTPA may, as indicated by a social ecologist, be forced to withdraw and take all removable assets with, and leave the community with fixed assets. The imminent change of land ownership, gives the community of claimants the right to choose who to work with. The uncertainty was evident in a concern raised by a claimant on "*how in the whole country, communities usually claim for the sake of claiming and fail dismally managing the land productively on their own after the land claim settlement"*. The challenges in Songimvelo are made complex by an argument highlighted by Emmett (2000:503) who argues that

development interests are wider than a community within a geographic boundary and "no community is so isolated that it does not have to contend with the power of larger structures, market forces and policies over which it has little control." There are disagreements among the claimants themselves on the proposal by government for co-management of the reserve, this is accentuated by mistrust and uncertainty about the intentions of the other stakeholders and about the benefits of "giving" their land

4.3 The effects of the challenges on the project performance

The conservation side of this development project is ongoing in spite of the challenges the MTPA is faced with. The discussions in this chapter are evidence of a delayed implementation plan due to community participation related challenges. At present, neither the settlement agreement nor the co- management agreement has been signed. The MTPA is currently engaged in a process to workshop the communities on the Co-Management Plan. The commercialization of the nature reserve has basically remained at what the contextualization phase MTGS (2007:112-113) terms the "organising for growth stage", primarily because of challenges related to community participation in the development decisions on the reserve.

Phase 1: **Organizing for growth phase**: (Short Term) 2007- 2008

- This phase consists of a long list of ground laying issues, only a few will be mentioned to highlight the delays.
- Settlement of land claims
- Concluding co- management plans and benefit sharing arrangements with community land owners
- Consensus with relevant stakeholders
- Detailed business plans and fund raising for reserves (Songimvelo Nature Reserve listed)

- Drafting of Integrated Infrastructure Maintenance and Upgrade Plan for rehabilitation of MTPA parks including improvement of access and development of infrastructure
- Drafting of Integrated Reserve Management Plans for all parks including zoning for developments

Phase 2: **Growth take-off phase**: (Medium Term) 2008-2010

- Implementation and conclusion of projects for flagship reserves
- Finalization of outstanding land claims including co-management and benefit sharing agreements
- Implementation of Integrated Infrastructure maintenance and upgrade plan
- Promotion and marketing of new developments
- Upgrading service levels
- Full participation by communities in support of transformation objectives
- Detailed business plans and fund raising for priority projects for other MTPA parks

Phase 3: **Rapid Growth Phase** (Long Term) 2011-2016

- Further product development in MTPA parks
- Managing and maintaining facilities
- Operation of facilities to international standards

The above phases outline time frames in the project to commercialise Songimvelo and it is evident from the findings of this study that the project is delayed and bogged down by ground laying issues identified in Phase 1: Organising for growth phase, as neither has the land been formally returned to the claimants nor has the co-management agreement

been signed to date. These ground laying issues speak to community participation related questions and until these are resolved amicably the project might not achieve its objectives of integrating conservation and commercialisation in Songimvelo.

Although the land has not been formally handed over to its rightful owners, the imminent resettlement agreement has ushered in the need for institutional arrangements that would enable meaningful participation. The community of claimants will not just be mere beneficiaries should the project to commercialise Songimvelo be implemented successfully. Through the power delegated to the CPA they will have their voice heard in the management of the reserve and they will have influence on decisions of development. The findings presented in this chapter also indicate possible future research in the area to see the proposed CPPP model at work, its challenges, benefits and effectiveness in bringing a better life for rural communities in this protected area.

As discussed in the literature review section of this study, development projects and programmes, are a mechanism for policy implementation. The success of projects and programmes is a reflection on government's effectiveness, good governance and accountability. Community participation is a major determining factor to government's success in development projects. Meaningful community participation is a merge of government's power with people's power towards a common goal of making the lives of the people, particularly rural communities better. Meaningful community participation eliminates the means/ end dichotomy in the objectives and rationale for participation in projects, it becomes a means to an end and should not be compromised by both government and communities. It is not about replacing bureaucratic approaches with participatory approaches in projects, but it is about combining these approaches. In doing so that the rationale for community participation in projects and programmes which is, delivery of project outputs and empowerment of communities is achieved.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter concludes the study by looking at the purpose and objectives of the study in relation to the research findings. This study investigated community participation, its nature, rationale, challenges relating to community participation and the effects of community participation in the Songimvelo tourism development project. Furthermore this chapter presents recommendations that can mitigate challenges to community participation and make community participation in this development project meaningful to the level of coproduction. Finally, suggestions are made for possible future research. The research questions this study sought to answer were:

- What are the institutional arrangements for community participation in the various stages of the project?
- What have been the effects of community participation on the projects' performance in the various stages of the project?
- What are the challenges for community participation in the various stages of the project?

The conclusions drawn from this study are that communities are still subjected to narrow interpretations of participation even with the democratic dispensation. From the evidence gathered government has literally been managing the reserve unilaterally for years. The initiative to commercialise the reserve has afforded local contractors tenders to do work in the project, and some local people have been trained in certain skills to work in the project but this does not amount to meaningful community participation. Meaningful participation as discussed in the study pertains to the degree to which the locals are strategically positioned to influence decision-making processes in a development project.

The validation of the land claims is the only reason that has awakened government to the importance of this community as a stakeholder of note. It is clear that there is a direct link between the stake one has and the power to influence decision-making. The land restitution claim translated the community of claimants to primary beneficiaries and

therefore to a position of power in decision-making. It is evident that it takes more than just providing indigenous knowledge for local communities to be considered participating beyond consultation in development projects. Neither the government nor the community of Songimvelo had institutional arrangements for participation. Community structures like the first Songi- Co forum became defunct, the project Heritage, Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism does not even form part of the local Albert Luthuli municipality's IDP. It is the land restitution claim that has triggered this rural community to mobilise its people into action.

Community participation in Songimvelo is made complex by two major challenges, namely, that government invested in land that it did not have ownership of and that the resettlement agreement gives the land rights back to the community without the right to occupation. The resettlement agreement stipulates that land-use cannot be changed. This conditional resettlement has led to tension and disagreement among the claimants as some desire to continue with their traditional way of sustenance, which is cattle farming; whilst others buy into the idea of the commercialization of the reserve. There is a major of conflict between this ideal of a profit - driven economy in the reserve and subsistence cattle farming. The development strategy developed by the MTPA is alienating and not contextualised. The competition for prime land between cattle and game in the reserve is evidence of competing values and ideals on the development of the reserve.

The delays in the signing of the resettlement agreement and the co-management agreement are indicative of a lack of trust in government by the community of clients. The CPA is cautious not to risk taking government into confidence only to be dispossessed of their land, this time around with their consent. The prevailing tension and the contradicting ideals create uncertainty for other potential stakeholders like the private sector which could be major role-players. Unless all the existing tensions are resolved in an amicable way, the intended development project will not happen. Development has to come in terms and conditions set by locals for it to be legitimated and owned by the locals.

Authentic community participation as Arnstein (1969:217) explains encompasses delegated power, partnership and citizen control which enable communities to "negotiate, engage in trade offs and obtain managerial power." The advent of the Community Property Association in Songimvelo, the proposed co-management of the reserve, positions the community of claimants strategically to bargain and to benefit within the proposed CPPP context

This study presents the following recommendations with regard to lessening challeges relating to community participation and ensuring that communities are instrumental in driving their own development as key major players, reaching a meaningful participation level of coproduction. Co-production as discussed in Wenzel (1996:49-53) is the ideal pattern for community participation, it advocates for power-sharing among stakeholders and "emphasises the legitimacy of each of the stakeholders' involvement, willingness to share in decision-making and responsibility for the development".

5.1 Developing a shared vision

There is no clear and shared vision of the future for Songimvelo over and above it being a protected area. Although Songimvelo is not fully commercialised, the community/ claimants have not contributed into what the government agency seeks to achieve. Emphasis is on educating or even trying to convince the claimants on the benefits and lucrative possibilities that commercialised tourism has over cattle farming. A shared, contextualised, "homebrewed" compelling vision of the future created by all concerned stakeholders with the community / claimant's ideas taken into account can ease the tension and have a people working towards a common goal. If strategies for development are crafted by consultants and communities are only consulted after the strategy development, they are likely to see the process as alienating and undermining. Chances of resistance to the implementation of a top-down strategy are always enormous as communities do not identify with or own a strategy crafted without their inclusion, chances of such a strategy not being grounded in the reality of the community and therefore being irrelevant are enormous. A shared vision of the future would translate to a shared value system as the vision would articulate the benefits of the proposed

partnership. Government's approach in Songimvelo has been presenting a list of do's and do nots to the community.

5.2 Communities to take advantage of the changed policy context in SA

The conditions set by the resettlement agreement in protected areas like Songimvelo could be a new form of dispossession of the land from communities. The existing policy context in the country the institutional arrangements for participation and the opportunity to enter into co- management agreements with other key stakeholders can assist communities/ claimants to bargain on their terms on issues like profit-sharing and others. It is incumbent upon community leadership to ensure that community interests supersede personal agendas. If the MTPA threatens to move out of the reserve with all the removable assets already invested by government in the reserve, and leave only non-removable assets, chances of deterioration are enormous as the community does not have the capital or the resources to sustain activity in the reserve. The resettlement agreement speaks directly to the beneficiation of communities, broadening the narrow idea of mere job opportunities and skills transfer to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). The proposed partnership can work to the advantage of the community should the CPA use their delegated power to the benefit of all the claimants, be transparent, accountable and ensure efficient management of acquired resources.

5.3 Government to redefine its role

It is important for government to redefine its role from that of a big brother attitude to that of a middleman between communities and the private sector. It is a known fact that the private sector is profit-driven, and government is obliged to "cushion" communities from entering into deals with the private sector, which may disadvantage them in the long run. The model below depicts the recommended role of government as middleman, acting as a link between the communities and the private sector.



The proposed CPPP model should genuinely give communities the prerogative to decide who to give concession on the land. Communities should be given the prerogative to decide on the packages for beneficiation. The commercialization strategy should not be done by consultants outside of the community and then be marketed to the community of claimants, whatever deals meant for the community must be transparent. It has to be deals with the community and not for the community.

5.4 Redefining community participation

The narrow interpretations of participation are persistent in government initiated projects. Government institutions and officials still pride themselves in the number of jobs created for communities, contracts awarded to local contractors and the training and transfer of skills. These narrow interpretations fail to convince the community that they will ever be viewed beyond just mere providers of labour, and that their participation is transient, and lasting only for the period of the implementation phase of a project. It is time that government views communities as equal partners, who will participate in a project from the conceptualization and contextualization stage of the project through to monitoring and evaluation of the project performance.

Meaningful participation can instill in communities a broader perspective of their role as equal partners in the decision making process. The community of Songimvelo could be participants in the global economy itself as they strike lucrative deals with international and national investors through game sales and on a resource (their land) that has for years been benefitting others at the exclusion of the land owners themselves.

5.5 Developing capacity for communities to participate

The new role that the community of claimants has to play in a community-public-private partnership (CPPP) has implications for capacity building. This of course goes beyond mere artisan training. This implies the need for capacity building in aspects of bargaining, tourism, understanding the global economic trends and investment to cite a few examples. Government has therefore to allocate budget for capacity building programs that will equip this community to decision makers and global economic players of note.

5.6 Contextualizing development projects

There is a need for government to take into consideration the context in which a development project is initiated. Government sees Songimvelo as a tourism destination on one hand and the community sees their land as grazing land. These two perspectives seem irreconcilable and in competition and with no chances for cooperation and co-existence. Government should in its commercialization strategy capitalise on the possible link between tourism and cattle farming. This would of course lead to less resistance from the community of claimants. Proper land use zoning would then be done to avoid the existing tension and competition for prime land between game and livestock. Cattle-farming cannot be dismissed, thrown out of the window as irrelevant. Contextualizing the commercialization of Songimvelo would have avoided all the uncertainty and mistrust as claimants feel the project could be a new form of dispossession of their land and disregard of their values and way of life.

5.7 Strengthening intergovernmental relations

The disjointed decision making is evident in the proclamation of part of the reserve as grazing land by one provincial government whilst the resettlement agreement from the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) has a clause stating that the land use in Songimvelo cannot be changed and that the land will be given back to its owners without the right to occupation. Such contradictions can only be avoided if government speaks in time and in one voice to communities.

The Heritage, Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism Programme was launched as one of the key provincial flagship programmes aimed at having a high impact on the lives of communities with its various projects. Its absence in the IDP document of the local Albert Luthuli Municipality is indicative of unaligned plans and priorities between the local and provincial government. It is indicative of a lack of commitment by government to its own ideal of evolving power and resources to local government as these are closer to the grassroot and understand the context and dynamics in their localities.

Conclusion

Arnstein (1967:216) argues that meaningful community participation is about redistribution of power. It is evident from the findings of the study in answer to research question 1 that the existing institutional relationship has been based on paternalism and contrary to meaningful community participation. The challenges experienced in Songimvelo vary from conflicting values and ideals attest to research question 2 that making meaningful participation real and tangible and redistributing power, is a process laden with social, political and economic challenges. The findings of this study finally indicate in relation to research question 3 that a project can be negatively affected if community participation issues are not amicably addressed. The objectives of the Heritage, Greening Mpumalanga and Tourism project which are, to preserve the province's environmental and heritage resources and promote sustainable tourism in the pursuit of socio-economic development can be attained with the meaningful participation by both the government and the community.