

THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF MINING: EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES OF MINING INDUCED RELOCATION

Abstract

This thesis critically explores a social reality (*i.e.* a resettlement process) from the perspective of a local community through the collection and analysis of empirical data, focusing on the nature of the power relations between affected communities and their traditional leadership, and uncovers some of the deeper dynamics at play between the traditional authority and its constituencies. The nature and evolution of these power dynamics was influenced by 150 years of Bafokeng social and political history, shaped by the discovery of minerals, by repeated challenges of constituencies to the leadership and their respective constant repositioning in the balance of powers, and by the advent of representative democracy.

This thesis argues that the wealth engendered by mining revenues, and the agreements that the Bafokeng traditional authority and mining companies entered into on the one hand; and the fragility of such wealth and contractual arrangements due to growing dissatisfaction within communities as well as competing land claims by individuals within the Royal Bafokeng Nation on the other (threatening the very basis on which this wealth is built), have contributed to shift the leadership style in the Royal Bafokeng Nation from one emphasising participatory democracy and checks and balances, thereby tending to a relatively stable balance of powers; to a more authoritarian and centralised one, stripping institutions such as traditional councils and *lekgotla* of their (counter) powers, and co-opting representatives of communities on the ground such as the *kgosanas* (headmen).