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**The dynamics of community participation: evidence from
practice**

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Abstract

This study investigated the dynamics of community participation (CP) manifest in participatory processes, both formal ('invited' or 'induced') and informal ('created' or 'organic'), in two Tswana speaking rural communities in Botswana, namely *Mogonye* and *Molepolole*. Specifically, the study examined, by way of comparison, how the 'created' (*Motshelo*) or 'induced' (MMDT) spaces for participation that are set up to regulate collective community engagement enable or constrain the control of decision-making processes by the poor and marginalised.

This investigation was motivated in part by the controversies that have led to a characterisation of CP as tyrannical and the prevalence of 'elite capture' in 'induced' forms of participation. The study was also inspired by the desire to assess what opportunities or 'spaces' that are 'organic' and development-oriented such as *Motshelo* can offer, and to explore the possibility of incorporating their insights into CP theory and practice as a means of addressing current theoretical shortcomings.

The study used a qualitative case study research design, with the construction and comparison of two case studies relying on interviewing and document analysis as main data collection methods complemented by the method of observation. The sampling strategy used to identify the research sites – participatory practices and villages - and interviewees was purposive: this strategy enabled the identification of contrasting cases and rich information sources that were served to elaborate emerging insights and theory.

The findings of the research reveal that both formal and informal forms of practice are inherently exclusionary, but their distinct dynamics mean that this proceeds in different ways. Despite their privileged position in CP theory, formal processes are in one way or the other, susceptible to 'elite capture' or the more pro-poor 'elite intervention' owing largely to the nature of their institutional requirements which constrain rather than enable participation among the very people that such spaces are intended to empower.

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Abbreviations

CP	Community Participation
CD	Community Development
PD	Participatory Development
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
CDD	Community Driven Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
VDTs	village development trusts
CBO	Community Based Organisation
VDT	Village Development Trust (VDT)
MMDT	Mogonye Mmamotshwane Development Trust
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
SFCDB	Strategic Framework for Community Development in Botswana
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
NDPs	National Development Plans
RDC	Rural Development Council
RDCD	Rural Development Coordination Division
NSPR	National Strategy for Poverty Reduction
RNPRD	Revised National Policy for Development
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
VDCs	Village Development Committees VDCs
RADP	Remote Area Development Programme
BOCOBONET	Botswana Community Based Organisations Network
DDP	District Development Plans
VET	Village Extension Team
VLC	Village Literacy Committee
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
VHC	Village Health Committee
ROSCAs	Rotating Savings and Credit Associations
PoC	Philanthropy of Community
PfC	Philanthropy for Community
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
TEDT	Tchoebe Enclave Development Trust
DNMM	Department of National Museums and Monuments
GT	Grounded Theory
BURS	Botswana Unified Revenue Services

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Community Participation (CP) is a popular, but contested concept in community development (CD) research and practice. First popularised in health research at the Alma Ata conference in 1978 (Zakus and Lykas 1998), CP has moved from the margins to the centre of CD discourse largely due to the work of Robert Chambers (1994; 1997), who has been instrumental in outlining the concept's key principles and practices. I discuss Chambers' work in some detail in Chapter 2. In particular, his work on participatory development (PD) as an approach, together with its offshoot, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), a methodological toolkit that specifies the principles of collective community engagement, has had a significant impact on CP theory and practice.

The PD approach to CP is central to this study because it informs much of the current participatory practices in developing countries, and this thesis in particular, examines how such PD-influenced CP, forms an element of local community development initiatives in Botswana. For instance, a common theme in policies pertaining to community development in Botswana, relates to the participation of the marginalised in order to have them empowered through control of decision-making processes (MoLG 2012; RNPRD 2002; SFCDB 2010), which is a central premise of PD theory and practice. Although PD and CP are sometimes used interchangeably, in this study they are treated separately. PD is considered as an approach, which specifies the principles under which CP is to be effectively implemented through its methodological toolkit, PRA. The latter is a set of processes of collective community involvement in project formulation and implementation that may be a consequence of PD, or other systematic approaches that

connect development activities to the processes of community life. For the purpose of this study, I link community participation or (simply) participation, or community engagement/involvement, to the goal of 'empowerment', which I take to mean improvement of the socio-economic circumstances of the poor through inclusive collective engagement processes that allow intended beneficiaries to exercise decision-making control over development projects and programmes.

The participation of the poor in development initiatives is considered critical for empowerment to be realised. Within CP discourse, it is argued that "the more the people are involved in decision-making for a project, the more the community is driving the project", which is the basis upon which the World Bank initiated concept of community driven development (CDD), regarded as an innovative form of community based development, is premised (Kiyamusugulwa 2013: 1267). Such inclusive participatory decision-making is considered crucial for the attainment of empowerment - which implies a sustainable and just system of socio-economic relations including broad participation in collective governance. While the involvement of as many people who are poor or marginalised in decision-making processes of projects that are promoted through formal participatory opportunities is considered important for empowerment to be realised, the efficacy of such an ideal is however often uncritically taken for granted.

I therefore ask whether the formal 'invited' or 'induced' opportunities for participation under consideration in this study, which are designed and organised so as to give the poor genuine decision-making influence or control, live up to expectations. It is also worth asking why CP projects and programmes that are designed to benefit the poor and marginalised in these supposedly bottom-up and inclusive spaces, stand accused of being

so susceptible to 'elite capture' (a situation where projects and programmes are hijacked by the already empowered elite who end up controlling the decision-making process at the expense the poor) in ways that informal participatory processes are not?

Such questions are pertinent since according to Eversole (2012), the CP process is conceived within the context of formal agencies of development informed by an institutional framework that is alien to the local context. She therefore argues that instead of reversing the "top-down expert-led model of development", CP subtly perpetuates top-downism "by presenting community action within a project and programme frame" in ways that can influence perceptions and the framing of roles and actions, which might be at variance with how social action is conceived in different local contexts (Eversole 2012: 31).

The task for this research project is therefore to ascertain, through the analysis of empirical data, whether presenting community social action within a project frame plays a part in promoting elite capture and top-downism, which constrain bottom-up inclusive decision-making initiatives, this despite suggestions to the contrary. In particular, it is important to examine the link if any, between a project's structure and its requirements on the one hand, and the manifestation of instances of "elite capture" on the other. It is also pertinent for this study to explore how the elite might, or do, actually "capture" these projects and whether their involvement is necessarily detrimental to the notion of having the marginalised and poor in control of decision-making processes in their local communities or whether they (the elites) might also play an important role in community development.

One way of establishing whether there is a link between a project's structure and top-down expert-led rather than bottom-up pro-poor decision-making control is to compare how formal and informal opportunities for participation are set up with a view to ascertaining the extent to which there is a connection between structure and elite capture. In order to have a clearer understanding of the structure of formal and informal opportunities within which participation takes place, it is important to examine the theoretical significance of these two concepts. Section (1.0.1) below explores the idea of formal and informal opportunities for participation by linking them to the concept of 'spaces for participation' in ways that try to make the distinction between the two clearer and theoretically more insightful.

1.1.1 Formal and Informal Opportunities as 'Spaces for Participation'

The terms formal and informal introduced above and used extensively in this study to identify the differences between opportunities that are systematically ordered and sustained by the government or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and those practices that are culturally organised and sustained by communities respectively. These formal and informal opportunities, which are also referred to as *induced* and *organic* forms of participation (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 31) (discussed in some detail in Section 2.1), are not accepted uncritically. For instance, questions should be asked about the theoretical validity of the formal-informal distinction. I argue in this study that the formal-informal distinction is a helpful means of differentiating between government or agency *induced* opportunities for participation, and those that are *organically* created by the poor and the marginalised themselves. For the sake of theoretical clarity, I adopt the concept of 'spaces for participation' (Cornwall 2002; Gaventa 2004; Cornwall & Coelho

2007; Winkler 2011; Molebatsi 2013) in order to enhance the explanatory force of the formal-informal distinction.

Linking formal and informal opportunities to the notion of 'spaces for participation' is important since it also helps to clarify the status of conceptual categories associated with the concept of 'spaces' namely 'closed', 'invited' and 'created', discussed below, which define and explain the nature of these participatory spaces. It is worth noting that while these categories are crucial in specifying what type of spaces exist, who creates and occupies them, and how these spaces are likely to affect inclusive participatory decision-making processes, the terms formal and informal are also important in distinguishing which of these spaces are officially recognised and those that are not: my argument is that the designation may be, based on how they are structured. Such a distinction is important since it addresses directly the overall goal for this study, which seeks to establish whether the structure of spaces has an influence on the ways in which the poor exercise agency or are marginalised through elite capture.

'Spaces for participation' are defined as the arenas within which "opportunities are created by actors – the state or citizens – for purposes of participating in policy formulation" (Molebatsi 2013: 10). Such spaces are said to be made available by the state or are created by civil society or the local people themselves as a way of having the excluded included, and it is within these arenas that competing ideas seek expression. 'Spaces for participation' are conceived of as a continuum with three main categories, characterised as 'closed', 'invited' and 'created' (Gaventa 2004: 35). As the name suggests, 'closed' spaces are exclusive, and "operate behind closed doors with no intentions of opening up for other actors" while 'invited' spaces are "those into which

people as users, citizens as beneficiaries, are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities, be they government, supranational agencies or non-governmental organisations” (Cornwall 2002: 24). This means that these spaces are made available for the community by outsiders who are not in any way neutral, but have their own agendas for inducing participatory processes in poor communities.

Lastly, ‘created’ spaces are those arenas that are “claimed by less powerful actors from or against the power holders or created more autonomously by them” (Gaventa 2004: 35). Formal opportunities in Botswana can be described as fitting the description of ‘invited’ spaces given that these spaces are created and supported by the government and local communities are invited to participate through the establishment of village development trusts (VDTs). Likewise, ‘created’ spaces are the opportunities such as rotating credit schemes which are informal and autonomously created by the poor or marginalised, and embedded in their everyday life practices. ‘Closed’ spaces would be those occupied by government officials, usually official meetings where they plan and formulate policies and such forums are not open to other players other than those appointed officials.

It is argued that ‘spaces for participation’, especially the invited ones, are dynamic and may not necessarily submit to the power of their creators since such “sites are productive of possibilities of subversion, appropriation, and reconstitution” (Cornwall 2002: 9). However, the extent to which such possibilities for transforming these spaces are available and exploited is an area beyond the scope of this study. What is pertinent to this research is an examination of the extent to which ‘spaces for participation’ enable or hinder inclusive participatory decision-making, because “no matter how participatory “invited spaces” seek to be, they are still structured and owned by those who provide

them" (Cornwall 2008: 275). Such a view is important since it puts into perspective the untenable position that those 'invited' to 'participate' in induced spaces are confronted with. Having to participate on "other people's institutional turf, [the poor] not only start out at a disadvantage [because] they do not necessarily know the rules of the game, but they are also likely to be disenchanting by the promise of participation" (2012: 36). It is on the basis of these concerns that the current study seeks to examine how these spaces are set up, the nature of the structures created, and what role the creators and those invited play, and how this promote or encumber inclusive decision-making control.

This study argues that inclusive decision-making control of participatory processes may be influenced by the ways in which opportunities for participation are structured. This means that how these spaces are set up, including the rules that regulate collective engagement, can either enable or constrain the inclusive participation of the poor and marginalised in the decision-making processes of development projects that are intended to be empowering and emancipatory. It is therefore important for this study to assess the significance of the constitution and organisation of spaces of participation and to establish why formal opportunities for participation are the most amenable to elite capture. It is important to ask what it is that makes elite capture in these opportunities so inevitable. Given the importance of 'structure' in this study, I now consider a conceptual framework that puts emphasis on structural factors and how these influence what roles the elite or the poor play in PD projects.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

One fruitful way of understanding the constitution and organization of CP, and of giving the distinction made between formal or *induced* and informal or *organic* 'spaces of

participation' some firmer conceptual basis is Giddens' (1984) idea of duality of structure. I consider this idea in some detail at the end of the review of literature, but note here that the approach considers agency and structure as equally important for understanding how agents interact with the conditions in which they seek to initiate social action. According to Giddens, agency and structure influence each other in an intricate relationship in which they presuppose each other. An understanding of how agency and structure interact may help shed light on whether both 'invited' and 'created' spaces for participation enable or constrain inclusive decision-making control of projects by poor agents or they are simply hijacked by the elite for their selfish agendas.

Furthermore, this framework helps to challenge the cornerstone of CP by questioning whether the notion of inclusive decision-making is compatible with the norms and values (or rules and resources) that regulate informal participatory opportunities. Such an analysis gives greater privilege in CP debate, to hitherto neglected concepts such as *Botho/Ubuntu* (an African philosophy of life prevalent in Southern Africa): these offer a means of explaining how philosophical foundations have shaped and allowed the persistence of informal participatory practices and how areas of potential conflict with technical blueprints arise given the very different set of precepts and values regarding how CP should be translated into practice. Bringing together debates about personhood, Ubuntu, agency and structure in PD theory and CP discourse, is a novel approach that gives the current research a distinctive character in terms of theoretical insights and advancement of knowledge. In particular, *Ubuntu* helps us to understand that the motivation to act is not necessarily based on the concept of gain, but is tied to people's values and norms that promote cooperative behaviour.

Another advantage of Giddens' framework is that it also addresses the agency-structure conundrum, which results from the exclusive promotion of one aspect at the expense of the other, as is the case with methodological individualism, which emphasizes agency while ignoring structural influences. Methodological individualism is a perspective which is based on the understanding that “actions, activities, decisions and behaviours represent a meaningful choice”, and as a consequence, “intentionality and the capacity of actors to exhibit conscious and goal driven behaviour are considered to be the defining characteristics of agency” (Connor 2011: ii98). Such an understanding of agency is influenced by rational actor models (also known as rational choice models) that attribute behaviour to the pursuit of self-interest by relatively atomized individuals (Cleverly 2007; Connor 2011). The emphasis within PD literature on the ability of agents to operate as independent individuals gives the impression of a ‘self-agentive, self-serving, autonomous individual capable of dealing with any situation’ (de Bruijn, van Dijk and Gewald 2007), a position that is highly contentious and difficult to sustain since agency is not always successful. The individualized view of agency attributes human action to meaningful rational choice, which is deliberate and goal-driven, based on economic calculations and the intention to make the maximum possible (material or monetary) utility or benefit (Connor 2011: ii99). As such, individuals or ‘single actors’ are regarded as the direct change agents solely responsible and accountable for their circumstances, not structural factors (Connor 2011: ii98).

However, this over-emphasis on the ability of autonomous individuals to act as rational change agents cannot adequately explain why intended beneficiaries of development projects tend to cede decision-making control to local elites. It is therefore necessary to adopt a framework of analysis that takes into account the importance of both agency and

structure in the examination of CP practices in ways that help to shed light on the dynamics involved. I argue in this study that an approach that takes into account the complexity of the agency-structure relationship is better able to account for the emergence of elite capture and subsequent marginalisation of the poor.

Of significance in this analysis are the rules and resources that Giddens (1984) argue constitute structure. I note that these are likely to be weighted in favour of the elites – those who have access to, control the terms of, and can mobilize structure in their favour. As such, structure for instance, can take the form of rules that are laid out in a project's constitution, which may not be too obvious to those who are less educated. These rules can be manipulated by the elite to advance their agenda in ways that can side-line intended beneficiaries. Galvan (2005) divides these rules and resources into superstructures (administrative structures and formal rules) such as agency projects and infrastructure (informal rules, habits, norms and values) such as *Motshelo*. Such a distinction is useful for this study as it helps to make the difference between formal and informal structures clearer. Cleaver (1999) makes an interesting observation regarding the role of superstructures in PD processes arguing that they are popular with development agencies and practitioners because they are considered to offer the best solutions to addressing problems associated with cheating and free riding given the sanctions imposed through formal rules.

In addition, Cleaver notes, superstructures are favored in development since they help to render legible the elusive concept of 'community' by translating individual action into collective effort in ways that are "visible, analyzable and amenable to intervention and influence" (1999: 600) such as poverty related projects. In this case, emphasis is on the

advantages of verifiability despite the fact that the concept of community is poorly defined and therefore confusing (Guijt and Shah 1998). This enthrallment with a physically visible community has led researchers and practitioners alike to take superstructures for granted as if they are a neutral technology in the context of community development. As such, very little attention in research terms has been directed towards investigating the possibility that these popular superstructures may actually have a negative effect on the ability of the poor to control decision-making processes. This is despite the fact that these technologies are not neutral since they impose their own rules and requirements that the poor and marginalized might find difficult to unpack and as a consequence, expose the participatory processes to “elite capture”.

It is important to point out that the concern in mainstream development literature tends to be on whether these superstructures are able to “work with the grain' of the socio-cultural environment" (Dill 2010: 23) Thus, questions about the likelihood of formal rules impeding collective decision-making control of the marginalized and poor on the basis that the rules and requirements imposed might actually exclude the intended beneficiaries, have rarely been raised. I therefore argue in this study that the exclusion of the poor and the subsequent capture of decision-making by the elite need to be considered within the context of these intervening superstructures and the associated rules and requirements in order to ascertain whether such structures enable or encumber active agency among the poor in ‘invited’ spaces. What is important in this instance is to know what structures exist and how agents interact with the imposed rules and requirements in pursuit of empowerment. The argument here is that the rules and requirements in both ‘invited’ or ‘induced’ and ‘created’ or ‘organic’ spaces play a part in as far as who is included or excluded because some agents might run afoul of such requirements and, as a consequence, miss out.

Thus, simply being counted in as participants does not necessarily mean that those individuals in question are ‘included’ in the strict sense since their ‘participation’ may simply be tokenistic either by choice, or more significantly, because the requirements of the ‘space’ they are invited to participate in, may impose subtle restrictions on intended beneficiaries, which exclude them. Genuine inclusion in this study, entails having a clear understanding of what ‘rules’ exist and how agents can negotiate their way while being able to manipulate ‘resources’ in order to attain empowerment. This means that the preferred framework for this study, in particular, its focus on the interrelationship between agency and structure, links what agents can possibly do, or are able to do, with the constraints that might limit such possibilities in a particular context. For example, while all villagers may be invited to participate in a project for the whole community, their participation in decision-making might be constrained by the rules that define the attributes or qualifications for one to be elected as either secretary or treasurer of a community based organisation (CBO), especially in ‘invited’ spaces. It is therefore important to consider a framework that emphasises the interaction between opportunities and constraints in ways that help to explain how and why such opportunities may be accessible to other people, while others, especially the poor and marginalised, are relegated to the periphery or excluded altogether. In sum, the agency-structure framework is important as an analytical tool for examining the link, if any, between structure and elite capture of spaces for participation, and subsequent marginalisation of the intended beneficiaries.

This section has provided the background against which a critical analysis of CP phenomena can be based. It has highlighted some important contested areas of CP and

has linked the concept of ‘spaces for participation’ with the notions of formal and informal opportunities in collective community engagement and so helps this study to problematize the latter. More significantly, a conceptual framework, which is relevant to the study has been identified and briefly explored. The next section presents the area of study, highlights the aim of the study, and discusses the empirical sites from which data for the study was obtained.

1.3 Area of Study

This thesis, situated in research into community development (CD), investigates how development-oriented opportunities for participation in Botswana that are intended to empower the rural poor are structured. The aim of this study is to critically assess the extent to which participatory opportunities that people create for themselves or those that are made available to them by the government or development agencies enable or hinder those taking to assume control of decision-making processes of projects and programmes which are intended to benefit them. Such a critical analysis pays particular attention to the ways both formal and informal participatory spaces or opportunities influence the character and trajectory of collective community engagement. The underlying assumption for this study is that how participatory opportunities are set up has a significant influence on the extent to which inclusive participatory decision-making is realised and the forms that ‘inclusion’ take. The important question to ask is how ‘induced’ ‘spaces for participation’, which are designed to promote the decision-making control of the poor end up enabling ‘elite capture’ while hindering the empowerment of the marginalised.

While ‘elite capture’ is indeed a product of the unequal and uneven access to power, resources and knowledge, it is however not very clear from the literature to date, how the

elite ‘wrest’ decision-making control from the intended beneficiaries. The analysis presented in this thesis is based mainly on interviewee accounts regarding who participates, the roles that participants play and the possible effects of such involvement. But an objective analysis of the role of elites in CP projects is needed in order to avoid labelling everything associated with their involvement as counter-productive. Following Musgrave and Wong’s (2016) distinction between ‘elite capture’ and ‘elite control’, I argue in this study that while it is largely problematic and controversial, the participation of the elite in formal projects is not without merit. Hence, this study explores both the positive and negative effects of elite participation in community development work.

While current development thinking in general and the policy framework in Botswana in particular, seeks to promote inclusive participatory decision-making through empowerment projects and programmes (SFCDB 2010: 13), there are concerns about the contradiction between the government’s centralised top-down planning and its decentralised system of governance at the local level (Molebatsi 2013; Obasi and Lekorwe 2014). It is therefore important to explore how such top-down centralised planning affects the planning and implementation of bottom up local level governance structures such as village development trusts designed to promote the inclusion of the poor and marginalised at village level in the development planning process for their local area. In order to explore these and other questions presented thus far, the current study relied on data obtained from a village-based development trust and a self-help participatory practice known as *Motshelo*, which are briefly described below.

1.3.1 The Empirical Sites

Data about participatory spaces are largely drawn from two contexts: formal registered opportunities for participation represented by the village development trust (VDT) known as Mogonye Mmamotshwane Development Trust (thereafter MMDT), and the informal self-help participatory practice known as *Motshelo* or rotating credit scheme created by the local people as part of their means of managing everyday life challenges such as poverty. The formal VDT was formally established in Mogonye village in 2008 and is owned and run by the community. This Trust is compared to *Motshelo* (started in 2009), which is organised and managed by a group of women who reside in *Molepolole* village. The two research sites are Setswana speaking rural communities located within a 40-60km radius from Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. Mogonye is located to the South West of the capital while Molepolole is to the North West. These two sites were chosen for comparison because the participatory processes that are located in these areas are not only development-oriented and intent on affording those involved decision-making control, but they also represent extremes on the formal-informal dimension that is used to distinguish forms of participatory practice.

As pointed out earlier, the participatory spaces of interest for this research are categorised as formal and informal. Formal opportunities refer to those prospects for empowerment that are availed or induced by the government of Botswana for its citizens, especially those in rural communities. A key defining feature of formal opportunities for participation is that they are government supported, officially registered and recognised, and are expected to include everyone in the village since they are meant to conserve and exploit, for income generation, available natural resources within a given village for the benefit of all. According to the strategic framework for community development in Botswana prepared by the Ministry of Local Government, the policies and strategies the

government has developed “provide a strong foundation for community development that is based on a community-driven approach” (MoLG 2010: 10) in order to “enhance popular participation in the development planning and implementation processes, as a basis for broad-based, balanced and sustainable development” (MoFDP 2002: 13) This is part of the state’s community development initiative which encourages rural communities to form community based organisations (CBOs) known as village development trusts (VDTs) to promote local level development that is facilitated by the government, but managed locally by the villagers as a way of promoting the “empowerment of communities to make decisions” (MoFDP 2010: 10). VDTs are registered entities under the Societies Act of 1989 and are expected to include all villagers in decision making which is consistent with the notion of inclusive participatory decision-making as espoused within the PD paradigm.

Informal opportunities for participation on the other hand, are those openings that the poor communities create for themselves as they seek to empower themselves without outside help (either from government or non-governmental organisations) known as self-help projects. They are not formally recognised by the state or local authorities and do not necessarily need to register in order to become operational.

In order to have a clearer understanding of how the spaces for participation affect collective community engagement, this study draws comparisons between formal (induced) and informal (organic) processes. One fundamental question to ask is whether the two forms should be treated as comparable development-oriented participatory processes. Both ‘projects’ are development-oriented, focusing on income generation in order to improve the socio-economic well-being of participants. According to Eversole

(2012), a case can be made for treating both formal and informal processes as equally important and complementary rather than mutually exclusive because of their orientation towards the improvement of the human condition and well-being. As shown later in this study, the money that is generated through *Motshelo* is used to address at least three of the eight key areas that were identified as critical in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the period up to the year 2015. The MDGs include: "eradicating extreme poverty and hunger"; "achieving universal primary education"; "promoting gender equality and empowering women"; "reducing child mortality"; "improving maternal health"; "combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases"; "ensuring environmental sustainability"; and "developing global partnerships for development" (GoB 2009: 160). By focusing on addressing internationally recognised development concerns, *Motshelo* can therefore be accorded the status of a development strategy at an informal level, which the poor utilise in order to improve their socio-economic well-being.

Another reason for a comparative analysis of this nature arises from the recent interest in the perceived importance of informal participatory processes in project work. For instance, Msukwa and Taylor (2011) propose that development work should as a first step, consider people's existing participatory practices. Using the funeral analogy, the two scholars highlight the fact that communities have existing forms of participatory practices and they argue that these should be considered when planning and implementing development projects. They argue that since the funeral is an "endogenous community institution, in which roles are delegated, acknowledged, understood and acted upon" (Msukwa and Taylor 2011: 60) the motivation to participate is inherent. Community institutions such as the funeral "embed collective social action in everyday life" since it is

a typical example in which “activities are planned, roles are demarcated, responsibilities are assigned, and desired outcomes are realised” (2011: 67). This is in line with Brehony's call for the incorporation of the community's current practice in project planning and implementation. Thus, "the starting point of any project planning in a community context is the current practice of that community" (Brehony 2000: 650). In his view, the absence of such a dimension in project planning and implementation logically leads to project failure because "pseudo participation" (Oakley 1991: 15) rather than genuine collective engagement prevails.

Furthermore, a study of this nature is justified, based on its empirical, theoretical and practical significance for CP research. Empirically, the choice of Botswana as a research site is attractive owing largely to its status as a model democratic country with well-established democratic institutions and a decentralised consultative system of governance, which starts at the village level. It is thus a ‘most likely’ country setting in which to observe genuine efforts to promote and value all forms of CP. One of the main criticisms for the failure of formal participatory practices in developing countries, especially in Africa, has been the issue that such processes are being implemented in countries that do not cherish democratic principles and values with no recognisable democratic institutions to support such local level participatory practices. It is on the basis of such criticisms that this study delimits its focus to the analysis of the post independent era with participatory practices characterised by an entrenched democratic dispensation and decentralized system of local governance, which has enjoyed unparalleled success in Southern Africa. Botswana was therefore a natural choice for a study of this nature, not only because of its fully-fledged democratic institutions and participatory processes, but also its long-

established practice of using traditional institutions such as the *kogtla* (the chief's office) for the advancement of development goals and initiatives in rural communities.

Given its long-standing tradition of using traditional practices in community development initiatives as noted above, the study is also interested in finding out the extent of the degree of 'fit' between formal participatory spaces or opportunities and local norms and values of collective community engagement. Botswana's long history of relying on traditional establishment to promote development is well documented, and its participatory practices are substantially locally driven. It is this interesting mix of locally initiated or induced and driven development supported by formal arrangements that are informed by PD and PRA principles vis-a-vis, local norms and values that regulate collective community involvement that makes this research empirically exciting. How these formal spaces of participation and the local norms and values of collective community engagement interact, and whether the notion of inclusive decision-making is supported in such an environment, is a subject of interest to this investigation.

More so, Botswana is in a unique position in that it relies on local CBOs such as village development trusts that are located in the villages owned and run by the villagers. These CBOs are supported by the government in promoting community development initiatives, which makes it different from other countries that rely on donor-funded local or international NGOs, usually located outside of the village mostly in cities and supported by international aid agencies. It is therefore interesting to find out whether Botswana's unique combination of a vibrant democratic dispensation, decentralised system of governance and the use of CBOs that are run by the local people, is able to deal with issues of elite capture and the marginalisation of the poor in decision-making processes of

formal projects. In particular, the study seeks to ascertain how such government funded and locally managed participatory practices function and whether Botswana has a unique set of challenges given its distinctive political environment and participatory arrangements. As such, Botswana's unique post aid order (with the exception of HIV/AIDS related work), and its role in promoting participatory development-style initiatives through village based and locally managed village development trusts, is compelling as a research site.

As such, while the proposed 'hybridisation' of participatory processes along the lines proposed separately in Brehony (2000), Msukwa (2011) and Eversole (2012) is plausible, questions about how this can be achieved in practice loom large. For instance, how can professionals strike the right balance between their expert knowledge, on the one hand, and the knowledge of the locals, on the other? One of the challenges practitioners are likely to face when trying to combine the local and outside expert knowledge relates to whose institutions to use that is, should it be outside formally induced organisational structures or the organic, local and informal "rules of the game"? (Eversole 2012: 35). The practical reality of actually picking what is appropriate and effective could be rather daunting.

To begin with, it is important to clarify who decides (professionals or locals – the marginalised or elites) which institutions, norms and values to choose and what criteria to use for determining which ones are more important than others and why, which brings us to the classic question in CP discourse: whose "reality or knowledge" counts? (Chambers 1997). This is especially so when we consider the fact that formal opportunities impose their own "rules of the game" and tend to dictate what "is possible, acceptable or not

acceptable" (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 546-547 cited in Eversole 2012: 35), which in turn not only influence the way CP practitioners work, but may also complicate the task of trying to combine formal (induced) and informal (organic) practices. It is therefore worth pondering, whether both formal and informal participatory processes have aspects that are compatible in the light of their differing and unique set of "rules of the game". This highlights the tension between formal and informal participatory processes as the former seek to replace the latter and co-opt the poor and marginalised in exogenous practices in order to encourage collective community engagement.

Given these and other challenges, and the growing interest in the use of both formal and informal processes, it is therefore both desirable and crucial to understand the nature and character of the rules and resources for both processes and how these affect control of decision-making by the poor. Such a comparative analysis should help to explore the feasibility of combining certain aspects from both sides of the 'cultural' divide, and to ascertain what considerations to take into account when doing so. An investigation into how these spaces can enable or constrain control of decision-making process by the marginalised is significant. The reason is that the research reported in this thesis has sought to explore whether and how the structure of spaces for participation influences the ways in which control of decision-making is handled. In order to consider the veracity of such an argument, the research has been guided by the questions below;

1.4 Research Questions

- (a) How are formal and informal opportunities for collective social action in Tswana speaking rural communities of Botswana constituted and organised?
- (b) In what ways do such arrangements enable or constrain active community engagement?

(c) What are the implications of such evidence for CP theory and practice?

The first research question seeks to generate empirical evidence based largely on people's interview accounts regarding how both formal and informal opportunities are structured. An analysis of the ways opportunities for participation are set up is key to our understanding of what spaces exist and what forms of marginalisation and elite capture might arise.

It will be important to establish whether such structures or requirements of the spaces for participation that are to be discussed in this study, are inherently pro-elite with the unintended consequence of naturally attracting the already empowered at the expense of those genuinely in need of empowerment. The extent to which social positions, levels of education and knowledge of the 'rules of the game' are used to take over control of decision-making processes is central to this study as well as any connection between these and how participatory spaces are structured.

Based on the data generated by the first question, the second question is intended to establish the extent to which either informal or formal processes enable elite capture while constraining the inclusion of intended beneficiaries in decision-making processes of projects based on how they are constituted and organised. In particular, it is critical to find out whether such arrangements are easily amenable to manipulation through the use of power and influence to muscle out the poor and take over control of decision-making by exploiting loopholes in the system. Given such possibilities, it is therefore necessary to establish the real drivers of elite capture, which push the poor to the periphery of project control. Such a research dimension is significant as a new line of inquiry given the questions it raises regarding whether the constitution and organisation of spaces for

participation' that are supposed to be pro-poor actually foment the very marginalisation that such opportunities are intended to address. The third question examines the implications of the evidence generated by the first and second questions, in terms of how such findings affect current CP theory and practice.

It is within the context of these unanswered questions that a comparative analysis of this nature is conceived: to consider opportunities and possibilities of broadening our understanding of the convoluted nature of collective community engagement. The overarching goal for the current study is to examine how the 'rules of the game' in both formal and informal spaces of participation impact on the marginalised and poor's ability to control decision-making processes. In addition, it is also hoped that such an analysis would help to detect instances of exclusionary tendencies at different stages of the participatory cycle (for example, formation, formulation, implementation etc.), and possibly clarify how 'elite capture' is achieved and why it seems unavoidable, especially in formal opportunities.

1.5 Organisation of Thesis

This thesis consists of 7 chapters. Chapter 1 highlights the key area for the study, the purpose, rationale and conceptual framework for this research. It argues that the way spaces for participation are constituted and managed is likely to influence how CP unfolds, which may consequently enhance or constrain the poor's chances of controlling decision making processes of development projects. It, thus, notes that it is important to be mindful of what spaces exist, how they are organised, and the ways in which decision-making control of the poor can be undermined by 'elite capture'. Such questions can necessitate a rethink of CP theory and practice by opening new lines of inquiry and

thinking, which can only help deepen our understanding of the complex nature of the dynamics involved.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on community participation in development as a way of providing the background against which participatory practices are considered. PD is the approach that informs the particular form of community development in Botswana and so the chapter starts with a focus on how it has evolved over time and an attempt to define it and to specify the key defining features of PD and its off-shoot PRA. It also presents a critique of CP arguing that the different points raised tend to point to one thing: the elite takeover of decision-making referred to as ‘elite capture’. I argue in this chapter that the involvement of the elite should not be seen as wholly negative, since these local agents also act on behalf of the community in ways that I characterise as ‘elite intervention’.

Chapter 3 reviews participatory development policy and practice in Botswana, focusing on the period since independence. This is followed by an analysis of the policy framework which provides the context within which the operations of village development trusts such as the MMDT ought to be understood. It also highlights community development practice in Botswana in terms of how it is decentralised while, nevertheless, having a centralised planning system. It is argued that just like in the case of participatory development in general discussed in the previous chapter, Botswana’s version of community development is also plagued by ‘elite capture’ which remains unresolved. I reiterate the argument that ‘elite capture is linked to the structure of the participatory spaces in which the poor are invited to participate which require careful examination.

In Chapter 4, I present a discussion on informal practices of community participation which are organically created by the poor and marginalised. It begins with an analysis of rotating savings and credit associations in general as a way of providing the background to informal practices such as *Motshelo* that are common throughout the world in terms of their character and purpose. This is followed by an analysis of women's associations in Africa and concepts such as associational power, self-help and *Ubuntu/Botho*, which are key to understanding why these practices are organised the way they are. In particular, women's associations are informed by people's concept of personhood and community with those in Botswana informed by the *Botho/Ubuntu* philosophy of life which puts emphasis on community needs over those of the individual. It is this background that helps understanding why participation in this setting is more about associational ties rather than a result of rational acts motivated by gain. This chapter offers a different perspective to understanding people's motivations to participate which contradicts rational choice models whose insights are central to mainstream CP theory and practice.

Chapter 5 discusses the research design and data collection methods used for this research. This chapter discusses case study methodology and explain how cases were selected and issues about gaining access. It highlights the data collection methods and explains why these were preferred. The main method of data collection is the interview, which was complemented by document analysis and observation. These methods, in particular interviewing and document analysis were chosen because they helped to generate data that was used to answer the research questions. Since the data used in this study was about describing how participatory practices are organised and set up, the interview is the most appropriate method. This is complemented by documentary

evidence mainly government policies and newspaper reports. The chapter also highlights the challenges associated with the use of an interpreter and how these were resolved.

Chapter 6 presents the research context for the study. It is divided into two main sections: one focusing on Molepolole and Motshelo and the other on Mogonye and MMDT project. Descriptions of the areas are given and are supported by pictorial evidence. This chapter also highlights the differences between these villages in terms of their subsistence and opportunities in a country located in semi arid conditions.

Chapter 7 presents the discussing on the findings from the empirical material. The findings reveal very different ways of organising collective community engagement and raises pertinent points for consideration in both theory and practice. It highlights how informal and formal settings are characterised by a different set of the ‘rules of the game’ that regulate collective community engagement in spaces for participation. The discussion on implications for theory and practice is insightful as it highlights the importance of understanding a different set of motivations for participation that challenge rational choice models. I have outlined the important issues raised in the remaining chapters. I present below the crucial aspects of Chapter 2, which focus on CP in general.

Chapter 2: Community Participation in Development

2.1 Introduction

The five substantive sections that form Chapter 2 of this thesis examine the literature on Community Participation (CP) in Development, the debates that are associated with different conceptions of CP and the fundamental concepts. The review begins with section (2.2), which is an analysis of what CP entails and is followed by a brief history (section 2.3) that reveals how understandings of CP have evolved over time. Section (2.4) pays particular attention to 'Participatory Development' (PD) as the predominant approach and the significant influence it has on participatory practices in developing countries in general. Section (2.4) also focuses on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the approach, especially the paradoxes and controversies associated with the characterisation power, agency, local knowledge, inclusion, institutions and empowerment.

2.2 What is CP?

This section begins with an attempt to answer the question: 'what is CP? In order to understand CP, we need to unpack the concept by focusing on its parts separately and then together. According to Kiyamusugulwa (2013: 1266), "participation signifies people taking part in decision making processes, or the type and level of people's involvement in development planning, projects and practices" and can take different forms such as citizen power, tokenism or non-participation (see ladder of participation below). Community on the other hand, refers "both to geographical entities and to associations of people who share interests or who live in the same area with the same culture, where reciprocity and mutual concern triumph" (Kiyamusugulwa 2013: 1267). There is no consensus regarding

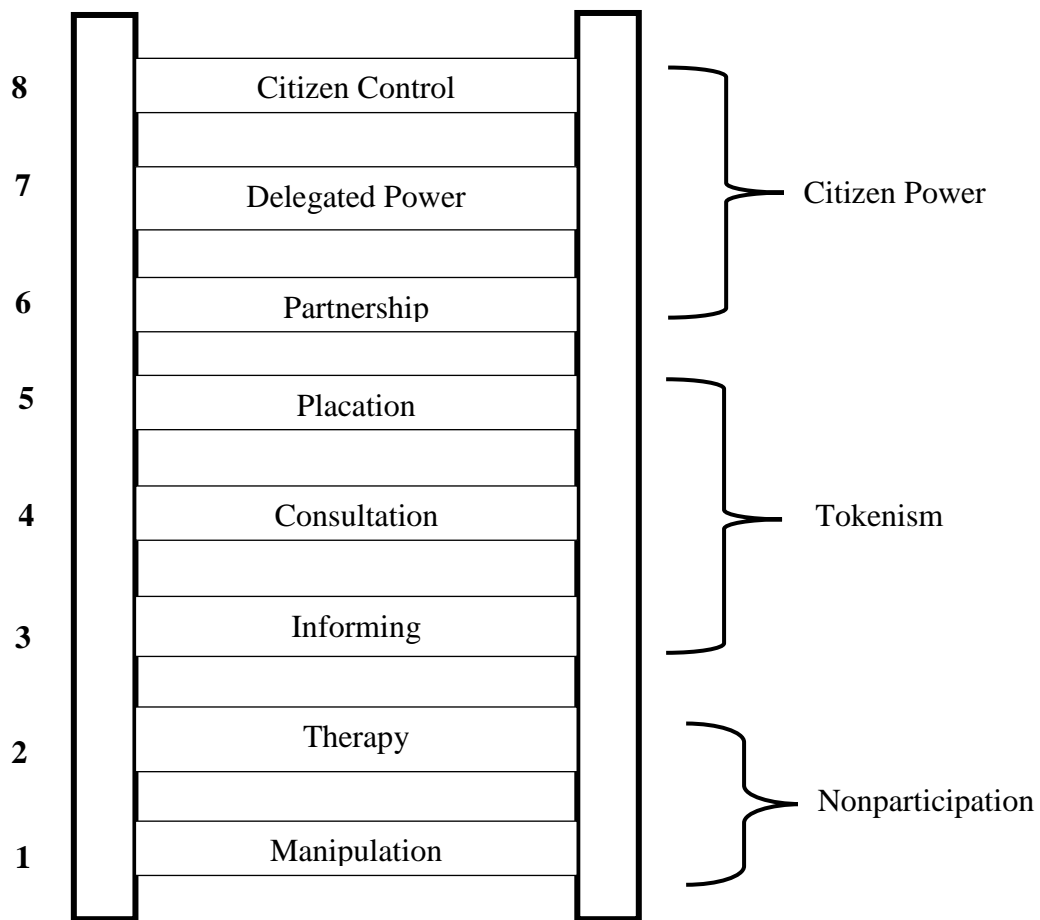
what exactly community entails. Community can be seen as simply geographical juxtaposition of individuals with rights; or as a collective entity – a polity, exchange system or a cultural practice that is a ‘space’ not only for participation, but for governance.

Defining CP is not an easy task. According to (Cornwall, 2008: 269), CP is an “infinitely malleable concept that can be used to evoke – and to signify almost anything that involves people”. Since CP can potentially be reframed to mean anything, attempts have been made over the years, to bring some form of ‘clarity through specificity’ (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980) to such morass. One such strategy has been the development of typologies of CP and the most notable examples being Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation, Pretty’s (1995) typology of participation, and White’s typology of interests (Cornwall 2008). First, the discussion focuses on Arnstein’s characterisation of CP, followed by Pretty and White's typologies. The strengths and weaknesses of the three typologies are highlighted. This discussion is followed by a brief analysis of CP’s short history.

Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation (figure 1) has three main categories; ‘Citizen Power’ as the topmost rung with subcategories, ‘citizen control’, ‘delegated power’ and ‘partnership’. Full control of decision-making is realised at the eighth rung at which point the poor are expected to exercise ‘citizen control’. The middle section of the ladder has ‘Tokenism’ as a main category, and this has subdivisions such as ‘consultation’, ‘informing’ and ‘placation’, while the bottom rung is labelled ‘Non-Participation’ and has ‘therapy’ and ‘manipulation’ as its subcategories. According to Arnstein, the lowest and middle rungs are not significant since there is no ‘real’ participation that takes place. In her view, real participation manifests itself through ‘citizen power’ with ‘citizen control’

as the ultimate goal of the participatory process: effective participation therefore entails the exercise of power by citizens as they take full control of project planning, implementation and decision making. Anything short of ‘citizen control’ cannot therefore be considered as effective participation.

Figure 1: Arnstein’s (1969) Ladder of Participation



(Adapted from Cornwall 2008: 270)

Arnstein’s ladder of participation assumes that there is a universal form of CP, which when fully realised empowers citizens to take control of the decision-making process. This is the ideal form of CP in which real power is in the hands of the poor as the citizens. It will be interesting to explore whether the way the two spaces of participation - the

formal MMDT and the informal *Motshelo* are structured enable or hinder the poor from assuming ‘citizen control’, and to assess the extent to which it is possible to establish community participation as ‘citizen control’ in Arnstein’s terms. In addition to Arnstein’s typology, Pretty (1996) presents her typology which describes the processes that are characterised as participatory. Pretty identifies seven forms of CP as shown below.

Table 1: Pretty’s Typology of Participation

Type	Characteristics of each type
Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretence, with ‘people’s’ representatives on official boards, but who are un-elected and have no power.
Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people’s responses. The information being shared belongs only.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people’s views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources for example, labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labour, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this ‘called’ participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external

	agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if government and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

(Adapted from Cornwall 2008: 272)

Of the above categories, ‘manipulative’ and ‘passive participation’ can be likened to Arnstein’s non-participation since citizens are not actively involved in any way. The other categories, ‘participation by consultation’ and ‘participation for material incentives’ are similar to what Arnstein describes as ‘tokenism’ given the participants’ level of involvement and decision-making control. Lastly, Pretty’s three remaining categories of ‘functional participation’, ‘interactive participation’ and ‘self-mobilization’ tend to correspond to Arnstein’s ‘citizen power’ and there seem to be a direct link between ‘citizen control’ and ‘self-mobilization’ as the ideal types.

White (1996) also presents a typology of participation. Though not presented in the form of a ladder, nevertheless there is an order that can, in part, be matched to the other typologies. White’s ‘nominal legitimation’ can be likened to Arnstein’s ‘non-

participation’ and Pretty’s ‘manipulative’ and ‘passive participation’ respectively, given the lack of participants’ input in the participatory process. Likewise, her three categories, ‘leverage’, transformative empowerment’ and ‘empowerment’ are in the same breath as Arnstein’s ‘partnership’, ‘delegated power’ and ‘citizen control’ and Pretty’s ‘functional participation’, ‘interactive participation’ and ‘self-mobilization’. As is the case with Arnstein’s ‘citizen control’ and Pretty’s ‘self-mobilization’, White’s ‘empowerment’ level is the ideal form of CP which is transformative according to her characterisation below.

Table 2: White’s Typology of Interests

Form	What ‘participation’ means for those on the receiving end	What ‘participation’ means to the implementing agency	What ‘participation’ is for
Nominal	<i>Legitimation</i> - to show they are doing something	<i>Inclusion</i> - to retain some access to potential benefits	<i>Display</i>
Instrumental	<i>Efficiency</i> – to limit funders’ input, draw on community contributions and make projects more cost-effective	<i>Cost</i> – of time spent on project-related labour and other activities	As a means to achieving cost-effectiveness and local facilities
Representative	Sustainability – to avoid creating dependency	Leverage – to influence the shape the project takes and its management	To give people a voice in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment – to enable people to make their own decisions, work out what to do and take action	Empowerment – to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuing dynamic

(Adapted from Cornwall 2008: 273)

The obvious advantage of such typologies is that they help to clarify what participation or non-participation in practice is understood to mean within the context of the framework. The typologies try to rationalize CP practice into some form of universal standard. However, the disadvantage of such a strategy for demarcating participation from other relational practices is that such typologies tend to give the impression that there is an *ideal form* of community involvement, for which people should strive. Such standardised and normative views of CP imply that it is possible to formulate a worldwide form of CP which can be measured in terms of ‘citizen control’, ‘self-mobilization’ or ‘empowerment’. According to Swapan, there are a number of factors that influence people to not want to participate, a situation which requires a different model from the ones that emphasise the need to transfer power from government to citizens, to one that takes into account both institutional and cultural factors (2016: 76). He argues that such a model should “take into account participants’ realities that shape the attitude and tendency of citizens towards participation” (Swapan 2016: 76). In his view, people’s socio-cultural and political context is important in shaping people’s attitude towards participation. As such, Swapan proposes a model of participation that emphasises the attitudes of citizens as an important consideration. While I agree with Swapan on the critical role that socio-cultural and political factors play in influencing people’s attitude towards participation, my point of departure is the emphasis I put on superstructures that are designed to regulate collective community engagement. As noted throughout this thesis, I argue that there is a connection between the structures of the ‘spaces for participation’ and the ability of agents to attain or fail to achieve ‘citizen control’, ‘self-mobilization’ or ‘empowerment’. Being able to participate at the level where poor

citizens have control of the decision-making process is considered crucial for the empowerment of marginalised groups as presented below.

2.2.1 Decision-Making Control

The idea of having the poor and marginalised in control of decision-making is also supported by the World Bank in their definition of CP. According to the World Bank CP can be defined as “a process by which people, especially disadvantaged people, influence decisions that affect them” (World Bank 1992: 177). Oakley, (1989) views CP as an active process where intended beneficiaries influence programme outcomes and gain personal growth. Guijt and Shah consider it to entail the involvement of ‘socially and economically marginalized peoples in decision making over their own lives’ (1998: 1), and is overwhelmingly conceived of and implemented as a community activity (Anyidoho 2010). The common theme in definitions of participation relates to the fact that intended beneficiaries ought to have decision-making control, a stipulation and argument that has generated both interest and criticism. It is also important to note that questions about what CP entails highlight the issue about whether CP has intrinsic or instrumental value.

2.2.2 Intrinsic versus Instrumental value

Furthermore, understandings of CP are characterised by a continuing debate about whether it should be regarded as a ‘means’ to an end or an ‘end’ in itself. Within development discourse, a sharp dichotomy exists between those that see CP as having instrumental or utilitarian/intrinsic value (a means to achieving project goals through the exploitation of community resources such as labour), and those that consider the empowerment of the poor as its ultimate goal or (‘end’) result (Chambers 1997; Cleaver

1999, 2001; Morgan 2001; Guijt and Shah 1998). Intrinsically, it is argued, “participation enhances pro-social thinking, strengthens citizenship, and enables more inclusive civic engagement” while “decision-making control help to develop self-reliance and collective action – the instrumental value of participation” (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 16). The dichotomy between means and ends has been problematic and difficult to resolve given the multiplicity of meanings that the terms intrinsic and instrumental tend generate. For instance, it has also been noted that, even if we were to regard CP as having utilitarian value or as a tool for empowerment, it would still remain unclear what exactly the concept entails given the diverse range of meanings that the two concepts denote (Morgan, 2001). CP as ‘end’ (‘empowerment’) for example may mean mere representation at the decision-making table, or the emancipation of women, or democratic participation through elections, or even accountability of governments to their citizens. Likewise, CP as a ‘means’ (‘utilitarian’) can entail efficiency, or cost-sharing possibilities, or the promotion of sustainable livelihoods (Morgan, 2001). The fact that CP can mean such different things has led Cornwall (2008) to characterise it as an infinitely malleable concept that can be used to suggest and to denote almost anything that involves people. This brings us to another dichotomous understanding of CP as ‘organic’ or ‘induced’ discussed below.

2.2.3 Organic Versus Induced Participation

In addition, a distinction has also been made between ‘organic’ and ‘induced’ forms of participation (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 31), which corresponds to ‘created’ and ‘invited’ spaces discussed earlier in the introductory chapter. Organic participation is considered to be initiated by highly motivated and charismatic agents who mobilise citizens to give voice to their interests (grievances, rights and concerns) by exploiting political

opportunities. Broadly speaking, organic participation involves a wide range of civic engagements in which the often-marginalised groups tend find their voice and challenge the status quo by expressing concerns about pressing socio-economic or political issues. Examples of instances of organic participation include groups such as social movements (for example the civil rights movement in the USA and anti-apartheid movement in South Africa) (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Other examples may also include rotating credit schemes that are common across cultures and other forms of associational engagements and groups that are initiated by charismatic individuals in local communities such as *Motshelo*, which is central to the discussion in this thesis.

In contrast, induced participation refers to CP that is financially and materially supported by “powerful institutions”, which in most cases are “promoted through policy actions of the state and implemented by bureaucracies” (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 32). In this case, the state is the dominant force behind induced forms of participation although it is not the only one. Other funders of induced spaces for participation include international aid agencies and non-governmental organisations. However, cases of success stories of induced participation are not many despite the emphasis on these participatory processes. In Brazil, the Porto Alegre boasts of 14000 active participants from the poor communities of the city in participatory budgeting (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 33). Another example of induced participation they refer to is the case of decentralised participatory governance involving a three-tiered system of *panchayats* namely the *gram panchayats* (village councils), *block panchayats* (block councils) and *zila panchayats* (district councils). This decentralised system of governance is credited with enabling disadvantaged groups to take part in budgeting and the drawing up of development plans in ways that enhanced their participation in decision-making processes (Mansuri and Rao 2013). In addition,

they also cite a Chinese example of village democracy through decentralisation using the Draft Village Organic Law (1987) and the Village Organic Law (1998), which gave villagers powers to self-govern (2013: 35). In the context of these laws, villagers have the power to elect their own officials and public goods within communities were placed under the jurisdiction of village officials.

Although these cases are cited as success stories, they however do not meet the strict criteria for citizen control of decision-making since the state has some form of control. For example, in India, the government retained control for implementing reforms that transferred power through decentralisation to local governing structures (Mansuri and Rao 2013). While in China there are direct elections of officials at the local level, the election of these officials does not necessarily entail control of the process by the poor since government is responsible for funding and organising the holding of these elections. As far as these examples are concerned, participation is more of nominal, functional and consultative as opposed to transformative and empowering as the highest rungs of the ladders seem to suggest.

The discussion above has highlighted differing understandings of CP and the challenges associated with providing a uniform characterisation of the concept. In particular, focus has been on issues relating to what CP entails. A major question about organic processes posed in the literature asks whether it is possible to harness them to help “improve the quality of government and the functioning of markets” (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 32) and how this can be carried out. As far as this study is concerned, the question to ask relates to how both organic and induced forms of participation are structured and whether the rules and requirements they impose enable or hinder active agency in the control of decision-

making process. Such a question is pertinent to this study as it seeks to find ways in which such forms of organising either naturally attract or inherently discriminate against the poor and marginalised. An effective answer to this question might go a long way in identifying the factors that militate against the poor's ability to control decision-making processes in CP practices.

The discussion below focuses on a very brief history of CP in terms of its origins and how it has evolved over time. It is intended to highlight not only the different approaches to CP, and when these were introduced, but also to justify why participatory development (PD) has been selected for analysis.

2.3 A brief History of CP

CP has a long history, stretching as far back as the 1960s and 1970s and is associated with the ideas of Frantz Fanon (1961), Paulo Freire (1970), Falsborda (1969; 1972) and Rahman (1995) (Bailur 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2013: 26). Fanon's idea of citizen control entailed the "redistribution of wealth and technology that orient effective power in favor of the poorest people" (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 26). Fanon's teachings were radical and political focusing on wealth redistribution in order to eradicate poverty. These teachings, in particular Fanon's seminal book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, though sometimes accused of preaching violence, inspired Freire. According to Freire, "development can only be achieved when humans are 'beings for themselves', when they possess their own decision-making powers, free of oppressive and dehumanizing circumstances; it is the 'struggle to be more fully human' (Freire, 1972: 29 as cited in Bailur 2007). Freirean philosophy was characterised by a radical and transformatory cutting edge intended to bring about widespread structural change by challenging

structural inequalities (Bailur 2007). It was a heavily politicised form of participatory development that challenged systemic marginalisation in developing countries. In revolutionary language, it advocated for a radical overhaul of existing repressive laws, property rights and the institutions of society with a view at advancing a redistributive agenda of national resources in order to bring about parity in both political and economic facets of life (Cleaver 1999).

Although it is difficult to identify a clear definition of what CP actually is as discussed in Section (2.1) above, within the context of the Freirean agenda, CP was understood to entail a radical political programme of action whose primary goal was the elimination of structural inequalities through radical social change (Cleaver 1999). The strength of this approach lies in the radical political programme of social justice, which focused on addressing the root causes of marginalisation and oppression of the poor and in so doing, put politics to the front burner of CP debate. What however attracted widespread criticism is its reliance on a state-led and top down approach to development and such criticism served as the basis upon which the rise of PD was built.

While the focus in this study is on participatory development as an approach to CP, it is important to highlight the fact that it is not the only one. A number of approaches promoting the CP agenda that have been developed over the years. The table presented in Figure 4 Appendix 1, provides a thumbnail overview of approaches to CP in terms of their origins, focus and likely impact. It is important to note that Hickey and Mohan's documentation of this history of CP was largely motivated by their desire to show that all of these approaches had some elements of citizenship, an approach they consider to be

all-encompassing and genuinely bottom up because of its focus on claiming rights from below as.

However, for the purpose of this study, the most significant and pervasive approach in most rural communities in the developing world and Botswana in particular, is participatory development. A focus on PD and its offshoot PRA helps to untangle the theoretical underpinnings of most development efforts in rural Africa and may also shed some light on the structural problems that scupper the collective engagement among the poor and their ability to control decision-making processes. Furthermore, the interest in PD programmes emanates from the fact that they are the most common and well-funded projects in developing countries. According to Mansuri and Rao (2013: 1), the World Bank has invested close to \$85 billion towards the promotion of PD with the hope that such a massive outlay will allow intended beneficiaries to take control of their own development. Yet, despite such a huge investment in PD programmes and projects, questions still remain regarding the effectiveness of trying to induce participation “through the type of large scale government and donor funded participatory initiatives that have become the *leitmotif* of development policy” (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 1). While Mansuri and Rao’s focus is on the “impact of large scale, policy-driven efforts to induce participation”, the current study pays attention to both induced and organic forms of community collective engagement with a view to understanding how they are structured and the extent to which such forms of organising enable or hinder the active agency of the poor. In particular, it is important to understand why induced forms of participation are so amenable to ‘elite capture’.

Given the widespread and well-funded nature of PD programmes, this study is keen to add some insights to the debate about why the poor have only played a peripheral role in decision-making processes of development projects when such programmes are designed for them to take centre stage. In order to have a clearer understanding of how PD works, this study provides in Section (2.4) below an outline of the PD approach and PRA methodology by paying attention to the framework's origins, theoretical import, practical applications as well as strengths and weaknesses.

2.4 Participatory Development and PRA: A Theoretical Approach to CP

2.4.1 Introduction

In discussing the theoretical approaches that have dominated the study of CP, this section outlines the key arguments and controversies that are associated with PD and its offshoot PRA. These two have been chosen on the basis of their influence on the development of thinking in participatory processes especially in rural communities of the third world countries. They are also important in advocating against top down government-led approaches to development which makes them pertinent to current development issues.

2.4.2 Participatory Development

PD emerged on the development landscape in the early 1990s as a bottom up alternative to the top down government-led approaches of the Freirean era and is associated with the work of its enthusiastic supporter, Robert Chambers (Kapoor 2005). It emerged as a direct result of the disappointment in the 1980s with top-down development policies highlighted above. There was therefore a growing critique in the mid-1980s of “top-down, large scale, centralised, government initiated development” which was failing in many areas (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Such complaints, note Mansuri and Rao, renewed

interest in local forms of decision-making and resource management. Participatory approaches became even more popular with the failure of structural adjustment programmes in the 1990s. This was also met with an increase in funding alluded to earlier. A new movement led by Chambers (1983), who was inspired by ideas of some leading scholars, led to the birth of a new form of PD. For instance, the work of economists such as Sen and Ostrom, which emphasise “common sense” and “social capital” respectively, were instrumental in promoting community-based development (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 1). According to Mansuri and Rao (2013), Chambers’ work was influenced in part by ideas of Hirschman (1970, 1984); Cernea (1985); Ostrom (1990); Sen (1985, 1999). Hirschman for instance is considered to have been instrumental in advancing the notion of “voice” and its connection with collective agency in capacitating the poor and marginalised. Cernea (1985) at another level promoted the idea of “putting people first” by emphasising local level participation of those marginalised communities (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 28) while Ostrom’s idea of pooling resources together influenced how collective action in poor communities was perceived. Chambers ideas about “whose reality counts”, and “putting the last first” were in some way influenced by some of these ideas including Sen’s idea of empowering the poor, which has become a central plank of current participatory thinking in which empowerment is considered the ultimate goal of PD.

The central argument of Chambers version of PD was that participation should provide the poor with a way to “have some control over decisions that affect them” (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 7). As noted above, the renewed interest in participation came as a result of the disappointment in government controlled and highly centralised systems of development strategies of the 1970s and 1980s. Such centralised strategies were accused of being

“disconnected from the needs of the poor, the marginalised and excluded” (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 1). The argument in this line of thinking is that giving decision-making power to the poor to directly control the planning and implementation of projects can go a long way in achieving genuine empowerment among the poor and marginalised. This led to the popularisation of the idea of localised participation in mainstream development thinking.

The control of the decision-making process is central to the discussion in this thesis given the fact that while resources are mobilised and allocated for the empowerment of the poor and marginalised, these intended beneficiaries tend to exercise very little or no control of the participatory process which is normally dominated by the local elites. This study is therefore intended to establish the drivers of elite takeover of decision-making in development projects by linking elite capture primarily to structural impediments within spaces for participation, which make it difficult for the poor and marginalised to be in control. I have discussed the ideas that were crucial in shaping current PD, it is important to point out the important aspects that shape PD thinking today. The section below discusses some of the key principles of PD.

2.4.2.1 Key Aspects of PD

This section discusses key principles of PD as presented in the literature. The crucial aspects of CP include empowerment, which is the ultimate goal of participation as well, inclusion, the incorporation of local knowledge, decentralisation and power. These are discussed below starting first with the ultimate goal of participation – empowerment.

2.4.2.2 Empowerment

Within development discourse, empowerment is a concept that is linked with democratic participation, capacity building and the socio-economic improvement of the individual (Oakley 2001: 43). According to Aslop *et al.* (2006: 1), "empowerment is a process of enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes". Indeed, empowerment entails that the poor and marginalised have the capacity to control the decision-making process so that they are able to pursue their goals and interests. Empowerment is considered morally a good thing that nobody can disagree with, it therefore means that it is a difficult ideal to challenge, and this helps to put PD at a pedestal. As such, PD is associated with 'a series of seemingly incontestable maxims: it is naturally progressive, CP is inherently good, championing PD is blameless and honourable' (Kapoor 2005: 1206). The main point in this case is that empowerment as an ideal, is considered both desirable and essential because it is the ultimate goal of community participation. When people are empowered they enjoy citizen control and can effect self-empowerment that is, participating for, and on their behalf. Because of this moral high ground, PD enjoyed an unbridled pervasive influence as development's new orthodoxy. Apart from the concept of empowerment, power in CP is considered to play an important role in our understanding of how some people participate more or less than others.

2.4.2.3 Power

Power in PD has largely been considered within the context of knowledge control and manipulation and the criticality of such knowledge manipulation to the exercise of power and decision-making. Within the context of this approach, the control of knowledge as a way of influencing perception is said to be critical to the exercise of power (Gaventa and

Cornwall 2001). As such those who control the production of knowledge and the administration of resources have power to influence what happens. Gaventa and Cornwall note that the emphasis on influencing popular awareness and consciousness through the production of knowledge, which can be used to counter the effects of power, is pervasive in participatory research. A view, which encourages the control of knowledge in order to counter the effects of power has had a lasting impression on participatory research and its methods especially, Chambers' (1997) PD and its PRA technical procedures, which promote 'awareness building, liberating education, a critical consciousness' (Gaventa and Cornwall 2001) in the development of indigenous or popular knowledge (Chambers 1997, Mosse 2001).

According to Gaventa and Cornwall, this understanding of power puts "emphasis more upon the ways in which the production of knowledge shapes consciousness of the agenda in the first place, and participation in knowledge production becomes a method for building greater awareness and more authentic self-consciousness of one's issues and capacities for action" (2001: 71). Such a conceptualisation of power is at the core of Chambers approach to CP, who argues for the promotion of local knowledge as opposed to the knowledge of experts if transformational change that leads to genuine empowerment is to be realised (Chambers 1997; Cooke and Kothari 2001, Mosse 2001). I highlight below the importance of including the poor as well as their knowledge in development projects.

2.4.2.4 Inclusion of the Marginalised in Pro-poor Initiatives

Another key point for PD proponents relates to the issue of inclusion of the poor and their role in participatory projects as well the role their knowledge has to play in the invited

spaces. It is considered that all those who are poor and marginalised in any given community should be invited into the spaces for participation and be included in decision-making processes in order to be empowered (Mansuri and Rao 2013). The notion of inclusion in participatory processes emphasises the need to involve all intended beneficiaries (the poor and marginalised) within a community or village in order to participate in change-oriented projects while at the same time allowing them to take control of decision-making processes in order to empower themselves (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 17). As such, those targeted (the youth, poor marginalised, women), are supposed to be included in, and to take control of, the project's decision-making processes (Chambers 1997). This means that opportunities for participation can only be empowering if they are inclusive and at the same time, bestowing decision-making powers on the poor and marginalised.

It emphasizes the active involvement of individuals in programmes and projects that are intended to improve their situation. Top down approaches were accused of neglecting the input of local people in decision-making and project management. Chambers (1993, 1994, and 1997) brought CP into mainstream development discourse by emphasizing the empowerment of the poor and marginalised, thereby transforming it into a people-centred approach to project management known as PD. As such, through PD, the empowerment of the disadvantaged became the essential objective of CP. As far as PD is concerned, its main aim has been to "increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalised people in decision-making over their own lives" (Guijt and Shah 1998: 1, cited in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 5). Such a view is also shared by the World Bank which considers PD as a process whose main purpose is to enable stakeholders the chance to be in charge of the decision-making processes and change oriented development

programmes that affect their lives (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 5). A framework that provides poor local communities with the opportunity to break the poverty cycle by taking full control of the decision-making processes regarding development initiatives intended to bring about socio-economic transformation was considered to be the best way to effect meaningful and robust social change among the poor and marginalised.

The assumption is that participatory approaches empower local people in order to engage in decision-making processes, which could lead to equitable and sustainable development (Guijt and Shah 1998). Such transformation is to be achieved through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), a technocratic toolkit that spells out the guidelines and methodological procedures to be followed. It is said to be important especially to Chambers (1997) who argue that outsiders should learn from the locals rather than dictate and impose their expert knowledge on the poor. One of the important objectives of PD is the incorporation of local knowledge and local people's choices in decisions made by governments and other interest groups such as private providers and aid agencies (Mosse 2001; Mansuri and Rao 2013).

2.4.2.5 Incorporation of local knowledge

In addition to taking control of decision-making processes of development projects, PD emphasises the importance of including local people's knowledge in programme planning, implementation and evaluation (Mosse 2001: 16). The use of local knowledge is considered important in changing a top approach to social transformation with a bottom up planning system that puts the poor front and centre of development initiatives (Chambers 1997). He also argues that the use of local knowledge would help reverse power relations by allowing the locals to transfer knowledge to the elites (knowledge is

power), who will assume the role of learners as opposed to their usual role of lecturing and transferring technologies to the poor. Such a reversal of roles would only be possible if there is a decentralised system of governance in which communities are able to decide what they want to prioritise and engage in their local communities.

2.4.2.6 Decentralisation

Decentralisation is another important factor that is assumed to play a crucial role in ensuring that the development process is owned and controlled by the poor and marginalised. Decentralisation can be defined in terms of:

...efforts to strengthen village and municipal governments on both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, it strengthens citizens' participation in local government – by, for example, instituting regular elections, improving access to information, and fostering mechanisms for deliberative decision-making. On the supply side, it enhances the ability of local knowledge to provide services by increasing their financial resources, strengthening the capacity of local officials, and streamlining and rationalising administrative functions (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 16).

Decentralisation emphasises the role that the poor can play in holding local officials to account by transforming them into active participants in decision that are linked to the development of their local areas. Decentralisation, therefore, helps the local people to engage and be seized by, issues about the enhancement of sustainability, the improvement of efficiency and ensuring that programmes that are designed to reduce poverty operate in an effective way (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 17). As Mansuri and Rao reports, it is also argued that decentralised community development activities help promote inclusion of the marginalised and poor with a view to empower them while also making sure that

governance structures are strengthened, and social networks are built. Advocate of PD, note Mansuri and Rao, argue that a decentralised system of governance at the local level stand a better chance of ensuring that local people's development priorities and community goals coincide, thereby giving control of decision-making process to those at the local level.

Giving decision-making control to the poor at the local level is intended, advocates argue, to help reverse skewed power relations by giving "voice" and activating the "agency" of the poor so that they are proactive in managing local development initiatives in ways that ultimately empower them (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 17). PD advocates, note Mansuri and Rao, argue that "when potential beneficiaries are able to make key decisions, participation becomes self-initiated action – what is known as the "exercise of voice and choice or empowerment". In this regard, the expectation is that participation would lead to "better-designed development projects, more effective service delivery and improvements in the targeting of benefits", which would also help in "a more equitable allocation of public resources and reductions in corruption and rent-renting" (2013: 15-16). This means that control of decision-making making is crucial for the attainment of empowerment. Not only is decentralisation associated with decision-making control of the poor, but it also promotes cost effective ways of financing development initiatives.

One way in which decentralisation is important is its encouragement of the co-sponsoring of PD programmes. The co-financing of development projects in which the donors and local communities complement each other is said to be one of the important aspects of decentralisation (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Communities can provide cheap or free labour and locally available materials or resources to support the donor agency or government in

financing the selected project Mansuri and Rao (2013: 162-163). It is also noted that the targeting of marginalised groups at local levels is more effective than trying to do this from central government. Decentralised programmes are considered to be more pro-poor in orientation than centralised ones (Mansuri and Rao 2013)

Decentralisation is credited with an increase in the participation of the poor in natural resource management projects due to an increase in motivation given the relevance of such projects to their immediate needs and interests especially the conservation of pastures and forests because they depend on them as part of their sustainable livelihoods (Mansuri and Rao 2013). According to Mansuri and Rao, participation is credited with improvement in quality of life especially in water projects and those linked to health. Such improvements are said to be more marked in projects that also provide training of local to improve capacity building. In order to ensure the reversal of power relations in PD, PRA provides a toolkit of methods and procedures can be used to achieve this goal.

2.4.3 Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRA aims at promoting local community empowerment through a more inclusive and ‘bottom up’ participatory programme. It was introduced to development in the 1990s as a result of a genuine disillusionment (among researchers and practitioners alike), with the failure of state-led mainstream international development to effect meaningful social change in developing countries. PRA is characterised as "... a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate (Chambers 1997: 102) It constitutes a wide range of methods which include visuals such as mapping and diagramming, and its practical applications have flourished in areas that include natural

resource management, agriculture, health and nutrition, poverty and livelihood programmes, and urban contexts (Chambers 1997). PRA approaches are considered alternatives to questionnaire surveys in appraisal and research, and their insights inform policy. As far as Chambers is concerned;

The essence of PRA is changes and reversals - of role, behaviour, relationship and learning. Outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn. Outsiders do not transfer technology; they share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. Outsiders do not impose their reality; they encourage and enable local people to express their own (1997: 103).

Such an approach is said to be derived from 'practice [using] what has been found to work, not deduced from a priori principles' (Chambers 1997: 104). This means that PRA approaches are determined by the needs of the community and the context they are being applied, which imply flexibility of use. PRA is said to be based on three principles;

- the behaviour and attitudes of outsiders, who facilitate, not dominate;
- the methods, which shift the normal balance from closed to open, from individual to group, from verbal to visual, and from measuring to comparing; and
- partnership and sharing of information, experience, food and training, between insiders and outsiders, and between organisations (Chambers 1997).

In addition to these principles, PRA has a set of methods and procedures that explain how it has been implemented in different contexts.

2.4.4 PRA Methods and Procedures

There is a wide range of methods and procedures that constitute PRA. These include:

- ***'Handing over the stick' and they do it***: that is, handing over the stick, chalk or pen so that local people become analysts, mappers, diagrammers, researchers, historians, planners, actors and presenters of their analysis.
- ***Do-it-yourself***: Role reversals of expertise where locals become experts and teachers and outsiders, learners. Locals supervise and teach how to transplant, weed, plough, level a field, mud a hut, draw and carry water, fetch firewood, wash clothes, cook a meal, stitch, thatch.
- ***Local analysis of secondary sources***: analysis of aerial photographs to identify soil types, land condition and land tenure.
- ***Mapping and modelling***: people's mapping, drawing and colouring with chalks, sticks, seeds, powders and pens on the ground, floor or paper.
- ***Timelines and trend change analysis***: chronologies of events, accounts of the past about changes in practices and customs.
- ***Seasonal calendars***: showing amount of rain or soil moisture, crop cycles, women, men and children's work.
- ***Wealth ranking***: ranking households into categories such as poorest, worst off and most deprived.
- ***Participatory planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring***: local people prepare their own plans, budgets and schedules.
- ***Drama and participatory video-making***: to enable people to discover how they see things.
- ***Matrix scoring and ranking***: using matrices and counters to compare through scoring e.g. different methods of soil conservation (Chambers 1997: 117-119).

These and other methods have been practised in different areas that include natural resource management, poverty and livelihoods, health and nutrition, and urban areas (Chambers 1997: 199-121). Although the actual benefits and the significance of the positive effects derived from these methods on the poor are debatable, it is worth pointing out that there has been widespread use of these strategies. I discuss below the reported

benefits of PD and PRA methods followed by a critical evaluation of the worthiness of such development strategies.

2.4.5 Impact of PRA Methods on the Poor

PRA can be credited with the idea of incorporating indigenous knowledge in project work through knowledge sharing and visual learning. In addition, its emphasis on a new code of conduct that require external development facilitators or planners to be 'enablers' rather than 'doers', by encouraging them to 'hand over the stick' (Chambers 1997) to local communities so that they are able to analyse problems and take appropriate action (Korf 2010), is commendable.

The fact that it is an approach that is supposed to be derived from practice, not a priori theoretical and policy prescriptions is significant in that it is expected to be based on what has been found to work in a particular context, which gives the impression that PRA is flexible and responsive to the specific needs of a given environment (Cooke and Kothari 2001). In theory, PRA methods are not based on blueprints, but ultimately facilitator's personal judgement and a multiplicity of methods that are context specific. These methods allow for reflective practice as facilitators are able to analyse and assess what has worked and what is working and adjust their methods and strategies accordingly (Chambers 1997).

PRA methods have replaced questionnaires and expensive surveys as flexible alternative methods of obtaining data about people's development needs and what strategies can be used to address these (Chambers 1997). As an alternative to expensive methods of data collection, PRA has provided development practitioners with a cheaper way of

identifying the practical needs of communities and help to adopt measures that are locally available. This helps to transfer the cost of *doing development* from agencies to the poor, which may however prove costly for the already marginalised in the long run. In this instance, while advantage associated with cost reductions tends to benefit the agencies of development at the expense of the intended beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the methods used in PRA are considered to promote knowledge sharing including experiences, values need and priorities within local communities (Chambers 1997). In addition, these methods provide different kinds of advantages. For instance, wealth ranking is commended for enabling the identification of economic and social differences among target groups. This would help aid agencies to support the groups that genuinely require such assistance although the issue of targeting of resource is the agency's problem not that of communities. Wealth ranking allows a pro-poor strategy to be formulated (affirmative action), which benefits both the agency for development and the poor. Identifying and targeting only those who genuinely deserves assistance reduces costs for the agencies which ensures that resources are channelled to those who need help the most.

Another important point to highlight is that PRA encourage monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and also to assess which methods work well and identify areas that need to be improved. Participatory mapping and listing help to avoid sampling errors since all people are included (Chambers 1997). PRA's multiple methods permit triangulation, cross-checking to enhance validity. PRA insights have helped to shape theory and policy. For instance, PRA promotes personal responsibility among development practitioners for what is happening rather than relying

on manuals and blueprints are mainly epistemological to do with obtaining information and gaining knowledge (Chambers 1997). According to Chambers these principles have the added advantage that they enhance trustworthiness. It does this by promoting on-going self-critical awareness among facilitators, so they embrace error, and are able to adopt error-correcting behaviour.

This section has discussed the key principles of PD and the positive outcomes associated with the implementation of programmes and projects inspired by this approach. It has been noted that PD has helped in improving data gathering methods, reducing the costs of doing development through co-financing, effective targeting of the genuinely poor and marginalised, increased participation in natural resource management initiatives as a result of decentralisation, and the monitoring and evaluation of projects in order to ensure accountability and efficiency, which is considered to improve results. For at least two decades, the PD approach has played an important role in shaping theory and informing current practice throughout the developing world, until the publication of the critique titled; *Participation: the new Tyranny?*, which challenges this article of faith in development discourse (Cleaver 1999, 2001; Kapoor 2005) with brutal honesty. The section below discusses the PD and PRA critique below paying particular attention to whether the goals for participation are realised as result of using the approach and its methods respectively.

2.5 PD and PRA Critique

This section focuses on the important criticisms of the key tenets of PD and PRA discussed in section (2.4.2.1) above. The PD critique has raised a number of questions regarding the reasons that have led to the failure of PD to genuinely empower the poor. I

discuss in this section the major criticisms of PD to date and argue that notwithstanding different emphases from different critics on what is crucial, there is however one consistent theme that cuts across the whole range of concerns raised by the critique - the unresolved persistent problem of elite capture. I highlight in this section that the issue of elite capture is central to the major criticisms of PD and explain why it remains unresolved. I also indicate the point of departure for my analysis in terms of emphasis and focus in relation to these critical analyses.

The review of the PD critique in this thesis is not presented chronologically, but thematically not simply because “distinguishing where critiques from within the orthodoxy end, and critiques of that orthodoxy per se begin is difficult,” but the “boundary is blurred” (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 7). Rather, there is value in presenting the critique in a way that reveals the central theme that cuts across the whole range of differing views: the fact that despite all the investment and potential benefits of participation, elite capture either by outside facilitators of development projects or local elites is real and rampant. In other words, decision-making control is firmly in the hands of the elite while the poor and marginalised continue to play a peripheral role. Such a theme-based approach to the critical review of the PD critique is important in that it not only identifies the persistent problem and the unanswered questions, but it also opens up a new line of inquiry, which justifies the focus of the current research.

While there are positives associated with PD and PRA as shown above, there are also challenges and controversies. As a concept, it can be argued that CP is one of the most overused concepts yet often misunderstood. According to Eversole (2012), CP is riddled with both practical and theoretical contradictions. For instance, she argues that despite the

near universal acceptance of bottom up PD approaches in CP, which seek to involve local communities, the practical application of these initiatives does not reflect their people-driven orientation (Eversole 2012: 30). A number of reasons have been proffered in order to explain such an anomaly.

In particular, the attention that the current thesis pays to the importance of structure in understanding the drivers of elite capture because I consider the lack of control of the decision-making process by the poor as not merely a question of how facilitators and or practitioners conduct themselves nor simply the problem associated with a particular technique or tool employed from an array of PRA methodologies, but as a systemic challenge owing largely to how the development project per se is structured. As such, the presentation of the critique is intended to highlight a common thematic thread that is the persistence and pervasiveness of elite capture wherever PD projects have been introduced and implemented, which points to systemic structural problems. This section, therefore, highlights some of the prominent critical analyses of PD to date starting with charge that PD has failed to deliver the promise of empowerment.

2.5.1 Empowerment

Indeed, despite its popularity, CP has often been criticised for failing to deliver its ultimate goal – the empowerment of the poor and marginalised, which essential entails control of decision-making processes from project formulation right up to implementation. One of the cornerstones of PD is its promotion empowerment as the definitive goal of CP. However, such a focus on empowerment as the essential goal of CP has generated a set of paradoxes and controversies. To begin with, the idea of empowering the individual as opposed to groups meant that social action was now

considered as individual effort rather than class action. The created problems in the way PD conceptualised the agency of the poor as it stand accused of failing not only conceptualise properly the linkages between the individual, structure and the social world, but also for characterising agency in narrow terms, as ‘deliberate public participation in decision-making and collective action’ (Clever 2007:223). Such characterisation does not accommodate the possibility that agency is exercised in different ways by different communities. For instance, in some communities, especially those that are regarded as collectivist (Hofstede 2010), the tendency is to put emphasis on cooperative behaviour and group effort. Clever criticises such individualised conceptualisations of agency in PD based on ‘rational choice’ models (i.e. those models that attribute behaviour to calculative self-interest), which is consistent with the view of individualised agency that is typical of methodological individualism discussed in Chapter 1, as ill-modelled.

The implication of this is that the radical challenging and transformatory cutting edge that dominated the Freirean era was lost, and consequently, empowerment was depoliticised (Ferguson 1994; Clever 1999; 2001). This depoliticisation of participatory processes is what Ferguson refers to as the “anti-politics of machine” (1994: 178). It effectively disarmed the poor and marginalised since participation was no longer a collective effort, but an individual aspiration. The idea that an individual must rely on his/her capabilities, choices, and actions to effect meaningful social change, has been criticised for depoliticizing CP since the burden for emancipation is placed firmly on the individual. This is in sharp contrast with the politicised radical emancipatory form of participation advocated for by Freire, which challenged institutionalized relations for example, inequality between social classes (Clever 2001).

Such a depoliticised concept took away the radical cutting edge of CP and has been criticized as simply another ‘buzzword’ in PD literature (Cornwall 2010). As part of the empowerment strategy, the ‘uppers’ (powerful) had to willingly hand over the stick to the ‘lowers’ (powerless), which means that “those who are uppers and powerful step down, disempower themselves and empower others...It implies that uppers have to give up something and make themselves vulnerable, for the sake of empowering the marginalized.” (Kapoor 2005: 1207).

According to Kapoor, this characterisation of power as a matter of oppositions in which the powerless are up against the powerful, the poor are against the rich, the powerful v powerless, the margins versus the centre, experts versus local knowledge, outsiders against insiders is not very helpful. Critics have highlighted the fact that PD as a concept tends to mask power imbalances between the elite and the poor within local communities (Kapoor 2005; Cleaver 2001, 2004), which makes the process tyrannical (Cooke and Kothari 2001), and that such skewed power relations enable the elite to take over control of decision-making, so rendering supposedly bottom-up pro-poor projects (Chambers 1997) largely top-down participatory processes (Kapoor 2005). Taylor (2007) bemoans the lack of real influence on the part of the poor as they fail to take full advantage of the spaces created for them to empower themselves since such spaces, it is alleged, tend to mask subtle forms of state control.

As such, the mismatch between empowerment initiatives and the reality of power imbalances is marked by the existence in practice of co-optation (explicit or implicit) of the poor rather than citizen control; tyranny rather than emancipation (Coke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004). Given these challenges, it means that simply viewing

power as a matter of opposing forces, fails to adequately account for the dynamics of power in social relations. PD highlights the ‘repressive side of power, and conceptualize power as a resource that individuals gain, hold and wield’ (Gaventa and Cornwall 2001: 72), but at the same time expect those in possession of power to surrender it for the benefit of others. Expecting the powerful to dis-empower themselves for the sake of empowering the poor is rather naive and far-fetched because the powerful have no incentive to relinquish their privileged positions in order to promote the poor and marginalised. This means that the powerful and privileged remain in control of decision-making processes at the expense of the poor who are expected to be “empowered” by the already powerful after they dis-empower themselves. As a buzzword, empowerment has only helped to further entrench the positions and influence of the rich and powerful in local communities at the expense of the poor and powerless. In this regard, the rich and powerful use their positions and influence to capture and control decision-making processes. This means that empowerment as an aspirational ideal, has failed to address the persistent problem of marginalization that hinder the poor’s ability to take charge of their development.

As far as understandings of power are concerned, PD fails to adequately present the dynamics of power that might prevail in different contexts, which makes it difficult to portray power in a positive since it is presented as if it always has negative effects on the power. If this was the case one would ask, how do the poor manage to survive in such a seemingly perpetual hostile state of affairs? I argue that power can be presented as a force for good. One useful way of characterizing power, which is very relevant to the current study is the idea of viewing power as associational in terms of how the poor may be able to benefit from its application as discussed in Chapter 3. Having discussed the problems

associated with the concepts of empowerment and power in PD, I discuss below challenges relating to how the poor and their knowledge are incorporated in project work or side-lined.

2.5.2 Inclusion of the Poor and the Incorporation of Local Knowledge

Another major criticism of PD pertains to how the poor and their local knowledge are incorporated in projects and programmes designed to improve their well-being. For instance, it is noted that within the current development set up inclusion is nothing more than the mere incorporation of the poor in project work "*strictly in terms of their role in institutionalised development interventions*" (Eversole 2012: 31, emphasis in original). This has been characterised as the relocation of the "poor within the prevailing order: bringing them in, finding them a place, lending them opportunities and inviting them to participate" (Cornwall 2005: 78 cited in Eversole 2012: 31). Within this context, CP's emphasis is therefore on 'bringing in' the poor and marginalised into formal spaces and processes of development marked by for example, the election of representatives, the appointment of advisory boards, and holding of planning meetings among other things (Eversole 2012: 31). Such processes are ritualised in PD to give the impression that genuine engagement is taking place when in fact people are simply going through the motions while their participation is purely tokenistic and inconsequential.

Not only is the process of including the poor ritualistic, but the way in which local knowledge is incorporated into project work in PD leaves a lot to be desired. While the use of local knowledge as espoused in PD literature would indeed lead to a reversal of power relations in favour of the poor if properly translated into practice, Mosse (2001) however challenges the way in which local knowledge has been incorporated in projects

and programmes, which ironically serve to reinforce existing skewed "power structures, professional positions and knowledge systems" (2001: 17). He argues that far from challenging top down planning processes, PD has colluded with such planning systems and has worsened rather than ameliorate existing unequal power relations thereby confining the poor to the margins of development practice. He argues that the local knowledge that such planning systems produce is not consistent with local perspectives about planning and implementing development projects. Mosse claims that such knowledge is largely influenced by existing power relations and therefore what is regarded as local knowledge "is highly differentiated in terms of who produces it, and in terms of ways of knowing, and it is such differences that PRA planning processes tend to mask rather than reveal" (2001: 19). As such, what can be considered as local knowledge may be very different from what constitutes local knowledge given the dynamics involved in not only the production of such knowledge, but in terms of how it is transformed and translated into planning knowledge.

Furthermore, argues Mosse, what is normally considered as local knowledge in PD is in the majority of cases, mere representations of agendas of outsiders that are passed as people's knowledge given that project managers and facilitators are active participants, "they shape and direct" knowledge production processes. For instance, in a typical rural project, it is project staff members who manage the research process, select the research topic, keep records of research, and write reports in accordance with the laid down criteria (Mosse 2001). In such a situation, argues Mosse, what is put on record is what satisfies project imperatives rather than local needs. In this way, PD projects "clearly influence the way in which people construct their 'needs'", since what is recorded as people's needs are in actual fact what project managers have identified as local needs (2001: 20). What

passes as local knowledge is, in essence, the agenda of outsiders (for example, NGO or aid agencies and government projects and programmes) expressed as local needs. Local people tend to go along with what they perceive to be project deliverables by colluding with project funders in order to secure the benefits associated with a given project (Mosse 2001).

Another way in which local knowledge is compromised is when local people are the ones "who acquire the new 'planning knowledge' and learn how to manipulate it, rather than outside professionals who acquire local perspectives" (Mosse 2001: 21). The important point here is that if indeed PD promotes local knowledge, then it should be outside professionals who should be learning local processes, and not vice versa. As such, 'people's knowledge is undoubtedly a powerful normative construct that serves to conceal the complex nature of information production in participatory planning, especially the role of outsiders. The simplistic assumption that better access to local perspectives will ensure that programme decisions are more participatory is perhaps, only too obviously blind to the institutional realities of rural development (Mosse 2001: 23).

Given such a situation, it is therefore important to acknowledge the fact that what are eventually considered as local needs, are in fact influenced and shaped by project imperatives and wider institutional needs in relation to other stakeholders such as management, donors (local and foreign) as well as relevant government departments and local institutions of governance. In addition, it is also important to note that institutional arrangements relating to the management of time, budgets and allocation and disbursement of financial and material resources including the way fieldworkers translate organisational policies and goals into participatory practice require anxious scrutiny

(Mosse 2001). For instance, fieldworkers tend to develop ways of interpreting local needs and project aims which are influenced by institutional and village needs. In Mosse's view, the perspectives of the community and local knowledge become, and are accepted as important only in so far as they validate outside agendas. As such, the use of local knowledge in PRA methods is inconsequential in relation to any more radical change to the institutional order.

Although the idea that outside knowledge dominates the local development landscape and that what is produced as local knowledge is indeed the knowledge of the outsider expert, this criticism does not however explain why and how local knowledge is side-lined. The real issue should not be whether local knowledge has been incorporated (since incorporation itself has connotations of the inferiority of the 'other'), but rather the critique should ask whether trying to combine local knowledge and the superior ideas of participatory development technologies, is feasible. The problem in this case is not that local knowledge is being overlooked; rather the question to ask is whether superior technologies can be operated and controlled by poor and marginalised agents (who in most cases, are armed) with inferior knowledge and education levels.

It is therefore important to examine why it is difficult for the poor and marginalised to take control of the transferred knowledge, which seem to fall into the ever welcoming hands of the elites – be they outside facilitators (from government, NGOs, or international aid agencies or multilateral institutions) or the educated and well-resourced locals. Mansuri and Rao for instance, cite a number of studies that show that “participants tend to disproportionately come from wealthier, more educated and more politically connected households” (2013: 128) while “poorer, less educated and more marginalised groups tend

to participate less” (2013: 135). The question to ask therefore is why is this so? The most logical response to this question is that the PD project’s technology and its imperatives dictate what form of knowledge is required a situation which makes local knowledge (mainly possessed by the marginalised and poor) marginally significant. Given the ways in which knowledge is framed and populated, the local input is often marginalised since it is not consistent with the technology of the PD project and its requirements and cannot adequately articulate project aim and goals. As such, the poor who are only armed with local knowledge move to the periphery as those with the technical knowhow move to the centre to control decision-making processes.

I have discussed the problems associated with the promotion of empowerment and the subsequent depoliticisation of CP as one of the reasons for the poor’s inability to take charge of their own development as control is firmly in the hands of the rich and powerful. I have also shown how the poor and their local knowledge are incorporated in projects and how this opens the door for elite capture. In the next section I discuss one of the harshest criticisms directed at PD: the charge that it is tyrannical.

2.5.3 Tyranny

One of the most vicious attacks on PD is the allegation that its projects and programmes are implemented in ways that are tyrannical rather than empowering (Cooke and Kothari 2001). PD has been criticised for its ‘tyrannical tendencies’ that tend to constrain rather than enable effective participation among the poor. According to Cooke and Kothari (2001) PD and its offshoot, PRA can be characterised as being systemically tyrannical: both the discourse and practice associated with the two ideas represent an unwarranted use of power. Rather than encouraging effective engagement, they may limit

participation of those whom development projects are intended to benefit. PD is accused of being tyrannical in three main ways:

- the tyranny of decision-making and control
- tyranny of the group
- tyranny of method

By tyranny of decision-making and control, Cooke and Kothari (2001) are referring to the way in which decision-making largely falls in the hands of a few (local elites, powerful members of community, elected officials), who make decisions on behalf of the whole community in ways that side-line and exclude the voices of the majority who are poor and already marginalised.

Group tyranny manifests itself in instances where, through the manipulation of group dynamics, only the interests of an influential few are being taken care of at the expense of the majority. While PD can be credited for promoting knowledge sharing, negotiating power imbalances, and active community involvement, it is equally criticised because these very same ideals stand accused of concealing "oppressions and injustices in their various manifestations" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 13). Paradoxically, such oppressive tendencies are said to be masked by the very institutions that are created to promote these ideals of knowledge sharing, negotiating power imbalances, and active community engagement. It is therefore important to unmask the subtle tyrannical tendencies that characterise the way in which institutions operate. The important point being made here is that local elites take over decision-making control at the expense of the intended beneficiaries: the poor 'invited' to do development in agency created spaces.

And lastly, the tyranny of method suggests that PD and its PRA methods have dominated CP discourse and practice to the extent that these approaches have effectively shut out other alternative methods to the study of CP phenomena. The critique manages to identify the nature and types of tyranny the poor encounter and endure as they try to engage and navigate the ‘invited’ spaces for participation. However, it does not explore how such tyrannical tendencies arise and how and why elite capture is so widespread and seemingly inevitable. An important dimension for this research is to pay attention to the drivers of elite capture by examining how spaces for participation are organised and the nature of the rules and requirements for collective community engagement. An analysis of this nature calls for a framework that emphasises the importance of structural factors in order to establish whether they enable or hinder the exercise of agency. The reason is that an analysis that primarily focuses on examining the organisational structures, rules and resources, and the norms and values that characterise development projects may help uncover the sources of such tyrannical tendencies. This justifies the focus on the structure of spaces of participation a situation which also makes the argument for the use of the agency-structure framework even more appealing.

In particular, criticism that pays attention to structural aspects of projects relates to the misgivings the critique has on the reliance of PD on the use of institutions for the implementation of development initiatives. In the section below I outline the key challenges associated with the use of institutional structures to implement participatory processes.

2.5.4 Institutionalism

PD is also criticised for its focus on formal institutions, which are not only incongruous with local arrangements of community engagement, but also, it is argued, impose structures that are inherently discriminatory. Furthermore, these institutions introduce ‘technical’ aspects of CP that allow outsiders and the elite to lecture and not listen, to dictate and not facilitate, to transfer technology and not rather than learn from local practices. How these structures and ‘technical’ aspects highlighted, here work can be accounted for by the agency-structure framework adopted for this study. The agency-structure framework is better able to show how agents interact with the rules that regulate how the technologies that are brought into communities to facilitate community work. This section discusses these and other challenges that confront PD as a framework for the analysis of CP phenomena.

The question of the appropriateness of institutional structures (referred to in this study as ‘spaces for participation’ or formal induced and informal organic opportunities for participation) used to promote the active collective community engagement of intended beneficiaries has already been raised in CP literature (Dill 2010; Cleaver 2001; Mosse 2001; Cleaver 2004). However, this critique seems largely fascinated by the conflict between formal institutional norms and values, and those of the local context at the expense of other lines of inquiry such as the one proposed for this study. In other words, the critique has so far concentrated its attention on whether formal institutions are able to ‘work with the grain’ of the socio-cultural environment" (Dill 2010: 23). Such concerns are highlighted in the quote below.

The challenge [for development practice] is to harness the cultures of Africa to find such workable hybrids for the rest of the continent. The overall lesson is that outside prescriptions only succeed where they work with the grain (emphasis mine) of African ways of doing things. They fail where they ignore the cultural suppositions of the people they seek to address (Commission for Africa 2005, cited in Dill 2010: 23).

One often-cited example of institutional failure to 'work with the grain' is demonstrated by the way some of the rules that formal opportunities impose such as sanctions that are meant to deal with free riding and cheating, are said to be heavily influenced by values of transparency and accountability, which are at variance with those African notions that foster cooperation through relationship building and conflict avoidance (Cleaver 2001). This therefore means that different contexts have their own ways of regulating collective social action that are not consistent with the kind of punishment that formal opportunities impose, which can create tension between these spaces and local values and norms of collective community engagement. It is noted that some organisations promoting CP end up bending their own rules by trying to forge consensus and to conform to local norms that regulate collective engagement (Hailey 2001; Cleaver 2002; Maganga 2002; Hilhorst 2003). The fact that different communities have their own ways of collectively engaging makes the idea of comparing formal and informal institutions appealing since this helps to assess whether an all-inclusive formalised participatory process promoted through CBOs in Botswana is also a common phenomenon in informal practices. Such a comparison would also help to assess which opportunities are able to support inclusive participation that promotes the control of decision making by the poor and marginalised.

Furthermore, Dill criticises the glaringly poor fit between institutional blueprints and the contemporary context within which these institutions are established (Dill 2010) for

promoting elite capture of projects by catapulting technocrats or bureaucrats to the centre of development planning and decision making at the expense of the ordinary people who remain at the periphery. Yet, it is the poor and marginalised who are supposed to be empowered in order for them to determine the direction of their own development. Dill laments the preoccupation within dominant CP discourse with the creation of inclusive and participatory institutions, which promote the "grafting of uniform institutional blueprints created in the global North onto the global South" (2010: 30), a practice known as "institutional mono-cropping". Such a practice:

Rests on the premise that institutional effectiveness does not depend on fit with the socio-cultural, and the more specific premise that idealised versions of the Anglo-American institutions are optimal developmental instruments, regardless of the level of development or position in the global economy. International organisations, local policy makers, and private consultants, combine to enforce the presumption that most advanced countries have already discovered the one best institutional blueprint for development and that its applicability transcends national cultures and circumstances (Evans 2002: 55).

Institutional mono-cropping is accused of creating an "uneasy fit between exogenously derived institutional blueprints and the norms and values of recipient cultures" (Dill 2010: 37). According to Hall and Lamont, the way institutions and local cultures interact makes it difficult to "identify 'best practices' that can readily be translated from one society to another" (2009: 2). It is argued that such universalised development discourse ignores other possibilities for change and precludes interpretations and understandings that are context specific, informed by multiple aspirations and produced by local people instead of experts (Dill 2010). As a result, despite the obvious mismatch between institutional blueprints and local norms of community engagement, Community Based Organisations

are considered best positioned to bridge the gap between institutional blueprints and local norms and values by allegedly performing the dual role of articulating the interests of particular targeted communities while at the same time, embodying the spirit of 'best practice' (Dill 2010). This is despite the fact that such fascination with institutional blueprints tends to go against the grain rather than work with it, leading to the stifling of citizens' ability to make choices for their communities.

Another common criticism of formal institutions is that the whole idea of establishing formal institutions contradicts the very essence of participatory development that is; to eliminate state bureaucracies by promoting bottom up participatory approaches (Cleaver 2001). Yet, the mapping of the boundaries of a community onto existing government administrative units and the use of state bureaucracies as mirror images for the new institutions is hypocritical as this contradicts the essence of bottom up participatory initiatives. To make matters worse, it has also been noted that such structures tend to be shunned as the poor are said to prefer conducting their transactions through informal channels (Cleaver 1999). Evidence from participatory water resource management committees show that participation in these formal institutions may actually happen outside of such structures, "through practices embedded in social networks, daily interactions and the application of cultural norms" (Cleaver 1999: 602). Such interactions, argues Cleaver, are characterised by constant negotiations by users of issues regarding "rights of access and compliance with rules" in ways that are meant to minimise or avoid conflict. This flies in the face of the idea of claiming rights from below (Hickey and Mohan, 2004), given its inherent confrontational nature. One therefore wonders whether the institutions that are deployed to promote collective community engagement are the right ones.

In addition, institutional approaches to community participation are also criticised for their insistence on democratic representation, the election of representatives, verbal contributions in meetings (Cleaver 1999), which are said to be inconsistent with local people's norms that govern collective community engagement. Rather, what is important argues Cleaver, is to understand local norms of decision-making and representation, the way they change, how they are negotiated and the extent to which the institutional framework designed to promote participation accommodates such dynamics. Such recognition does not in any way suggest that informal social networks of interaction are better than formal institutions especially given their tendency to "uphold and reproduce locally specific configurations of inequity and exclusion" (Cleaver 1999: 603). However, knowing how these informal networks work and how they reproduce inequalities that marginalise other members of the community may go a long way in informing interventions about the root cause of such marginalisation rather than focusing on symptoms.

The examples discussed thus far, suggest a strong inclination towards questions of cultural incompatibility between formal opportunities and local people's norms and values. Although the lack of fit between exogenous blueprints and local norms of participation (Cleaver 1999) has been a major preoccupation of the critical literature on CP, it is argued in this thesis that even if cultural compatibility issues are resolved, this will not necessarily eliminate exclusion, marginalisation or elite capture. Rather, an understanding of how, where, when and why such exclusion arises would represent a useful starting point. I therefore argue that such an understanding of exclusion and the subsequent capture of development projects by the elites can be achieved through an examination of how project rules and requirements enable certain agents to engage while

constraining others from exploiting the opportunities available in the ‘invited spaces’ for them to participate and empower themselves. As it stands, spaces for participation are appropriated by elites to form exclusive arenas for entrenching already privileged positions (Gaventa 2006; Cornwall and Coelho 2007).

While these criticisms are important, it is however critical to go beyond the mere documentation of instances of tyranny or complaining about the peripheral role played by local knowledge, or simply highlighting the problems associated with ‘elite capture’ or marginalisation, and instead adopt a perspective that seeks to establish why and how these development ills arise in the first place. In particular, it is important to understand how the elite manage to take over the control of decision-making processes in terms of the strategies they use to wrestle control of projects from the poor. A study that focuses on how elite capture arises and what drives it, is important since it is likely to highlight the connection between project structure and the involvement of agents whether they are elites or non-elites. Given the prevalence of elite capture in PD discourse as shown above, it is important to establish the link between elite capture and the structure of the spaces for participation. A good starting point would be to clarify exactly what elite capture entails and whether the involvement of the elite in community development practice is inherently toxic. The picture painted in the literature strongly suggests that the involvement of the elite in induced participatory is largely counter-productive.

However, Musgrave and Wong (2016) argue for a balanced assessment of elite involvement in participatory projects than hitherto, noting that the role of elites can be both beneficial and disempowering. Below, I discuss ‘elite capture’ and attempt to

provide clarity by adding some form of conceptual refinement to the characterisation of elite involvement suggested by Musgrave and Wong (2016).

2.5.5 Elite Capture

Elite capture is a considered to be major problem that makes it difficult for the marginalised and poor to take charge of their own empowerment. Instead of being in control of decision-making processes, it is argued that the intended beneficiaries are often relegated to the periphery by the elites who are accused of using their power and influence to muscle out the powerless and vulnerable poor. A definition by Dasgupta and Beard (2007) captures the essence of elite capture, which they define as:

a process by which locally based individuals with asymmetrical social positions, disparate access to economic resources, varying levels of knowledge of political protocols and procedures and different literacy rates hijack and take over control of the decision-making processes of community level planning and governance of projects and programmes designed to empower the marginalised and poor in rural communities (Dasgupta and Beard 2007: 233).

It is clear from the definition above that ‘elite capture’ is a result of a variety of factors that can militate against the poor and marginalised in their quest to take control of decision-making processes in PD projects. Similarly, Musgrave and Wong highlight the negative effects of ‘elite capture’ by defining it as “the capture of the distribution of resources, project implementation and decision making which negatively impacts non-elites or the target population or is deemed to be corrupt under the law” (2016: 92). The two definitions emphasise the point that elite capture impacts negatively on non-elites by making it difficult for them to control the implementation of projects as well as decision-

making. The discussion above, illustrate the pervasive nature of elite capture in PD projects either those that are supported by outsiders such as aid and donor agencies and it will be interesting to see how elite capture is manifest in government funded VDTs in Botswana.

However, the idea that elite involvement in PD projects is somehow almost always negative has been challenged. Musgrave and Wong (2016) for instance, question the negative connotations associated with the role of elites in community projects designed for the poor and marginalised in which their participation is described pejoratively as ‘capture’. They argue that what is sometimes classed as elite capture may actually be elite control, which they consider to be positive. As such, Musgrave and Wong (2016) make an important distinction between *elite capture* and *elite control*. In their view, ‘elite control’ refers to the “control of the distribution of resources, project implementation and decision making, which does not negatively impact non-elites or the target population” (2016: 92). This means that the involvement of the elite can and should be considered critically and fairly given that it can also be beneficial. It is therefore important to critically evaluate the role of the elites in order to ascertain whether their participation is self-serving or for the benefit of others, especially the marginalised.

Such a perspective is important for this study because it brings on board a dimension that was previously ignored – that is, the positive effects of elite participation in induced community projects. While there is a danger that the elites tend to hijack programmes meant for the poor, it is important to be open-minded about their participation and assess the role they play in different contexts since in some cases the elites are more of ‘translation agents’ or intermediaries who go between outsiders and the marginalised in

order to facilitate dialogue and partnerships. In such cases, the role of the elites is considered to be largely beneficial, carried out on behalf of the poor as opposed to ‘capture’ in pursuit of personal gain (Musgrave and Wong 2016: 92). As such, the distinction between ‘elite capture’ and ‘elite control’ is important because the literature alludes to cases where the intended beneficiaries may not necessarily have the capacity to run a project owing largely to a lack of education, for example. It is in such cases that elite intervention on behalf of the marginalised and poor might be beneficial for such groups as they may find it difficult to meaningfully and effectively engage with donors or other outside service providers.

While I fully support the merits of an analysis that consider the positive effects of elite involvement, I tend to disagree with Musgrave and Wong’s (2016) use of the term “elite control” to imply a positive role for the elites. I take issue with the use of the word ‘control’ to convey a positive sense of the role of elites in development because such application contradicts the essence of the two scholars goal: to “propose definitions that are intended to bring some consistency to the description of the roles elites play in development projects” (2016: 88). Rather than bring about consistence and clarity of purpose, the use of the terms ‘elite capture’ and ‘elite control’ to illustrate a distinction, is problematic since ‘capture’ and ‘control’ can be used interchangeably as synonyms. For instance, according to the Collins English Dictionary online, the word ‘control’ means having “the power to influence or direct people's behaviour or the course of events” while “capture” means “to take prisoner or gain control over”. This essentially means that the two words are semantically inseparable, and it is no wonder there is not much of a difference between the two definitions of “elite capture” and “elite control” they propose above. It is therefore not coincidental that the only variation between the two definitions

is marked by the insertion of the phrase “do not” in the latter definition in order to draw the reader’s attention to a rather forced or unnatural distinction between the two words. The bottom line is that the word “control” essentially retains its negative connotations in this context, by implying that elites have power over non-elites and the decision-making process despite the authors’ deliberate positive spin. To use “control” to imply a positive influence in this context sounds largely unconvincing.

I therefore argue for the use of the term “elite intervention” as a way of ensuring consistency and clarity. The choice of the word “intervention” is justified, logical and appropriate. The Longman Business English Dictionary online describe “intervention” as “the act of becoming involved in a situation in order to help deal with a problem”. The word ‘intervention’ has natural positive connotative implications associated with offering assistance or help. Following on from this, I define “elite intervention” as the participation or involvement of the elite in “the distribution of resources, project implementation and decision making” (Musgrave and Wong 2016: 92), on behalf of the poor and marginalised. The key difference between “elite control” and “elite intervention” is that while the former emphasises the idea of having “power and influence over something”, the later entails “being involved in order to assist the other”. In this regard, “elite intervention” accurately captures the spirit of helpfulness which is positive compared to “elite control”, which entail the perpetuation of the marginalisation of the poor owing largely to the control of decision-making by the elite.

It seems plausible therefore to use the term “elite intervention” in place of “elite control” to refer to the positive role played by the elites in PD projects, which implies that their involvement is done on behalf of others rather than for the pursuit of selfish personal

interests. In this case, the empirical study considers the role of elites in terms of whether their involvement can be characterised as ‘capture’ or ‘intervention’. I have discussed the issue of elite involvement and introduced the concept of “elite intervention” as opposed to “elite control” as a way of adding clarity to theoretical terms and concepts. I critically reviewed some suggested solutions in the literature about how the problem of the exclusion or inclusion of the poor and their knowledge might be resolved. I discuss below the efficacy of using local forms of participation alongside the current participatory methods.

2.5.6 Inclusion of Local Forms of Participation

In the light of the above shortcomings of PD, some researchers have called for the inclusion of local and informal participatory forms of collective community engagement in order to make participation work. The reason being that CP, in its current form, CP is considered largely top-down because "it invites communities into the development process and development decision-making, it respects their voices and presence, but asks them, in effect, to leave their knowledge and institutions at the door" (Eversole 2012: 38). It is argued that CP needs to accommodate people's pre-existing practices into development work as a first step (Msukwa and Taylor 2011). Msukwa and Taylor use the analogy of a funeral to highlight the fact that communities have existing forms of participatory practices that should be incorporated into the planning and implementation of a project if such forms of collective community engagement are fit for purpose in contemporary development contexts. They argue that since the funeral is an 'endogenous community institution, in which roles are delegated, acknowledged, understood and acted upon' (2011: 67), the motivation to participate is inherent. According to the two scholars, community institutions such as the funeral "embed collective social action in everyday

life" (2011: 60). This is in line with Brehony's call for the incorporation of the community's current practice in project planning and implementation as the "the starting point of any project planning in a community context is the current practice of that community" (Brehony, 2000: 650). Incorporating people's current practice, beliefs and knowledge into project work is significant in that it provides a stronger foundation on which to develop and build community motivation and consensus. In his view, the absence of such a dimension in project planning and implementation logically leads to failure because 'pseudo participation' (Oakley 1991: 15) rather than genuine collective engagement prevails.

The basis of Brehony's (2000) argument is that communities have hardwired coping and self-help strategies that are inherently participatory. As such, genuine participation should start with the community's existing practices. Brehony contends that an understanding of how communities solve their own problems in practice, provides a firm foundation for understanding their belief systems, their knowledge and world view. The consequence of lacking such an understanding often leads to assumptions that are detrimental to the sustenance and future sustainability of most development projects. This is succinctly summed up by Mossanne who notes that;

Until recently, many failures of development projects were attributed to the recipient culture, which was thought to lack the capacity to adapt to the requirements of modern Western technology. In much of the literature on development co-operation, culture has been used as a scapegoat, equating it with tradition and blaming it for opposing 'development'. But, in fact, it was the Western lack of understanding of recipient countries' culture that led to disappointing results in many projects (1993: 39 cited in Brehony 2000: 650).

So, contrary to these assumptions, Brehony argues that the best way for the promotion of successful development work, is to consider existing participatory practices and "start with what people already know", since what most people already know is their cultural norms and values. As such, the study of local culture should be the starting point in the planning of the development process. The conventional approach to project planning such as PRA is criticised for its tendency to allow the more powerful to dominate the participatory processes. While PRA can be credited with the idea of promoting the "historical evolution of the community" (Brehony 2000: 650), little has been done to understand past and present coping mechanisms and knowledge systems which should provide a strong foundation for clarity of purpose. Instead, notes Brehony, PRA puts emphasis on gathering and sharing information between planners and communities without the communities participating fully in the planning process.

In his view, people's world view manifests through their actions and as such, how people participate provides a window into their cultural world. He therefore advocates for an approach in which development organisations and workers take part in the community's own projects and not vice versa. In this regard, communities should be left to plan their development. Brehony (2000) cites evidence from Ethiopia and Uganda regarding community home-based care (CHBC) for people living with HIV/AIDS reveal that the communities studied had their existing home care practices that were effectively used as the starting point of a donor funded project for organising and mobilising collective community involvement in such schemes. In his view, the success of these two projects can be attributed to the deliberate effort made by the funding agencies to incorporate in the planning and implementation, existing community practices which people already

knew. This deliberate effort to integrate indigenous and Western health in these projects is credited with boosting people's confidence and stimulating motivation as local communities could easily relate to what was going on since the starting point was something that they were familiar with: their local knowledge.

While not all aspects of culture are beneficial, it is equally true that not all aspects of local people's culture are harmful. The advantage of tapping into the beneficial aspects of indigenous knowledge systems is that it affords an outsider the chance to be critical of those aspects that are harmful without necessarily being viewed as condescending since such analysis will be done together with the local people. Working together with the local communities to identify both the beneficial and harmful effects of culture encourages openness and dialogue about the efficacy of certain cultural practices without being prejudicial or offensive. As such, the use of communities' existing forms of practice provides an entry point for change agents to understand both the beneficial and harmful aspects of current practices which they can either incorporate or discard depending on their usefulness or otherwise, without endangering the sustainability and well-being of the project. According to Brehony's (2000) argument, understanding these dynamics is the first step in identifying appropriate intervention strategies that can provide effective and durable solutions to a community's problems.

The idea of taking the community's current practice as the starting point, argues Brehony, leads to a more effective reversal of roles between facilitator and community members than that advocated by Chambers (1997). Instead of the community participating in the project of the 'outsider' (i.e. the development worker) as is the case in most PD projects, the 'outsider' participates in the project of the community. The strength of such a strategy

lies in the fact that "the responsibility to learn and understand shifts from the community to the outsider - the outsider has to understand the work of the community rather than the community trying to understand the ideas of the 'outsider'" (Brehony 2000: 659). In this way, the outsider is a real learner in the strict sense of the word, and the community the teacher; the outsider asks questions and the community provides the answers. Such a strategy goes beyond the mere rhetoric in PRA about the use of indigenous knowledge since in the latter, emphasis is more on sharing than the actual use of such knowledge in project planning and implementation. The use of indigenous knowledge in all stages of the project cycle not only provides a firm foundation for good communication which can only help build mutual trust and a long term good working relationship between 'outsider' and the community, but more importantly it gives the community a reassuring sense of ownership of the projects which augurs well for its long term sustainability (Brehony, 2000).

Msukwa and Taylor (2011) attribute the failure of development projects to a lack of ownership which in development terms, would embody the exclusive right to determine and influence the development process and the power to do so. Such ownership, they argue, is achieved through "participation, devolution of power and authority, and the democratisation of decision-making; which implies that there is a collective body or community that 'owns' and the power to direct and control a process formulated by intended beneficiaries (or 'owners')" (Msukwa and Taylor 2011: 67). As far as Msukwa and Taylor are concerned, funerals meet these criteria and if development was organised in such a manner, then it could also satisfy them. In essence, their basic argument is that development does not work because it is not consistent with people's norms and values of

collective community engagement as expressed by the funeral analogy (Msukwa and Taylor 2011: 67).

Such criticism, they argue, is not intended to mask the glaring shortcomings of undemocratic local institutions of governance and local politics as well as the negative effects of traditional practices that can marginalise and disadvantage certain vulnerable groups. What the two are critical of is the tendency among development agencies to determine the content and procedures for the implementation of development projects. While such rules are well meaning, they are however blamed for alienating and demotivating local communities since they assume that being poor also means one's ability is curtailed (Msukwa and Taylor 2011). Such a view perpetuates the notion that projects ought to be designed by external 'experts' because communities are not able to make decisions or take decisive action. What is therefore needed is to accept and embrace local knowledge in development theory and practice. Msukwa and Taylor (2011) conclude that funerals work because they are embedded in people's everyday practices.

What is therefore desirable, they argue, is for development agencies to work with and empower, existing local institutions and not to side-line them by prescribing their own methods. This is not intended to imply that all existing local institutions are suitable for contemporary development issues, (some are inherently undemocratic and overbearing), nor neither should we accept the insinuation that they are all structurally not fit for purpose. Rather, existing local institutions should be incorporated into project planning and implementation since they embody people's current participatory practices. What is therefore needed is an honest assessment of the viability and relevance of what people already know and are using, not to just dismiss or ignore indigenous intervention

strategies as is the norm in current development practice. As such, the two scholars' main proposition is that it may be possible and desirable to draw upon insights from pre-existing forms of collective community engagement in order to enrich our understanding of CP practices in different contexts.

While Eversole supports the use of these pre-existing informal processes in project work, she is however of the view that the problems associated with formal invited spaces notwithstanding, bottom up change cannot be sustained by informally created spaces alone since some barriers require a combined effort and sometimes access to resources may only be gained through formal structures (2012: 37). Such a mutually complementary relationship is said to require 'learning participation and acculturation' on the part of both outsiders and locals in ways, which allow for not only the integration of both knowledge systems, but also the flexibility of practitioners to "move across institutional and knowledge terrains to create spaces for communities and organisations to participate together" (Eversole 2012: 37). While this is such a plausible idea, the main challenge would obviously relate to how this can be translated into practice. I discuss below the proposed use of translation agents and the extent to which such a solution can help solve the systemic problem of elite capture.

2.5.7 Translation Agents

In order to address the practical problems associated with navigating the institutional and knowledge terrains, Eversole argues for the use of "translation agents" who are comfortable working on both side of the cultural divide (formal versus informal settings) equipped to effectively facilitate reciprocal learning processes. Such a set up goes beyond Chambers' call for role reversals in which outside development workers or facilitators are

supposed to be the learners acquiring local knowledge and not the ones transferring knowledge to the locals. The idea of giving an equal voice to informal forms of participation seems to reflect the growing consensus in the literature regarding the fact that communities have knowledge and institutions that are qualitatively different from the knowledge and institutions that guide the work of formalised development organisations (Eversole 2012; Msukwa and Taylor 2011; Brehony 2000). Such "community knowledge" and institutions are organically bottom-up ways that communities pursue their change agendas.

As such, "translation agents" are intended to plug the gap between formal organisational goals and the needs and aspirations of the poor. She argues that these agents are critical in efforts to reshape and remake CP as they "sit simultaneously as community members and as development workers trying to translate across cultural divides"(Eversole 2012: 38). According to Eversole, this puts them in a unique position with access to both professional and local knowledge by immersing themselves in the "culture of formal organisations and the culture of the communities where they work and live" (2012: 38). The advantage of being knowledgeable in both cultural settings is that these change agents are able to work comfortably with different sets of institutional rules and are able to determine what works when, where and why (Eversole 2012). Eversole makes the important observant that relying on only one of either 'local' or 'expert' knowledge is inadequate because "communities need resources beyond their reach; development organisations, in turn, need the embedded knowledge and networks that communities mobilise" (2012: 38). The successful integration of the two worlds requires the willingness on both sides to learn from each other's practices. This means that in order to empower local communities it is important not only for these poor and marginalised to

learn and engage, but also the institutions that work with the local people to be prepared to learn and engage with local knowledge.

Such interactions, argues Eversole, need to be supported and encouraged by empowering "translation agents" who are able to work on both sides of the cultural divide (2012: 38).

It is however important to note that the challenge posed by the idea of "translation agents" relates to how the problem of elite capture can be resolved through the creation of an elite group of culturally empowered agents that can easily hijack the whole participatory process given their rich knowledge of both practices. I argue below that while the idea of translation agents is an interesting proposition, it however does not necessarily solve the problem of elite capture. Instead, it makes the situation worse since such an initiative deliberately empowers a small group of individuals with superior knowledge that qualifies only them to control decision-making processes.

2.5.8 "Translation Agents": A Critique

This section presents a critique to the idea of translation agents as a solution to the problem of compatibility between local values and norms and the ideals of technical blueprints. While mutual learning is desirable and necessary, it appears the emphasis put on the role of "translation agents" make them far more superior than the poor and marginalised. This means that they will still participate more than those who are not literate in both the culture of development agencies and the local norms and values of collective community engagement.

Furthermore, promoting the educated elite as "translation agents" further entrenches their power and knowledge levels while undermining the position of the marginalised and poor

(Eversole 2012: 38). More so, the idea of promoting translation agents does not resolve the problem of elite capture that has seen development projects being taken over by local elites at the expense of the marginalised. Although the idea of introducing “translation agents” sounds plausible, the important issue that has not been fully explored in CP literature is to try and understand the extent to which the structure and requirements of development projects influence the way people participate. I argue in this study that development planners and researchers alike should also pay attention to the extent to which development projects’ rules and requirements that regulate collective community engagement facilitate or hinder decision-making control by the poor.

The main reason for trying to understand how local practices work, is borne out of the realisation that the way they work is hardwired in people’s cultural practices that need to be clearly untangled. For instance, local practices are governed by tradition, which refers to ‘accepted forms of conduct to which practitioners seek to conform, as a matter of habit’ (Frohn 2001: 110). Hobsbawm describes traditions as constituting a set of practices, normally governed overtly or tacitly by accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. This explains why traditional participatory processes have persisted over time because according to Hobsbawm, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (1983: 1). In so doing, claims Frohn, traditions ‘combine social groups and practices, adding to them purpose and inner logic that cohere over time’ (2001:109). This may present problems for “translation agents” as they try to intermediate between two ‘worlds’ since they will be expected to act appropriately within one’s tradition while at the same time introducing alien participative technologies to the community.

Appropriateness of participatory practices has of late, become an issue in the analysis of CP phenomena. For instance, Hailey questions whether ‘Western concepts of participation and democracy inherent in many participative technologies can really be translated into a different cultural environment’ (Hailey, 2001: 97). In addition, Henry (2004) argues that while some communities understand participation as a right others view it as an obligation to one’s community. This raises questions about the reliability and suitability of one-size-fits-all participatory approaches such as PD, to adequately characterise the dynamics of community engagement in different contexts, which has prompted Brehony (2000) to suggest that CP projects should be organised like funerals, in which roles are clearly demarcated and duties distinctly assigned in accordance with people’s cultural norms and values.

The reason for this is that appropriateness, according to Frohnen (2001), involves more than recognizing the existence of a background understanding of tradition, but aptness entails acting in accordance with pre-existing standards of excellence and the understanding that one is a constituent member of one’s tradition. In this regard, despite the sheer variety of traditions, they are concrete realities and enduring modes of conduct based on habitual relations among people, and since they are constituted largely by habit, they are not easily manipulated or changed, particularly by individuals (Frohnen 2001: 112) such as “translation agents” that may be perceived as trying to introduce inappropriate technologies. The reason is that traditions do not depend directly on the actions and beliefs of individuals, but that of the collective. According to Frohnen, “individuals do not radically alter traditions.... Traditions undergo modifications in the course of events – in facing changed circumstances – or when the constitutive groups over time come to accept that aspects of their tradition conflict with other, higher order

traditions” (2001:113). In this regard, translation agents may resistance from the collective as they try to cherry-pick certain aspects of tradition that they consider to be amenable to manipulation.

Of course, traditions can be changed or to borrow Hobsbawm (1983) terminology, ‘reinvented’ to suit changing times, but such change is rarely an individual effort, nor does it happen overnight. According to Hobsbawm, the concept of ‘invented traditions’ refers broadly to include ‘actually invented traditions, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief debatable period...and establishing themselves with great rapidity’ (Hobsbawm 1983: 1). The object and characteristic of traditions, including invented ones argues Hobsbawm, is invariance. This means that the past, real or invented, to which these traditions refer, imposes fixed (normally formalised) practices that are repeated. Thus, tradition differs significantly from convention or routine because of its ritualistic or symbolic function. Tradition is therefore ritualistic and symbolic and is characterised by an enduring resilience; qualities that are not normally associated with convention or routine whose existence is justified on the basis of technical rather than symbolic reasons. This means that traditions are not technically driven but are rooted in people socio-cultural worldview. “Translation agents” would therefore need to be well conversant with the ritualistic nature of traditions in order for them to effectively and appropriately negotiate and find synergies between two traditions very different traditions.

Since conventions or routines are designed to “facilitate readily definable practical operations and are readily modified or abandoned to meet changing practical needs” (Hobsbawm 1983), they are more utilitarian than symbolic. On the basis of this

characterisation, the rigid methodological procedures of formal participatory processes inspired by PRA models that are designed to improve the accountability, transparency, and efficiency of participatory projects, can be classified as conventions because they perform a far more utilitarian than symbolic function. It will therefore be necessary for “translation agents to at least match these conventions with corresponding conventions from the local environment which requires a good understanding of the cultural practices of the local context including the distinction between rituals and utilitarian routines. It would therefore be important for “translation agents” to understand and appreciate how rituals and routines differ in terms of their functions and the importance in different communities. Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* for instance, point out that indigenous self-help practices among most Southern African communities are not mere survival (utilitarian) strategies, but also perform the important function of nourishing and sustaining relationships (ritualistic function), which is a far more important than mere survival.

What is important to note is that the invention of traditions does not imply that older forms of community and structures of authority could not be adapted or were not viable. Rather, argues Hobsbawm (1983), 'adaptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes'. According to Hobsbawm, this is the way in which old institutions with established functions, references to the past, and ritual idioms and practices, are adapted. In this regard, old materials are used to create invented traditions that are of a new type for completely new purposes. As such, notes Hobsbawm, each society has a large store of such materials accumulated over time together with an elaborate language of symbolic practice and communication. New traditions can be grafted onto old ones, and such invented traditions need to be linked historically and to be appropriate otherwise they lose their symbolic force. As such, the inventing of traditions

implies a process of ‘formalisation and ritualization characterised by reference to the past’ (Hobsbawm 1983). It becomes incumbent upon “translation agents” to be faithful to the way traditions work in order to maintain consistence and appropriateness.

However, where the old ways are alive and in use, traditions neither need revival nor invention, hence the need to promote an understanding of how they are sustained nor work. It is also important to point out that where traditions are invented, it is often not because old ways are no longer available or viable, but because they are deliberately not used or adapted due to a number of reasons. Given the fact that old traditions are always available for use if needed and also the fact that new ones can be invented, it is important to look inward and within communities for intervention strategies that have been locally adapted to deal with changing circumstances and also to consider how such interventions are regulated by norms and values that define their use. It is therefore important to understand how they are constituted and organized and how such arrangements promote or hinder collective community engagement.

It is important to note that when creating new traditions, the “newly minted institutions should not duplicate, contradict, or overlap with the functions of existing forms of social organisation, since doing so can only help breed mistrust, cause confusion and jeopardise community development work” (Msukwa and Taylor 2011). Needless to mention that, in most cases, PD blueprints and models tend to duplicate, contradict and overlap with existing practices in ways that threaten the viability and sustainability of current CP projects and programmes. This may also pose serious challenges for “translation agents” as they try to navigate a development terrain characterised by duplicity, contradictions, ambiguities and sometimes mistrust between ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ in local

development work. In any case, the use of ‘translation agents’ may not necessarily resolve the problem of elite capture. If anything, such a solution can only make a bad situation worse by turning ‘invited’ spaces into the exclusive zones of those already empowered who can control all the levers of decision-making power at the expense of the poor and marginalised.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the origins of CP and the key theoretical underpinnings of PD and PRA that have shaped and continue to inform mainstream CP thinking. The chapter has also discussed the major problems associated with PD projects in developing countries. The inherent weaknesses of the PD approach to CP have been raised and how decision-making power of the poor is (inevitably) supplanted by the influence of the elite. Agents tend to be hindered by the rules of the game of superstructures, which include project requirements and the institutional blueprints that inform how participation ought to take place.

Questions about the efficacy of institutional blueprints in enabling active community participation in empowerment related initiatives and explore the potential relevance of indigenous practices and institutions to contemporary development challenges, have been raised. The section above has highlighted the problems associated with institutional blueprints and local norms of community engagements. It raised questions about the compatibility of these universal forms of project work and aspects of people’s everyday life. The main argument here is that there is a mismatch between the ideals of CP and local norms of collective community involvement. The key question that has remained unresolved is how elite capture arises and in particular, how the elite end up controlling

decision making processes. It is argued that while the use of translation agents sounds appealing such a solution cannot resolve the problem of elite capture, but instead will perpetuate elitism. More so, their work is made the more difficult by traditions that complicate what to prioritise or relegate.

In short, the discussion above has raised key questions about how decision-making control by the poor remains elusive. It can be argued that the challenges and controversies raised in the above critique tend to point towards one major problem associated with PD – the capture of supposedly bottom-up processes by the elite, whether local or outsiders.

Having focused on CP theory and practice in general, the next chapter pays particular attention to CP processes in Botswana. Chapter 3 below reviews the literature on community development policy framework in Botswana by highlighting key policies that have influenced participatory initiatives in the country's rural areas. It is important to highlight the nature of CP work in Botswana and the extent to which it is linked to PD in general. The chapter also focuses on the unique features of Botswana's community development and the extent to which elite capture is a problem. The discussion of the major criticisms regarding the PD approach to community development in general has revealed evidence that seems to suggest that the fundamental challenge facing participatory projects is the widespread nature of the problem of elite capture. It is therefore important to determine the extent to which elite capture is a problem in formal participatory spaces in Botswana. As such, the primary focus is on how the "rules of the game" in a democratic, decentralised system of governance characterised by centralised planning, either promote the control of decision-making by the poor or rather enable elite capture play in its genesis. The question that the empirical material seeks to address is

whether elite capture is a direct and unavoidable consequence of the rules and resources that shape the spaces for participation. The extent to which such a link exists is an issue of concern for this study.

Chapter 3: Community Development in Botswana – Policy and Practice

3.1 Introduction

This chapter pays attention to community development policy and practice in Botswana since independence. The idea to focus on post independent development policy is important since CP in Botswana is being examined against the backdrop marked by democratic principles of governance and decentralisation practices promoted by the government in order to promote participation at the local level. The first section focuses on policies that have shaped community development work in Botswana. The second section discusses community development in Botswana and how it is put into practice

3.2 The Policy Framework in Botswana

This section focuses on the policy framework in Botswana and the role it plays in providing context for participatory practices in the country. The discussion first highlights the country's government-driven six-year development plans initiated soon after independence, which provides the broader policy framework in which other policies and guidelines are then inserted. This is followed by a discussion of prominent policies that have shaped Botswana's community development landscape especially community participation initiatives in poor rural communities. One of the key policies to be discussed in this section is the (MoFDP) (2002), which puts emphasis on the importance of popular participation in community development through the development and pursuit of income generating projects.

In addition, other policies that respond to specific national needs especially in the area of community development are produced, for example, the Strategic Framework for Community Development in Botswana (SFCDB) (2010); Sustainable Livelihoods

Approach (SLA) (2012) and the Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM), are also discussed. Since my brief is not to discuss policy per se, this section highlights key policy issues relating to the policy frameworks identified above as they relate to the current situation regarding CD in Botswana. The importance of this policy review is that it provides the current study with an appropriate policy context within which we can understand what is actually happening on the ground vis-a-vis what ought to happen as prescribed by policy. This will be followed by an analysis of community-based organisations (CBOs) in general and a specific focus of the CBO phenomenon in Botswana with a view to highlighting how they work and the effect that has on decision-making control. The policies discussed above have as a central theme: the promotion of community development practices through the active engagement of intended beneficiaries: the local communities themselves.

3.2.1 Six Year National Development Plans

This section highlights key developments in policy formulation relating to community development in Botswana soon after independence. The history of community development (CD) in post independent Botswana stretches as far back as 1963 (Ferguson-Brown 1996). According to Ferguson-Brown, serious consideration for CD can be traced back to the 1963-1968 Bechuanaland Protectorate Plan, which promoted CD as self-help by stating, "the time has come when more active steps should be taken to encourage local responsibility and initiative at the village level" (1996: 69). This marked the beginning of subsequent six year long legislated development plans that emphasised local level participation in the development of rural communities. The evolving state of Botswana's development terrain in terms of policy formulation is outlined the six-year development plans, which specify government's plans for the next six years. Botswana began its six-

year policy advance planning soon after independence with the introduction of the 1966 Botswana Plan known as the Transitional Plan, which further acknowledged the importance of CD in rural life. It was in this plan, notes Ferguson Brown, that a commitment was made to expand the department of CD, which had just been constituted under the ministry on Local Government and Lands, through the provision of adequate funding for the training of staff to kick start development initiatives in rural communities. According to the Strategic Framework for Community Development in Botswana (hereafter called SFCD 2010), the department of CD was given the mandate to oversee the creation of employment and the reduction of poverty in rural areas. The role of the department of CD continued to be emphasised in subsequent National Development Plans (NDPs).

A fundamental premise of planning in Botswana since independence and over the decades and clearly expressed in the the six year development plans is that development initiatives should, to the extent possible, be based on a “‘bottom-up’ planning system through consultation, whereby the people have the opportunity to express their needs and prioritise them. These needs, in turn, constitute the basis for local level planning and eventually national planning” (GoB NDP 9: 390). The NDP number 10, which was the current plan during the course of the data gathering process in Botswana for this study highlights the fact that its key principles and objectives regarding community development in rural areas is guided by the Revised National Policy for Rural Development 2002.

A number of policy documents and papers and reports have been produced for the purpose of shaping community development in Botswana since independence. One of

these documents include a paper on Rural Development in Botswana (1972) published by the government (MoFDP 2002: 2). As a follow up, a report titled: the National Policy Rural Development (1973) was produced outlining the aims and objectives of such a policy framework and the ways in which these could be achieved. This led to the establishment of the Rural Development Council (RDC) now known as the Rural Development Coordination Division (RDCCD) to spearhead and coordinate rural development initiatives in the countryside. It is noted that since 1973 rural development policies have largely focused on the promotion of “industrialisation and agricultural development as well as provision of infrastructure and services” (MoFDP 2002). Focus was primarily on building government infrastructure to be used in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects in different sectors of the economy. However, such a government run rural development programme had to change given the changing circumstances where the economy grew larger and became more complex, changing the dynamics of the urban and rural economies, which were also impacted by the new challenge of HIV/AIDS. As such government sought to change the trajectory of rural development in order to make it effective and efficient in addressing a new set of challenges as well as the need to streamline operations in ways consistent with Vision 2016 (MoFDP 2002: 3). These revisions culminated in the formulation of the revised national policy for rural development (2002) which has been instrumental in guiding rural development policy over the years.

Other policies have also been produced over the years the Remote Area Development Programme (1978); the Community Based Strategy for Rural Development (1997); the Revised National Policy on Destitute Persons (2000), and the Revised National Policy on Rural Development (2002). These policies share the common goal of including the

marginalised in development initiatives intended to empower the poor. The overall objective of Remote Area Development (RADP 1978) is to develop these remote areas in ways that improve the standard of living for the communities mainly dominated by the Basarwa ethnic groups who lead a mostly hunter gatherer lifestyle (MoFDP 2002). The main focus has been to resettle these groups in communities where they can acquire skills that would enable them to engage in “income generating activities” in order to economically empower marginalised communities as well as the strengthening of community leadership structures through education and training (MoFDP 2002: 9).

The Community Based Strategy for Rural Development (1997) puts emphasis on community participation involving leaders and ensuring that community needs were identified and prioritised. The Revised National Policy on Destitute Persons (2000) mainly deals with the rehabilitation of adults with training in entrepreneurial skills and knowledge in sustainable development (MoLG 2010: 9). What is important is that these policies are concerned with the development of those at the margins in order for them to be economically empowered. One of the key policy documents is the (MoFDP 2002) and this is discussed in some detail since it is a policy document upon which most of community development policy is based.

3.2.2 Revised National Policy for Rural Development 2002

This policy framework spells out the principles and parameters for rural development (RD). The government's thrust is to assist poor rural communities to improve their life situations through community development initiatives that are meant to empower them. The policy document outlines the strategies to be adopted for the successful implementation of the government's approach to RD. In this revised policy, RD is

understood as referring to "the modernization process that aims at raising the living standards of the rural communities as well as enhancing a variety of social welfare services geared towards self-reliance and sustainable development" (MoFDP 2002: 13). The reference to modernization in this definition shows the extent to which the idea that societies in developing countries are less developed because they are traditional and have to modernize following a certain prescribed path that was followed by their developed counterparts (Giddens 1991) especially, in Europe and America, is pervasive and intractable. Modernization strongly assumes, that development can only be induced from outside, and that there are certain variables that can be used as a standard for measuring social progress. The basis of the modernization theory has been criticized for using other the development of other countries as a yardstick for measuring against which the social progress of the less developed societies is based.

Furthermore, the emphasis that the definition puts on the importance of social welfare services is a throwback to the food for work government handouts highlighted by Ferguson-Brown above, which are responsible for destroying the philosophy of self-help ingrained in Tswana speaking communities as part of their social fabric, leading to government induced systemic dependence syndrome.

The issues to be addressed by the revised policy include the following: sustainable livelihoods; sustainable and effective land and natural resources use; social protection; institutional framework and development; capacity building; gender mainstreaming; HIV/AIDS prevention; poverty alleviation, and sustainable environmental conservation (MoFDP 2002). The overall goal of the revised policy is to enhance the quality of life of all people who live in Botswana's rural areas (MoFDP 2002: 12). According to the

revised policy, such a goal can be achieved through the implementation of policies and strategies that will enhance people's social and economic well-being and strengthen their ability to live in dignity and food security (MoFDP 2002). In line with this primary goal, this revised policy sets out that its objectives are to:

- a) reduce poverty;
- b) provide opportunities for income generation and involvement in economic activities;
- c) create employment, and;
- d) enhance popular participation in the development planning and implementation processes as a basis for broad-based, balanced and sustainable development (MoFDP 2002: 13).

According to the revised policy, the promotion of a participatory rural development process through the involvement of local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community based organizations (CBOs), and the private sector is seen as key to combating poverty, promoting sustainable livelihoods, stimulating rural employment and income generation through the identification and exploitation of profitable alternatives to livestock and crop production. In addition, such participation is considered crucial in enhancing self- help by reducing reliance on government support. It is clear from the above that the participation of rural communities in their development is considered crucial for the success of development initiatives in these communities.

The RNPRD (2002) was followed by the development of the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (NSPR) (2003) whose primary focus is to reduce poverty in a sustainable way and also to “harmonise all existing anti-poverty policies and programs” in order to achieve its objectives (MoLG 2010: 10). While the NSPR (2003) specifically targeted poverty reduction, another policy the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM 2007) was designed to promote the exploitation of natural

resources in sustainable ways, which involve conservation and preservation of these natural assets.

3.2.3 Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Policy (2007)

According to Arntzen (2006), Botswana does not have a formalized policy or programme for CBNRM. The current situation in Botswana is that CBNRM has resulted from the fusion of several activities and different project and policy initiatives particularly in the areas of wildlife, rangelands and rural development. Historically, CBNRM has largely been concerned with wildlife based projects, and the majority of projects that have been established within context of wildlife and veldt conservation and exploitation. In the absence of formal policy, current activities that can be described as CBNRM, can be credited with the provision of some kind of framework for the establishment of the current CBOs in Botswana.

3.2.3.1 Community Based Organisations

CBNRM was transformed into formal policy in 2007 (Centre for Applied Research 2016) and has however provided rural communities with some kind of framework for the establishment of community-based organisations (CBOs) known as community trusts for the purpose of instituting economic development initiatives in their local areas. These community trusts are registered as charities through a relevant ministry, depending on the type of natural resource they want to exploit. Even though the basic CBNRM framework primarily focuses on the conservation and exploitation of wildlife and veldt products in those areas that have these resources, in areas that do not have wildlife, the CBOs they establish adopt more or less the same institutional framework. Until 2007, CBNRM programmes and those for general rural development initiatives had regrettably remained

largely separate from the core CBNRM programme (Arntzen 2006). The CBNRM policy of 2007 formalised the operations of existing CBOs and provided an enabling environment for the formation of new CBOs. CBNRM and CBOs operations were later harmonised in order to effectively develop rural communities (Centre for Applied Research 2016). Two years after the CBNRM was adopted, the Revised Remote Area Development Programme (RRADP) Guidelines (2009) were published to give guidance and update the old policy. The revisions emphasised the participation the poor in remote areas in initiatives designed to bring about new ways of subsistence which focused on income generation, training and education.

3.2.4 Strategic Framework for Community Development (2010)

The SFCD is a guideline that defines community development and its purpose, and sets out in broad terms, the types of interventions to fulfil that purpose within the context of the revised rural development policy. The framework puts emphasis on sustainable livelihoods and community-driven development, which promotes empowerment in order for communities to become resilient and self-reliant. Within the context of Strategic Framework for Community Development, community development is defined as a "participatory grassroots process that promotes mutual understanding, social justice and sustainable social economic change; it is a process that enables community members, including the marginalized, to address and realize their social and economic aspirations through improved and more equitable access to resources" (MoLG 2010: 12). Community development is also considered to involve all disadvantaged groups (social inclusion) in community driven programmes through participation in decision-making, which would result in their empowerment. A community driven approach to development of this nature is characterised by role reversals in terms of the relationship

between community development workers and the communities they serve. In this regard, the community development worker assumes the role of facilitator who helps communities reach important decisions regarding their development. This means that the community development worker acts as mobilizer and facilitator: a change agent who provides the link between communities and aid agencies (MoLG 2010). Such a characterization of the community development worker is consistent with Chambers (1997) view that the professionals only play a facilitation role while learning from the local people in a reversal of roles. While such a reversal of roles is in theory, a sound proposition, in practice the approach to development in Botswana as discussed below has largely remained predominantly top-down despite policy pronouncements to the contrary.

In this regard, The SFCD is being implemented within a context characterized by what is referred to as a 'service provision' mode (MoLG 2010: 4), fuelled by a centralized top-down approach to project planning. As such, the challenge is to "recreate an approach to the development of communities that gives emphasis to self-reliance, community planning and decision-making, as well as, social and economic empowerment" (MoLG 2010: 4). Such an approach requires high levels of participation by the poor and a sense of ownership of project work by the community rather than government-led top down planning and implementation (MoLG 2010: 5). It is noted in the SFCDB (2010) that development initiatives in Botswana are guided by four national principles namely: democracy, unity, development and self-reliance. These principles are said to be grounded in the country's traditional culture which embraces the national philosophy of *kagisano* or 'social harmony', which means living peacefully together through the promotion of social justice, interdependence and mutual assistance. It is through the spirit of *kagisano* that friends and neighbours establish bonds for collective community

engagement in order to alleviate suffering through social schemes such as *Motshelo*. However, despite such an aspirational development agenda as contained in the MoLG (2010), the community development context in Botswana is:

Caught in the dichotomy of 'top-down' centralized planning system, and a 'bottom-up' development philosophy that is based on the ideals of participation and self-reliance. This dichotomous situation has in the last two decades shifted more towards a 'top-down' approach. The challenge of immense social problems has resulted in a substantial expansion of centrally planned and government led social safety net services. The spin offs of this action have been a reinforcement of a government dependency syndrome at the community and household level, and a community development service that is locked into providing services rather than 'facilitating change' (2010: 7).

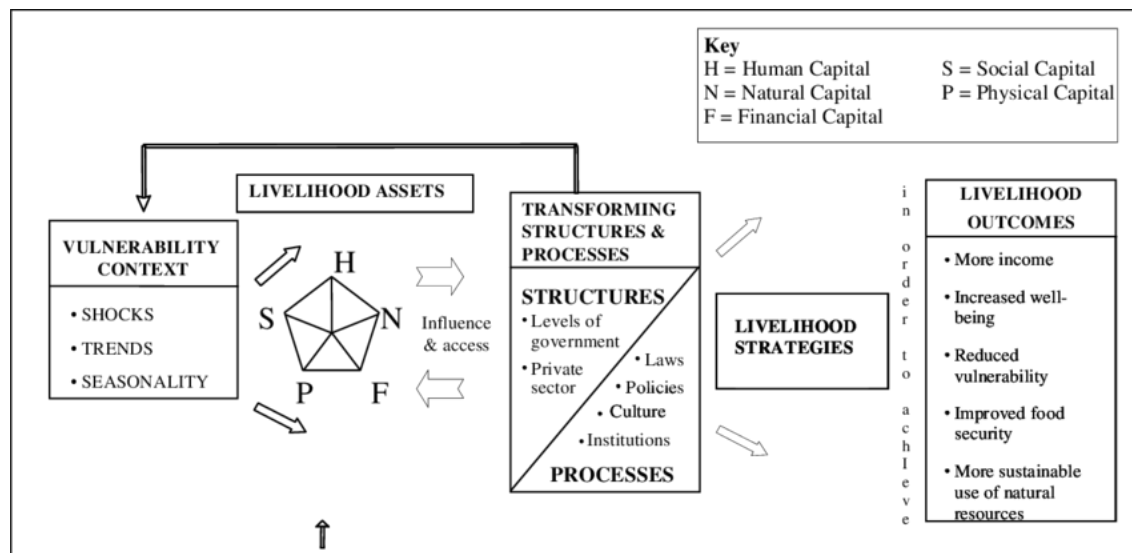
This means that the current community development set up in Botswana is more consumed with the provision of service as part of the government intervention through social welfare and public works programmes in order to alleviate poverty as opposed to creating opportunities for promoting self-reliance. For instance, poorly resourced areas (such as Mogonye) “often depend on social welfare, poverty eradication as well as public works programmes. For example, the national budget for the *ipelegeng* programme was BWP580.6 million in 2014 and increased to BWP635.390 million in 2015 (with 64 191 beneficiaries in 2015)” (Centre for Applied Research (CAR 2016: 18)). As such, what is needed is an approach that moves away from top-downism to bottom-up community-driven development practice that according to the SFCDB (2010) should be rooted in the national ethos of *Botho* or humanness which emphasis the community spirit of interdependence, self-reliance and collective community involvement. In between the SFCDB (2010) and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (2012), the government has

also revised the National Youth Policy (2010) and produced the Poverty Eradication Road Map, spelling out how poverty can be reduced.

The SLA (2012) was formulated on the basis of the SFCDB (2010) and it puts emphasis on the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, with its focus on the utilization of assets such as natural; human; social; financial, and human.

3.2.5 The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach 2012

Figure 2: The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach 2012



(Adapted from Carney 2001: 57)

According to Allison and Ellis the SLA has its origins in the literature that deal with “understanding the differential capability of rural families to cope with crises such as droughts, floods, or plant and animal pests and diseases” (2001: 378) associated with the Institute of Development Studies in the United Kingdom. It entails an assessment of a community's vulnerability and the policies and programmes meant to mitigate such challenges taking into account the nature of assets available to the community. Such an analysis also involves an evaluation of how these assets are exploited, including whether

the livelihoods strategies adopted by the community meet the needs and aspirations of its people and determining whether such strategies lead to sustainable livelihood outcomes. According to the SFCD, the SLA is a focal theme of Botswana's approach to development. It is an integral part of the community development strategy for the country, which provides an analytic framework for the systematic examination of the underlying processes and causes of poverty, and how such challenges can be addressed. The SLA builds on prior work based on the community-based strategy for rural development which was informed by other approaches such as the action planning model and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques to identify community needs and plan relevant actions.

However while the SLA is a useful tool for identifying people's assets, their vulnerabilities, available strategies and sustainable outcomes, it still does not go beyond the simple rhetoric of merely mentioning *Botho* and *kagisano* as moral guiding principles, to the actual incorporation of existing local practices in the framework guide for community development in Botswana. Rather, the operational guideline for the implementation of the SLA of 2012, which serves as a reference document for community development workers detailing out step by step how the approach is to be implemented, does not borrow from existing practices that are inspired by the philosophy of *Botho* or *kagisano*. However, despite the fact that the SLA is yet to be implemented, Botswana currently has adopted the community based natural resource management (CBNRM) programme as the *de facto* policy primarily responsible for providing guidance with regards to the exploitation and conservation of wildlife and veldt resources in those communities endowed with these natural resources. In addition to the SLA, there were also the Poverty Eradication Guidelines: Implementation of Packages (2012) which

intended to ensure that poverty is not simply reduced but eliminated altogether. Poverty alleviation in Botswana is a central theme given the semi-arid nature of the geographic area in which Botswana is located. Poverty reduction or eradication is considered a multipronged approach that involves “economic capability, human capability and participation” (MoLG 2010: 10). In this case, economic capability is measured in terms of the number of people who live below the poverty datum line while human capability relates to issues such as education and training. The participatory dimension deals with the extent to which the poor engage in local level planning processes.

The overarching goal of these policies and strategies is to provide a very firm basis upon which community development initiatives are predicated. According to the SFCDB these policies all promote the notion of:

- The empowerment of communities to make decisions;
- The use, conservation and management of community assets (social capital);
- Sustainability and supporting communities and households to engage in socio-economic activities that led to improved livelihoods and quality of life;
- Targeting the marginalized (MoLG 2010: 10).

These policies have had an influence on how community-based organisations (CBOs) operate in rural Botswana. Having outlined the policy environment, I now turn attention to the nature of organisations at the forefront of community development in Botswana.

3.2.6 The CBO Phenomenon in Botswana

CBOs are a recent phenomenon in Botswana owing largely to the designation of the country as a middle income country, which led to donor flight leaving behind underfunded non- governmental organisations (NGOs) that were at the forefront of

development projects in rural areas. The resultant gap created an opportunity for the promotion of CBOs that are largely supported by the government in order to actively involve local people in the development of their communities. CBOs are largely voluntary or membership organisations "formed by and for individuals residing in a geographically bounded and administratively defined area, usually a municipal sub-ward, are now recognised as the primary vehicles for popular participation in development efforts (Kyessi 2002; Meshack and Sheuya 2001). Over the years CD has been responsible for general community mobilization, promoting literacy, supporting the village development committees (VDCs), youth projects, mass education campaigns, community projects programme and mass education campaigns. In its current form CD has continued to have responsibility for three programme areas: VDCs, community projects and remote area development programme (RADP). VDCs were institutionalised by way of a presidential directive in 1968 in order to promote development at the village level.

Community projects were introduced in the late 1970s to support and strengthen the capacity of VDCs and other village level organisations to engage in productive income generating and employment creation activities. RADP launched in 1978, is on the other hand, responsible for providing development support to remote settlements through the management of the economic promotion fund. However, since Botswana was declared a middle-income country the role of NGOs in rural development has drastically diminished.

The usual role played by NGOs is now being performed by CBOs in the form of community trusts such as those that operate within the context of CBNRM as well as those trusts that have been established in areas lacking in wildlife. Within communities,

VDCs are the political arm of the village while community trusts constitute the economic arm. A community trust is made up of twelve members some elected others appointed on the basis of their positions in the socio-political structure of the village. Of the twelve members the positions of chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer and vice treasurer, secretary and vice secretary including four other committee members are elected at an annual general meeting of the trust. These elected officials hold office for a certain agreed period in accordance with the provisions of the trust's constitution. The two other members, the *Kgosi* (chief) and the chairperson of the VDC, are ex-officio members with no voting rights. The twelve-member committee is responsible for running the affairs of the trust on behalf of its members who are the villagers. Before trusts are allowed to operate, they have to be registered under the Charities Act 1989. According to the Centre for Applied Research there are 165 CBOs that are affiliated to the Botswana Community Based Organisations Network (BOCOBONET) the organisations that promotes the interests of CBOs (2016: 7). The Centre for Applied Research (2016) points out that out of the affiliated 165; only 94 are registered while 53 are considered to be active and operational. The low numbers of registered CBOs compared to those registered might imply problems associated with the introduction of a technology that is alien to the village with its blueprints and rules of the game that may prove cumbersome for ordinary villagers. In addition, the few that are operating might be affected by the challenges associated with running participatory projects in poorly resourced areas coupled with low levels of education as noted earlier in Chapter 2. Depending on what they intend to focus on as part of their income generating project, they have to apply for a license for that particular operation to the parent ministry under whose jurisdiction that particular line of business falls.

For instance, according to Mr *Letsholo* my informant from BOCOBONET who introduced me to the research participants I interviewed from the two research sites, if the project in question involves the processing of quarry stones for use in housing construction, then the trust concerned has to apply to the Ministry of Mines for a license to operate legally. In theory, the committee is supposed to work in consultation with the villagers to draw up an economic development programme for the trust. However, in practice as we noted later, in the discussion on formal participatory processes, the board of trustees makes decisions on behalf of the community. At an annual general meeting the committee gives an update on the trust's economic and income generating activities by presenting annual reports and it is expected that these are scrutinized by the whole membership of the trust. These trusts are formed and run by villagers and only receive financial and expert guidance from responsible ministries and relevant departments. Most of the trusts are formed after villagers have identified an income generating project they want to venture into. They then have to come up with a constitution before they can register as a legal entity. The help they get from outsiders is dependent on their needs and in most cases, it is the Trust that approaches government and responsible departments for support.

The section above has considered the research context in terms of the history of development policy in Botswana in order to situate the current research within the broader framework of government policy as it relates to rural development. Having outlined the broader policy context within which development programmes and projects are being rolled out in Botswana, it is important to consider a brief history of community development and the governance structures with which local level development practice is inserted.

3.3 Community Development Practice in Botswana since Independence

This section discusses both past and contemporary CP practices in Botswana after the attainment of independence. First, it highlights how CP has developed over time shaped by the policies highlighted above. The second part focuses on current participatory processes and how these are constituted and organised in poor rural communities.

Botswana has developed a government supported system to ensure that the poor and marginalised are involved in development projects through the use of various spaces for participation. However, such noble government initiatives to promote self-help in rural areas suffered a huge setback as a result of a severe and prolonged drought that hit the country from 1965 to 1966, forcing the government to change course and to concentrate on providing food to the needy as opposed to promoting self-reliance. As food production came to a virtual standstill, government appealed to the international community for help and the World Food Programme (WFP) came to its rescue. Initially the WFP distributed food for free to the people. However, as the drought persisted, the community development department (CDD) recommended that CD project works be carried out in exchange for food (Ferguson-Brown 1996: 70). Such a move had serious implications for the notion of self-help. According to Ferguson-Brown, the unintended consequence of the CD approach to development work is that such a strategy set a bad precedent: an expectation for a return in kind for services rendered by the community. This expectation to receive something in return for volunteering put a dent to efforts to promote self-help and self-reliance within communities.

As such, notes Ferguson-Brown, the motivation to be involved in CD programmes depended not on long term benefits of any given project, but rather the immediate rewards that such work guarantees. This set Botswana on an unfortunate path to a dependence syndrome that characterise communities' attitudes towards voluntarism and the spirit of self-help. In Ferguson-Brown's view, the 'food for work' scheme not only eroded the self-help spirit of the nation by creating an endemic dependence syndrome, but more tellingly, they laid the foundation for a 'top down' government-led development agenda as opposed to a 'bottom up' grassroots initiated approach to CD.

The self-help initiative was back on the government development agenda in the 1968 National Development Plan (NDP), which marked a shift in focus, from an emphasis on the identification of need and hardship in response to the effects of a severe drought, to the post drought years which now highlighted the importance of economic independence from government and donor aid (Ferguson-Brown 1996: 73).

In order to achieve such a turn around, the government through a Presidential decree in 1968, introduced village development committees (VDCs) made up of 12 members to be elected at the village Kgotla every two years with the chief being an ex-officio member (Ferguson-Brown, 1996). However, one unfortunate development associated with the introduction of VDCs, argues Ferguson-Brown, and was the mandate to change people's traditional ways of doing things. Such a move introduced another significant dichotomy to an ever-growing list of binary distinctions: modernity versus tradition. Already, there was a set of well-established contradictions in CD discourse in Botswana, that is, the tension between 'food for work' versus voluntarism and 'top down' versus 'bottom up' approaches.

Such tensions had devastating consequences especially in the domain of policy formulation in different governments departments, which resulted in the promotion of mixed messages about government's actual plan. For instance, while the 1968 NDP's efforts were channelled towards changing traditional practices to suit changing times, the CDD's 1970 report lamented that "the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation has made it impossible to employ the traditional way of doing things ... there is a vagrancy on a large scale in all groups (Ferguson-Brown 1996: 73). Sadly, despite the rhetoric of self-help, the CDD pursued a modernisation strategy aimed at changing traditional attitudes. Consequently, such a policy effectively helped to establish top down rather than bottom up planning that foster the spirit of self-help as opposed to dependency. According to Ferguson-Brown, "this top down approach to development – of trying to change attitudes to suit the national plans rather than identifying community needs at the community level – suggests that CD in Botswana has a historic alienation from the people" (1996: 78). The point being made here is that despite having a model of decentralised system of local governance, the planning system is heavily centralised to the extent that CP in practice, becomes ironically top-down rather than bottom-up. The section below explores in some detail how Botswana's system of local governance is decentralised while the planning system is centralised and how the spaces for participation are structured including the way such spaces are supposed to promote popular participation in decision-making at the local level of governance.

3.3.1 Local Government Structures in Botswana

This section highlights the decentralised local governance structure in Botswana. It is worth pointing out though the role that the parent ministry of Local Government plays in

providing “policy direction and guidance to local institutions in their quest for social and economic development” (GoB NDP 10). In carrying out its role, the ministry strategy is informed by the Revised National Policy for Rural Development (2002), which emphasises poverty reduction and “greater popular participation in the development planning and implementation process” at the local level of governance. Botswana prides itself as having a model for a decentralised system of local governance in Southern Africa, which is grounded in the *kogtla* “consultative framework of traditional democratic system of governance” (Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 1). According to Karlsson *et al.* (1993: cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 1) “decentralisation [in Botswana] is a national political priority, and is well formulated in the constitution as well as in other policy documents”. Decentralisation can simply be defined as the transfer of authority from central to local government (Dasgupta and Beard 2007). One of the key aims of Botswana’s decentralisation policy is to “enhance local participation in decision-making and the promotion of social and economic development” among the poor in rural communities (GoB NDP 9). The role of a decentralised system of governance in promoting citizen participation cannot be over-emphasised. Available evidence seems to suggest a strong correlation between decentralised governance and the level of citizen engagement in public policy formulation. Decentralisation is credited with providing local level channels for “consultative participation and accountability (Rakodi 2004 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 2) and is credited with the creation of the necessary conditions for active local level participation in decision-making” (Michels 2011 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 2). Whether decentralisation is good at what it is intended to achieve is subject to debate and is discussed later. It is important for now to turn our attention to the nature of decentralised local governance institutions in Botswana and how the spaces created enhance grassroots participatory decision-making at the local level.

The lower levels of governance in Botswana consist of Councils, Tribal Administrations, Land Boards, District Administration, District Development Committees and Village Development Committees. All these administrative arms of local governance have specific responsibilities allocated to them through a long standing decentralisation policy adopted after independence. This section provides a brief account of each administrative structure's functions and responsibilities within the local development context. It focuses first on Councils, followed by Tribal Administrations, Land Boards, District Administration, District Development Committees and Village Development Committees. Such decentralised structures show the extent to which government has a presence at the village level and how such forms of governance influence community participation.

3.3.1.1 District Councils

District Councils were introduced in 1965 through the Local Government Ordinance and are made up of both elected and appointed officials. Councils provide services to towns and cities such as health facilities, schools, education water and waste management and the general upkeep of these areas. Within the context of Botswana's democratic governance system, councillors are expected to represent their electors and to hold consultative meetings where they inform the public about any issues of interest (Molebatsi 2012: 10).

3.3.1.2 Tribal Administration

Established during the colonial era, Tribal Administrations have largely remained unchanged mainly due to their heavy reliance on the traditional *kogtla* system of consultative governance characterised by open discussions (Molebatsi 2012: 11). Tribal

Administrations are made up of chiefs, sub-chiefs, headmen, administrative staff and local police. The main role of a Tribal Administration is to facilitate “popular participation in decision-making” (GoB NDP 9: 390) among the local people in each community.

3.3.1.3 District Administration

As is the case with Tribal Administrations, District Administrations were also established during the colonial period and have persisted to this day. The responsibilities of the district administration are mainly to do with coordination (Molebatsi 2012: 11). The district administration office is responsible for coordinating the activities of central government linking it with local level administrative structures. Such responsibilities are shared between the district administrator and the district development committees and government is represented by the District Commissioner.

3.3.1.4 District Development Committee

Established by a Presidential decree in 1970, the District Development Committee (DDC) is responsible for linking government and local development institutions. Its membership consists of chief executive officers (CEOs) of councils, land boards and the tribal administration and those in charge of leading central government departments.

3.3.1.5 Land Boards

Land boards were introduced after the attainment of independence in 1970. There are twelve main land boards responsible for administering tribal land. Their sole responsibility is to allocate tribal land for “residential, commercial, arable, livestock-grazing and industrial purposes” (Molebatsi 2012: 11).

3.3.1.6 Village Development Committees

These came into effect in 1968 in order to champion local level development initiatives. VDCs were designed mainly to promote and ensure community participation in the formulation and implementation of village/ward development plans and is responsible to its community through the *kogtla*.

3.3.1.7 The *Kogtla*

One of the key 'spaces for participation' at the village level is the *kogtla*. The *kogtla* is a traditional institution that has been part of the Tswana people from pre-colonial times. The term *kogtla* however is derived from the English word court, but the system of *kogtla* has been around well before colonisation. It is also noted that *kogtla* refers to a place where people gather or assemble (Tlou 1998 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 4). The *kogtla* plays an important role as a village level traditional institution. For instance, the *kogtla* is a venue for public meetings and also doubles up as a traditional court of law presided over by the *kgosi* or chief. As a venue for public meetings, the *kogtla* provides a forum for the consultative process that enable villagers to contribute to the formulation of national development plans (NDPs), which is one of the key pillars of community development and social integration (Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 11).

The *kgosi* or chief presides over the proceedings at the *kogtla* and in pre-colonial times he was assisted by a team of advisers or councillors who he consulted (Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 4). It is pointed out that the *kgosi* was expected "to govern with the interests of the people at heart and was even expected to provide his people with sustenance" (Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 4). They argue that the *kgosi* demonstrated a certain degree of democratic practice through consultation with advisers before major decisions were implemented.

According to Tlou 1998 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 5) the kogtla system was a deliberative and participative forum in which the kgosi “took account of the opinions expressed at the meeting and rarely did the kings go against the opposition of the people”. However, the downside of the kogtla was that it had no place for women (Mgadla 1998 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 5). Such a system of governance was adopted and perpetuated after independence and because of its strong background in consultative processes, the modern kogtla has adapted to the current parliamentary democratic dispensation with remarkable endurance. The stability and adaptability of the kogtla prompted van Binsbergen to point out that;

So much is the kogtla model the standard for ideal social behaviour, that it is immediately emulated whenever the diffusion of information, the need to arrive at a decision, or the settlement of a conflict necessitates the appeal to a common framework of interest and a shared model of action: in family matters, on the work-floor, in formal organizations, etc... effective ceremonies of consultation ... are the hallmark of Botswana political culture (1994 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014).

In this regard the kogtla is regarded as an important forum for promoting collective community participation and is considered to “signify the embodiment of good governance measured by popular participation, consultation, accountability, transparency, and rule of law” (Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 5). The kogtla is said to be characterised by what are known as “freedom squares” or ‘open spaces set aside for public meetings of a political nature’ and they ‘exist in every residential area and village and are open to whatever political party applies for a permit to use them’ (van Binsbergen, 1994 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 5). It is also noted that these spaces are also used as platforms for information dissemination. It is however argued that participation in *Kogtlas* has been

reported to be on the decline partly due to the urbanisation and modernization and also due complains about the take-over of the traditional institution by interest groups for selfish political motives (Mokwena and Fakir 2009).

3.3.2 Decentralised Local Governance Structures as “Spaces for Participation”

The various local level administrative structures also act as spaces for citizen participation in the governance of their communities. It is important to consider how these structures promote collective popular community engagement in rural Botswana. Obasi and Lekorwe (2014) three common traditional forms of community involvement at the local level, which are public meetings, question and answer sessions and co-option into committees. Meetings are mostly held at the *kogtla* for consultation purposes where government officials and representatives of various local level committees and administrative offices including ministers or even the president gather communities to consult on various policy issues. These meetings could also be question and answer sessions where officials answer villagers’ ask questions on issues that are critical to the development of their areas. In some cases, villagers are co-opted into committees to deliberate and advise as part of the local level policy making process (Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 6). In this case villagers engage in token participation which is more of co-option into the participatory process rather than genuine decision-making control.

It is argued that in some cases there are reports of popular forms of participation made possible by the decentralisation of governance spaces (Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 7) while in other reports it is noted that the elite and government officials dominated proceedings. Although the importance of the *kogtla* as a village level institution that has ‘allowed a measure of communication and consultation between the government and the rural people

who are the majority of the population’ (EISA 2001 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 7), bottom-up planning has however not materialised because the planning process remains heavily centralised as the flow chart below demonstrates (UNDP 2002 cited in Obasi and Lekorwe 2014: 7). The contradiction of having a decentralised local system and a centralised planning system at the same level of governance has complicated the attainment of participatory decision-making as the discussion below shows.

3.3.3 Decentralised Governance Spaces versus Centralised National Planning

While at the local level administrative duties are decentralised as discussed above, the planning process is centralised in ways that affect the participation of the local people in determining the priorities of their local area. The section below discusses the national planning process in Botswana showing how such a centralised system affects popular participation at the local level.

3.3.2.1 National Development Plans

Botswana introduced a system of six-year national development plans developed from the village up to the national level. NDPs provide the macro-economic environment within which development initiatives in Botswana are implemented and these inform the kind of interventions necessary. Development planning in Botswana has evolved since independence in 1966 through the production of NDPs that inform governance policies and development programme and initiatives - these plans are part of Botswana law enacted through parliament including any revisions and or adjustments. According to Ferguson-Brown community development became a major preoccupation of government policy since independence.

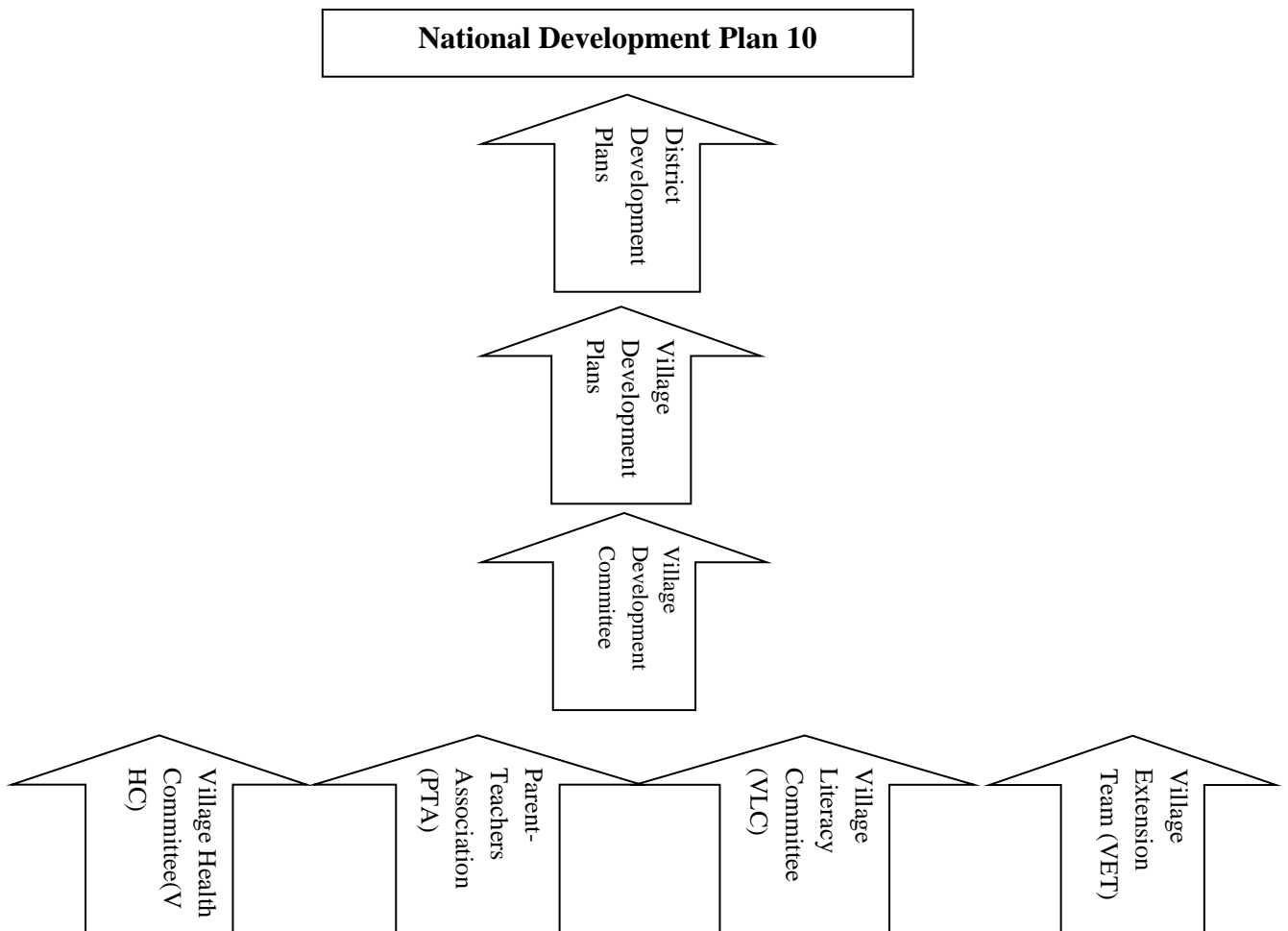
However, the CD work envisaged in which communities take the lead was derailed by a severe drought which led to food for work programmes which saw development projects and initiatives being implemented by community development workers within the newly created CD department. Within such compromised circumstances, the agency of the community was taken away by the professionals through the introduction of a presidential decree that led to the establishment of VDC in 1968 ushering in a top-down rather than bottom-up approach to development. Although the government of Botswana deliberately encourage the notion of "self-help" and "self-development", in reality, it has been government led and detrimental to efforts directed towards the promotion of a genuinely grassroots-led CD (Ferguson 1996). During the course of this research Botswana was implementing the NDP 10 which covered the period between 2009-2016. Botswana's CD is also guided by vision 2016, adopted in 1997, which in essence is "the principal guide for the governance of the country and provides the framework within which to address the (development) challenges that face it" and informs the formulation of all subsequent development plans (Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 13).

As such, Vision 2016 is regarded as the overall guide for "all political, social, and economic activities, including the National Development Plans, whose objective is to attain sustained development, rapid economic growth, economic independence and social justice" (Government of Botswana 2007: 18, cited in Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 13). In this context, the NDPs serve to provide a policy framework against which all development initiatives are conceived taking the role of a nationally produced technical blueprint written by politicians and approved by government.

3.3.2.1 District Development Plans (DDP)

These are mainly concerned with issues that are considered priorities at the district level. Although there is work on DDPs regrettably, there are no known local level or village development plans. Mokwena and Fakir note the efforts of civil society and other grassroots-led initiatives to give voice to the locals through village development plans however such bottom up initiatives are yet to materialize. In theory, NDPs are developed through a process that is supposed to be grassroots led starting with villagers input in the form of village development plans led by VDCs as shown below.

Figure 3: National Development Flow Chart



(Adapted from Serema 2002, cited in Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 13)

The diagram above shows a flow chart representing how development planning in Botswana is supposed to take place with a clearly laid out bottom-up structure starting at the very bottom of local level administrative structure: the village. As shown in the diagram, development planning is supposed to be initiated from the bottom through the Village Development Committee made up of the village extension team (VET), village literacy committee (VLC) parents-teachers association (PTA) and village health committee (VHC). Yet, in reality, a top-down centralised planning system is the norm.

3.3.3 VDCs and Participation

CP and citizen engagement are manifest and institutionalised in VDCs (Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 14). VDCs were created to implement government approved development plans at the local level especially, the coordination of drought relief programmes. The VDCs were therefore "a means through which the support of the people for development could be sought...often decisions about development were taken for the people, even at the local level, rather than by the people" (Ferguson 1996: 73-74). In order to change the role of VDCs from being top-down implementers of government policy to being enablers of consultation and deliberation at the local level, VDCs utilised existing traditional deliberative structures represented by *kogtlas*. The *kogtla* is the traditional headquarters of the Kgosi or chief and it is the venue for meetings for the elected ten members of the VDC and all stakeholders (villagers, chiefs, district officers and sometimes national leaders including the president) for consultation and deliberation regarding village issues. As such, VDCs through the *Kogtla* are expected "to facilitate the fullest participation and involvement of all villagers" (Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 14). According to the two scholars, "the internal dynamics of each village, which set the backdrop against which these committees are created and function - as well as the fundamental character of the

can at times impose limitations on the scope of participation and involvement of important stakeholders and village constituencies" (Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 14).

What is crucial for the analysis is the contradiction between the creation of decentralised 'spaces for participation' and the promotion of local level supposedly grassroots-led participation relying on a largely centralised government-controlled planning system. How these structures work is crucial to understanding how 'elite capture' arises and is nurtured and enhanced at the expense of the intended beneficiaries of such decentralised spaces. The key question deals with the extent to which the structures discussed above allow for participatory decision-making. The section below pay attention to the challenges of implementing bottom up participatory practices in a context dominated by top-down national level policy planning discussed above.

3.3.4 Local Spaces for Participation: Challenges and Controversies

The way Botswana's local governance structure is organised is meant to promote bottom up planning through the involvement of the local people in the decision-making process. On paper such a decentralised system should enable a people-driven, grassroots-oriented and pro-poor development planning. However, the practical reality of Botswana's local spaces for participation is ironically described as top-down despite its widely acclaimed decentralised system of local governance. Mokwena and Fakir highlight the way in which deliberative and participative processes that are facilitated by and through the *Kogtla* system, fall prey to the dominant power structures that are prevalent in the village set up. For instance, it is argued that given the *Kogtla* set up, those "who are close to the chief or the chiefs themselves usually dominate the deliberations over [the village development plans]. The relatively better resourced, relatively better educated and other local

community dynamics may mean that some voices are marginal in the process, if not completely excluded from the consultations of the *Kogtla* on the development plans” (2009: 15). It is interesting to see whether the VDC set up allows for those who are better resourced and better educated to take control over decision-making processes within the trust under investigation and how the poor might be excluded altogether from participating. Such a set up makes the argument for the use of the agency-structure framework even more compelling. It is also worth noting the fact that the *Kgosi* is a member of both the VDC and development trusts, there might be a strong chance for his office to dominate development planning. The chief might abuse the traditional power he wields and the influence he has in village life, a situation that might turn the process into an elite driven initiative rather than a grassroots-led one.

Another factor that might undermine decision-making control, argues Mokwena and Fakir is the idea of having a “standard national development template which might suppress other voices and might not necessarily address local particularities and challenges” given the layered nature of formulating development plans as shown in the diagram above (2009: 16). They also argue that a national development template that is based on a centralised system of planning which requires adherence to national norms can sometimes be inflexible and detrimental to the overall goal of having a bottom up approach to national development outcomes. Such a rigid planning structure is more or less similar to the institutional blueprints associated with PD planning. These development templates, blueprints and policies constitute the structural factors that need to be understood as the conditions that may enable or hinder decision making control.

In addition, it is noted that an incongruous relationship exists between local priorities and those of politicians within the context of policy formulation and development agendas “from the national to district and right through to the sub-district and village/township level” Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 20). In this regard, the needs of the communities and those of the politicians do not coincide. Whether such discord exists between the local community of Mogonye and the politicians, is something this study is keen to establish. Mokwena and Fakir are of the view that while the elaborate planning system in Botswana may have served the country in the initial stages of its transition to a democracy and development, such a set up may now be tenuous to justify. For instance, they argue that the nature of participation that takes place is not consistent with expectations of a participatory consultative and deliberative process that the *Kogtla* system is supposed to provide for VDC work. In their view, instead of having more of lateral communication between villagers at the local level interacting with local councillors and members of parliament (MPs), the system has historically been dominated by a government that is more inclined towards service delivery and development on behalf of the people.

It has also been noted that the *Kogtla* has been rendered ineffective by poor attendance levels as “there is a general feeling that the consultation undertaken at the *Kogtla* is ceremonial as the government uses this forum primarily for legitimizing decisions made elsewhere” (Sharma 2005 cited in Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 20). It is important to establish whether such poor attendances are also prominent in organic spaces. Furthermore, this lack of interest is can also be attributed to what is described as “consultation fatigue” caused by the lack of coordination between the decentralised arms of governance, which seem to call for individual rather than cross-departmental meetings in order to reduce the number of such meetings per calendar month (Molebatsi 2012: 12).

In addition, it is also claimed that the indifference to participation by the locals in VDC work through the *Kogtla* is caused by the lack of information at the village level in respect of the specific roles and responsibilities of elected officials be they VDCs, councillors or MPs. Such lack of information affects the level and effectiveness of engagement that communities offer, which makes the process less two way and more top-down and vertical from officials to the villagers and not the other way round. Such an asymmetrical flow of information and knowledge disrupts grassroots-led processes by turning the local people into followers in development initiatives they should be leaders. Mokwena and Fakir conclude that given the way VDCs work it may not be clear how they contribute towards deliberative and participatory processes that advance the interests of the local development agenda as far as the formulation and implementation of community based and development plans are concerned. Since VDTs operate within such an environment, it is interesting to see whether such dynamics are at play and how they affect the activities of VDTs given that participation has largely remained nominal rather than characterised by decision-making control exercised by the poor.

The challenge is on how to mitigate existing exclusionary mechanisms in order to realise genuine citizen control given the way VDCs work it may not be clear how they contribute towards deliberative and participatory processes that advance the interests of the local development agenda as far as the formulation and implementation of community based and development plans are concerned. Since VDTs operate within such an environment, it is interesting to see whether such dynamics are at play and how they affect the activities of VDTs given that participation has largely remained nominal rather than characterised

by decision-making control exercised by the poor. It is interesting to assess whether such a scenario exists in the context of development practices that are led by VDTs.

According to Ferguson-Brown (1996), the implementation of the six year development plans has been the specific responsibility of community development personnel employed within the department of community development. Such a situation is blamed for curtailing the agency of communities by making CD work a preserve for professionals. Despite the fact that there is a consultative process at village level right up to district (as shown in the diagram below/above), which is not fully utilized. The NDPs like any other such development policies the world over are "essentially technical documents, drafted by experts and later approved by elected representatives" (Taylor 2002, cited in Mokwena and Fakir 2009: 12). The question to ask is whether such technical blueprints are responsible for 'elite capture' and whether such a pattern is replicated in the way VDT projects are formulated and implemented.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the policy framework and participatory practices in Botswana. It has discussed how spaces for participation are exploited by the elite in government departments and ministries as well as those in local communities. This critical review of how participatory processes that are implemented tend to echo what happens in PD contexts in general as discussed in Chapter 2. The dominant theme to emerge from the review of the PD critique in Chapters 2 and 3 is the pervasiveness of elite capture in projects and programmes and its negative effects on intended beneficiaries. Although its existence is attributed to power inequalities and the use of influence by the elite, very little is mentioned about how structure sustains elite capture. It

is also important to note that apart from Musgrave and Wong (2016) who highlight some positive aspects of elite involvement, the literature generally presents the participation of the elite as being largely negative. Yet available evidence suggests that elite involvement can be beneficial to local communities. Having discussed participation within the context of the PD approach in general in Chapter 2 and its practical application in the context of Botswana in Chapter 3, it is important to consider the concepts that are useful in understanding the nature and character of informal processes, in terms of how they emerge and are sustained in everyday life.

Chapter 4: Informal Spaces: ROSCAs - African Women's Associations

4.1 Introduction

The discussion in this chapter examines organic participatory processes in general especially the rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs), which straddles different cultural traditions given their widespread nature. It highlights how they are formed and the nature of their organisation and constitution including the common features that characterise these infrastructures. The previous chapter has highlighted the nature of community development in Botswana in terms of its structure and policy guidelines. This chapter discusses the origins and nature of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations and associational life in Africa in general as well as a special focus on how *Motshelo* evolved to become a ROSCA. Section (4.5) discusses the local people's cultural norms and values relating to community involvement as expressed through *Botho/Ubuntu*, an African philosophy of life. Such a focus will help situate discussions about ROSCAs such as *Motshelo* within a socio-cultural context. The importance of acknowledging cultural context is borne out of the realisation that the way people act is informed by the norms values and understanding these is important.

It is important to highlight the nature of these processes and how they can play a role in community development. I consider first, the link between *Motshelo* and Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) in general in order to set the broader context within which *Motshelo*, a ROSCA, should be considered. Since the majority of ROSCAs including *Motshelo* are conducted by women, I show the general basis upon which women's associations in Africa are formed. I also link these associations to the philosophical foundations that inform and inspire their formation and how they work. In

particular, special mention and a brief discussion of *Ubuntu* or *Botho*, a predominantly Southern African philosophical tradition is presented as a way of providing the context within which the formation, structure and operations of *Motshelo* ought to be understood. The chapter is divided into six sections. Section 4.1 is the introduction. Section (4.2) discusses the nature of ROSCAs, while Section (4.3) examines the role of social movements, Section (4.4) associations, section (4.5) self-help, and section (4.6) Ubuntu/Botho.

4.2 Rotating Saving and Credit Associations (ROSCAs)

This section pays attention to the concept of rotating savings and credit schemes of which *Motshelo* is an example. It highlights the key features of these schemes and explains why they are very popular and widely used internationally by the poor. Rotating saving and credit associations (ROSCAs) are a ubiquitous phenomenon throughout the world. These schemes play important roles in strengthening relationships and are used as opportunities for financing development initiatives that directly benefit participants.

One of the most influential studies on ROSCAs, Geertz (1962 cited in Mansuri and Rao 2013), points out that such schemes are important for entrenching solidarity relations of trust within communities, which are exploited for networking purposes. This puts emphasis on the importance of social capita networks (Ghazali 2003). Ghazali claims that informal credit schemes are known to increase the “quantity, quality and persistence of social interactions among neighbours, friends and members of groups and associations, generate social capital and the ability to work together for a common cause which is especially important for the poor (2003:184). This means that the building of relationships is central to the structure and organisation of ROSCAs. Likewise, Besley *et*

al. highlight the criticality of the “use [of] pre-existing social connections between individuals to help circumvent problems of imperfect information and enforceability” (1993: 805) while Handa and Kirton 1999: 177) emphasise the idea of “social collateral that ensures sustainability”. This underlines the significance of strong interpersonal ties as a basis for a ROSCA’s robustness and longevity. According to Mansuri and Rao (2013: 190) one of the key characteristics of ROSCAs is mutual trust and it would be important to examine how this aspect considered in Motshelo.

A ROSCA is formed by a group of people who arrange to contribute equal amounts on a regular basis and depending on arrangements; a specified amount is given to one member at a time on specified time periods until every member has had his or her turn (Johnson *et al.* (2010: 2). Anderson *et al.* define a ROSCA as a “group of individuals who gather for a series of regular meetings. At each meeting, each person contributes a predetermined amount into a collective “pot” and this money is given to a single member” on a specified date (2009: 15). This process is repeated until all members receive their share in a single rotation and the process is restarted. Members are said to be the ones who decide the order in which payments are made to recipients, the order amount to be paid (Anderson *et al.* 2009) and that such rotational arrangements "may be determined by ballot, by age or seniority or other social systems of preferment" (Johnson *et al.* (2010: 2). This makes the management of ROSCAs simple and flexible in operational terms. As such, these organic spaces are said to be popular owing largely to what Johnson (2004 cited in Johnson *et al.* 2010:5) refers to as the “negotiability” aspect of these schemes that is, their ability to offer flexibility in settling debts for instance since these are subject to negotiation. Such negotiability is based largely on the nature of people’s relational ties.

As such, the popularity of ROSCAs is derived from the "simplicity" with which the system is managed and the "underlying financial intermediation mechanism" (Johnson *et al.* 2010: 2). In other words, not only are ROSCAs a simple way of managing financial transactions, but they also act as a means through which the poor can access cash, which would normally be out of reach were they to rely on mainstream lending institutions such as banks. Such access to financial resources is considered crucial for providing a social safety net for poor members, which helps to improve the quality of life (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Similarly, Ghazali emphasises the importance of these schemes in reducing poverty while increasing the household return for investments made. According to Johnson *et al.*;

ROSCAs are a very basic and simple form of financial intermediation that has a very high degree of flexibility: the amount to be saved; the number of people in the system; the regularity of contributions; the number of people to receive a payout on each occasion; the use to which the funds can be put; can all be determined by those participating (2010: 2).

The strength of ROSCAs lie in their "flexibility and multi-purpose and multi-dimensional" (Johnson *et al.* 2010: 3) nature as they are constituted in order to deal with both economic and social issues. People are free to join ROSCAs of their choice as long as they satisfy the requirements for acceptance members can also withdraw from a scheme, but only after a rotation is complete (Ghazali 2003: 189). Economically, ROSCAs represent a simple, but efficient way of saving limited financial resources in order to pay for goods or services using what Platteau (1997 cited in Johnson *et al.* 2010: 3) refers to as "balanced reciprocity" in which rotating credit transactions offer participants insurance for future purchases.

Johnson *et al.* (2010: 4) note that the lifespan of a ROSCA depends on how well it is managed as well as its purpose. Some ROSCAs persist for long periods depending on what they are intended to achieve while others operate for a short duration of time. Problems that affect the smooth operation of ROSCAs range from inconsistency in making payments, delays in paying or not paying at all, which may lead to a member being removed from the group, or if the problem is so serious, it may threaten the very existence of the group. Ghazal (2003) is of the view that the non-payment of dues is disruptive and may lead to the break-up of a scheme. While these groups rely on the threat of sanction to keep members in check, it is important to acknowledge that the enforcement of sanctions is not a straightforward matter. What stands as the ROSCA's strongest buffer against defaulting: social connections – is also the source of the most painful consternation, especially when it comes to severing such ties as a result of cheating. Defaulting is considered to have serious social consequences, which sometimes leads to the expulsion and blackmail of the defaulter, a situation that may make it difficult to be trusted again or to secure membership elsewhere. Expulsion can be bitter since it means destroying social relations and people's associational life.

However, in cases where group members work smoothly, they are commended for providing participants with a sense of economic and social security since “individuals can successfully counter the basic uncertainty of a marginal existence by generating methods of economic solidarity that mobilise resources efficiently (Velez-Ibanez 1983: 113 cited in Johnson *et al.* 2010: 4). In this regard, individuals who would otherwise be vulnerable on their own are cushioned from harsh economic realities based on having strength in numbers, which allows them to pool resources together and address such challenges in ways that may not be possible if they operated on their own. It is noted that problems of

defaulting and enforcement are less pronounced in more stable schemes than random ones (Handa and Kirton (1999)).

While Geertz (1962: 260 as cited in Johnson *et al.* 2010: 4) argue that role of ROSCAs in economic development is debatable since they tend to promote “social and cultural change”, which helps communities to transform themselves from a traditional way of life to a more modern one in which they adopt a new set of values. It is undeniable that they play a crucial role in local community development. According to Anderson *et al.* (2009), informal groups play an important role in the economic development of most developing countries. Ghazali (2003) highlight the fact that the money generated from investments in these schemes is used to finance children’s education, the purchase of household goods and the promotion of better welfare for members’ families. Sterling (1995) reporting on the *Partners* type of ROSCA common among people of Jamaican origin in the United Kingdom used the schemes to buy houses, furniture and cars while at the same time fostering a sense of unity and belonging among the immigrant communities. ROSCAs have therefore become an important tool used by the poor to try and lift them out of a poverty trap.

However, ROSCAs have a negative side that needs exploration. I noted earlier, the dangers associated with the expulsion of a defaulter which can cause irreparable damage to the sustenance of social relationships. More so, those expelled might find it difficult to join other groups owing largely to black mail, which leave these individuals isolated and further marginalised. More critically, ROSCAs promote inequality and social exclusion especially the tendency to have people in groups based on social relationships. This has the consequence of having people isolating on the basis of social class: the rich ‘mixing it

up' on their own and the poor engaging hurdling among their own kind as well (Ghazali 2003: 193). This division can only accentuate the existing inequalities between the rich and poor. A study of the *Kut* schemes in Malaysia, reveal that these organic spaces are used to exclude and marginalise others. The question to ask is how this exclusion arises and what it means for induced participatory processes.

Despite these challenges, it cannot be denied that ROSCAs give, especially women economic opportunities and "voice": the choice to buy what they want (Ghazali 2003: 193). The fact that these opportunities enable the poor to empower themselves shows that ROSCAs are a useful vehicle not only for strengthening local level connections and relationships, but also act as ladder to lift the poor out of poverty. The empirical study needs to establish the extent to which Motshelo as a ROSCA foster relationships and whether it is an empowerment toll for its members. It is also important to understand its structure and whether it excludes others who are poor and the implications such findings have on CP theory.

What is therefore important is to understand what motivates people in different contexts to desire to form and establish these associations. An understanding of motivations can help to provide an alternative to the rational choice models that currently inform mainstream characterisations of agency in participatory development. One way to explain such motivations is to consider related groups such as social movements in order to account for the reasons people take part, which may give an alternative view to rational choice models that are at the heart of PD approaches. As such, an important question to ask is whether the empirical material confirms the importance of social movement theory in community participation studies.

This study also draws insights from other fields by borrowing and combining theoretical concepts. Candidate concepts such as social movements, associations and Botho/Ubuntu are borrowed from different fields of study in order to illuminate the current research. The sections below focus on social movements, associations and associational power, and Botho/Ubuntu.

4.3 Social Movements

The study of social movements is considered important to this study even though insights from the study of social movements had not yet been considered in the analysis of CP phenomena until now. There seem to be a link between the study of CP and social movements not least because both put emphasis on active collective engagement, but more importantly, the two fields of study (in) directly implicate the involvement of *associations* and *networks* of relationships as the key ingredients for the formation, sustenance and organisation of organic spaces of participation. Emphasis in CP literature has been on rational choice models and how these account for people's motivation to participate. However as pointed out in Chapter 2, rational choice models have been criticised for the way in which they characterise the individual and society. The view that the individual is a rational being who calculates whether it is necessary to participate on the basis of self-interest may not be consistent with concepts of Ubuntu/Botho that characterise the individual as a social being whose personhood is to be understood within the context of others. As such, reference to social movement theory may help to foreground other alternative ways for explaining why people participate. Since both social movements and CP processes are dependent on the ability of participants to mobilise and organise collective social action, it is likely that they share some key features. Mellucci (1996) observes that the notion of social movements can be useful as analytical concept

rather than an empirical category, by focusing on issues such as collective identity building, forms of action, and motivations that inspire people to take action (Barnes *et al.* 2005). However, care is required when transferring insight. In this regard, this section starts by explaining the concept of social movements and then show make the case for enlisting social movements into the body of knowledge that is considered to be theoretically relevant to the study of CP.

Various definitions have been given in the literature regarding what social movements entail. However, like Barnes *et al.* (2005: 43), the current research is primarily concerned with those aspects of social movements as they relate to collective action that is inspired by "shared concerns usually deriving from dissatisfactions with some aspect of 'the way things are', and a consequent wish to achieve changes in the way life is ordered". It is therefore important to establish what dissatisfactions or concerns led to the formation of Motshelo.

Another important aspect of this notion of a movement is the idea that the implied action is not a one-off thing (like in the case of a demonstration), but an ongoing process of engagement over time (Barnes *et al.* 2005). The significance of social movements in understanding collective social action is evident in the creation of new spaces that are outside of the official arenas. It is within these new spaces created by social movements, argue Barnes *et al.* (2005), that "new identities are created, new ideas explored, new solutions proposed...[and] assumptions and identities can be challenged" (2005: 43). According to Cornwall (2004), these new spaces are different from the 'invited spaces' created by public officials seeking to open up policy-making processes as highlighted in the PD approach to CP. Rather, they are alternative arenas for collective social action,

similar to what Fraser (cited in Barnes *et al.* 2005) refer to as *counter-publics*, created to challenge exclusion and to reject the norms of engagement that embody the official arenas and are responsible for perpetuating the marginalisation of the poor and weak. It is argued that "within these alternative public spheres, experiences can be expressed in ways that do not conform to the normative expectations" of mainstream CP theory (Barnes 2005: 44), but which are consistent with the way people act as part of everyday life.

It is important to establish through the empirical material, the extent to which the norms and values that inform the kind of collective community action that local communities engage in are consistent with those values that are considered critical in the PD approach. In addition, it will also be important to examine the nature of Fraser's *counter-publics* that local people exploit through their own brand of social action and how these differ from what Cornwall refer to as the 'invited spaces' created by either government officials or NGOs through project work.

One important way in which social movement theory can contribute to our understanding of CP is through its analysis of people's motivations for participation in collective social action. Within CP literature different explanations are given as to why people get involved. These theoretical standpoints can be divided into three broad categories: the socio-cultural perspective with its emphasis on value systems (i.e. how social actors make sense of their own situations and the way in which they respond to their discontent with institutional or broader social norms). In the case of CP practices, dissatisfaction could result from conditions of persistent poverty which communities would naturally strive to change. Second, a perspective on participation is informed by rational choice theory with its emphasis on the considerations that individual agents make when deciding their

choices as they pursue their goals, interests and desires. Lastly, there are arguments that pay attention to the importance of people's social networks and the role they play in enticing people to participate, as well as, sustaining such collective engagements (Barnes *et al.* 2005: 45).

According to Barnes *et al.* (2005), earlier explanations regarding the motivations for the emergence of social movements emphasised that the activists involved drew inspiration from their disadvantaged position of being dislocated, alienated and isolated (or being *anomic*, see also the section on networks below). These explanations have been refuted by empirical studies, which show that those involved in social movements tend to be well-connected and integrated into social networks. In Melucci's view, the networks that people create constitute the context within which "interactions between individuals produce both the cognitive and affective schema that can connect individuals to collective action" (1996: 65 as cited in Barnes *et al.* 2005: 46). The implication of such a view is that institutional factors do not matter since what is only important are the immediate networks within which people interact in everyday life.

Such a perspective ignores the important point that these networks are formed within a socio-cultural context, a situation that has a bearing on how such networks function. As such, to suggest that the networks represent the context within which social interaction and collective action take place is to ignore the significance of important structural factors that influence both the formation of networks and the way they operate. As Diani and McAdam note;

Typically, social movement activists and sympathisers are linked through both 'private' and 'public' ties well before collective action develops. Personal friends, relatives, colleagues, and neighbours, may all affect individual decisions to become involved in a movement; so, may people who share with prospective participants some kind of collective engagement, such as previous or current participation in other movement activities, political or social organisations, and public bodies (2003: 7 cited in Barnes 2005: 46).

In seeking to understand how different forms of CP work (or do not work), it may, then, be important to consider the nature of community social networks, the forms of networks that are most likely to lead to participation and how such networks relate to people's understanding of their own situations and the considerations they make before engaging collectively in pursuit of their interests (Barnes *et al.* 2005). This brings to the front burner of CP debate, notions such as Ubuntu/Botho in order to provide the philosophical foundations of people's participatory tendencies and practices.

Another important aspect of the social movement theory to the analysis of CP phenomena is that its focus on motivations is also linked to the idea of identities', which is described as "an active process of making sense of oneself and one's connections to others in order to construct a self that has strong affective elements and that directs the way in which people decide to act" (Barnes *et al.* 2005: 46). According to Barnes *et al.* (2005), individuals become motivated to take part in movements through others they can easily identify with who can give them a sense of who they are, what they value and how they stand in relation to the world. This is consistent with the way the individual is perceived in Ubuntu/Botho moral worldview dominant in Southern Africa where personhood is not so much about individual rights, but also one's duty to the community he/she belongs to.

In the light of the above, the concept of motivation can be a very useful notion to the study of CP and can provide an alternative way of looking at people's interest in collective community engagement. The notion of motivation can be distinguished from the concept of 'incentives' that define understandings of participation within rational choice models (see Cleaver 1999), which insist that individuals make choices to participate or to not participate, on the basis of a cost and benefit analysis. This means that individuals make choices to engage or opt out depending on whether they consider the available options to be of benefit or a cost. (Barnes *et al.* (2005). While rational choice models try to explain interest in CP in terms of benefits or costs, social movements provide socio-cultural reasons as the rationale for people's motivation. The advantage of the explanations that social movements provide is that the framework offers a theoretically refreshing range of possibilities not just a binary choice of either, benefit or loss, as is the case with rational choice models.

Not only can the study of CP benefit from social movement theory, but also from an analysis of associational life, especially those in Southern Africa. In Southern Africa, ROSCAs are borne out of people's associational life, which is rooted in cultural and philosophical traditions such as Ubuntu/Botho discussed in section (4.6) below. Associational life among African women discussed in section (4.2) below, is considered important for a better understanding of what motivates people to join these groups and the implications such networks on collective community engagement. Such insights can help our understanding of why people participate the way they do in CP projects.

4.4 Concept of Association

The concept of association helps to shed light on the nature of associations that people form and the ones that are crucial for CP. In an influential treatment of associational theories, Warren notes that, in lay terms, associations ordinarily refer to "those kinds of attachments we choose for specific purposes - to further a cause, form a family, play a sport, work through a problem of identity or meaning, get ahead in a career or resolve a neighbourhood problem" (2001: 39). This means that people choose to associate on the basis of a number of considerations. Theoretically, the most common description of associations depends on a distinction between the thickness and thinness of their associative relations (Warren 2001), which basically is about the strength of these relationships. For instance, families and friendship belong to the category of *primary associations* while civic groups, sports clubs, and religious groups constitute *secondary associations*. On the other hand, membership-based interest groupings and professional bodies are referred to as *tertiary associations* (Warren 2001: 39). The concept of association is considered useful in understanding a wide range of social and political phenomena. With reference to the empirical material, it is important to ask which of these three types of associations is common? Such knowledge is important since it reveals the considerations that people make when mobilising and organising collective social action.

Advocates of the notion of association point out that it is a multi-faceted concept that cuts across identities, communities, geographies and other potential cleavages. As such, approaches to association emphasise different facets depending on their ideological or theoretical standpoint. For instance, since liberal approaches emphasise the idea of freedom to associate, they tend to focus on secondary and tertiary associations simply

because it is these categories that demonstrate an individual's choice of whom to associate with. As far as communitarians are concerned, associations are important because they have inherent integrative qualities, which are important for the attainment of community cohesion. Proponents of democratic approaches put emphasis on the democratic effects of associations, and it is considered that the "virtues and viability of democracy depend on the robustness of its associational life" (Warren 2001: 39). What this means is that the influence of associations go beyond the realm of mere socialisation into the political domain in which they provide the bedrock upon which strong democratic practices are built.

The study of CP tends to place emphasis on the integrative social function of associations, and to that extent, it has some affinity with the communitarian view. However, the perspective that informs the current study does not subscribe to the communitarian view which treats associations as if they are 'cultural centres' whose sole purpose is to provide individuals with their "identities, horizons and moral orientation" or compass to deal with the problem of anomie or social disconnection which is said to be prevalent in liberal communities (Warren 2001: 21). Anomic individuals are considered disconnected from the moral discipline of ethical communities, which means they are unable to form bonds of trust that are necessary for developing the capacity for social action (Warren 2001). As far as the current study is concerned, associations are not only moral zones where the so called anomic individuals can seek refuge, but they also act as a window through which we can appreciate how people mobilise and organise themselves in order to engage collectively for social action in their everyday lives within their communities. An appreciation of people's associational life can help widen understanding of the dynamics of CP by paying attention to local norms and values that provide the social glue that binds

community members to different kinds of associational relationships. It is from these associational relationships that participants in different forms collective social action are recruited (Steady 2006), which gives impetus to the argument that the effectiveness of CP as an empowerment and poverty alleviation tool, is contingent upon taking existing practices as the starting point of any intervention project related support from outside (Anyidoyo 2000; Brehony 2001). The argument for such considerations is based on the understanding that since associations are already good at what they do, which explains and justifies their continued existence, it may well be worthwhile to understand the considerations that the people involved make when recruiting, mobilising and organising themselves for collective action. I discuss below how and why women's associations in Africa are formed and the important role they play in the socio-economic and political spheres of their members' lives.

4.4.1 Women's Associations in Africa

Steady's (2006) analysis of African women's associations is very insightful as it pays attention to how and why they are formed and the role they play in collective social action within different social, economic, cultural and political contexts. According to Steady, the women's associations she studied in Africa tended to be built on primary group ties of family, kinship, friendship, community and shared values characterised by a degree of informality in the way meetings are conducted (2006: 4). She points out that almost everywhere in Africa, women have a long tradition of organising for collective action and the associations they form play an important role in promoting socio-economic development needs. This is despite the fact that in mainstream CP thinking, women are in general, considered weak, poor and always at the mercy of patriarchal hegemony which relegates them to the periphery of society's socio-economic and political activities.

Yet, Steady study reveals that women in rural Africa have always actively pursued self-empowering initiatives through traditionally entrenched structures for recruiting, and mobilising participants, as well as organising for social action. It is therefore important to understand how these women, often characterised as vulnerable and powerless, are able to mobilise for social action. In her analysis of participation in social, economic and political affairs of their communities in Sierra Leone, Steady highlights the importance of traditional associations such as secret societies, which act as conduits through which the efforts to mobilize women for development and democratisation are channelled. In other words, these associations draw their membership from secret societies which act as recruitment zones. According to Steady, the make-up of these associations is reflective of the underlying group ties and they serve as a "substitute kinship group, providing mutual aid and support, which in turn guarantees social security in times of adversity" (Steady 2006: 112). These associations also serve as coping mechanisms against poverty and hardship while others are intended to provide solidarity relations.

In addition, Steady notes that women's associations in Sierra Leone play an important role in the participation of members in the country's political processes since these groups are considered important assets for political parties, which try to recruit secret society members to become party affiliates. The value of secret societies to political parties in general and those aspiring for political office in particular, presents these women groups with opportunities to lobby for favourable concessions. Given their centrality to party politics as party mobilizers, women's secret societies are able to exploit their advantage and use it as leverage as they (re)negotiate skewed power relations in their favour. Such strategies for power reversals may conflict with 'norms' - for example, of good governance with its emphasis on transparency and accountability.

Steady also points out that almost everywhere in Africa, women have a long tradition of organising for collective action and the associations they form play an important role in promoting socio-economic development needs of members. In particular, notes Steady, women associations in Sierra Leone have been promoting development in areas such as education, employment creation, resource mobilisation as well as participation for the democratisation of local and national institutions of governance. In countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, associations play an important role in development-related issues. A good example of such efforts from Kenyan women are expressed through *Maendeleo Yawawake* which means "progress for women" in Swahili. According to Steady, women's associations in Kenya are credited with improving land ownership and tenancy in urban areas on their own behalf. These associations are credited for promoting socio-economic development through entrepreneurship, community projects, mutual aid schemes, legal counselling, formal and non-formal education and self-empowerment programmes (Steady 2006: 141). It is noted that "despite the diversity of African societies, cultures, and women, there are common themes in their histories, institutions, cultural norms and values, including the experiences of colonization and corporate globalisation that warrant comparative treatment" (Steady 2006: 1). For the most part, argues Steady, these associations are designed to promote development related interests and the improvement of societal well-being. In this regard, she views most women's associations in Africa as socio-centric rather than being there to fight against gender based discrimination and marginalisation or fighting for individual rights. Rather, they are preoccupied with humanistic and development related concerns in order to empower themselves which can help to enhance their status as important economic and political players. As such, an understanding of how these associations

mobilise and organise themselves into engaging in these important aspects of community development is vital for the development of CP theory.

Such empirical evidence is important for showing how gender differences that are framed through the lens of dichotomous models which often characterise such distinctions as a matter of bipolar oppositions in which patriarchal hegemony is blamed for the marginalisation of African women traditionally (Steady 2006: 2). Yet, far from being always at the receiving end of skewed power relations, argues Steady, "African women have historically operated in the public sphere as rulers and political officials, even in patriarchal societies" (2006: 2). In fact, as Steady study highlights, women's associations operate in the "public sphere" where they challenge the state, formulate policies, demand change, and lobby for greater female representation in decision-making positions.

Steady argues that indigenous associations or those social groupings that have existed as part of people's everyday life, hold the key to understanding the gendered nature of women's collective action. For instance, through her sensitivity to contextual factors she has managed to establish the historical link between secret societies and mutual aid associations on the one hand, and the traditional "gender division of labour and the autonomous functioning of "male" and "female" in economic and social spheres of activity and influence" (Steady 2006: 4), on the other hand. More importantly, her study of associations has shown that such groupings "served as useful mechanisms for mobilization for collective community engagement, and continue to act as important power bases for women" (Steady 2006: 4). This means that associations can play a role in participatory development where the involvement of the poor and marginalised in unimpressive. Tapping into how these association work might just help those who induce

spaces for participation about how the poor on their own engage and whether such strategies can be adapted for use in invited spaces.

In her view, an important element of female collective action associated with indigenous forms of mobilisation is the desire by the women involved to safeguard key aspects of their culture that underwrites human security (Steady 2006). As a consequence, argues Steady, these associations tend to promote a feminism that is humanistic in orientation and transformative in intention, as opposed to expending their energies on agitating and fighting for their rights or challenging men as espoused by rights based frameworks, for instance. This shows that what may motivate people in a given context to want to participate may be informed by a different set of value systems. The tendency among the groups Steady studied was to give priority to social and human-centred goals rather than narrow concerns about gender equality and fighting for rights from below. Rather, the fight against exploitative development policies and tyranny is done through a number of strategies that include advocating for more democratic institutions and policies; challenging underdevelopment; facilitating access to resources; providing mutual aid in times of hardship and promoting formal and non-formal education (Steady 2006).

In particular, mutual-aid associations or "friendly societies" tend to focus on providing material, social and moral support to members in times of need, for example, bereavement emergencies and destitution which means these associations assume the role of social welfare agencies (Steady 2006). This shows how widespread the concept of self-help is among African communities given that Wilkinson-Maposa (2006) *et al.*, report of well organised philanthropic institutions in Southern African communities. By

engaging in these associations, the poor exploit their strength in numbers, which arms them with associational power as presented below.

4.4.2 Associational Power

Associational power is based on the formation of a common will, the collective notion for facilitating action. Such an understanding of power does not reduce itself to a zero-sum game where the benefits are unequally divided but lends itself to a positive-sum scenario where there is mutual benefit. Although collective efforts do not all necessarily translate into equal benefit as it can sometimes lead to domination, this view of power as collective and integrative, often leads to the exercise of power with, rather than over others as the empirical research in Botswana regarding informal and formal CBOs reveals. According to Allen, associational power is about the power to connect, to bring together, but not to suppress the interests and differences that commonly divide. In this regard, power is perceived as a force of good. In other words, people have power as they can organise themselves to advance their cause, hence they are not powerless. It is this power that has been overlooked in development literature. Associational power is positive in that it enables self-development through self-mobilisation (Allen 2003) and offers better prospects for empowerment since it is grassroots-led and goal-driven. Evidence for this power can also be found in cases relating to associational life and social movements.

Such an understanding of power is different from the one that considers associations to be constituted for the purpose of opposing the influence of the powerful in society. Within this view, people are not considered as powerless, but rather they exercise power through the positive strength of collaborative association (Allen 2003). Associational power is exercised mostly through negotiation and persuasion (see also Masaki 2004). Thus, the

mobilisation of associational power is not always in direct opposition to domination (see Masaki), but has its own right and existence. As such, power can arise from the collective mobilisation of often loose coalitions. In this sense, association enables negotiation which seeks to promote change without being confrontational in order to foster a 'positive-sum scenario' where a more beneficial use of power for all is envisaged (Allen 2003: 187). The productive nature of associational power helps to forge alliances in 'public spaces' where diverse groups of individuals come together in order to achieve broadly similar set of goals. Characterising power in this way is important in that it acknowledges the fact that people are not powerless, but rather they exercise their power through the positive strengths of collaborative association. Different modes of empowerment enable people to come together to pursue a common goal without having to be confrontational. In this scenario, argues Allen (2003) negotiation and shared outcomes replace confrontation and opposition and take us into the realm of the power to act, rather than the domain of powerlessness and resistance.

It should however be noted that associational power can be disrupted by the eruption of violence as the case of most good intentioned demonstrations that turn violent and destructive, can testify. This does not in any way diminish the potency of associational power as a force of good. Associational power helps to put into perspective the argument that there are no perpetually powerless people since rural communities through existing indigenous participatory practices are able to organise themselves in order to harness the positive attributes of power and change their circumstances in a positive way. Such power can be deployed either, to promote negotiations that can result in positive change or challenge by way of confrontation the boundaries of possibility in order to attain the

same goal. Such power is derived from the kind of associations that people engage in everyday life consistent with people's cultural norms and values.

The discussion reveals the problems associated with a simple binary representation of power as a duel between the powerful and powerless. Instead, I argue that considerations of power based on the relationships that people hold in space and time (Allen 2003) might be useful. The reason is that argues Allen, power affects people in different ways depending on context and relationships. It is also noted that by pooling their resources together as most members of ROSCAs discussed above do, the poor try to use numerical advantage and exploit the productive force of associational power which can sometimes be fruitful while in other instances it can be disruptive if the goals of the group do not align. What is important here is that associational power can help to explain how the poor, despite their circumstances are sometimes able to pool their meagre resources and help members to build houses or buy food. The study of associational power is linked to the concept of self-help through self-mobilisation.

4.5 Concept of Self-Help

Self - help is a deeply entrenched cultural phenomenon associated with humanity, which most poor communities have relied upon for both survival and the advancement of change-oriented projects. In order to have a better understanding of the concept of self-help in Africa especially, in Southern Africa, it is important to highlight the philosophy behind intervention strategies which are motivated by the desire to help (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). The argument that indigenous practices should be integrated into CP theory and practice is also supported by findings from an extensive study conducted in four Southern African countries (Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe)

which highlight the fact that communities in these countries have well established indigenous philanthropic intervention strategies designed to mitigate the effects of poverty. According to Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006: 1), "African philanthropy is not something that needs to be introduced by anybody because Africans have strong traditions of self-help, self-support, voluntary institutions, rotating credit and associations like South African *Stokvels*. But we have not been able to tap into this tradition and do not usually think of its various expressions as development tools"

The study also illustrates the point that local self-help strategies are influenced by people's norms and values and in order to understand the principles that underpin how and why they collaborate in participatory processes of self-help and intervention strategies, it is important to emphasise their everyday life experiences (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* (2006) dismiss the widely held assumption in development literature that the poor in Africa as being incapable of helping themselves, arguing that far from being mere recipients of outside help, local communities are active promoters of culturally ingrained intervention strategies that are horizontal (poor to poor), mutually supportive and underpinned by principles of reciprocity and co-operation. Such horizontal philanthropy or self-help (poor to poor) is contrasted with vertical philanthropy (rich to poor) that associated with current forms of development aid from international aid agencies and NGOs (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). According to Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* (2006) horizontal philanthropy is known as philanthropy of community (PoC), because it is done by, and for the community while the horizontal one is known as philanthropy for community (PFC) since it is done for and on behalf of, the community by outsiders. The informal process of Motshelo is considered to belong to PoC because of its spirit of coming together to combine limited resources and share them

in turn, while the formal MMDT is a Pfc. In order to understand how PoC works it is important to first consider the philosophical import of the whole idea of self- help in Southern Africa.

In their analysis of self-help in Southern Africa Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* note that;

Help between poor people is widespread, deeply embedded, morally grounded and operates as a vital element for both survival and progress. Rather than random or disorganised, horizontal philanthropy is part and parcel of the social fabric. It follows proven, acculturated rules with associated sanctions for non-compliance.

It is also noted that such self-help intervention strategies need to be understood with the African philosophy of life; *Ubuntu* or *Botho* that define humanness from an African perspective. As noted in section (4.5) below, the notion of *Ubuntu/Botho* emphasises the obligations that one has for others to the extent that it is not uncommon for people to fore go their rights in order to protect the interests of others and maintain relationships in the process. As such, understandings of selfless altruism do not have little resonance with the philosophical underpinnings of *Ubuntu* since within the context of this ethical tradition, there is no distinction between giver and receiver given that both are "co-determined bearers of humanity reflected in the axiom: 'I am because we are', (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006) and since we are therefore I am" (Mbiti 1990). In this instance, argues (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006), "gifting and receiving are mutual in the obligations carried by both helper and helped". Within this African worldview, there is therefore no separation between an individual's voluntary selflessness and moral imperatives that require and expect individuals to help others. As far as *Ubuntu* is concerned, argue Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* (2006);

altruism, generosity, and volunteerism are subsumed as motivations into the moral principles and meanings which can be theorised in terms of the collective self. Ubuntu operates as an acculturated belief-based system, often with spiritual explanations. It informs identity, social rules and conduct, the ethics and norms of relational behaviour as well as inter-generational obligations particularly towards ancestors, symbolising an extended family (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006: 101).

The emphasis that is put on belief systems, obligations and relationship is important for understanding how self-help programmes are rolled out within such communities and the norms and values that regulate such behaviour. As such, understandings of charity as non-obligatory acts of selflessness, has little purchase in contexts where such acts are seen as part of people's societal and moral obligations to look out for others in distress. In this regard, it is noted that self-help within the context of philanthropic interventions is characterised by important notions of relationality, reciprocity, morality, obligations, altruism and co-operation rather than mere voluntarism (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). This study therefore, brings into focus the significance of understanding people's 'traditions' in relation to the study of CP and it will be interesting to see how these notions relate to the formal and informal participatory processes of *Motshelo* and MMDT. Given that philanthropy among most Southern African communities is motivated by both voluntary moral imperatives of duty, obligation and mutuality, it is important to explore how these notions are manifest in both formal and informal processes and the implications that this has for current CP theory, policy and practice.

Since the informal participatory processes of *Motshelo* in Botswana are based on people's everyday associational life, the importance of including an analysis of associations to our

understanding of the dynamic nature of collective action is clear. Associations constitute a web of networks that are important as forms of support for those engaging in social action. How this web of interlocking relationships work is key to our understanding of the dynamics of collective community involvement. The section below discusses the philosophical underpinnings of associational life discussed above by focusing on the concept of *Ubuntu/Botho* common in Southern African and other *Bantu* communities.

4.6 Botho/Ubuntu

Botho is the Tswana name for an African philosophy of life that is common among the Bantu speaking people of Southern Africa. *Ubuntu/Botho* is an African Philosophy of life whose core values emphasise communalism, interdependence and collectivism (Murove 2008; Ramose 1999). The concept of *Ubuntu/Botho* has obvious serious implications for theoretical frameworks that are informed by Eurocentric values of individualism and competition. The reason being that collectivism rather than individualism holds sway, and the 'WE' rather than the 'I' consciousness prevails (Le Roux, 2000, Venter 2004). This is succinctly summed up in the saying, 'I am because we are, since we are, therefore I am' (Mbiti 1990: 132). As such, no human being can live in isolation from other persons and must have relationships with them and these relationships should not be contingent but necessary (Gyekye 1992, Higgs and Smith, 2000). According to Menkiti (1992), "the reality of the African communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories, whatever these may be". This means that communal interests, goals and values are more important than those of the individual. The understanding within *Ubuntu/Botho* is that 'rights, i.e. political, economic and social are built into the ethos and practices of the cultural community' (Gyekye 1992: 11). This means that, economic, political and social needs of individual members (which are the concern of most individual rights) are

expected to be catered for, to some degree of adequacy by the community structure. Accordingly, it is therefore not expected of individuals to have a penchant for their rights (Gyekye 1992).

Instead, individuals are always expected to be conscious of their moral duties and societal obligations since duties are prioritised over individual rights. Duty (i.e. task, service, conduct or function that a person feels morally obligated to perform in respect of another person or other persons) within *Ubuntu/Botho* is considered as the “moral tone, the supreme principle of morality” (Gyekye 1992: 11). This means that within the context of this moral philosophy what people do for others has value and significance. It is this kind of morality that binds community members into forming associations and self-help initiatives that promote and nurture relational and friendship ties and solidarity.

However, the portrayal of *Ubuntu* by Menkiti has been criticised not least because the communitarian view is not the only philosophical tradition that inform human behaviour in Africa, but also for the flawed nature of the basis of its central argument. I consider first, Kapaghawani views followed by Gyekye and Motolino’s critique. Kapaghawani alludes to three other conceptualisations of personhood each of which he refers to as a ‘thesis’. He highlights Temple’s *forces thesis*; the *shadow thesis* of Alexis Kagame and the *communalist thesis* to which Mbiti and Menkiti subscribe (Matolino 2011: 23). Although Kapaghawani’s identification of three perspectives might mean three distinct views, Matolino argues that Kapaghawani’s characterisation of personhood could be a question of conceptual difference in which African philosophers describe the same notion in different ways. However, even if it is assumed Matolino is right in arguing that differences in perspective could merely be conceptual, the fact remains that one concept

cannot adequately cover the different philosophical traditions that exist on the continent given that differences in race and ethnicity on the continent are so diverse.

More so, Menkiti's characterisation of African philosophy is criticised for being extreme. Gyekye (1997) for instance criticised Menkiti's form of communitarianism as extreme. He makes a distinction between radical and moderate communitarianism and criticised the radical version associated with Menkiti for misrepresenting the nature of relationships between the individual and community. For instance, the emphasis that is put on the importance of the community compared to that of an individual is criticised for depriving individuals of their rights since such a view tends to value less, individual initiative and creativity. Gyekye challenges Menkiti's assertion that full personhood is dependent on one's age, that is, the older one is and has been part of society, the more he or she attains personhood. In this case, Gyekye takes issue with Menkiti's emphasis on community taking precedence over the individual, which effectively denies people individual freedoms (Matolino 2008: 65). Gyekye's argument is that the individual is not only a social being, but he or she is also other things such as "virtue, the ability to make individual choice and rationality" (Matolino 2008: 77). The point Gyekye is making is that these other things are important when it comes to decision-making and setting goals, which may not always coincide with societal goals. As such, individuals are not necessarily prevented from making their own decisions and choices otherwise such communities would not have original inventors and innovators for example if they had to always rely on the wider community goals and decisions. By proposing moderate communitarianism, Gyekye is trying to strike a balance between community demands and individual rights and freedoms.

Furthermore, another scholar, Motolino (2008, 2011), is unconvinced by the theoretical foundations of Menkiti's argument. He questions the validity of basing a whole philosophical argument on the misplaced importance attached to the word "it". Menkiti's use of the English word "it" to show the difference between men and babies, is dismissed as disingenuous as such use "betrays either a selective use of the word or a serious misunderstanding of how the word operates in English (Matolino 2011: 28). The reason is that the way the word "it" is used in English as a referring pronoun does not "denote personalised existence" in the same way Menkiti would want it to appear. In other words, the way the word "it" is used does not "carry any moral significance" (Manolito 2011: 28). This means that attempting to use "it" to explain questions of morality has no theoretical basis. As such the argument by Menkiti that personhood is acquired through experience as assigned by the community is therefore difficult to sustain.

Despite the criticisms directed at Menkiti's theoretical basis, it is undeniable that *Ubuntu* plays a significant role in shaping human behaviour and action. It can be argued that by putting greater emphasis on individual duties rather than individual rights, *Ubuntu/Botho* presents a direct challenge for widely held ideas and assumptions that tend to give prominence to individual rights at the expense of individual duties and obligations in PD practice. As such, a new dimension to the study of participatory processes especially in Southern African communities should pay attention to the importance of duty rather than individual rights.

An approach of this nature requires grounding in people's value systems and norms in order to have a clear understanding of what works and what does not work in different cultural contexts where PD is being promoted. Such grounding can be made possible by

first recognising the self-help strategies that communities use in order to lift themselves out of poverty and try to build on existing knowledge and practices. Caution should however be exercised when using a concept like Botho because such philosophical traditions are also blamed for promoting skewed power relations in which women are disadvantaged. It is important to ensure the use of such a notion does not perpetuate inequality and marginalisation given the patriarchal nature of socio-political arrangements in most Southern African countries.

The discussion in Chapter 4 above and the issues that arose in the analyses in Chapters 2 and 3, have laid a firm foundation for the need for a framework that explore structure and how agents negotiate these challenges in order to attain empowerment. It has highlighted different participatory practices that are informed by different cultural practices and traditions, which impose certain rules and requirements that require a conceptual framework that can reveal how agents interact with these structural factors in order to empower themselves.

4.7 Conceptual Framework

As mentioned above, the preferred conceptual framework for this study is Giddens' duality of structure. The duality of structure implies an intricate and inseparable relationship between agency and structure (Giddens 1984). The relationship between agency and structure in social theory has been a subject of intense debate. In order to have a clearer understanding of how the concept of duality of structure works it is important to first define agency and structure separately followed by a description of the agency-structure problem that has dominated current CP debate in order to situate the framework

in its proper context. First, I present a definition of agency followed by a description of structure.

4.7.1 Agency and Structure

Agency is not an easy concept to define because "most of the available definitions of agency are too loose or unspecific to allow for a progressive scientific research program" (Barandiaran *et al.* 2009: 367). Some definitions emphasise the autonomy of agents while others take into account the significance of structure. For instance, Barandiaran *et al.* argue that (2009: 367 emphasis in original) for an agent to be considered genuine it must: (a) define its own *individuality*, (b) be the active source of activity in its environment (*interactional asymmetry*), and (c) regulate this activity in relation to certain norms (*normativity*). Using these three characteristics the authors define agency as an "autonomous organization that adaptively regulates its coupling with its environment and contributes to sustaining itself as a consequence" (Barandiaran *et al.* 2009: 367). Their emphasis on autonomy is more or less similar to Emirbayer and Mische's characterisation of agency as involving "self-hood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity" (1998: 962), which is criticised for its neglect of structure as it gives the impression that agents operate in a social vacuum. A definition of agency that acknowledges the interaction of agency and its environment is given by Musolf, who notes that;

Agency refers to the fact that we make culture, history, and policy, though not under conditions of our own choosing. ...Human beings are producers as well as produced; shapers as well as shaped, influencing as well as influenced. Social action is volitional, purposeful, and meaningful, even though some social facts constrain life chances. Actors

reflect, rather than respond by reflex. Agency emerges through the ability of humans to ascribe meaning to objects and events, to define the situation based on those meanings, and then to act (2003: 3, emphasis in original).

The above definition clearly acknowledges the existence and significance of contextual factors (or structure) that influence the way agency is realised in practice, something that is crucial for the notion of duality of structure. Given the significance of structure in the above definition, it is important to examine the nature of structure that shape agency.

Structure, is defined as the “rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems” (Giddens 1984: 377). Giddens conceives structure as referring to the rules and resources that are involved in the production and reproduction of institutions. Within the structuration theory, rules are classified as either formal (knowledge relating to policies or laws) or informal (knowledge about culture and mundane practices) and both rules are important for informing the way in which social practices are enacted and reproduced (Giddens 1984: 21). In the case of formal spaces of participation rules consists of formal guidelines, procedures, codes of conduct, and protocols while in informal spaces these are sanctions, cultural values and norms.

As far as resources are concerned, Giddens divided them into two categories: authoritative resources (capabilities which generate command over persons – therefore human) and allocative resources (capabilities which generate command over objects or other material phenomena – therefore, non-human) (1979:100; 1984: xxxi). Agents operate within contexts characterised by the rules and resources that Giddens highlights above. The fact that humans (agents) make these rules which in turn influence the way

they act makes the argument for adopting the concept of duality of structure for this study even more compelling. The dichotomous treatment of agency and structure in CP literature presents serious challenges when trying to understand how social action works as discussed below.

4.7.2 Agency-Structure Conundrum

Treating agency and structure as separate entities is problematic. Ignoring one aspect may mean bias towards the other. For example, emphasis on the ability of agents to live an independent existence outside of the influence of structural factors is considered inadequate given the importance of context in social analysis. Meanwhile, an exclusive focus on structure is criticised for being deterministic and disregarding of human creativity and initiative, and therefore, dismissive of agency.

4.7.3 Concept of Duality of Structure

Having defined agency and structure above, this section briefly discusses the concept of duality of structure (Giddens 1984) and its significance in understanding how opportunities for participation enable or constrain the poor's ability to control decision-making processes in CP programmes and projects. Unlike the dichotomised view of agency and structure presented above, Giddens is of the view that these two aspects, far from being separate entities, are actually both sides of the same coin. According to Giddens, the duality of structure refers to:

...the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices: structure is both medium and outcome of reproduction of practices. Structure enters simultaneously into the

constitution of the agent and social practices, and 'exists' in the generating moments of this constitution (1979: 5).

In this sense therefore, agency is intricately linked to structure in an interplay in which “structures shape people’s practices, but it is also people’s practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures. As highlighted in the introduction, the agency structure framework help to clarify the interaction between agents and their socio-cultural context and how they create and try to shape and be shaped by such structures. For instance, people put in place rules to regulate their conduct and these rules in turn impose sanctions that the people have to abide by, which influence the way they act. In this view of things, human agency and structure, far from being *opposed*, in fact *presuppose* each other” (Sewell 1992: 4, original emphasis). This underlines the fact that agency and structure are both the producers and products of historical processes (Giddens 1984; Connor 2011; de Bruijn, van Dijk and Gewald 2007). As such, by acknowledging that agency presuppose structure and vice versa, the duality of structure tries to bridge the agency-structure divide in ways that help to explain the relationship between the superstructures and infrastructures that people create in order to regulate action and how such structures can affect what agents can and cannot do. As such, while agents shape the structures they operate in, these structures also influence what actions are permissible and possible. This section has discussed the theoretical framework used to understand how structure influences what agents can or cannot do.

4.8 Conclusion

I have discussed the theoretical framework for the study explaining its key components and how it can be applied to the analysis of data for this study. I argued that an analysis

that take into account the interaction between agency and structure is best placed to uncover the link between structural factors and the marginalisation of poor agents who tend to cede decision making control to the better educated in who are able to navigate and negotiate the “rules of the game”. As such this framework is able to account for what structures are in place and how these enable or hinder decision-making control by agents of development. In the next chapter, I will present the case study methodology and the data gathering methods used in this study.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This study uses a case study approach to collect and analyze data about two strongly contrasting instances of a phenomenon – Community Participation. This chapter, which is divided into four main sections, which discuss a range of methodological issues associated with case study research. It starts with section (5.1), which introduces this chapter. It is then followed by section (5.2), which provides a brief discussion of the nature of case study research followed by section (5.3), which discusses the research design. Section (5.4) focuses on data acquisition or collection and section 5.5 outlines the methods for data analysis.

5.2 Case Study Research

Yin's classic definition of a case study sets the terms of this distinctive method as follows: "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident", and it "allows the investigator to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (2003 :13) such as individual life cycles or organizational processes. He advises that the important issues to consider when conducting case study research are: defining the case, determining relevant data to be collected, and clarifying how to deal with such data (Yin 2003: 2).

Case studies rely on the use of multiple sources of data and, whilst Yin's definition privileges the empirical character of this form of inquiry, it is also true that use of the method benefits from the specification of pre-existing theoretical positions to guide both

data collection and analysis. The case study is therefore an all-encompassing method covering the logic of design and specific approaches to data analysis (Yin 2003: 14). This study is also a comparative study, selecting and constructing two cases of community participation in order to consider how different dynamics of participation might be identified and attributed to the institutional arrangements within which they occur.

5.3 Research Design

The research design within case methodology is defined as "the logic that links the data collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study" (Yin 2003: 21). This means that data and research questions are closely linked or connected. Yin (2003: 21) suggests that the design for a case study should be guided by the following key considerations: (a) the study's research questions (directs the study to phenomena); (b) its propositions if any (specifies what exactly to be studied); (c) its unit(s) of analysis; and (d) the criteria for interpreting the findings. These are taken in turn.

5.3.1 Unit of Analysis or Observation

According to Yin, the "appropriate unit of analysis" is specified by clearly stated research questions, which means that case construction is determined by the way research questions have been framed (2003: 2). The research questions introduced in section (1.2) are restated below.

- (a) How are formal and informal opportunities for collective social action in Tswana speaking rural communities of Botswana constituted and organised?
- (b) In what ways do such arrangements enable or constrain active community engagement?
- (c) What are the implications of such evidence for CP theory and practice?

The first question clearly specifies the phenomenon of interest as the two forms of collective community engagement: formal (MMDT), and the informal (Motshelo) community participatory groups. An aspect of context indicated are the rural communities of Tswana speaking people Botswana. Finally, that research question is also suggestive of processes linking context and phenomenon – organisation and constitution – and potentially agents that take responsibility for these processes. These indicate units of analysis of central importance. With the unit of analysis specified, the next stage is to select the cases to be investigated. One of the important aspects of case study research methodology is the selection of cases. I discuss below how cases were selected and the ways in which access to these interviewees was negotiated.

5.3.2 Case Selection

This study used a comparative case study, which examines the distinctive character of formal and informal participatory processes, chosen deliberately to expose different dynamics in the constitution and organisation of participatory practices. The two cases that were chosen are MMDT which is formal and Motshelo which is informal. The selection of these cases was not a straight forward matter. Initially I had set out to compare agency-led spaces for participation such as those managed by international aid agencies or local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and indigenous participatory practices. The idea was to show how different participatory practices that are informed by different philosophical foundations manage the process of collective community engagement. However, after my interview with the chief executive officer of the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO), which was my second interview since I arrived in Botswana, I realised it was not possible to conduct fieldwork as originally planned. I was advised that since Botswana is now considered a

medium income country, donor funds from international aid agencies, which sustained NGO activities in Botswana, had dried up as result. Many NGOs had closed, relocated to the capital or changed focus pay attention to topical issues that attracted funding such as HIV/Aids programmes and projects. This meant that I had to shift my focus to a new area altogether. It was in this meeting that I was told that the community development work that NGOs used to do was now being carried out by locally based and government funded community-based organisations (CBOs). Rather than despair, I considered this to be a unique opportunity to explore how these new organisations were set up and whether such forms of organising collective community engagement allowed the poor to control decision-making processes. I also decided it could be worthwhile to contrast such formal structures with informal structures of community engagement with a view to highlight how structure enable or hinder decision-making control by the poor.

I was signposted to the Botswana community-based organisations network (BOCOBONET), the umbrella body (to which CBOs have an affiliate status), responsible for assisting them with registration issues, formulating a business proposal or drafting a constitution. I was also given contact details of the executive secretary, Mr Letsholo whom I met for the first time at the main bus terminus in Gaborone on 12th May 2013 and arranged to meet at a later date for a formal research interview which was held on 15th May 2013. After this meeting he agreed to become my key informant since he was very knowledgeable about the issues I was researching. From our discussion with the executive secretary of BOCOBONET, I was informed that there were formal CBOs and informal rotating credit schemes known as metshelo, which were involved in community development. I therefore made the decision to compare formal and informal participatory processes with a view to finding out how their structures support collective community

engagement. The idea was to establish the extent to which participation can be affected by the ways in which agents engage in spaces and whether such engagement promotes or hinders their ability to control decision-making processes. In this regard, a comparative analysis of two distinct spaces of participation was considered important in terms of the contrasting factors that are likely to be established as crucial.

Arrangements were made for the 20th and 24th of May 2013 to interview interim chairpersons of *Modipane* trust and *Manyana* trust, which were yet to register in order pilot research instruments and to adjust to the use of a translator or interpreter for interviews. After the pilot, I decided to limit the comparison to just these two because of the preliminary nature of the study with no known studies of a similar type, I was cautious not to include more than two case studies. Another consideration was that since data collection was followed immediately by translation from Tswana to English and transcription as well as analysis, before the commencement of the next interview, the process was deemed time consuming and more data would have complicated the whole process. In addition, the fact that data was analysed as it was collected, the themes that emerged from the data were compared with the themes from the literature, and most themes had been identified by the time data from the third interview was analysed. It was also considered that since the comparison was about the structure of two examples of distinct practices, the two cases were different enough to yield data that was sufficient to compare these processes. In any case, the idea is not to have a representative sample in order to generalise to the wider population, but to consider the theoretical and practical significance of these findings within the context of this study. I have discussed the selection of cases above, the section below focuses on the sampling strategy.

5.3.3 Sampling Strategy

I chose purposive sampling because I knew beforehand what I wanted to find: the extent to which different structures of organising spaces for participation enable or hinder the ability of the poor and marginalised to control decision-making processes. Despite the fact that I knew what I wanted to find, I still used the inductive strategy for coding data in the first instance in order to allow new themes to emerge inductively so that these could be compared with those already available in the literature as a way of validating the new themes. The rationale for a purposive sample is that it is assumed that “certain categories of individuals may have a unique, different or important perspective on the phenomenon in question and their presence in the sample should be ensured” (Mason 2002 cited in Robison 2014:32). Such a strategy is therefore targeted and deliberate in order to capture information rich sources. I selected individuals who participated in the formation of the organisation and day to day activities of the formal MMDT and informal *Motshelo*, making sure those who were actively involved in the two processes were interviewed. It was not easy to find interviewees in both cases for different reasons. In the case of MMDT most villagers expressed ignorance about how the trust operates and most of the villagers who were approached kept directing me to the members of the committee whom they argued, were better positioned to assist since they were in charge of the day to day operations.

On the other hand, in *Motshelo* it was a case of mistrust first where some questioned why a Zimbabwean was conducting research in a neighbouring country when such practices were also found in my country of origin. Eventually, with the help of my research assistant, informant and other villagers who were convinced I was a genuine researcher, I decided to concentrate on those who knew and were willing to participate in the research

process. I then made sure that I had in each group participants who were knowledgeable about the operations of each process from inception right up to the time of the fieldwork. There are a range of strategies used in qualitative research for the selection of cases, but for purposes of this study only two were considered pertinent to this research. This study employs a combination of homogenous and maximum variation sampling. Homogenous sampling is used to identify and select interviewees from each case who have in depth knowledge about how each space for participation works. Since the two cases are to be compared, maximum variation was used to identify differences between the two cases along the formality/informality divide. Homogeneity as a strategy emphasises commonality within a subgroup while maximum variation focuses on heterogeneity of important shared patterns (Palinkas *et al.* 2015: 533). An example of a shared pattern is the participation of the poor income generating projects in rural areas with the difference being that one is formal, and the other is informal.

5.3.4 Choosing Cases: Selection Criteria

When choosing the cases, I relied on my informant, the executive secretary of Botswana Community Based Organisations Network (BOCOBONET), who had knowledge of these (CBOs) especially the formal organisations since they are affiliates of the umbrella body: BOCOBONET. He was also well aware of the Motshelo practice and its members. Since CBOs in Botswana are scattered across the country's provinces and differ in terms of what they do depending on the natural resources available in the local area, it was important to establish a criteria for their selection.

I made the decision to draw comparisons between formal CBOs and informal Motshelo to highlight their differences in structure and how these can enable or hinder control of the

decision-making process by the poor. The argument in this case is that since very little is known about the connection between a project's structure and 'elite capture', it is important to establish through a comparative research design the nature of link if any between form and the "hijack" of decision-making control by the elite. As such, I selected strongly contrasting forms of CP for their theoretical significances and/or differences. The conceptual frame suggests they are both relevant instances of the phenomenon of interest (for the thesis) and through their contrasting characters, they allow the research to explore the veracity of the main argument of this thesis. As noted in Chapter 1, these spaces for participation are development oriented that is, they are designed to generate income for participants in order to improve their lives as a larger group as is the case of the formal practices such as MMDT, or a small group as in the case of *Motshelo*. The selection of cases plays a crucial role in determining the quality of research findings (Coyne 1997). According to Coyne (1997), there is need for researchers to provide sufficient descriptions of their selection strategies in order to make interpretation of findings a fairly straightforward matter.

There are various ways of choosing cases, but for this study the decision was made to identify information-rich cases in order to "maximize what we can learn" (Stake 1995: 4). According to Patton, the "logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling" (1990: 169). The issue of central importance for this study was to obtain information about the structure of these two spaces for participation and to establish the extent to which such forms of organising promoted or negatively affected the poor's ability to control decision-making processes. *Mogonye*

Mmamotshwane Development Trust and Motshelo participatory practices met this criterion.

In this regard, I decided that the participatory practices to be considered should have been in existence for more than three years, which at least would demonstrate some level of stability, resilience and continuity on the part of such participatory practices. Furthermore, these practices had to be located in poorly resourced areas with very little in terms of exploitable natural resources. The criteria excluded those that were operating in areas with wildlife since in these cases the motivation to participate is obvious: financial gain from the sale of wild animals and their products. Some communities that are endowed with wildlife engage in very successful projects. For example, the *Tchobe* Enclave Development Trust (TEDT) which operates a successful venture and owns lodgings in the Okavango delta is a very good example of a success story (Jones 2002). Such trusts are allocated quotas by the government to exploit wildlife and they sell part of their quota to foreign hunters and engage in other income generating projects. However, not all villages are so generously endowed with wildlife resources since some of them really struggle to identify profitable income generating projects for their communities. One such village is Mogonye, which identified a gorge with the help of officials from the Department of National Museums and Monuments (DNMM).

Given such discrepancies in the availability of natural resources in different areas, I decided to investigate those communities that were less fortunate. The main reason is that those few communities that are fortunate to have wildlife resources are guided by a well-formulated policy known as community based natural resource management (CBNRM), which relates to how such resources are to be exploited and managed. For the

majority of the communities in resource poor areas, there is no proper policy framework to guide how natural resources (that are not wildlife and therefore not covered under the CBNRM) can be exploited. Instead, they rely on guidance from the ministry or government department under whose jurisdiction a given VDT's business interests lie. This was the case with MMDT, which received and continue to receive, guidance and support from the Department of Museums and Monuments on how to engage in conservation work while at the same time exploiting the natural resource for income generation purposes. It is on the basis of the uneven distribution of natural resources, and the absence of a well formulated policy to guide VDTs that I decided to explore those VDTs in resource poor areas to ascertain how well the poor and marginalised control decision-making processes.

Another consideration for the selection of the comparative case was that it met criteria for informal (in the case of Motshelo) and formal (in the case of MMDT) participatory processes. Formal practices are government induced, registered and officially recognised and managed participatory processes while the informal ones are organic not registered, unofficial and created by the poor and marginalised. Such a distinction was important since the research was meant to explore the nature of insights that can be gleaned from informal processes, and to assess whether such knowledge provide new ways of understanding how CP spaces are structured and the impact these forms have on decision-making control.

Such purposeful selection involves a "calculated decision to sample a specific locale according to a preconceived but reasonable initial set of dimensions (such as time, space, identity or power), which are worked out in advance for study" (1990: 169). As such, I

was well aware of what I wanted to base my comparison on that is how formal and informal participatory processes either enable or constrain decision-making control among the disempowered based on how they are structured. Such a comparison is based on the assumption that formal and informal forms of participatory processes are governed by different sets of rules or dynamics, which affect how the poor are able to take control of the decision-making process in different ways. As such, knowing what rules exist and how these enable or constrain access to decision-making is important when designing pro-poor empowerment projects to ensure that such projects are genuinely empowering.

Although case studies are powerful qualitative research methods, they have been criticised taking too long to complete. However, the current study took four months of fieldwork. It is also noted that with the advent of new technologies and software, case studies need not take too long to finish (Yin 2003). As far as this study is concerned, I relied on Nvivo software to store, organise and code data. While case study research is often accused of bias, Yin (2003) notes that almost all research methods have an element of bias and what is needed is to ensure that the principles of conducting research are followed in order to minimise the influence of bias. Most importantly, case studies have been criticised for lacking a basis for generalization (Yin 2003). However, within case study research, the issue is not about sample size, but the manner of construction of the case, 'thick description' (Geertz 1993), and the process by which an abstraction to theory rather than statistical generalization to a population is achieved (Mitchell 1982) as shown in Chapter 7. Thick description entails production of a complex, multi-layered and detailed analysis of the interview accounts of participatory processes and the relationship of those processes to the context. In this study I have managed to establish relationships between themes and organised them into hierarchical layers, which show connections and

linkages between subthemes, themes and meta-themes in Chapter 7. On the basis of such a description, it is possible to engage in interpretation rather than enumeration. In other words, thick description puts emphasis on depth of analysis and its far reaching theoretical implications as opposed to the more conventional quantitative approaches that are concerned with statistical representativeness (Geertz 1993). According to Yin, case studies are generalised to theoretical propositions or abstractions and not to populations or universes.

As such, the "case study is not intended to represent or approximate 'typicality'. Indeed, as we will see, it might be chosen precisely because it is not in any sense 'usual'. This is why for this study, extreme cases on the formality/informality scale were chosen for comparison in order to maximise differences between the two in terms of their effects on decision-making control by the poor. In undertaking a case study, one's goal will be to expand theoretical understanding and not, to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation)" (Yin 2003: 10). In the case of this research, the findings are linked to the theories and concepts reviewed in the literature. It is important to point out that although final decisions about case selection were made while I was already in Botswana, considerations about how to gain access to Botswana as a research site were put in motion before I left the United Kingdom for Africa. The section below details out how access to Botswana's research sites was negotiated, including access to the case studies and individual interviewees.

5.3.5 Gaining Access

This section explains the ethical considerations that were crucial in undertaking the research within the context of acceptable standards when dealing with human

participants. It highlights how access to the research participants was negotiated in line with Keele University's ethical guidelines.

Access to the research cases was negotiated at different levels. In the first instance, I managed to establish academic contacts in Botswana and I was invited to become an affiliate member of the Isaac Schapera Project of the Department of Sociology at University of Botswana. Such membership was important in a number of ways. Firstly, my academic contacts, Dr Sethunya Mosime and Dr Treasa Galvin advised me about the fieldwork requirements especially, the fact that I needed a research permit from the Botswana government granting me permission to undertake fieldwork research in the country. They wrote a letter of support which I used to apply for a research permit. Once permission was granted, the two academic hosts helped me to settle upon arrival. They helped to identify and train a research assistant for me and helped in facilitating negotiations for reasonable fieldwork contracts based on the University of Botswana's payment schedule. My affiliation to the Isaac Schapera project also enabled me to have access to university facilities such as the university library's special collections section which is rich in locally generated research and documents on Tswana traditional practices and ethnic groupings.

Upon arrival in Botswana, I was informed about the existence of BOCONGO by my academic hosts. A former colleague I worked with at the University of Zimbabwe who is now based in the Department of Religious studies at the University of Botswana, Professor Togarasei, linked me up with one of his students, a former member of the BOCONGO executive committee. I was directed to the BOCONGO offices where I had the privilege of interviewing the Executive Director in her office in Gaborone. I wanted to

gain insights into the state of agency-led development practice. However, as pointed out earlier, it turned out that participatory community development in Botswana was now being promoted by the government through community-based organisations known as village development trusts. It was from here that I was directed to the BOCOBONET executive secretary whose organisation directly deals with these village-based organisations.

After securing consent with the organisation's officials, I interviewed the executive director and executive secretary of BOCONGO who explained that due to difficult financial circumstances, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had limited reach in terms of areas of interest and coverage. They were now concentrated in the capital city, Gaborone and their main focus was HIV/AIDS programmes, which are still attracting donor aid. It was during this interview that I was informed that development work in rural areas was now being conducted by CBOs operating as community trusts that are formed and managed by the villagers themselves. Initially, I had planned to examine how NGOs manage CP processes in rural communities. Given such a changed development landscape, I had to adjust and adapt my research's focus to suit the new trajectory. Rather than comparing NGO participatory practices and indigenous practices, I ended up comparing formal CBO practices and informal participatory processes in two different villages focusing on how they are constituted and organised and the impact this has on the control of decision-making processes. I was advised by my academic hosts that it was not necessary to travel to Francistown to conduct fieldwork as there were plenty of research sites around the capital city which I could explore.

At another level, access to research sites was negotiated with traditional chiefs (kgosi). Together with my BOCOBONET informant and research assistant, we visited the two villagers and my two companions took turns to brief the chiefs in Molepolole and *Mogonye* villages about the aims and objectives of my research and how I intended to include the villagers in my research. Permission to approach villagers and talk to them was granted and the *Kgosi* in *Mogonye* even offered his offices for use to conduct the interviews.

Lastly, consent was sought from the interviewees themselves and some willingly obliged, but others had to be persuaded while the rest were either unreachable or simply refused to take part. Since some people are not comfortable signing forms that are retained by a stranger for future reference, the consent forms were read out by my research assistant, and if the participant agreed he/she would answer yes and all this was audio-recorded. The consent forms and information sheets were translated into Setswana, the local language for the benefit of participants.

Having secured access to the research sites and selected the cases to be compared, it was also important to identify the actual participants for interviewing for this particular study. Equally critical are decisions regarding who to interview and the number of interviewees to include.

5.3.5 Sourcing Participants

Sample sourcing involves the actual negotiation with prospective interviewees by contacting them in order to participate in the research (see Robinson 2014: 14). It is important to specify how the researcher recruited participants and the ethical issues

involved. There are a number of strategies that can be used for recruiting participants. I sourced interviewees using the snowballing strategy. My informant identified individuals who were knowledgeable about the activities of their participatory practice. He contacted them to see if they were available or willing to be interviewed. In the case of *Motshelo*, my informant knew at least two members of the group and since he also lived in *Molepolole* it was easy to establish contact. He contacted one of the ladies (Mma Munye) who is a friend of Melo (the youngest of the five sisters who formed *Dijo* the *Motshelo* I investigated) and was among those who first came together to form this *Motshelo*. He briefed her about my project and asked her to identify other women in her group who had thorough knowledge of *Motshelo* and who were willing to participate. She then identified other members of her group who were willing to participate. Snowballing in this case helped us to gather together information rich sources (all pseudonyms) such as Mma Tsepo, Mma Pulo, Mma Buye, Mma Palapye (Melo's sisters) and Mma Sithle, her mother. In addition, I also interviewed Mma Rita, Mma Gauri, Mma Sotho and Mma Lerab. Mma Munye was especially very helpful when it came to arranging meetings and encouraging members to take part in the interviews. Her husband arranged transport for five meetings using a car he claimed was bought through *Motshelo* and so he was so motivated because for him this ROSCA was getting the recognition it deserved. Interviews with this group took place in different locations of *Molepolole*. Some were interviewed in the comfort of their homes while others were at different market places where they sell food or goods. Interview meetings in *Molepolole* commenced on the 28 of May 2013 to 25 July 2013 and for *Mogonye* it started from 29 July to 5 September 2013.

The same strategy was used in *Mogonye*. My informant used his long time association with the *kgosi* to recruit participants. My informant contacted the *kgosi* to inform him of

my intention to interview members of the trust in his village. We were invited to *Mogonye* by the *kgosi* and were advised that it would be a good idea to visit on a particular weekend because the committee had a scheduled monthly meeting. Our first contact with potential participants in *Mogonye* happened when we visited on a day we were informed by the *kgosi* that there was going to be a monthly meeting. We exploited the *kgosi* office and influence to access information rich sources.

My informant explained to the committee the purpose of my research. The chairperson and treasurer had reservations about this as noted elsewhere. The vice chairperson and secretary agreed to meet on another day for interviews, for which follow up contacts were made, and meetings arranged. Through snowballing the *Kgosi* was able to identify on my behalf information rich sources. I was directed to the former VDC chairperson, Mma Thob, who is credited with extending the invitation to the officials from the Museums to assess the gorges and establish whether they were suitable for tourism purposes. The *kgosi* later recruited Mr Tsepo the former interim chair of the MMDT. My first interview was with Mma Thob the former chairperson of the village development committee in *Mogonye* who informed the people from the Department of Museums and Monuments about *Mogonye* gorges. This was followed by interviews with the interim committee member Mr Tsepo who was part of a team that prepared for the establishment of the MMDT. The first two interviewees gave a very good account of how the Trust was set up. I also interviewed Mr Thob the vice chairperson of the Trust and by this time I had a clear sense of how the trust was established, its structures and the way it was operating. I was however disappointed when I arranged to interview one of the committee members, Mma Peneng who did not know much about the trust because she had just joined the committee. However, when I interviewed the secretary and treasurer who are

professionals working in Botswana, I now had a full picture of what MMDT was about. Of the 12 members in the MMDT committee, I interviewed five including the Kgosi. Mma Thob and Mr Tsepo former interim chair and Mma Thob who was instrumental in the formation of the Trust were the other interviewees. I was disappointed that the chairperson and other members of the trust did not find time to participate in this research project because of work commitments. However, those interviewed provided me with sufficient descriptive data about the trust. Lastly, but not the least, I had the privileged of interviewing the kgosi in his office and at home. The *Kgosi* is so passionate about the trust and is a very welcoming person.

One advantage I had in the field was that my informant was well travelled and well known as a former civil servant and particularly his current role and work as executive secretary of BOCOBONET, which meant that he was well connected and knew the people we were dealing with. In *Mogonye* he had a good working relationship with the *kgosi* and used it to good effect. He asked the *kgosi* to help in the recruitment of interviewees for the research project. The *kgosi* played an instrumental role in facilitating interviews and convincing potential interviews as he argued a research of this nature might help publicise the village and the gorges. His intervention was crucial as it helped to allay fears of participants about my intentions.

The problems I faced in *Mogonye* regarding the hesitancy and mistrust they showed towards me was caused by the fact that I had told them I had interviewed the interim chair of *Manyana* village development trust. *Manyana* is adjacent to *Mogonye*, and the interim committee in *Manyame* was working towards registering its trust whose aim is to promote the preservation and conservation of historical sites which could then be used to attract

tourists in similar ways to *Mogonye*. As a result of this information, the chairperson and treasurer of *Mogonye* were against sharing the ideas for their project with a rival village. *Manyama* at the time was also considering venturing into tourism by exploiting heritage sites in the village's mountains for income generation in ways similar to what *Mogonye* was already doing. I was therefore viewed with suspicion and was considered to be someone who was going to give information to a rival. This is one of the reasons members of the MMDT committee were not comfortable to share with me their strategic plan and constitution. While the *kgosi's* intervention helped me to secure interviews, he could not however convince the committee to release the documents, which clearly showed that the *kgosi's* position in the committee was mainly purely symbolic. This section has explained how interviewees were identified and recruited. The following section focuses on the rationale for selecting participants.

5.3.6 Selecting Participants

Interviewees were selected on the basis that they could provide the information needed for this research. I chose participants who had an in depth knowledge of their respective participatory practices in terms of how they were formed, structured. In this case I relied on purposeful sampling, a popular strategy for identifying information rich sources for interviewing. In qualitative research, it is important to select participants on the basis of justifiable reasons informed by a particular aim or purpose that is informed by specified research questions (Cleary *et al.* 2014: 473). They consider determining the “breadth, depth and scope” of the research process at the planning stage to be crucial.

Decisions regarding who to include or exclude and on what basis (Patton 1990 cited in Robson 2014:26) need to be specified in terms of the special qualities that made them

qualify. In the two cases the most important criterion was to include those who participate actively and have knowledge about how each participatory process works. As such, participants who have little knowledge about how the participatory work were excluded. The interviewees chosen were mostly information rich sources who provided detailed accounts about how the two processes of participation were formed, the structures they have, as well as the rules and procedures for instance. The selection of interviewees is said to depend on “what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility” (Patton 1990: 184 cited in Cleary *et al.* 2014: 473). It is noted that the selection of participants tends to be largely influenced by “their personal experience or knowledge of the topic under study” (Cleary *et al.* 2014: 473). This means that the selection of participants is purposefully driven. The choice of participants was therefore consistent with the chosen conceptual framework. In this regard, participants should generate data that is relevant to the research question in ways that allows the researcher to explain the situation under consideration. The emphasis in the selection of interviewees was on sample homogeneity. Homogeneity within each sample, but seeking variation between samples so that any similarities can be generalised beyond the two samples. The participants involved in this study are described below.

5.3.7 The Participants

This part presents a general description of participants in terms of age range, gender and occupation. Participants in *Motshelo* were all women of different ages ranging between 25 and 65. Melo was the youngest and the group was preparing for her wedding at the end of September while her mother and other women who were interviewed were 65 years and above. These women were not formally employed and depended on self-employment, which involved the selling of traditional food, crafts, electrical and hardware along the main road, or in front of shops, and offices as well as support from family and agriculture

(growing of cash crops and keeping livestock). Interviewees in MMDT were a mixture of professionals, self-employed individuals and the unemployed for example the two committee members who were working at the construction site for the Trust's Gatehouse as part of the government's food for work programme. The age range was between 35 and 65 years. The vice chair, secretary and treasurer were between 35 and 50 years while the Kgosi, Mma Thob, Mma Peneng and the former interim member, Mr Tsepo were between 55 and 65 years. Participants were chosen on the basis that they were actively participating in the formal and informal spaces of participation and were not only knowledgeable (except the two committee members in Mogonye who said they had just joined the Trust) enough to talk about the origins, purpose and organisational structures of the two practices, but were also willing to participate.

There were four female interviewees in *Mogonye* and three males. Female interviewees were the former VDC chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and a committee member while the males were the former interim chairperson of MMDT, the vice chairperson and the *Kgosi*. The secretary and treasurer are professionals who work in Gaborone as social worker and accounts clerk respectively and the vice-chairperson is self employed with a brick moulding company operating in *Mogonye* and *Ramotswa*, the second largest village in Botswana. There are six elites in the committee (the chairperson and vice, the secretary and vice, and the treasurer and vice) while others are unemployed relying on agriculture, mainly keeping cattle and goats. *Mogonye* is a rocky and dry area and people tend to rely on food for work programmes in times of droughts.

5.3.8 Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection for the two case studies was conducted between 28th May 2013 and 5 September 2013. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide with questions based on the following themes; origin, institutional requirements, organisational structure, recruitment of members, and roles and responsibilities. Generally the interviews were between 45 and 60 minutes long. I asked the questions in English and my research assistant as interpreter would use a prepared version of the same questions in Setswana. He would then interpret and translate the responses into English for my benefit. While it is possible that there were cases where certain meanings could have been lost in translation, I would make sure I reformulated the question or ask probing questions whenever I felt the response might not be consistent with the needs of the question although this was kept to a minimum because of the language barrier. Two samples of tape-recorded interview data from the pilot study were given to another trained research assistant who did not take in the field research for this project to transcribe. This was done to check whether my research assistant's record of transcripts were an accurate reflection of what interviewees said. Such cross-checking helped to assure the researcher that the process was efficient. All interview data including the translated material were audio recorded. The recorded interviews were then translated into English and transcribed by my research assistant.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher with the help of a trained final year University of Botswana Sociology student. The interviews were conducted in both English and the local language, Setswana. The research assistant would communicate in Setswana with interviewees and in English with the researcher. All materials used for the purpose of collecting data from interviewees were written in both English and Setswana.

Interviews were conducted with participants where they felt comfortable and relaxed: in the comfort of their homes, at meeting venues and informal market places where some of them sell food and agricultural produce for cash.

As far as this study was concerned, due care was taken to ensure that the principle of informed voluntary participation is adhered to at every stage of the data collection process. All information about the research was presented in culturally appropriate ways as advised by my local academic hosts. The privacy of participants was respected and anonymity of audio-recorded as well as observed data was guaranteed. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the research process at any given point, if they so wished and at no point in time were participants observed covertly. During the course of the research, none of the participants who volunteered to take part withdrew from the research. At the end of the fieldwork research, debriefing sessions were held with those who participated in the study.

5.3.9 Sample Size

There are both theoretical and practical reasons for deciding what a sample should be. Practically, research projects are expected to specify provisionally sample size at the research design stage in order to work out what resources are needed. Sample size can be changed during data collection on theoretical and practical grounds (Robson 2014). I selected eighteen participants in total: eleven from *Motshelo* and seven from *Mogonye*. There is serious debate in extant literature about what size of sample is considered adequate. One of the questions that are asked about qualitative research relates to whether academic rigour is achieved through the use of such a seemingly smaller number of interviews. A good sample is believed to enhance rigour and transparent (Robson 2014:

38). Some researchers prefer larger samples while others are of the view that sample size does not really matter (O'Reilly and Parker 2012).

As far as the current research is concerned, the number of interviews used was considered adequate due to a number of reasons. For instance, this study is not the first qualitative research to employ such a small number of interviews given that there is no recommended standard sample size (O'Reilly and Parker 2012). In any case, sample size is not the most important factor in determining the sufficiency and quality of data as the discussion below will highlight. What is important is that one has a good sample which helps the researcher to address the needs of the study's research questions. Since I was looking for people with in depth knowledge to describe the formation organisation and operation of MMDT trust and that of Motshelo, I strongly believe I interviewed those who had a thorough knowledge of the evolution of *Motshelo* and MMDT except the youth member and the committee member for *Mogonye* who had just joined the committee.

More so, the two cases considered in this study have homogenous interviewees who described how the participatory practices are structured. As discussed later in data analysis, most of the data driven codes or themes had emerged after the analysis of at least three interviews from each of the two cases. This confirmed the richness and homogenous nature of the information sources.

Another reason the research relied on a small sample is that the researcher wanted to interview those with an in-depth knowledge about how the two participatory processes started and work. It was also observed that those with little knowledge about how these

started did not want to be interviewed referring the researcher to those they considered to be more knowledgeable. Since the objective of this study is for interviewees to describe what they know about how formal and informal participatory processes are constituted and organised, it was considered that the research was fairly targeted in scope and focus. This means that by interviewing information rich sources, the researcher was able to use minimal sources without compromising the quality of the research findings.

Smaller samples are often criticised in qualitative research for data inadequacy because sampling is essential for enhancing rigour. One of the tests used to ascertain academic rigour through the size of a sample relates to whether the data obtained reached saturation point. The idea of saturation is expressed in two different ways namely, theoretical saturation and thematic or data saturation. The term theoretical saturation is the original form with its roots in Grounded Theory (GT) developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their pioneering work regarding building theory from qualitative data (Guest *et al.* 2006; O'Reilly and Parker 2012). On the one hand, theoretical saturation refers to a situation where emerging categories or themes from data are “fully accounted for, the variability between them are explained and the relationships between them are tested and validated and thus a theory can emerge” (O'Reilly and Parker 2012: 192).

On the other hand, data/thematic saturation “are taken to mean that data should continue to be collected until nothing new is generated; the point at which there are fewer surprises and there are no more emergent patterns in the data”(O'Reilly and Parker 2012: 192 citing Green and Thorogood 2004; and Gaskell 2000). In this study, data/thematic saturation is the preferred choice given its relevance to the sampling procedure, which is purposeful rather than theoretical.

A more elaborate definition of data saturation is given by Bowen who notes that data saturation “entails bringing new participants continually into the study until the data set is complete as indicated by data replication and redundancy. In other words, saturation is reached when the researcher gathers data to a point of diminishing returns when nothing new is being added” (Bowen 2008: 22 cited in Marshall 2013:11). While data saturation is considered important as a measure of a sample’s adequacy, there are problems associated with this test method. For instance, Marshall *et al.* point out that the concept of data saturation is difficult to attain because in qualitative research, no specific standards about sample size exist as there are no “concrete guidelines” (2013:11).

Such a limitation is also noted by Morse (1995:147 cited in Marshall 2013:11) who points out that although “saturation is the key to excellent qualitative work...[but] there are no published guidelines or tests for estimating the sample size required to reach saturation”. In the absence of specified standard requirements, it is difficult for novice researchers to make sense of how to navigate such a minefield. Patton (2002: 242-243 cited in Marshall 2013: 12) sums this up when he points out that “qualitative inquiry is rife with ambiguities” and there is lack of clarity in terms of what constitutes an acceptable sample size. It is therefore argued that “the solution [therefore] is judgement and negotiation. I recommend that qualitative sample designs specify minimum samples based on reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study and stakeholder interests”. This means that there should be a minimum number for a sample size although nothing concrete is given. Patton’s concerns are shared by Yin (2009: 68 cited in Marshall *et al.* 2013: 12) who bemoans the fact that in qualitative research... “the data collection procedures are not routinized... During data collection, only an experienced researcher will be able to take advantage of unexpected opportunities rather than being

trapped by them and will also exercise sufficient care against biased procedures”. Given such a situation, it becomes difficult, especially for student researchers to formulate a robust strategy to deal with biases in the absence of concrete rules and procedures.

It is also argued that trying to have a universal standard to assess rigour in qualitative research can be counterproductive. Barbour (2001 cited in O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 191), is against the uncritical adoption of a range of criteria pointing out that such a move does not necessarily equate with rigour. It is also noted that qualitative research is so diverse and idiosyncratic that it is “problematic to attempt to develop quality criteria applicable to all qualitative approaches as this would not respectfully value the wide range of methodologies that fall under the rubric of qualitative work and because of this each work should be idiosyncratically evaluated against quality markers that are congruent with their epistemological origins” (Caelli *et al.* 2003 cited in O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 191). Although it is accepted that there are some quality markers that can be universally applied others are less suitable (Tracy 2010 cited in O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 191). In this regard, O’Reilly and Parker (2012: 191) are of the view that the elevation of the notion of saturation to the status of gold standard in measuring the quality of qualitative research is exaggerated. Rather than over-emphasise the importance of saturation, which not only has multiple meanings, but is also characterised by questionable transparency credentials, researchers should instead pay more attention to sampling adequacy that should provide depth and maximum opportunity for transferability of findings (O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 191). For O’Reilly and Parker therefore the key issue about a sample should be about appropriacy and adequacy since the aim is not to achieve generalizability, but to “sufficiently answer the research

questions” (2012: 192). In this regard, the sample used in this study is appropriate and adequate and helps to answer the research questions sufficiently.

Sufficiency as a marker of quality puts emphasis on depth of data as opposed to the size of the sample (O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 193). They argue that “the adequacy of a sample is, therefore, not determined solely on the basis of number of participants, but the appropriateness of the data” (2012: 195). They make the important observation that researchers require to be pragmatic and flexible enough when sampling to ensure that the processes and procedures they adopt are consistent with the aims of the research and research questions.

The two scholars conclude by making the compelling argument that concepts such as saturation should not be rigidly applied in all situations pointing out that “the unquestioned acceptance of concepts like saturation consequently become part of the institutional discourse that perpetuate unhelpful myths about optimum sampling adequacy and simultaneously undermine the value of research not conforming to these expectations” (O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 193). It is therefore important that no single measure be held as the gold standard given the somewhat idiosyncratic nature of qualitative research and the need to use procedures that are consistent with the aims of the research.

In the light of these inconsistencies some researchers have proposed ways of resolving such questions. For instance, Marshall *et al.* (2013: 14) propose three ways that novice researchers can use to deal with the glaring deficiencies with regards to the provision of a standard measure for optimal sample sizes in qualitative research. These include, a) citing

recommendations of other researchers, b) citing examples of samples used by others, and c) using internal justification which involves citing the number of interviews that were needed to reach saturation. In their own study in which they compared interview data from 60 women from Nigeria and Ghana, Marshall *et al.* (2013: 13) concluded that of the 109 content driven codes they developed, about 80 of these had already been identified “within the first six interview transcripts; 100 (92%) were identified within the next six interview transcripts...” This means that data saturation can be reached with fewer interviews than often deemed necessary. As such, what is important is not just the number of interviews, but rather considerations about the aim of the research as well. For instance, it is argued that “if the goal is to describe a shared value, perception, belief or behaviour among a relatively homogenous group, then a sample of 12 will likely be sufficient” (Guest *et al.* 2006: 75). This means that determining the sufficiency of sample sizes does and should not solely rely on sample size. In the current study the goal was to have two sets of homogenous groups describe how the participatory practices they engage in are set up.

In this regard, it is argued elsewhere that a measure of quality in research is transparency, which refers to the need to provide detail regarding how data were gathered (Meyrick 2006 cited in O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 193). He however notes that transparency is not easy to achieve given the fact that there is very little in terms of recommended guidelines for qualitative researchers to use. The important thing about transparency is that researchers need to acknowledge limitations or problems that may likely affect saturation by documenting all limitations of sampling adequacy. The acknowledgement of the limitations in sampling and the failure to reach saturation “does not necessarily invalidate the findings” (O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 193). The emphasis on saturation as the gold

standard overlooks the fact that in some studies there could be an endless generation of themes owing largely to the uniqueness of each life, hence in some situations “data are never truly saturated as there will always be new things to discover” (Wray *et al.* 2007 cited in O’Reilly and Parker 2012: 193). This means that in qualitative research insisting on one measure for quality is rather naive and researchers need also to take into account the research questions they need to answer, the research design and whether the results ought to be generalized or is research specific. As far as this study is concerned, there is a link between the research questions and the design and there is no inclination to generalize the findings beyond the study samples.

As such, as far as rigour is concerned, it is important to consider sample adequacy not just sample size, and the ability of such a sample “to supply all information needed for comprehensive analysis” (Yardley 2002:221 cited in Robinson 2014:38). This means that the emphasis that is put on sample size is somehow exaggerated and is not supported by what qualitative researchers actually do in practice, since there no recognisable stipulations on recommended sample sizes. It is argued that research should also establish coherence by making sure that there is consistence between the sampling process on the hand and research aims, research questions, data collection and analysis” (Robinson 2014:38). Such a link or connection is important for ensuring theoretical consistency.

However, it is also important to note that some strategies may be useful for other purposes while other strategies may not. For instance, it is argued that;

...many of the strategies do not achieve their intended goal of contributing to rigorous research and must be used judiciously. Some strategies may be used only for unstructured

interviews (i.e., thick description, negative case analysis, research bias, and perhaps peer review), and some only used for semi-structured research. Some strategies may only be used with particular methods, such as prolonged engagement with observational research, or methodological triangulation with mixed methods designs. The indiscriminate use of strategies with any type of qualitative research is clearly harmful to the goal of conducting rigorous research (Morse 2015: 1219).

This means that strategies and methods need to be consistent with the overall purpose of the research.

The section above has considered issues related to sample size. It was argued that a small sample size is justified if there is a connection between the research questions, research design, goals of the research and homogeneity of information rich sources. It was also noted that the emphasis put on sample size is difficult to justify in qualitative research in the absence of any recommended number. Furthermore, it was argued that privileging one measure of research quality such as data saturation is unproductive since there are a number of quality measures that should be considered. The next section outlines the methods used to collect data in the field.

5.4 Research Methods

It is important for researchers to document the nature of qualitative methods they used at each stage of the research process in order to ensure the trustworthiness of findings and openness of the research (Cleary *et al.* 2014: 474). As such, they point out that details, which include the data gathering methods, who was recruited, the description of participants, inclusion and exclusion criteria, what was done, how it was done and why

are very pertinent. The discussion below focuses primarily on the interview and also mentions other methods that were used in collecting data

5.4.1 Semi-Structured Interview

The main data collection method used for this study is semi-structured interviewing. Qualitative interviews are the most common forms of data collection, which ensure an in-depth exploration of a topic or phenomenon. Interviews can be structured or unstructured. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviewing was the main preferred method for collecting data given that the focus was primarily on gathering predominantly descriptive accounts of how the participatory practices of *Motshelo* and MMDT are structured. This meant that the research relied heavily on interviewee accounts, describing what they know about the origins and organisational structure of these two practices. The interview guide consisted of six themes and six main questions for each theme, which were asked to all participants from the two research sites in the same order for consistency. According to Morse (2015: 1218), “this standardisation enables the responses to be systematically coded” later on during the data analysis stage.

In order to enhance data quality, interview accounts of carefully selected homogeneous information rich sources were compared within each case and between cases. This form of data source triangulation helps to enhance accuracy and trustworthiness. Within case study research, data source triangulation is important as it helps to build “credibility, confirmability and dependability” (Lin 2003: 33).

Semi-structured interviewing is characterised by one-on-one face to face interaction between interviewer and informant (Johnson 2001; Bryman 2008) and is a flexible way of

collecting data, which allows for the probing of interesting leads. However, in the context of this study the use of probing questions was not always straightforward. The use of an interpreter sometimes made asking probing questions problematic because the interpreter, in some cases, had to present summaries of interviewee responses, especially in instances where the interviewee's account was too long to reproduce verbatim. This meant that in cases where elaboration or clarification was needed an opportunity to do that was sometimes lost. However, in order to make sure all interviewee answers were satisfactory, a decision was made during a pilot study to make sure each interview is transcribed, translated and analysed before the next one was conducted in order to make sure questions were addressed. This meant that the process of gathering data between interviews took longer than expected, which also meant that the size of the sample had to be smaller, but information rich. The advantage of this strategy was that the researcher was well aware of what themes were emerging and whether new themes were being added after each interview, which is very instructive.

In qualitative research, the interview is considered to be a natural human interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Brinkmann 2016: 520). Such a characterisation, notes Brinkmann, is based on the assumption that "interviewing is a natural relation between people that provides more or less unhindered and unmediated access to the experiences of the interviewee (2016: 521). Yet, in reality the interview "is a staged form of interaction with countless cultural and historical specifics", which often make it unnatural and mediated. This brings us to the issue of *positionality* in qualitative research, which refers to the researcher's position and relationship with interviewees in the research process. I was aware of my role as a researcher and its likely effect on the researched. The fact that I was a PhD student from a university in England and a foreigner from

Zimbabwe affected the interaction between researcher and interviewees. Some interviewees were expecting financial rewards thinking that I had money which I could possibly donate. I explained to them that that was not the case. Some were sceptical and unwilling to participate arguing that I should have done the research in Zimbabwe. I was also aware of the skewed power relations between me and the villagers given my educational level. However, I felt that the interviewees and my research assistant in particular wielded more power than I did. The reason is that the interpreter should never be considered as “simply a neutral conveyor of words, but as someone who influences what is said and recorded and perceptions and reflections are made” (Skjelsbaek, 2016: 5 cited in Brinkmann 2016: 521-522). For instance, the use of an interpreter in this study changed the whole dynamic: both researcher and interviewee were at the mercy of the interpreter who can easily dominate the interview process by virtue of his language ability. However, given the position of the interpreter there is a possibility that he/she can have a direct impact on the interview by changing questions resulting in a different set of responses all together. In order to ensure questions asked by the researcher were not altered, I would ask the questions in English and the interpreter had a set of the interview questions translated into Setswana and presented them to interviewees from a written script except for probing questions in those instances that these were asked. This meant that interviewees were asked the same questions with the same structure. However, when it comes to the interviewee responses, the interpreter produced summaries. I decided that it was important to review interviewee responses after data was transcribed in order to check whether the responses adequately addressed the questions before the next interview was conducted. As such, data collection and analysis were conducted at the same time in order to check the data.

It is noted that interviewer roles are influenced by the different methods used for interviewing participants (Brinkmann 2016: 529). While in other interview situations, the interviewer is cautioned against making interviews seem unnatural by paying little attention to how their presence can affect the context, in the context of this research my influence was largely diminished. My interaction with interviewees felt distant and unnatural given the intervention of an interpreter who had to go back and forth between researcher and interviewee. The fact that there was a time delay between the moment the interpreter translated into English for my benefit and when he asked the next question, made the setting feel very awkward. The interpreter's interaction with the interviewees may have been more natural though than what I experienced because of the shared values and common language between the two.

Before conducting the interviews that were included in this research, I conducted a pilot study to help me adjust to my role as researcher and to test the research instruments. According to (Kvale, 2007 cited in Turner 2010: 757) piloting a study with a case that is similar to the target case is important in order to test one's research instruments by checking what works and what does not. A pilot study to assess research instruments and the preparedness of the researcher and research assistant was conducted with two participants: one from *Manyana* (interim chairperson of *Manyana* Village Development Trust, a village adjacent to *Mogonye* and another from *Modipane* (interim chairperson of *Modipane* Village Development Trust). These two participants were the interim chairpersons of their respective trusts, which at the time the fieldwork was conducted, were not yet registered. The pilot study helped the researcher to revise and review interview style after realising the challenges of using an interpreter. For instance, it became clear that the use of probing questions would be problematic especially in cases

where an interviewee would give a long answer than the translation that is done by interpreter, which was in most cases summaries. Sometimes it was difficult to tell whether the short response given was caused by lack of understanding of the question on the part of the interviewee or that the interviewee had very little to say. In such cases, I had to check with the interpreter to see if the question could be paraphrased and repeated. A decision was also made to have the research assistant refer to written translated questions in Setswana that matched the main questions I asked and would only translate and interpret where probing questions were asked during the interview process in order to minimize misunderstandings caused by poor translations. This was also meant to ensure that questions asked were similar in order to maintain rigour.

Another important decision I made as a result of what happened during the pilot study was to make sure data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously in order to ensure that the researcher was able to review transcripts and also to help the research to check what codes were emerging and at what point was data sufficient to answer the research questions. In addition to the interview method, I also used the method of document analysis to supplement the main data collection method.

5.4.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis is an important qualitative data gathering method that can be used as a standalone or to supplement other methods (Bowen 2009). It was used in the analysis of policy documents (especially government policy documents) such as the Revised National Policy for Rural Development (2002), Strategic Framework for Community Development in Botswana (SFCDB 2010) and Implementing the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach: Operational Guidelines (MoLG 2012), National Development Plans 9 (2005-

2009) and 10 (2009-2014), and Vision 2016. In addition, the documents also included local national newspapers (hard copies and electronic), especially those reports about *Motshelo* and the MMDT trust, as well as the notes from my fieldwork diary.

My search for documents began at the offices of the Ministry of Local Government where I had gone to inform the official who had processed my research that I was now in Botswana. I asked for policy documents regarding community development in the country and was given copies of the first three above. The rest of the policy documents were obtained through internet searches. As far as newspapers were concerned, I got possession of two free hard copies of the local Daily News, with stories of *Motshelo* and I included these in my list of documents. I also conducted internet searches for more newspaper reports on *Motshelo* and MMDT trust and found a number a few more archival reports on both case studies.

Document analysis, especially the critical review policy documents on the nature and character of community development in Botswana were important for providing important details, which gave this study a firmer grounding in the history of community development in post independent Botswana. According to Bowen, document analysis enables a researcher to understand the “historical roots” of the phenomenon under consideration as well as contextualising data obtained through interviews (2009: 29). This means that data obtained from document analysis can be used to corroborate evidence from interviews in ways that enhances rigour and data sufficiency and trustworthiness. Document analysis is defined as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet transmitted) material” and this systematic analysis “involves skimming (superficial examination),

reading (thorough examination) and interpretation” (Bowen 2009: 27). Such an analysis is important for it enables the researcher to identify and carefully examine only those documents that are relevant to the research questions.

In order to make sense of the documents collected I used thematic analysis which was also applied to interview data. While interview data was analysed inductively first without the influence of prior theory, in the case of document analysis, the themes that had already been established from data (data driven codes) and those generated from the literature (theory driven codes) were used to identify similar or related themes in the documents. First, I skimmed documents’ headings and subheadings for general meaning related to already established themes. Once relevant sections were established, I read these careful underlining and highlighting key phrases or sentences that shared the same or similar meanings with pre-existing themes. Emphasis in this case is on meaning and not the form, which means that it did not matter whether it was a sentence or phrase, as long as it was meaningful and relevant to the research questions. These were reviewed in order to develop connections with other themes and to develop hierarchies and layered meanings. The highlighted materials were used as quotations to complement and corroborate interview data. As far as this research is concerned, documentary evidence was mainly used to corroborate interview data and also to provide context within which the two cases can be understood.

Although document analysis is very useful as a source of evidence, due care should be taken when using it. Documents may not be a complete record. In the case of this research I did not get the documents from the trust, especially the strategic plan and minutes but managed to get newspaper reports that corroborated interview data about the origins and

purpose of the MMDT trust. According to Bowen emphasis should be about “about quality of documents and evidence they contain given the purpose and design of the study” (2009: 32). This means that despite the shortcomings, data obtained was of quality and helped to complement interview data. Another method, observation was used sparingly because of its peripheral role in this particular study.

5.4.3 Observation Method

The use of observation as a method was limited due to the fact this method was not considered key to aims of the research and for generating data that would be relevant to the needs of the research questions. The data I was collecting were largely about descriptions regarding how the two participatory processes are structured and organised based on the following themes: origins, organisational structure, purpose/goal, recruitment, roles and responsibilities and challenges. As such, emphasis in this particular case was on how induced and organic spaces were set up and not so much about observing people actually participating. This meant that the role of observation was diminished. I attended two meetings: one in each village. While meetings could have been important the fact that they were conducted in Setswana made it difficult for me to make sense of what was going on. It was also difficult to have an interpreter during meetings as it would have been very disruptive.

Where observations were conducted, as in the case of *Mogonye*, I observed the village set up which was so small compared to *Molepolole* and wondered why the two were considered as villages when one is has a population of over 500 while the other has more than 69 000 (GoB 2011). In *Mogonye* I also observed that tourists used a number of entry points, which disadvantage the trust’s ability to collect fees efficiently. When we went to

the gorges with one of the Trust's workers, we saw at least three cars parked near the gorges, and these people had not passed through the office to pay. It would be important to ensure the area is protected with only one entry point through the gatehouse where every visitor is accounted for and pays fees for entry.

In *Molepolole* I noted that it was a vibrant village with a hospital, schools, shopping mall, banks, supermarkets, and football stadium as well as government offices. Both *Molepolole* and *Mogonye* have a mixture of modern houses and traditional thatched houses. The village houses are organised along the lines of modern towns and cities and they have electricity and tap water.

I also attended one of the *Motshelo* monthly meetings in which they gather to make contributions and to discuss any issues of interest. My first attempt to attend one of the meetings was resisted by other members of the group who felt insecure to have a stranger observe them while they were handing over money in their rotating credit scheme to those whose turn were due. I had to leave the meeting when it was time to handover cash to recipients. There were genuine concerns about security and the fact that they could not trust who I said I was even though I had proper documentation. Even the presence of my BOCOBONET informant who lives in *Molepolole* as well as my research assistant was not good enough to assure them of my good intentions on this instance. Other members of the group were however very receptive and they signed up for interviews. It was only after a number of interviews that they became aware of my research purpose and with time they accepted my role as a researcher. I also observed one of the meetings for the formal MMDT conducted by members of the committee which was organised in the way formal meetings are conducted. The meeting was conducted in Tswana and the

committee did not want to be recorded. I had to rely on a summary given later by my research assistant. As such, observation as a method was not central to the collection of data for this research.

The section above has discussed the interview method as the main method used to gather data for the study. It has also highlighted the role played by document analysis and the method of observation in complementing interview data. These methods are appropriate for a research design that is primarily qualitative and specifically support construction of a case study, providing rich and complementary data and permitting validation not only through development of a rich narrative, but also through triangulation. I have discussed the methods of data collection above, in the section below I focus on how the data was analysed.

5.5 Data Analysis

The other important aspect of the research design is specifying the criteria for interpreting findings. Yin (2003) argues that there should be a clear link between the findings and theories in the literature in ways that makes it possible to compare findings with previous research. Data analysis for the current study was carried out almost simultaneously with data collection. The main reason for this was that it was important to check interview transcripts against the interview questions to assess whether interviewees were answering questions adequately. The need for such a verification process was caused by the fact that the researcher used an interpreter or translator as an intermediary. This means that rather than having the interviewer ask questions directly to the interviewees, an interpreter had to ask questions translated from English to Setswana and then the responses translated from Setswana to English for the benefit of interviewees and the researcher respectively.

As such, before another interview was conducted, the researcher had to check the each transcript's relevance to the questions. This also led to the commencement of data analysis. The researcher developed codes from data in the first instance and these codes were later matched with the codes/themes derived from theories and concepts taken from extant CP literature. The idea of matching data-driven and theory-driven codes is based on the understanding that data need to be challenged rather than accepted uncritically. Such checking enhances rigour and trustworthiness of data and the findings. The section below describes the coding process undertaken for this study.

5.5.1 The Coding Process

Coding is an important process of analysing interview data. Codes can be defined as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 56 cited in DeCuir-Gunby *et al.* 2011: 137). Firstly, I developed codes from the theories and concepts (theory-driven) in the literature as well as research questions and goals (question-driven or structural), all of which were instrumental in the development of an interview guide. Theory and question-driven codes such as *institutional requirements* and *organisational structure* respectively, were developed during the literature review process and informed the interview guide. These and other theory-generated and question-driven codes were compared with those codes derived directly from data (data-driven) in order to test the emergent codes for quality and relevance to the current research. Lastly, codes were developed directly from data inductively to produce data-driven codes.

Coding was done both manually and electronically. There were power outages in Botswana and internet signal was not only very weak in some places especially where I

was based, but the service was also very expensive. As such, I decided to use Nvivo to store the manually identified codes for secure storage and further analysis that helped in the identification of related and sometimes redundant codes as well as building and creating node hierarchies with parent and child nodes. When creating data-driven codes inductively, I relied on the principle of breaking data into manageable chunks such as phrases, sentences or paragraphs based on whether they convey meaning (DeCuir-Gunby *et al.* 2011: 145). I looked for meaning line by line and if a phrase was meaningful, I coded using different colour highlighters as well as annotations that identified the actual code and definitions. For the purpose of exemplification, this coding process generated codes such as *relational ties*, *friendship* and *mutual neighbourliness* from *Motshelo* data and *registration*, *constitution making*, and *voting process* from MMDT. Simply using the common line by line, sentence, or paragraph level divisions would not always yield meaningful themes given that sentences or paragraphs “often featured a variety of themes making it impossible to label ... using only one code” (2011: 145). By focusing on the level of meaning enabled me to lump and split texts at different points on the basis of meaning not structure (i.e., whether it is a sentence or paragraph).

Data from the two cases were analysed separately and data-driven codes were inductively developed following the principles of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Even though a purpose sample was used, the idea to develop codes from data inductively was intended to allow data at the very least, “to speak for itself first” before introducing codes from theories and questions. Data-driven codes were needed to ensure that all case specific themes were revealed and accounted for. This inductive process of generating codes directly from data is known as *open coding*, which is contrasted with the second phase of coding data called *axial coding* (DeCuir-Gunby *et al.* 2011: 138). Open coding is

defined as the process of “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data” (Corbin and Strauss 2008 cited in DeCuir-Gunby *et al.* 2011: 138). This means that open coding is used by the researcher to explore the ideas and meanings that raw interview data contain. Open coding is the process that gives rise to data-driven codes introduced above. This is the first stage of data analysis. At this stage, codes are inductively created by breaking up interview texts into manageable units such as phrases, sentences or paragraphs on the basis of the meaning they conveyed not just the structural make up of these units.

Once this process was complete, I compared the data generated-themes with theory driven- and question-generated codes mentioned earlier in this section such as *instutional requirements* and *organisational structure*, which I identified during the process of reviewing the literature on CP. A theme “is an underlying dimension of meaning that cuts across texts” (Hagaman and Wutich 2017: 31). This means that the same instance of meaning found across texts represents a theme. In order to establish connections and hierarchies between the three sets of themes (theory, question and data-driven codes), I started matching them on the basis of meaning. For instance, data-generated codes such as *relational and friendship ties* and *neighbourliness* were matched to the theory-generated code *associational requirements* (from Chapter 3) given the semantic relationship between these themes. I assigned *associational requirements* the status of a higher node since it encompasses *relational* and *neighbourliness* connections. The understanding here is that *relational and friendship ties* and *neighbourliness* are part of the *infrastructures* or rules that those who want to join *Motshelo* need to satisfy and these are a part of people’s associational life. In the same vein, since these rules impose the conditions that people have to satisfy in order to become members of this *Motshelo*

group, then these associational ties are part of the question-driven theme – *constitutive requirements* because they form part of the requirements which should be satisfied in order to be accepted as a member. In this case therefore, *constitutive requirements* as a theme, occupies a level higher node than associational life to become the meta-theme. In addition, constitutive requirements as a meta-theme is also used to draw comparisons with themes from MMDT trust, which means its application transcends the two case studies and is therefore a viable category for the development of theory compared to associational life which can only be applied to data from one case study. As the highest code in the hierarchy, the meta-theme *constitutive requirements* is also used to compare codes from MMDT that are related to this meta-theme. For instance, the data driven codes from MMDT such as *registration*, *constitution-making* and *selection process: voting* are classified as *institutional requirements*, a theory-driven code, which is in turn linked to the meta-theme, *constitutive requirements* in the same the way the codes from Motshelo were connected to this meta-theme. The process of comparing data driven-codes with related theory-driven codes was repeated until all data driven codes were matched with theory generated codes. During this review process, codes were grouped together into categories and concepts, which were refined to create sub-themes, themes and meta-themes.

As such, the process of comparing and reviewing themes, when repeated, can result in the creation of hierarchies involving, sub-themes for example, (*relational ties (Motshelo) or registration (MMDT trust)*), which are linked to themes (*associational requirements (Motshelo) or institutional requirements (MMDT trust)*), to create the meta-theme (*constitutive requirements*), which cuts across themes from both case studies. A meta-theme can be defined as an “overarching dimension of meaning that cuts across themes”,

which means meta-themes are higher level concepts or categories of meanings. This process of constant comparison and reviewing of themes is part of the second stage of data analysis known as axial coding. It involves the use of themes (a) generated from the literature; (b) which are reviewed and revised in relation to the data and; (c) checked for reliability (Boyatzis 1998 cited in DeCuir-Gunby *et al.* 2011: 141) by comparing them with data driven codes, a process which resulted in the identification of sub-themes - *relational ties* and themes - *associational life* as well as meta-themes - *constitutive requirements*. Such a processes of constantly comparing codes (theory-driven, question-generated and data driven codes to produce hierarchies of thematic categories are important for enhancing rigour and the development of theory.

The identification and constant comparison of themes in this analysis, as described above, was informed by the concept of thematic analysis developed by Gibbs (2007). The concept of thematic coding in qualitative research “involves recording or identifying passages of text or images that are linked by a common theme or idea allowing you to index the text into categories and therefore establish a framework of thematic ideas about it” (Gibbs 2007). The advantage of thematic coding is that it enables the researcher to identify connections between ideas, categorise emerging themes and to establish hierarchies in ways that promote critical analysis as opposed to mere description.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored issues relating to the study's methodological approach. It discussed the issues in case study research by paying attention to research design and case selection. The discussion also highlighted the weaknesses of the case study methods and identified ways in which the negative effects of associated with this approach can be

mitigated. It also explored the research methods and pointed out that data was largely collected through semi structured interviews and document analysis. The chapter also noted the challenges faced in the field and how some of them were resolved.

Chapter 6: The Research Context

6.1 Introduction

This part of the thesis focuses on the research context as it relates to the study sites. The chapter presents descriptions of the research communities in terms of their location and the socio-economic context in which the two case studies are situated. These descriptions of the two research sites are accompanied by photographs of the two communities. The discussion highlights the distinctive features of the two communities especially the means of production and subsistence.

6.2 MMDT and Motschelo Participatory Processes

This section discusses the two participatory processes under investigation: MMDT in Mogonye and *Motshelo* in Molepolole, Botswana. Botswana is a sparsely populated country in Southern Africa, sharing its borders with Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia as shown in the map below. Botswana is considered a middle income country and has a population of over 2 million people. Most of the land is covered by desert patch of which the most prominent one is the Kalagadi desert and its economy is largely based on diamond mining and cattle ranching.

Figure 4: Map of Botswana



(Adapted from World Guides n.d)

The fact that Botswana is now considered a middle-income country has negatively affected the support that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) used to receive. International aid agencies and multilateral institutions have scaled back funding for local development projects in poor communities serve for those NGOs working in HIV/AIDS related sectors. According to the Executive Director of Botswana Congress of Non-governmental Organisations (BOCONGO) the recognition of Botswana as a middle income country has resulted in donor flight as it was considered no longer necessary for international aid agencies to continue supporting the poor since the country was considered capable of providing for its citizens.

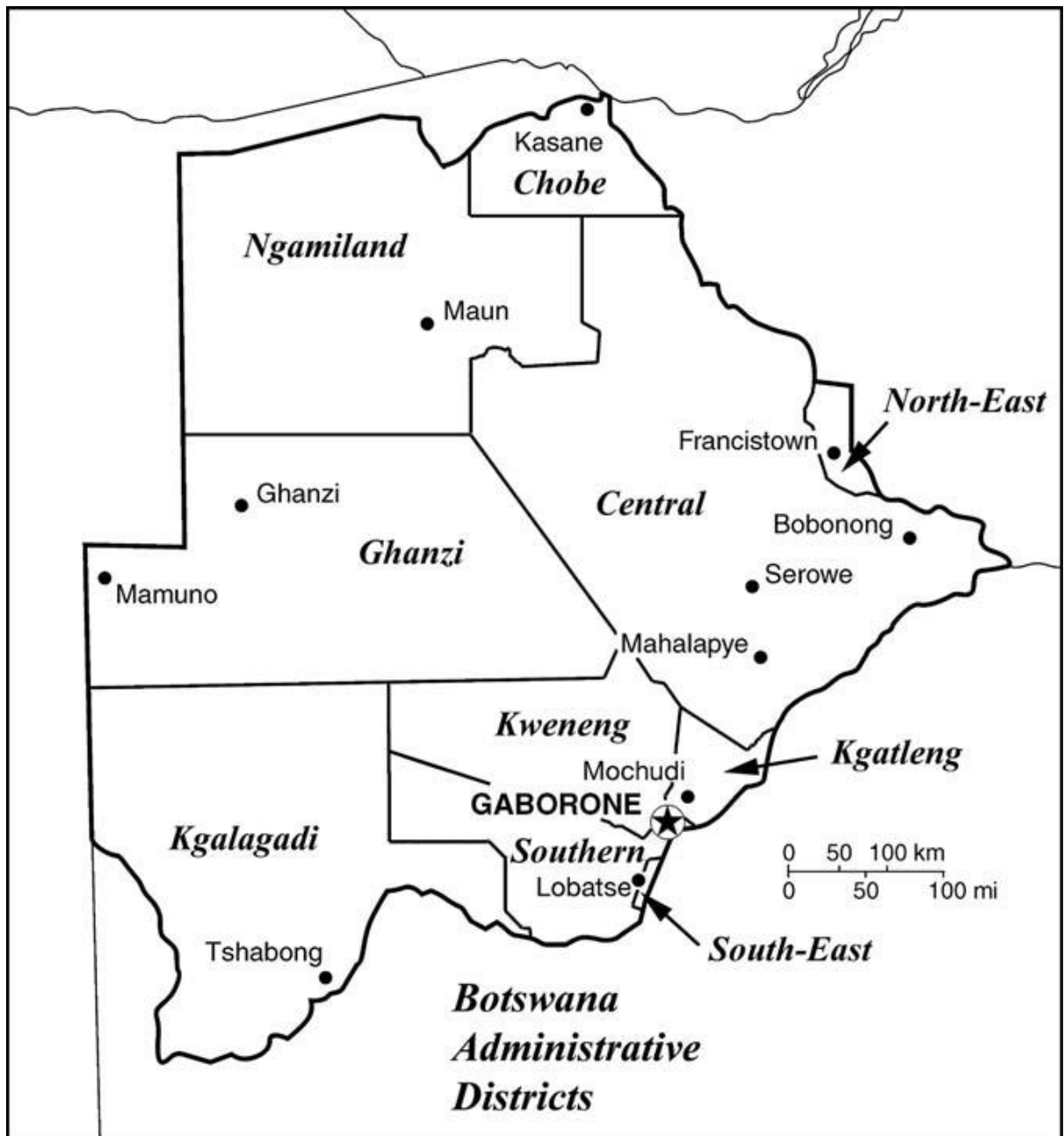
This meant a reduced role for the NGOs in community development and creating space for the establishment of community-based organisations (CBOs) located in the villages and funded by the government to initiate local development. Such a development has given Botswana a unique form of community development actors in Southern Africa who are locally based, and government funded. The fact that community development actors were largely village-based and that development initiatives were grassroots-led, forced a change in my research plans. Originally, the idea was to conduct research among the Kalanga in the North East and to relocate to Francistown. I wanted to focus on the work of NGOs in community development and to compare such work with traditional practices. However, given the changed community development terrain I had to change course after realising that participatory processes in Botswana are run, not by NGOs, but by CBOs in the form of community trust located in villages. Since these trusts can be found right across Botswana and are established on the basis of the same principle: conservation and exploitation of locally available resources, it was considered prudent and economic to deal with those communities that are in and around Gaborone where I had already established base, rather than relocate to some far off place to investigate the same phenomenon.

The CBOs are in two forms: informal ones that are organic and part of people's everyday life and the formal ones induced by the government, which are established as trusts and are subject to a regulatory framework involving formal registration and licensing. Once registered, these CBOs become part of the formal spaces to which villagers are 'invited or induced' to participate. As part of the rationale for this study, I argue that there is a connection between how these participatory spaces are set up on the one hand, and the fact that they easily fall in the hands of the elite who are accused of capturing spaces that

are not intended for them. The reason for such a view is that available evidence in the literature reveals a correlation between the poor's lack of active involvement and their level of education, which may suggest that formal spaces are more accommodating to those who have a certain level of education (Mansuri and Rao 2013). It is on the basis of these concerns that the comparative approach adopted for this study has been conceived in order to establish whether elite capture is only unique to induced spaces or it also is prevalent in organic spaces. More so, it is important to ascertain the nature of link between elite capture and how these spaces are structured.

In this regard, both the MMDT and *Motshelo*, were investigated in order to understand how CP spaces are organised and what link exists between structure and 'elite capture'. The section below begins by describing the villages in which the organic and induced spaces are located. This is intended to give the two processes some sense of socio-economic context. Organic participatory processes are located in *Molepolole* and the induced spaces in *Mogonye* village both of which are part of the *Kweneng* district as shown in the map below.

Figure 5: Map showing the Kweneng District



(Adapted from Denbow and Thebe 2006: 3)

Figure 6: Map showing Molepolole location.



(Adapted from Google Maps (2016))

It is worth pointing out that *Mogonye* village, maybe because of its small size, does not seem feature on most maps that I have searched. It is closer to *Ramotswa* in a westerly direction as if one is travelling towards the area between *Kanye* and *Thamaga* from *Ramotswa*, the second largest village in Botswana after *Molepolole* as shown on this map. I begin with a description of *Molepolole* followed by that of *Mogonye* village.

Molepolole is the biggest village in Botswana with a population of over 69 000 people according to the 2011 population census (GoB 2011). It is not any ordinary village and is considered the capital city of the Kweneng district. The Kweneng district is inhabited by the *BaKwena* a Tswana ethnic group. *Molepolole* has all the hallmarks of a modern day

city even though it is a considered a village. For instance, the village has a shopping mall, football stadium prison, hospital government offices and tarred roads. Below are pictures of these facilities.

Figure 7: An aerial view of Molepolole village



(Adapted from Google maps)

The contrast between *Molepolole* and *Mogonye* is stark. Not only is Molepolole the biggest village in terms of area and population but resembles a modern city with amenities that are not found in *Mogonye* such as the ones above. In terms of absorbing people into the mainstream economy, *Molepolole* is better positioned than *Mogonye* which has two very small shops that are barely recognisable. The fact that so many people are gainfully employed enables those of selling traditionally cooked food especially during lunch breaks very profitable. Ten of the women interviewed are involved in the business of selling food and hardware. Five of these women provide labour for hire by engaging in a number of tasks including washing, laundry, and any other household chores for those

who need such services because they do not have time to perform those tasks largely because of work commitments.

Given its urban outlook and cheaper rentals compared to Gaborone, there are quite a number of people who commute everyday between *Molepolole* and Gaborone; residing in the former area and working in the capital city. Some people have relocated from Gaborone to *Molepolole* in search of cheaper accommodation. It is some of these people who create jobs for the poor women because they are busy throughout the week, and do need certain tasks done on their behalf while they are away.

Figure 8: Part of Molepolole village



(Adapted from Google images)

The picture above shows part of the residential areas in Molepolole village with a mixture of traditional homes, and modern houses. Compared to Mogonye, people in Molepole

find something to do especially selling food to numerous workers who work in government, shops, hospital, stadium, schools. One of the stadiums in Botswana is located in Molepolole and is shown in the aerial picture below.

Figure 9: Aerial view of stadium



(Adapted from Google maps)

Molepolole stadium is used by local teams including the national team for football games throughout the year. Another major feature of *Molepolole* is the presence of a shopping mall and a bank as shown below.

Figure 10: Mafenyatlala shopping mall

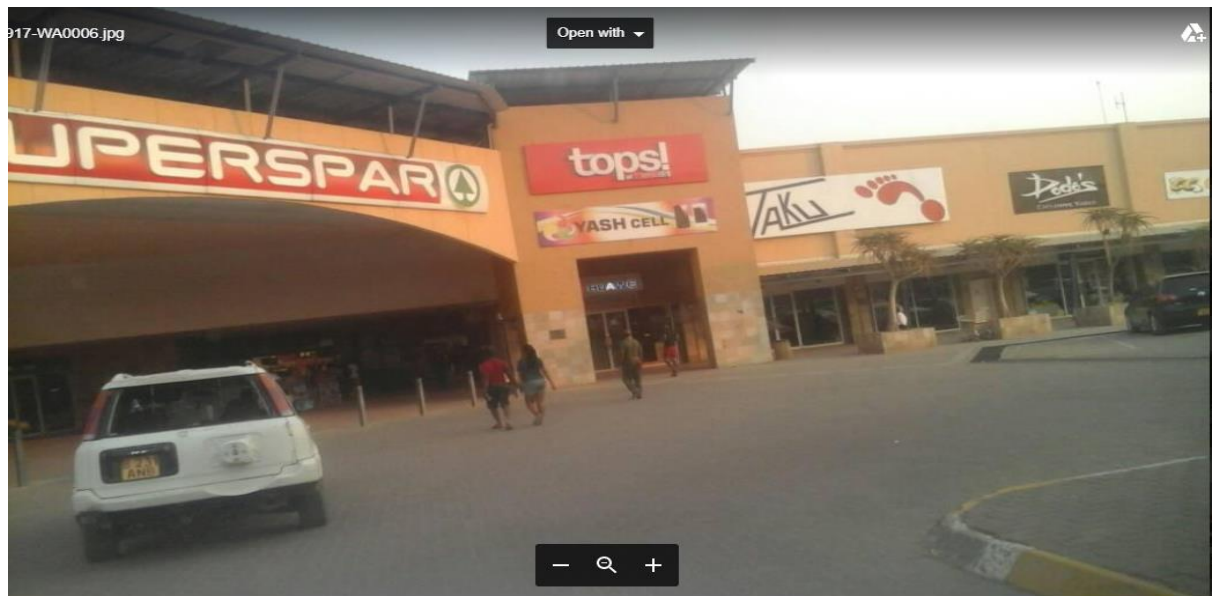


Figure 11: Mafenyatlala shopping mall



(Images taken by the researcher)

It also has a prison and hospital as well. There are very high chances of self-employment especially in the area of buying and selling and it was no coincidence that most people in the Motshelo I investigated were self-employed.

Figure 12: Mafenyatlala shopping mall



(Images taken by researcher)

Choppies, one of the popular supermarkets in Botswana is pictured above. The number of parked cars resemble those found in a town or city not a place referred to as a village in Africa. The picture also shows someone selling agricultural produce in the car park – illustrating economic opportunities both for small scale farmers and for the unemployed in this context. Some would perform menial tasks at other people’s homes for money. In an area that resemble a town there is bound to be a number of economic opportunities for the local people.

I have shown *Molepolole* village in terms of size and economic opportunities for the villagers which characterise the nature of their subsistence. The section below is a

discussion of the Tswana local practices, highlighting their participatory nature with a particular focus on *Motshelo* in terms of its origins and significance both as a poverty alleviation strategy and a force for social good in terms of sustaining and maintaining relationships. A discussion of the formal participatory arrangement in Mogonye village known as *Mogonye Mmamotshwane* Development Trust (MMDT) is presented last.

6.3 Tswana Participatory Practices

Traditionally, the Tswana way of showing collective philanthropy was through a process of sharing agricultural labour by coming together to work on each other's field in turns. Such a participatory process is known as *letsema*, a prominent practice used for land preparation, tilling, harvesting and threshing (Lukhele 1990). *Letsema* is a rotating participatory practice which involves the coming together of families within villages for the purpose of tilling, planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing, done in turns, one after another. For instance, between five to ten families would come together at the onset of the rainy season to till their land. They would spare a day on each family's land in turns. When it comes to weeding, harvesting and threshing they would repeat the same process starting with the land that was prepared first, following each stage in that order. Such community collective action can be explained in different ways. According to Lukhele, one the reasons for the popularisation of *letsema*, is purely utilitarian: to capture soil moisture for tilling and planting. This was born out of the realisation that agricultural success hinged on the ability to till and plant at the earliest possible time while the soil was still moist. Botswana lies in a semi-arid and very hot region where rainfall is erratic hence the ability to till and plant at the height of the wet season was paramount. In order to quicken the pace of tilling the land while the soil is still moist, the people realised that collective engagement was the key so that in their large numbers as family groups they

could do the work in a day and move to another's field in no time. As such this was a survival strategy which also helped those who did not have cattle to use as draught power. In this regard *letsema* served as a platform for community collective action as well as a strategic necessity.

The other explanation that can be given for the success of *letsema* is cultural. The Tswana, like their Bantu speaking cousins in Southern Africa, are inherently collective (based on Hofstede's 2010 classification of national cultures) and every opportunity that demands for collective action is exploited starting within a family and extending outwards to extended family, kin relations, friends, neighbours and the community at large. Another organic practice whose origins coincided with the advent of a cash based socio-economic system as opposed to the agrarian one in which *letsema* flourished, is *Motshelo*.

6.4 Organic Spaces for Participation: *Motshelo*

Motshelo is a poverty alleviation and empowering strategy that established itself not only as an effective intervention strategy among the *Tswana*, but also as an everyday life institution for the nourishment of relational ties alongside the other philanthropic participatory practices *Letsema* whose influence is diminishing as a result of the change from a agrarian socio-economic way of life to a cash dominated social existence.

Motshelo is not originally an indigenous Tswana participatory practice, but is linked to South Africa's *Stokvels* (Lukhele 1990). *Stokvels* are group saving schemes for the mutual and financial well-being of group members and are defined as “a type of credit union in which a group of people enter into an agreement to contribute a fixed amount of money for to a common pool weekly, fortnightly or monthly” (Lukhele 1990: 1).

According to Lukhele, *Stokvels* are group saving schemes providing mutual and financial well-being as well as social and entertainment needs. *Stokvels* have different categories or schemes depending on how the money is disbursed. These include revolving savings schemes, loan schemes, home loan schemes and share buying schemes (Lukhele 1990). According to Lukhele (1990), *stokvels* came into being as a result of "stock fairs" where people would spend some time at cattle markets during the selling season. In order to cope with the harsh economic realities during the cattle selling season at the market, people started helping each other out by paying one another in turns. First recorded in 1932, *stokvels* have come to be associated with names such as *mohodisana* (Sotho) meaning paying each other or the Zulu equivalent, *kuholisana*. In Afrikaans it is called *gooi-gooi* meaning 'throw' something, which might suggest that the way resources are pooled together is understood as throwing them into some collecting container. This idea of pooling financial resources together can be likened to the *SeTswana* idea of *kotshela* which means to 'pour something into'. It is the Afrikaans' *gooi-gooi* and the *SeTswana's* *kotshela* that are very close in terms of their meanings. The similarities in meaning may be a result of the fact that, *Motshelo* originally came from South Africa when migrant labourers from Botswana who went to work in mines and were exposed to this rotating credit scheme, which they adopted and adapted into their culture.

The Tswana noun *motshelo* (singular and *metshelo* plural) comes from the verb *tshela* meaning 'pour into' and *ko-tshela* - 'to pour into'. As such, *Motshelo* is therefore the practice of pooling resources together for the good of participants which resembles the pouring of something (liquid) into a storage container. Even though *Motshelo* is not originally a Tswana practice, it is consistent with *letsema*, the traditional participatory

practice that follow the same principle of a rotating scheme involving the pooling of resources (in this case labour) together for agricultural production.

It is therefore plausible to suggest that since *Motshelo* is similar to *letsema* in the way it benefits participants in turns in a rotating way, it was easily integrated within the Tswana way of life. Interestingly, none of the members of the *Motshelo* group, who participated in this research knew that *Motshelo* did not originate in Botswana. This can be linked to Habsbawm's observation that invented traditions tend to take root when they are linked historically to some other traditions that people can easily identify with. It can be said that *Motshelo*, which is discussed below, is an example of an 'invented' tradition through adaptation, given its responsiveness to current socio-economic challenges in ways that are consistent with people's cultural values and norms.

6.4.1 Molepolole Motshelo: Dijo Women's Group

The *Motshelo* group of women known as *Dijo* the tswana name for food, is based in *Molepolole*, a village 40 km North West of the capital Gaborone. It has an urban character to it with a central business district that has retail businesses, government offices, banks, a prison, and a hospital as discussed above. Although the majority of villagers are farmers, the fact that the village has an urban character, some villagers are formally employed. However, all of the *Motshelo*'s group members are self-employed and rely on a mixture of activities to make ends meet. One of their strategies is to pool resources together for various purposes. The women involved in the Molepolole group of *Motshelo* are 30 in total. They are mainly relatives, friends, neighbours and trusted associates. They came together in 2009 having realised that they could work effectively as a collective in the harsh economic environment they found themselves in. The

challenges they face include the failure to secure or access basic necessities such as food, school fees for their children, and shelter. Given their knowledge of *Motshelo* as a survival and poverty alleviation strategy, and having heard success stories about other women involved in this participatory process, the women came together and decided to form their own group.

Motshelo is characterised by a variety of schemes, which include general purposes scheme, food or groceries scheme, wedding scheme and building scheme of which the first two are central to this group as they run throughout the year and all members participate in these since the group, started in 2009. The other schemes depend on those whether some members are interested in other issues such as build houses or preparing for weddings, which may not be priority areas for others. In this case there is flexibility in *Motshelo* for members to form subgroups as long as what they do will not affect the main schemes for the whole group. If those who want to focus on other issues such as a wedding are not many, they are free to look for other people outside of their main group. Such schemes normally end once the purpose for which they were created is fulfilled. In some groups these *metshelo* can be one off targeting a specific issue after which the group disbands.

In the case of the group *Dijo*, the 30 strong membership is made up of relatives, friends and neighbours who trust each other. The group is split into five smaller groups of six people. The rationale is that smaller groups enable members to receive cash contributions from the general purpose scheme twice a year. In the general purpose scheme, they contributed P150 per month which is given to a member every month in a rotating way until all six members have received their share and the cycle is restarted. The amounts to

be paid are decided by the whole group and can be reviewed after a cycle is complete based on consensus. In this scheme it is up to the individual to decide what they want to use the money for. At the end of each month they meet at a member's house where they make contributions.

As far as the food scheme is concerned, they contribute P200 each per month towards the purchase of groceries twice a year, at the end of June and December. The money is paid within their respective smaller groups monthly and can be borrowed by those who need it even trusted outsiders who are known to have a regular income. Borrowers repay with a fixed interest charge agreed by the main group. Members pay 10 percent interest and non-members pay 20%. They claim that their group has stuck together because they are very strict and always pay on time. The interest paid is added to the total amount for the benefit of all members. At the end of each six months they collect all the money from the five groups and put it in one main group pot ready for shopping. They arrange a day convenient for everyone and all members travel to Gaborone where they already have arrangements with some supermarkets to buy groceries in bulk at a discount. The most important goods are cooking oil, sugar, washing soap, maize meal, rice, flour and salt which they share equally.

In the case of the building material and wedding schemes, interested members agree to contribute a fixed amount and decide what the money should buy, purchases which are specifically meant for the wedding or the construction of house. To ensure that the money is used for the intended purpose the recipient has to produce receipts of the purchased items. The idea is to ensure that the money is not used for other purposes other than the

intended one. Again, this is done in a rotating way and the amounts to be paid are agreed by those participating.

I have discussed Molepolole as the location of the Motshelo case study and described how the schemes work. I describe below the location of the other case study and the socio-economic environment.

6.5 Formal Induced Spaces: Mmamotshwane Mogonye Development Trust

This section focuses on formal participatory processes in Botswana represented by community-based organisations (CBOs) operating in rural areas known as village development trusts (VDTs). Since the designation of Botswana as a middle-income country, donor funds for development related work have dried up leaving non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with very little or no support. This has created a vacuum in rural based poverty alleviation project work which is currently being filled by government supported CBOs that are encouraged to manage and exploit available natural resources in their geographical areas. The case study to be considered in this section is Mogonye Mmamotshwane Development Trust (MMDT), a village-based organisation that is involved in the conservation of local gorges that are now recognised as tourist resort centres, which the community are exploiting for income generation purposes.

The Botswana government resolved to diversify its economy from an over reliance on minerals to one that is driven by the local communities in rural areas through the management and exploitation of natural resources available in each locality (Dichaba and Thebe 2016). As such, the Department of National Museums and Monuments (DNMM), which is responsible for the management and conservation of sites such as Mogonye

gorge is following the guidelines of the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM 2007) policy which is mainly concerned with the management of wildlife and emphasises the importance of having local communities conserve and exploit natural resources available in their area.

The underlying assumption being that local communities have historical, spiritual and socio-economic values attached to these sites and that they too, are concerned about their deterioration” (2016: 58) hence they would be inclined to participate. The adoption of the CBNRM model by the DNMM was borne out of the realisation that government was being overwhelmed by conservation issues and need to shift responsibility to the communities. The CBNRM stresses that “the management of the environment and control of natural resources *must* (emphasis mine) be shifted to the level of the community, so that local people are able to benefit directly from the resources of the area where they live” (Dichaba and Thebe 2016: 58). This means that Trusts involved in the conservation and exploitation of monuments are expected to take the lead and own the initiative although they receive support from government or other aid agencies and donors. In this regard, *Mogonye* Trust was viewed as a community project run by the local people. In this section we describe the *Mogonye* village, its people and the gorges at the centre of development initiatives being undertaken by the community in the form of a development trust.

6.5.1 *Mogonye* Village

Mogonye village, located to the South-West of the capital city Gaborone, which is about 31 kilometres was the second research site for the study. The people of *Mogonye* belong to the *Bahurutse* ethnic group who settled in the area around the 18th century having

migrated from Lehurutse and *Motswedi* villages in South Africa as a result of the wars between the Boers and the *Ndebele* (Dichaba and Thebe 2016) This earlier group which settled at *Mogonye waKogphu*, was later joined by another, the *Bahurutse* of *Bapoane* from *Otse*, resulting in the shortage of agricultural land. This forced some of the people to settle next to the gorge. It is some of the descendants of these people that participated in this study. The aerial maps below show Mogonye village.

Figure 13: The aerial map of Mogonye village



(Adapted from Google maps 2015 cited in Dichaba and Thebe 2016: 57)

Figure 14: The aerial map of Mogonye village



According to the census of 2011, *Mogonye* has a population of about 500 people and is one of the smallest villages in Botswana where other villages such as *Molepolole* (discussed above) have a population of over 69 000 inhabitants (Molebatsi 2012). The village is situated in a rocky and semi arid region in which inhabitants depend largely on subsistence farming biased towards livestock production especially goats and cattle. In such a harsh environment characterised by scarcity of water, Mmamotshwane gorge provides relief to the villagers' animals as it has a spring that flows throughout the year filling several pools and ponds that provide drinking water.

A key feature of the *Mogonye* village is the *kogtla*, where the chief holds his meetings and is also used by government officials or even the president to meet with the people for consultations regarding any issues of importance. In *Mogonye*, the *Kogtla* is central to village life not only because it shares the same space with the local police post, but it is used as an assembly point for political, social religious and economic business of the village. It is at the *kogtla* that the MMDT committee holds its meetings. It is a very important part of the Tswana people's rural life. In addition to being the chief's court, it is also a place where people gather for important village functions including political meetings.

Figure 15: The Kogtla in Mogonye Village



(Picture taken by researcher)

The kogtla is the thatched structure in the middle and to the left is the temporary office for the MMDT which at the time of the research had 2 members of staff whose salary was being paid for by the Department of National Museums and Monuments (DNMM). On the right side of the kogtla is the local police post in which the Kgosi has office. It is in this office that the interview with the Kgosi was held. Ministers and regional and district leaders as well the president, hold meetings with villagers at the kogtla. It is at the kogtla that meetings for the trust are held and there is a room that the trust has been using as an office while waiting for the gate house, which was under construction to be completed.

6.5.2 The Gatehouse

The gatehouse which was under construction at the time of the fieldwork when this picture was taken was officially opened in 2013 as the entrance to the gorges where entry fees are paid.

Figure 16: Picture of Gatehouse



(Taken by researcher)

In the picture above, the gatehouse was under construction when this picture was taken. It was being financed by the DNMM through the *ipelegeng* food for work programme. Two of the members of the MMDT were working in the food for work programme. It is a beautiful structure that blends well with the natural surroundings. The gate house is used as the official office of the Trust for fees collection and the sale of artefacts.

6.5.3 Mmamotshwane Gorge

This section describes the nature of the gorge and surrounding areas. The *Mmamotshwane* gorge is one of the seven gorges found around *Mogonye* village. It is located about 2.5km - 3km from the gatehouse. From the gatehouse there is a rough and dusty road that leads visitors to the foot of the hill. Certain parts of the road are difficult to negotiate with smaller cars and the foot of the hill is inaccessible by car. Below is a patch of the road leading to the gorge.

Figure 17: The way to Mmamotshwane gorge



(Picture taken by researcher)

At the time of the research, this road had not been serviced and as one approaches the hill, the terrain becomes impassable by car, and tourists have to walk almost 1km to the foot of the hill. The two employees of the Trust are the ones who take turns to escort people to the gorges. At the time of the research I saw a busload of Chinese tourists who visited the gorge.

Before getting to the foot of the hill, there are two big signs that provide very useful information about the gorges and their place in history.

Figure 18: Informative sign about the gorge



(Picture taken by researcher)

Above is one of the signposts, which is a few metres away from the foot of the hill. It provides a brief description of the gorge and its significance to the people of Mogonye. At the foot of the hill the ground was wet with clear signs of water in an otherwise very dry area.

Figure 19: The foot of Mmamotshwane hill



(Picture taken by researcher)

At the foot of the hill a small wet patch can be seen, which is the first sign of surface water in a very dry area. During the wet season the water forms a stream flowing downhill. Animals flock to the hill for water as this is the only place where there was surface water as all rivers in Botswana were dry. As one walks up the hill there are a number of pools and I was informed that these never run dry.

It is believed that the gorge developed as a result of erosion by water flowing along the weakest line of the hills that could have been caused by earth's movements which are believed to have caused extensive and intensive faulting and jointing (Dichaba 2009). The gorge has several water pools supporting different and small animal life. The pools

are presented in order starting from the bottom of the hill right to the top where there is a waterfall where the water comes from the rocks.

Figure 20: Pool no. 1 (All pools' pictures taken by researcher)



Figure 21: Pool no.2



Figure 22: Pool no. 3.



Figure 23: Pool no. 4



Figure 24: Pool no. 5



Figure 25: Pool no. 6



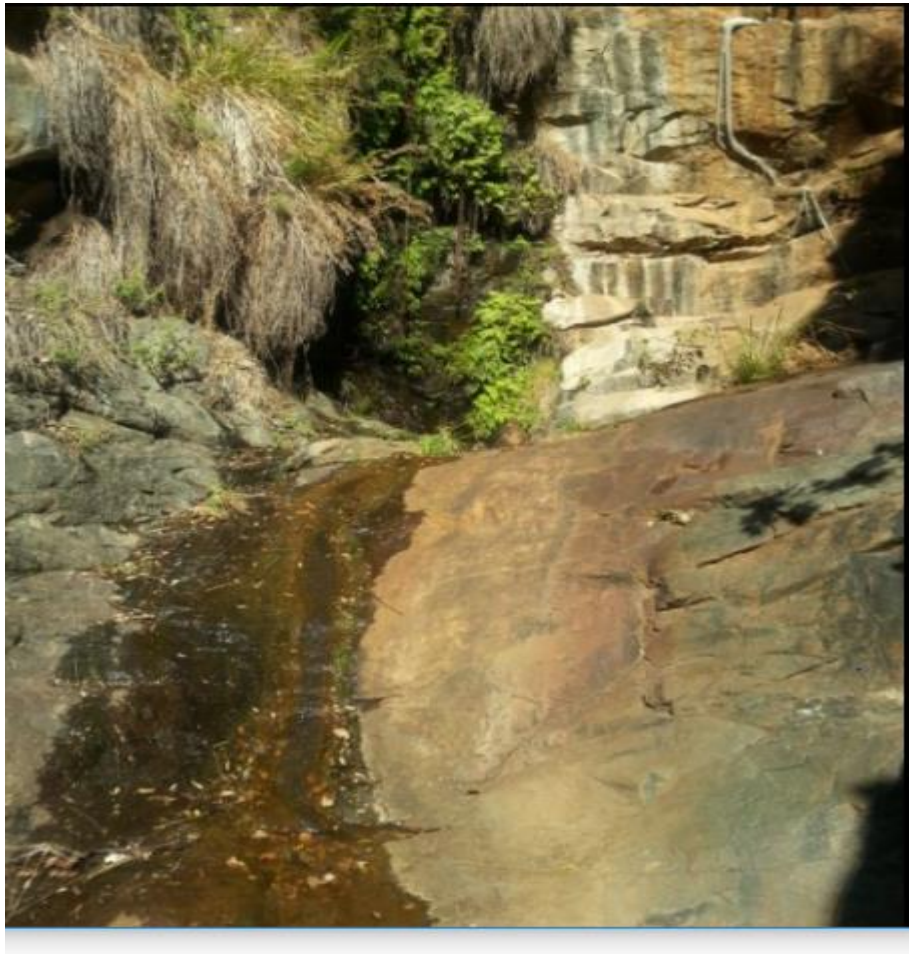
Figure 26: Pool no. 7



These pools are a magnificent site especially in a very dry and arid region where rivers only flow during the rainy season. These pools are said to never run dry. The villagers' cattle drink water from these pools and for that reason they play a very important role in village life. It is these pools that the MMDT is mandated to conserve and generate income from as tourists visit the area.

At the top of the hill is the waterfall, with highly dense vegetation known as the fern which is shown below. This is where the flow of the water starts and cascades downhill filling the pools below.

Figure 27: The Fern



The community treats the gorge as a sacred place because of the fern that is found at a place they call *Ko Puleng* shown above. The fern is believed by the local community to be the "breath" of the gorge and removing it from its original place means ending the life of the gorge (Dichaba and Thebe 2016). According to Kgosi Bose the fern is a "tree that rains", a point corroborated by Mr Thob, the vice chairperson of the Trust. Among the local *baHurutse* of Mogonye, it is widely believed that the fern has never been pulled out and has remained as sacred as ever. The whole area has a high concentration of nettle trees that cover a wide area on the western side of the gorge.

The hill is also famous for its archaeological sites which are on the other side of the hill. The Mmamotshwane hill is a site has the remains of a stonewalled prehistoric village. Another site also found on this hill is called the Dinkgwana archaeological site which has artefacts such as pottery and beads. This site is also known as *lefelo la badimo*, meaning a sacred ancestral place, which the locals are scared to venture into because of the myths associated with the sites. In addition to its historical significance, Mogonye gorge also has economic value to the community. In addition to being a water point for their animals, it is also a tourist destination with over 2957 tourist arrivals reported since 2011 (Dichaba and Thebe 2016).

6.5.4 Subsistence Life

The need for income generating projects in Mogonye is, just like in any other village in Botswana, obvious given that the country's semi-arid nature and low rainfall pattern do not fully support viable crop production. According to the Centre for Applied Research (CAR 2016: 16) livestock, social welfare, crops and informal employment are the major sources of income in poorly resourced and small villages (such as Mogonye) in Botswana with livestock being the most prominent given the low levels of rainfall the country generally receives. They point out that formal employment is associated with large villages such as Molepolole because of the numerous services they provide as discussed earlier. As such, the formation on the Mogonye-Mmamotshwane Development Trust (MMDT) is a positive development for a rural area that has very little economic activity. Unlike in Molepolole where there are a number of job opportunities including self employment, in Mogonye, the only official people are the police officers, the Kgosi and their support staff. There are no schools in the village and their children have to travel to Manyana or Ramotswa in order to attend classes. They depend on their animals for their

subsistence and when it rains, they grow crops mainly sorghum and watermelons which they take to Gaborone for sale. Even the level of self-employment is very minimal because of low demand in an environment characterised by poverty, low rainfall and rocky pieces of land. One of the most prominent areas of self employment in *Mogonye* is housing construction. The vice chairperson, Mr Thob has a thriving brick moulding business which sells bricks to local villagers. There is also demand for broken stones used in the production of concrete, which individuals prepare and sell. Otherwise, most young people migrate to towns and cities mainly Gaborone the capital, looking for work.

6.6 *Mogonye-Mmamotshwane* Development Trust

The *Mogonye-Mmamotshwane* Development Trust (MMDT) came into being after the former chairperson of the village development committee in *Mogonye* attended a meeting in an adjacent village, *Manyana* organised by the Department of National Museum and Monuments in 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage local communities to identify sites that could be designated as tourist attractions to be used by villagers for income generation. The Government of Botswana has a deliberate policy of encouraging the development of local community trusts that exploit natural resources. During the meeting the former chairperson of the VDC told the officials from the village about the gorges and after the museums officials inspected them the gorges were designated monuments, and encouraged the *Mogonye* villagers to establish a trust in order to utilise the gorges as tourist attractions for generating income for the benefit of villagers. The Trust was officially registered in 2008.

The Trust is made up of 12 committee members of whom ten (the Chairperson, and Vice-chairperson, Treasurer and Vice-treasurer, Secretary and Vice-secretary, and four

committee members) are elected at an annual general meeting attended by all villagers. Two of the members: the *Kgosi* and Chairperson of the village development committee are automatic ex-officio members with no voting rights. The Chairperson, Secretary, Vice secretary, Treasurer and Vice treasurer were professionals who were working and residing in the capital Gaborone. The vice chair at the time was a local businessman whose residence is in *Ramotswa* the second largest village in Botswana. His mother lives in *Mogonye* and she is the one who asked the officials from the Department of National Museums and Monuments to assess the viability of *Mmamotshwane* gorge as a tourist resort. The members of the committee are sons and daughters of the village who came together every month to discuss the village's development issues. Other members of the committee were resident in the village and two of them participated in *ipelegeng* for the construction of the gatehouse for the Trust.

The committee holds monthly planning meetings and one annual general meeting where everyone in the village is expected to attend. It is at the annual general meeting that villagers are given reports of the progress that the Trust has made during the course of the year. Meeting dates are announced at *kogtla* meetings they are presided over by the *Kgosi* and in some cases government officials or politicians who may from time to time have meetings with villagers on any other issues of importance to the village.

As mentioned earlier, Botswana has a deliberate policy of promoting CBOs in rural areas so that local communities are able to conserve, manage and exploit natural resources available within their locality. As such, what a given community can exploit for their benefit is dependent on what is locally available. This means that communities differ in terms of project orientation and focus as this relies on available natural resources. In the

case of *Mogonye*, the gorge and its pools provide a natural resource that the village is generating money from for other projects like the construction of a primary school.

This deliberate policy of encouraging communities to exploit natural resources available in their communities is similar to the successful CBNRM which primarily focuses on the conservation and exploitation of wildlife and veldt products. It is designed to promote self-sufficiency and sustainable ways of exploiting available natural resources. The way CBOs are organised is meant to give communities a sense of ownership since the local people are meant to decide on what form of activity to participate in. The idea of giving communities the platform to exercise initiative and decision making control is intended to reactivate the spirit of self-help prevalent among the Tswana, which has been negatively affected by food for work and social work programmes that have created a dependency syndrome among the people as discussed earlier.

6.7 Conclusion

Chapter 6 above has provided background information necessary to understanding the two case studies. Descriptions of the villages and the case studies have been given including the nature of the people's means of production and character of their subsistence livelihoods. It is noted that the two participatory processes focus largely on income generation in order to alleviate poverty among the marginalised and poor. Having presented the socio-economic context within which the two participatory practices are inserted, the study focuses on the analysis and discussion of the empirical material in Chapter 7 below.

Chapter 7: The Empirical Material: Research Findings and Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of the findings of the research from two case studies under review. The findings for this study are expected to provide answers to the three main research questions for the study. These are repeated here for clarity and convenience:

- (a) How are formal and informal opportunities for collective social action in Tswana speaking rural communities of Botswana constituted and organized?
- (b) In what ways do such arrangements enable or constrain active community engagement?
- (c) What are the implications of such evidence for CP theory and practice?

The findings chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section is the introduction, followed by five sections which are organised around five meta-themes. The second section (7.2) is based on the meta-theme *constituting the “spaces for participation”* with the theme – *origin/formation of the spaces for participation*, and sub-themes *group-led versus government-led initiative*. The discussion in this part focuses primarily on how the “spaces for participation” came into being. This is followed by another meta-theme (in section 7.3), *goal orientation/purpose*, which pays attention to the aim or purpose of each participatory space. The goals of these participatory processes are characterized by themes *group-shared interests versus community defined interests*. The third section (7.4), focuses on *constitutive requirements* which are divided into *associational versus institutional requirements*. The fourth section (7.5) focuses on the *organizational structure* of the two spaces defined by *formality* or *informality* of their constitution or organization and lastly, section (7.6) addresses the *decision-making power*

and control of those involved which is viewed in terms of *collective* versus *delegated agency*. The chapter is rounded off by the section (7.7), a general conclusion which also highlights the implications for the study.

The presentation and discussion of data in theme-based sections and sub-sections helps to draw comparisons between the two participatory processes under consideration in a conceptual manner, which helps to clarify where the similarities and sharp differences lie. *Motshelo*, the informal participatory process, and MMDT, a formal community development trust, which are both spaces for participation being exploited by the local people to spearhead development initiatives in Botswana's rural areas, are compared. I present below the analysis of empirical data on the basis of the five meta-themes mentioned above. The discussion begins with how the spaces for participation came into being.

7.2 Constituting the “Spaces for Participation”

This section focuses on how the “spaces for participation” represented by the informal *Motshelo* and the formal MMDT participatory practices, are set up. The argument for this thesis is that the way ‘spaces for participation’ are organised, influences the poor and marginalized’s ability to control decision-making thereby facilitating elite take-over. I argue that questions in the literature about why the poor lack decision-making power and control of projects or why such power ends up in the hands of special interest groups such as the rich and the elite, may require us to consider how these spaces are set up and whether such arrangements promote the interests of the already empowered while constraining the possibilities and options for the disempowered who struggle to have control of decision-making processes. As a starting point in the constitution of these

spaces it is important to focus on how they were formed. The ways in which participatory processes are formed may help us to understand who initiated the idea, the nature of their interests or goals.

7.2.1 Origin and Formation of “Spaces for Participation”

Motshelo and Mogonye Mmamotshwane Development Trust were formed under very different circumstances and conditions. The key difference is that *Motshelo* was organically formed when a group of women between the ages of 25 and 65 years came together on their own initiative and decided to pool their meagre financial resources so that they are better positioned to confront persistent socio-economic challenges in everyday life. It started as a family affair when in 2009 when four sisters decided to start their own *Motshelo* which they called *Dijo* or food which is discussed in (7.2.2) below. On the other hand, MMDT was a government-induced initiative aimed at addressing issues of conservation and income generation within communities by encouraging local people to conserve and protect the environment while exploiting sustainably the natural resources in their locality. As such, projects like MMDT established through government initiative are defined as government-led initiatives, while those such as *Motshelo* established through the initiative of a group are characterized as group-led. The analysis below first considers how *Motshelo* was formed followed by considerations of the circumstances leading to the formation of the MMDT project.

7.2.2 Group-led Initiative

In the case of *Motshelo*, the women came together starting with five sisters who were joined by their mother and later on other relatives (two sisters-in-law), friends and neighbours and those who are willing to cooperate and play the rules. Melo, who is one of

the five sisters and is also the youngest was the secretary and treasurer of the group at the time data for this study was collected and was one of the founders of this particular *Motshelo*, had this to say;

Let me say we have heard people talking about Motshelo, but for us we are children of the same parent and we invited friends such as Jojo (Mma Munye), but we are the ones who started this Motshelo.

The formation and subsequent establishment of this *Motshelo* began as a family affair after they realized that other people were participating in *Motshelo*. The idea was later shared with other people like friends and neighbours. This is corroborated by Melo's first sister Mma Tsepo, who points out that;

From my immediate family I am alone, and then other members are my mother, my younger sister, my elder sister and our daughter in law. Other members are just friends and we live in the same neighborhood.

The emphasis on relational, friendship and neighbourliness ties is consistent with the formation of organic spaces such ROSCAs which tend to rely generally on primary associations that have an integrative social function, which promote strong relationships. The way this *Motshelo* was formed resonates with the story of another *Motshelo* known as "Cuzins" that was formed by relatives and later grew in size to a membership of twenty people as reported by one of the local newspapers in Botswana after the group donated P10 000.00 to a kidney patient in order to facilitate his treatment. According to daily newspaper;

It all started in 2000 when cousins sat together in Palapye and initiated what would be your normal kind of Motshelo, a finance scheme of some sort with rules peculiar to each establishment (Daily News 2013: 8).

The idea that relatives, friends or people who are close to each other are associated with the formation of *Motshelo* is significant, but not new as it is also highlighted in the literature on ROSCAs in general (as shown in Chapter 4) and *stokvels* of South Africa in particular, where the idea of rotating financial schemes that are commonly known as *Motshelo* is said to have originated before spreading to Botswana. This highlights the importance of relational ties in the formation of *Motshelo*, a point to which we shall return later.

Suffice here to point out that the way this *Motshelo* was formed shows that the poor (who in the case of the studied group are all women) are able to take the initiative as a group to try to improve their socio-economic condition without the help of outsiders. This shows that while women can be vulnerable and susceptible to manipulation and marginalization, they are not passive members of the community, but have agency and ‘voice’. Realizing the power and strength in numbers, they seize the initiative as active agents in order to address their vulnerability through collective action. Such group initiatives are a clear demonstration of the members’ exercise of their agency which is not individual but collective.

There is a tendency among the interviewees to use the coercive “we” to refer to themselves as members rather than identify individuals for special mention, which clearly demonstrates the importance of the collective as opposed to the individual in their social lives. This is also consistent with *Botho*, which emphasises collectivism and the

importance of group interests. For instance, even though it is common sense that the idea to form *Motshelo* was suggested by an individual, the impression that is given is that all members of the group came up with the idea all at once as the quotations below seem to suggest. Mma Rita who resides in another neighborhood and was invited by a friend to join had this to say about how their *Motshelo* was formed;

We started our Motshelo by grouping ourselves as women and took a decision of forming Motshelo. There is no one who came up with the idea of the formation of Motshelo, we just came up with this idea all of us as cousins.

There are different ways in which the use of the word “cousin” to refer to the women in this group can be understood or explained. In the first instance, the speaker is referring to the five founding members who are indeed sisters while others are relatives and friends. “Cousins” could also be used metaphorically to extend the boundaries of familial ties by blurring actual relations through the use of words or terms that have the effect of drawing closer and equalizing sometimes distant relationship between members in the group by taking a neutral position that they were all cousins. The fact that that Mma Rita is someone who was invited by a friend shows that she has a strong sense of belonging and speaks as if she was there when this group was started, which also suggests that she feels fully accepted and well-integrated as a member.

When asked to identify the individual who came up with the idea of *Motshelo*, Melo’s first sister, Mma Tsepo was evasive even though she was there when this scheme was set up deferring to the coercive “we” by suggesting that it was group initiative not an individual effort: “We just volunteered to form this Motshelo as family members. No single person did this. We just came together as sisters and friends and formed it.”

While it is highly unlikely that the idea occurred to them all at once, (there has to be somebody who came up with the idea and sold it to the other members of the group and was overwhelmingly received) it is uncharacteristic of groups from collective communities as the *Tswana* to be seen to want to claim individual ownership of something considered to belong to a group. This again is consistent with the collectivistic nature of their existence as provided for in Hofstede's (2010) value dimensions framework, as the quotations below from Mma Buye and Mma Pulo (Melo's other two sisters) respectively seem to suggest;

There is no one to pinpoint and say is the one who came up with this idea of forming Motshelo all of us we just formed it and by that time there was no chairman and no secretary (Mma Buye).

There is no a particular person who started this Motshelo we just came together from different places and then we agreed to form Motshelo (Mma Pulo).

Although the idea of Motshelo was certainly initiated by an individual, the denial of individual ownership illustrates that in some communities, especially those that value collectivism and associational relations the tendency is to promote group interests, harmony and cohesiveness at the expense of individual pursuits or success.

The initiative taken by these women demonstrates their sense of responsibility as members who have an obligation to do something to provide for their families. Duty, as outlined in *Botho*, is essential to one's humanness. They pride themselves in group rather than individual effort, which again, can be interpreted as an expression of collective,

rather individual agency, and is consistent with collective societies as described in Hofstede's (2010) value dimensions framework.

In addition, such an initiative can be regarded as a manifestation of the spirit of self-mobilization which underpins the idea of self-help and self-reliance that characterizes most Southern African communities (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). This concept of self-help and self-reliance is considered central to government's desire to make people less dependent on government handouts through social welfare programs. According to the Revised National Policy for Rural Development one of the goals of the Botswana government is to "reduce, where socially acceptable, the livelihood dependency of people on government, whilst maintain appropriate social protection" (2002: 13), especially for the vulnerable and in extreme cases such as food relief during or food for work programs such as *Ipelegeng* (a food for work and social work security program that was introduced in response to persistent drought conditions). It is clear in these policy documents (see especially Chapter 3) that there is a desire to want to see a revival of self-sustenance practices through the provision of "opportunities for income generation and involvement in economic activities" (MoFDP 2002: 14) that are intended to scale back government led interventions by reviving and strengthening the spirit of self-help that is prevalent within the communities.

The major preoccupation of outside intervention strategies has been to find ways of mobilizing people so that they participate in order for them to be empowered. But, we can see how the existence of strong relational ties, associational relationships and networks of friends among African societies such as the Tswana provides a firm foundation for self-mobilization. And it is not that such forms of organization remain invisible or self-

contained, with little linkage to other forms of practice or other 'centres of power'. Steady's (2006) study of secret societies in West African communities reveals how political parties take advantage of these indigenous associations in order to recruit and mobilize members into joining their organizations and to engage in political activism on behalf of these parties. This shows how modern party political activism and organization, exploits existing indigenous practices for political purposes by tapping into existing well organized networks.

Likewise, evidence from *Motshelo* practices show that poor villagers are able to exploit their network of associations and relationships in order to recruit and mobilize members for social action. If such associations and networks were to become more fully recognized in CP practice, self-mobilization might be activated through such pre-existing mechanisms that already command legitimacy and trust. It should however be pointed out that the use of these associations does not necessarily mean they will always be successful, as there are cases of other *Motshelo* projects that have collapsed due to cheating and defaulting. There is evidence though to suggest that such associations can be effective as recruitment zones, and since in most cases they consist of people who already trust one another, there is mutual understanding and cooperation already built in that can guarantee success as pointed out in Chapter 4. By tapping into existing networks of relationships and associational life, which depend on the strength of people's relational and friendship ties, the poor communities engage in *self-mobilization*, which could be tapped into to promote active agency in induced spaces. Self-mobilization enables people to harness the positive effects of associational power in order to engage in self-help projects that promote *self-empowerment*.

As such, rather than wait for outsiders to organize and empower them through development related projects as suggested in mainstream development literature, local communities are able to self-mobilize and self-empower in ways that are not envisaged in mainstream CP discourse. Such control of decision-making processes is what Arnstein (1967) refers to as citizen control while for Pretty, self-mobilization is the highest form of effective participation since it entails taking independent initiatives. According to White, this form of participation is transformative since it is empowering.

The ability to self-mobilize can also be explained by social movement theory discussed in Chapter 4, which pays attention to the issues that motivate people to want to participate. This particular focus on motivations opens up a wide range of possible explanations unlike the accounts given by rational choice models that reduce understandings of why people participate to a simple calculation of whether such action is associated with gain or loss. What seems important for them is that as women, they realized the importance of pooling resources together (strength in numbers) in order to address the socio-economic challenges confronting them. The fact these findings seem to contradict the key tenets of mainstream PD literature which forms the basis upon which current CP research and practice is predicated, provides justification for the notion that effective community engagement should be informed by how local communities self-mobilize and self-empower in order to improve theoretical understanding as well as practice. This brings us to the notion of “spaces for participation” discussed in the introduction such as “closed”, “invited” and “created”. Motshelo is therefore a good example of a “created” or organically initiated participatory space in which the poor came together on their own initiative to engage collectively without outside intervention. Such a group-led initiative is contrasted with a government-led participatory initiative discussed below.

7.2.3 Government-led Initiative

The formation of the *Mogonye Mammotshwane* Development Trust (MMDT), which is a community based organization (CBO) – was largely inspired by the Botswana government's deliberate policy of promoting the conservation and exploitation of natural resources by local communities for their benefit (MoFDP 2002: 14). The idea is to “stimulate rural employment and income generation through identification and exploitation of profitable alternatives to livestock and arable agriculture, such as rural industries, services, attraction of skilled youth; promotion of private sector initiatives” (MoFDP 2002: 13). As such, government efforts to conserve natural resources was linked to the sustainable exploitation of what is available in the locality as a way of empowering the local communities to generate income for their communities “through increased participation of people in economic opportunities” (MoFDP 2002: 13).

In the case of the MMDT, the idea of conserving the gorges and turning them into an income generating projects was introduced to villagers by the government. Representatives of the Department of Museums and Monuments were touring rural communities to promote active community engagement in areas that deal with natural features that are likely to be designated as tourist attraction centres. According to the former VDC chairperson, Mma Thob (Mr Thob’s mother);

Mogonye development trust started after an event for natural resource management which was held at Manyana village, and it was a big event for natural resources at Manyana and because Mogonye is part of Manyana the village development committee for Mogonye was invited for this event, it was me as the chairperson of the VDC and another member. And at that event I was chosen to become master of ceremony and during the proceedings of the

event, our leaders asked if anyone of the event attendants know where natural features can be found in Mogonye or Manyana and people started to say that there is “lenao la gaMatsieng” (matsieng’s foot), and I mentioned that in Mogonye we have MmaMotshwaana gorge so maybe it can be one of the significant natural features but some people took it for granted saying Mmamotshwaane is nothing but I was firm and they agreed with me. I told our leaders that I will meet with the chief and inform him to look for two or three people who can take us to MmaMotshwaana with the people from Museums and Monuments.

In this case, then, the “development idea” that provided the rationale for community involvement was not an original community generated idea from the people of Mogonye, but rather an outsider’s (that is, the government through the Department of Museums and Monuments) agenda wrapped in community development and empowerment lingo for the sake of co-opting local people into conservation projects. This is also supported by Mr Tsepo, a former member of the interim committee of four, which was given the task laid the groundwork for the establishment of the trust who pointed out that;

Let me say Mogonye Mmamotshwaane trust started by the time when there was an event for natural monuments at Manyana village which is led by Chief Mosielele under which our village falls, and by that time Mma Thob was a village development committee member and she attended the event and the main people who were there were the Museum officers. And as Mma Thob heard what was happening in Botswana in other parts and they were talking about things like gorges and she stated that there is a gorge in Mogonye village. And the Museum people came to Mogonye to find out exactly what is Mmamotshwaane gorge and they conducted their research in the village and they took information from some elders who were much familiar with Mmamotshwaane, the history Mmamotshwaane and how the gorge was used in the past. And afterwards a lady called Mma Sichele from the National

Museums who was the one leading the department of museum advised us that in order for the work to be a success, residents of Mogonye needed to form a four member committee which was called the interim committee before we can actually have full committee. The task of this committee was to pave way for the voting of the committee and to market Mmamotshwaane and it took us almost a year as a committee from 2007 to 2008 around September when we started Mmamotshwane conservation trust and a committee of ten members was voted and it was the committee of Mmamotshwane conservation.

Villagers were therefore invited to an event organized by a government department to inform people about government efforts to conserve natural resources while exploiting them for income generation. Such projects are designed for larger units such as villages in order to ensure that all members benefit from the area's natural resources. As a part of the policy, there are, then, concerted efforts to create awareness and generate interest in local communities to engage collectively in order to generate income for the community's benefit.

The above quotations confirm that the initiative for conservation and community income generating projects is/was a government-led program, which government presented as a community initiative. The idea was to entice communities into conservation work with the promise of income generation as an incentive. This clearly shows that this was a government initiated agenda in which the rural communities are being co-opted in order to further government goals and interests under the guise of community development. In this case the government, through the Department of Museums and Monuments was engaging local communities consulting and education people about conservation, which seems to be one of its priority areas. The situation in this case is completely different from that of the group that is involved in *Motshelo* in the village of *Molepolole* or any

other such form association for that matter. In *Motshelo*, it is clear that the group members acted on their own volition to form such an association on the basis of their circumstances purpose and priorities there by creating their own “space for participation”. However, the villagers in *Mogonye* are operating in “invited spaces” created by the government in pursuit of its agenda.

One might argue that villagers are being co-opted in a government-led initiative presented as community-driven development and yet the agenda is not a local one. This may also be explained by the impersonal nature of the interviewees’ reference to the formation of MMDT which is in sharp contrast to the way the women who participate in *Motshelo* refer to their “project” using the coercive “we” or “our” as mentioned earlier. In MMDT there is no sense of personal or group attachment or ownership as the interviewees use phrases such as “Let me say Mogonye Mmamotshwaane trust started when there was an event for natural monuments at Manyana village which is led by Chief Mosielele under which our village fall...” and “Mogonye development trust started after an event for natural resource management which was held at Manyana village...”

The impersonal nature of the villagers’ reference to the Trust contrasts sharply with the way the women in *Motshelo* use personal pronouns “we” and “our” as follows; “We started our *Motshelo*...” and “We just volunteered to form this *Motshelo* as family members”. This suggests a sense of ownership among *Motshelo* members compared to their Trust counterparts who sound somewhat distant from the process that led to its formation, which might have implications for the way they engage in the activities of the Trust.

This distant relationship between villagers and the Trust may help explain why the designation of *Mogonye* gorges as tourist attraction sites had to be negotiated in order to ensure acceptance by, indeed commitment, from the local community, given the differences in priorities between the officials from Museums and local people. For instance, one member of the local community noted that they had to engage government officials in order to ensure that their animals could continue to drink from the gorges while they are also being preserved and used for income generating purposes. As far as the villages were concerned, the gorges are and continue to be, a source of water for their animals and they did not want this arrangement disrupted by the change in terms of use if it were designated a monument for tourism purposes. According to Mma Thob they came to an agreement after realizing that the official representing the government was an honest and trustworthy person;

...we saw that she was telling the truth about the state of affairs but the question was because you madam you want Mmamotshwaane to be a natural monument, are you going to allow our animals to drink from those gorges because this might end up affecting our animals, but we had a good agreement and I am sure you will go and see where our animals drink from and how the gorges can be developed for purposes of generating income for the village.

The quotation highlights the *uncertainty* that development from outside brings and a question about what one's rights/entitlements are in the face of local private interest, local collective (shared) interest and the "powerful" national interest represented by Government officials. Trust and uncertainty are bound up together and people handle or "delegate" uncertainty if they trust. In this case the villager expresses the sense of mistrust between villagers and government given that the villagers wanted guarantees and

commitment from the representative. The tension between the local and government interests that may not necessarily align. It also highlights the nature of the unequal power relations that exist between government and citizens. While the government gives the impression that villagers can and should take control of their development the villagers think that the government knows it has control (based on its responsibility for the national interest and the authority that comes with this) and can decide on behalf of the villagers: hence the negotiation processes which were helped by the sincere manner in which the official from the ministry conducted business. Trust is an important factor in determining the success or otherwise of development related projects, as we noted in our discussion of informal participatory processes of Motshelo. It has been noted elsewhere in the literature that most of the development projects that are commissioned in developing countries struggle to strike a balance between project imperatives, and community needs and priorities of the local people (Cleaver 2001). The above quotation suggests the possibility of a tension between local needs and priorities and those of the government: hence the insistence by villagers for government guarantees that their needs and priorities would not be sacrificed in pursuit of project goals. The point to make here is that the distinction between interpersonal trust as is the case of *Motshelo* and institutional trust is that with tradition, trust is vested by a person in another person, this is very different from the rules of bureaucracy where trust is vested in the very impersonality of structure, role, and procedure that produces “fairness” and rationality. So, although this person (the official) is sincere and honest, that does not mean that the next representative would be held to that agreement, unless it is formally recognized, written down and agreed as a “contract”. This highlights the tension and discord between ‘local’ and ‘outside’ interests, which do not appear aligned.

The emphasis on the part of the government seems to have been on ensuring that natural resources are conserved while being exploited in a sustainable manner for the benefit of communities which suggests that the consultations cited in the quotation revolved around future natural resource use (tourism) and its conservation without paying attention to past or current use. There has been much exhortation in the development literature to ensure that projects which are proposed by outsiders (either the government or its departments and local authorities, local or international NGOs, international aid agencies or the donor community) also seek to understand and respect/show sensitivity to local people's needs and priorities. It has been noted in CP literature that the mismatch between project objectives and community needs has a negative effect on the success of development project work. However, this is different than starting from the consideration of the impact of development on local ways of life that would need to be maintained.

The account of the negotiation given by the community member suggests a deep lack of interest or sense of ownership of the project by the villagers: it was the Government's project and the villagers were simply concerned about the consequences intended or otherwise for their given way of life. The fact that they had to seek guarantees from the government officials may suggest that as far as the project was concerned, decision-making power and interests in the benefits of development resided somewhere outside of the village. This might have prompted the pleading from villagers for the continued unfettered access to the gorges, first and foremost, as watering holes for their animals. It has been reported elsewhere in the literature that more often than not, there is a poor fit between institutional blueprints and the contemporary context (Dill 2010) as shown here by the mismatch between institutional goals and local needs at the village level.

7.3 Goal Orientation (Group-shared Interests versus Government-defined Interests)

Both *Motshelo* and MMDT are driven by particular purposes or goals, which is one of the important considerations for the formation of these “spaces for participation”. In order to ensure active engagement and commitment in the participatory process it is imperative for those involved to share a common goal or purpose. As far as MMDT is concerned, the official aim of the Trust is to develop the *Mogonye* area and to transform it into an important tourist destination in the South West of Botswana in order to generate income for the community. According to the RNPRD policy, one of the principles of community development in Botswana is to encourage “empowerment through increased participation of people in economic opportunities [for the] achievement of self-reliance and dependable livelihoods” (MoFDP 2002: 14) and to organise “different socio-economic groups to improve local economies” (MoLG 2012: 7). Such sentiments were echoed by the chairman of the trust during proceedings at the ground-breaking ceremony of the launch of the MMDT who noted that;

We intend to beat others who already exist because Mogonye is near Gaborone. What we have started is something that can help us generate money for the benefit of the village. We will market the place, so people don't just pass. They must come and see our beauty (The Voice 2011: 1)

As such, one of the important goals for the Trust is to generate income for the local community through tourist arrivals in the area attracted by the beauty of the gorges. Speaking at the same function the Minister of Environment Wildlife and Tourism, Kitso Mokaila sums up the purpose of MMDT by highlighting the connection between poverty alleviation, natural resources management and their exploitation for the benefit of the community in the quotation below;

We believe Batswana can rescue themselves from poverty using natural resources as they are renewable unlike diamonds which would be finished one day. We are teaching the villagers to care of the resources knowing that these can be a livelihood for them and their children (The Voice 2011: 1).

Another important point mentioned by the minister is the role that villagers are expected to play in the area of natural resource conservation. This is also supported by government policies that emphasise “optimal and environment friendly utilisation of natural resources” (MoFDP 2002: 14) or “the use, conservation, and management of community assets” (MoLG 2010: 10). The emphasis on conservation and exploitation of resources for income generation is prevalent in policy guidelines that inform community development in Botswana.

A salient point the minister mentioned, which clearly shows that the whole project is a government-led initiative is captured by the second sentence in which he points out that as a government they had to teach the villagers about the importance of resource conservation and utilization in order to build their livelihoods in a sustainable way for future generations. The achievement of this aim would potentially meet both local and national development interests. It would mean that while government is promoting empowerment initiative by encouraging local communities to generate their own income, villagers would also in the process, assist government in its conservation efforts in order to attain sustainable development through the exploitation of natural resources. In this regard, community interests are defined by outsiders that is, ministers and government officials who seem to “know” what is in people’s best interests as the statement from the minister cited above seems to suggest.

On the other hand, members of *Motshelo* formed their group after suffering from the effects of droughts and poverty and they decided to form a rotating credit scheme in order to mitigate the effects of the challenges they faced. Mma Munye, the friend who was the first “outsider” to join with the three sisters, their mother and sister-in-law pointed out that;

We started our Motshelo by grouping ourselves and we were driven by the social shocks such as drought which we faced and then we decided to form Motshelo as a way of overcoming drought.

In this sense, *Motshelo* could be considered to be a coping mechanism for the women who were struggling to deal with problems associated with poor harvests owing to the negative effects of droughts in a country prone to receiving insufficient rainfall. Having realized that drought had negatively affected their livelihoods, these women came together so that they can deal with the challenges caused by persistent drought and devised different schemes to cater for different purposes on their own initiative without help from outside. In addition to droughts, the women faced other everyday challenges as highlighted by Mma Lereb;

Our Motshelo started after grouping ourselves as women and looked at the challenges that we encounter as majority of us were not working and looked on how we can help ourselves in order to overcome the challenges confronting us and then we agreed to form Motshelo and agreed to contribute P100 and P200 respectively and the one for P200 is mainly the Motshelo for buying building materials and one has to buy building materials of her choice in order to do something and we make sure that those beneficiaries for Motshelo which deals with building materials only buy building materials (Mma Lerab).

The majority of the women in this *Motshelo* were self-employed. Some did menial work while others were small scale farmers. Others who were the more enterprising ones were involved in selling traditional food (Melo and Mma Munye for instance) and agricultural produce along the main roads in *Molepolole* and the capital, Gaborone.

The fact that *Motshelo* is considered not only a survival strategy, but also part of their life and sustenance is explained by Mma Gauri who notes that;

Our Motshelo started when we came together as women looking at the fact that we didn't have something to survive upon and we saw it important to venture into Motshelo because if you contribute money as a group and give it to someone it will be better to survive with because the money will be increased. We don't do anything in life we earn a living through doing piece jobs like doing laundry for someone or weeding someone's yard and then with the money that we get in return we will reserve it for Motshelo. With Motshelo, now we are able to do things such as buying a chair or food for my household.

Motshelo is now considered a lifeline for the people who participate and value the strength they have in numbers to overcome challenges that would otherwise overwhelm them as individuals. For instance, the women have various projects they engage in as a whole group or as smaller groups within a large group. Depending on needs, sometimes some women might want to build houses or buy household goods while others may want to focus on weddings as the two quotations from Mma Buye and Mma Pulo show below show;

Our money from Motshelo, we can use it for various purposes like buying chairs, pots or buying cement to mold bricks (Mma Buye).

We formed this Motshelo by the time when we were doing preparations for the wedding and we saw it important for us to have a Motshelo so that we can share task and responsibilities of the wedding and also the other reason was to entice the wedding (Mma Pulo).

In this case, *Motshelo* could be designed to deal with a specific problem which a small group of people may be interested even though they are involved in a larger group with an overall aim or goal.

One of the important considerations for collective social action is whether the group members share a common vision. Common interests or goals help the group to coalesce around a common issue of concern and to be able to plan accordingly as highlighted in the quotation by Mma Munye: “We started Motshelo because we realized that if we contribute money as a group, we can raise money which will be reasonable for someone to use for various purposes.”

The common goal in this case is to ensure that group members have disposable income to spend on various goods and services they need. It is important that those participating in this *Motshelo* share a common vision because without one the group will become dysfunctional owing largely to a clash of interests. As noted earlier, this group had various schemes which include a burial society, a wedding plan, grocery scheme, building material scheme, school fees scheme and general needs scheme, which members can participate in when a need arises as explained by Mma Sotho;

We use Motshelo to generate income which will help us in our daily lives. There are different types of Motshelo like the one which is mainly oriented towards buying food, money or buying household utensils and building materials.

These schemes are influenced by the groups' overall vision for the future and the fact that they managed to pay into all schemes without any serious difficulties is an indication of their unity of purpose based on the fact that they share the same interests and are bound by these. The variety of available schemes shows these have been carefully chosen as priority areas on the basis of consensus and cooperation. The fact that there are different purposes for Motshelo, is supported by evidence obtained from newspapers in Botswana reporting on the benefits that such schemes bring to participants. According to the *Mmegi online* newspaper of 19 December (2014), there are various types of Motshelo catering for different needs and purposes including financial, kitchenware and furniture, building materials, groceries and toiletries. This shows that although there is a diverse range of Motshelo, the bottom line is that they tend to deal with common issues that are intended to address poverty with a view to empower individuals and families and improve their socio-economic condition through income generating projects. The fact that they can assess their situation and try to devise strategies to improve their circumstances in ways that show common purpose demonstrates the importance of shared interests in driving collective social action.

In addition to comparing the two spaces for participation on the basis of the participants' goals or interests, it is also important to assess the two in terms of the conditions for their establishment and how these promote or hinder collective social action.

7.4 Constitutive Requirements (Associational versus institutional rules)

The requirements for establishing an informal *Motshelo* and a formal CBO such as MMDT vary significantly. These can generally be classified as associational and institutional *rules of the game*. Associational conditions are those that are closely linked with people's interpersonal relationships that characterize familial or relational ties, friendship connections and neighborliness. On the other hand, institutional requirements relate to those conditions formally established by a regulating authority (for example a ministry or department) on behalf of the government to standardize the formation and establishment of recognized institutions. How these impinge upon people's decision-making control is of interest to this investigation. In particular, the link between associational ties and institutional requirements, and the agency structure framework is critical. Associational connections and institutional requirements constitute the 'structure' that 'agents' create in order to regulate participatory practices. These structures in turn influence the way agency is exercised. This illustrates the idea of agency and structure presupposing each other as explained in Chapters 1 and 4. With reference to the two cases: the informal practice of *Motshelo* and the formal CBO, MMDT as examples, it can be argued that they were established with a strong sense of how community involvement should be organized and managed. As such, these considerations constitute the structure that can either promote or limit the inclusion of agents, and, in particular, the poor and marginalized control of decision-making processes. My presumption is that the way CP is constituted and organized influences who participate, how they engage, and the effectiveness of such involvement. The section below sets out the key considerations in the establishment and management of both formal and informal participatory processes such as *Motshelo* and CBOs in Botswana's rural areas. The section begins with a focus on associational conditions.

7.4.1 Associational Requirements

This sub-section examines data from *Motshelo* and explores the way in which this informal process is constituted and organized. The findings reveal at least six data-driven themes or important considerations that play a part in the way poor communities mobilize and organize themselves for collective social action within the context of *Motshelo*. These include, *mutual trust; cooperation; relational ties (family and kin relations); friendship ties; proximity and neighbourliness and common interests*. As noted earlier, a study conducted in South Africa regarding informal participatory processes known as stockvels, which are considered to be the precursors to *Motshelo*, also highlights the importance of relational and friendship ties in influencing the membership of the groups involved (Lukhele 2000). This is supported by a case of *Motshelo* cited earlier, which was formed by relatives who are cousin brothers and sisters hence the name “Cuzins”. First, we consider the significance of relational ties to collective social action among the Tswana, but specifically in one village, *Molepolole* and with reference to *Motshelo* practice.

7.4.1.1 Relational Ties

The findings in this case study reveals the importance of family ties and kin relations in mobilizing relatives, friends and neighbours to become group members in order to engage in collective social action especially in informal settings. One member of the group, who is the fourth sister to Melo (the secretary), Mma Palapye emphasised the centrality of relational ties to the composition of the group by pointing out that their group is not open to any woman to join, even if they are in similar circumstances;

We don't allow any woman to join our Motshelo because as we have formed our Motshelo like this, we only allow relatives, close friends and people who live in the same neighbourhood with us to join our Motshelo.

In this case, preference for membership is given to relatives, friends and neighbours. This group consisted of five sisters and their mother, two sister in-laws, eight extended family members, seven neighbours and the other seven who were identified as friends. Four of the friends live in adjacent wards while the remaining three live in wards that are far away from the ward where the related members live. Although the other three women live far away from the ward where the majority of members come from, the fact that they are invited by other members on the basis of their friendship means that physical distance in this case is not a relevant issue. The importance of inviting relatives and neighbours can be explained in a number of ways. One possible explanation is that in any community, relatives, friends and neighbours, given their closeness both physically and emotionally, constitute the core members of one's associational life and social network of relationships.

Relatives, friends and neighbours are part of an individual's primary associations (Warren 2001), and since they provide the building blocks for one's social networks, it seems natural that consideration is given to them in issues relating to collective social engagement because these are the groups of people that have been involved in one's social life since childhood. Among the Tswana, as is the case in most rural Southern African communities, villages are made up of people with close relational ties from family, kin, clan right up to larger categories such as ethnic groups that share the same origin and totem. This is consistent with Botho (the Tswana name for the African philosophy of life), which emphasizes the importance of relationships and is particularly common among communities that are characterized as collectivist by Hofstede.

Such a set up signifies the importance of relational ties among the studied group as well as in African communities generally and is consistent with findings from various studies (Henry 2004; Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006; Cleaver 2007). In this case, the importance of relational ties to collective community engagement can be explained as a cultural aspect of the people's existence informed by *Botho* which emphasizes community spirit, togetherness and cooperation. In the villages written contracts are not a common practice. Recruiting people that are related appears to be a way of building trust among the members of the group.

The importance of personal relationships in participatory processes has been noted by Hailey (2001) in his study of South Asian NGOs. It is also important to link this discussion to Hofstede's value dimensions framework which shows that people's values are influenced by their national cultures. He highlights the distinctions between individualism and collectivism showing that collectivist communities put emphasis on relational ties as opposed to individual effort. Since the relational ties involved represent primary associations, it indicates that among the Tswana, primary associations are far more important than secondary or tertiary since they continue to be relied upon in adult life for material, social and moral support. While in Western countries, adults rely on paid for insurance policies and social security, in most Southern African countries, primary associations help to underwrite individuals against different kinds of adversity, hence their continued relevance and sustenance (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). This also explains the strength of extended family relations among most African communities given the primacy of relational ties over individual preferences. Communities characterized as "collective" put emphasis on the needs of the group or community rather than the individual. Most African communities, especially Bantu communities are

connected through language and, in the order of social relations, strongly privilege the relational ties of family, kin, clan or ethnicity. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica:

Bantu languages are spoken in a very large area, including most of Africa from southern Cameroon eastward to Kenya and southward to the southernmost tip of the continent. Twelve Bantu languages are spoken by more than five million people, including Rundi, Rwanda, Shona, Xhosa, and Zulu. Swahili, which is spoken by five million people as a mother tongue and some 30 million as a second language...

Not only are relatives and friends part of primary associations among collective societies but fostering the development of relationships in everyday life is also considered a valued achievement. It is an *obligation* of every community member to ensure that relationships are nurtured in ways that promote community spirit and togetherness. Cultural values are expressed through *Botho*, which define their world view. Through relational ties, communities that subscribe to *Botho* have what Ansel (2006) refers to as unwritten social contract in which relatives look out for each other and extend their support, be it moral or material, to extended family members. Such support is also extended to friends who, by virtue of their closeness, tend to enjoy more or less the same privileges reserved for relatives.

The importance of relational ties to *Motshelo* is that they act as a magnet, attracting people who are expected to always look out for each other. There is already a strong bond among those involved, which makes coordination easier because as relatives they not only know how to work together but are used to working together given the collective and communal nature of their existence, which thrives on strong bonds of interdependent interpersonal relationships. As relatives the strong bond they share promotes a good

working relationship between family or kin members, which makes it easier to concur, plan, coordinate, and organize *Motshelo* programs while allocating and sharing roles and responsibilities among themselves in ways that are consistent with their everyday life. As such, relational ties help to bind the group together as they try to work out ways that help to maintain good relations within the extended family set up. It, however, does not mean that relatives have cordial relations all the time, or that they are always able to work together. However, when they do, their working relationship is enhanced by the fact that they are armed with the experiences of previous engagements in everyday life from which they are well aware of who to work with, when, where, and on which issues. Such knowledge is important for anticipating and detecting problems in advance, and to even pre-empt potential sources of conflict. *Motshelo* therefore brings a relational dimension to CP discourse, which shows that in some communities, organizing and engaging meaningfully in change oriented interventions programs require more than just the label of being poor and marginalized. The assumption that by simply identifying a “concentration” of “need” or indeed “capacity to change”, there will be common interest, shared by those included in the “concentration” and an interest in working cooperatively to address their shared issues seems somehow misplaced. Such assumptions tend to overplay the interest in collective benefit since the “capacity” to work together and to “handle” (in all sorts of ways) the process and potential gains of change simply is not there. A different form of collective identity and organization is hard-wired into the way “community” works.

People also consider the *strength* of their relational ties which help to underwrite the success of such intervention projects. This means that within these communities, there is a particular established social ordering of relationships in which closeness is measured on

the basis of cultural norms about kin and friendship relations, social distance or the frequency of interaction with kin and friendship relations being the most important. The insights from *Motshelo* seem to suggest that development agencies may need to consider the role that relationships play in promoting active collective engagement, a point also made by Hailey (2001), in his analysis of successful South Asia NGOs in which he concluded that those NGOs that were successful, had to adapt their operations to accommodate the centrality of relationships in community involvement. Apart from relational ties it has also been noted that friendship plays a crucial role in promoting collective social action.

7.4.1.2 Friendship Ties

Closely linked to family and kin relations are friendship ties that also help shape the way collective community engagement is organized in informal settings such as those in which *Motshelo* flourishes. My discussion with members of *Motshelo* emphasized that the boundary between social categories are not absolute and fixed, but, in certain ways, fluid or permeable. Associational ties and social networks of relationships help to promote collective social action as groups and friends exploit such networks to recruit and mobilize like-minded associates. When I asked about the nature of relationship of those who formed this *Motshelo*, Mma Lerab explained that “We are not all relatives, we are just friends just like this lady here who is my tenant she was invited by her friend.”

A part of primary associations, friendship ties are as important as relational bonds. These ties, together with neighbourly connections, constitute what Steady (2006) refers to as mutual aid associations. Such associations are important for access to necessary material and emotional support in times of need. Friendship ties (social proximity) and neighbour

relations (arising from spatial proximity) help to connect family, kin or clan members to other members of the community that are outside of their familial unit by exploiting interlocking webs of personal ties involving different people. In the case of *Motshelo* friendship helps those involved to share amongst themselves in an orderly and communal way. It allows negotiation of common understandings of need, which will assist them to define their goals in their own terms and to formulate strategies and options they consider mutually beneficial. Genuine friends do not exploit one another and *Motshelo* relies on strong ties that have served the group in other aspects of their lives. The fact that they have a shared agenda helps to strengthen their collective endeavour. Friendship ties may already tend to minimize or hold constant power imbalances between members of the group. But *Motshelo* – in particular, the “rules” of this participatory practice - gives everyone equal opportunities that make the process even more attractive as a collective practice. One of the sisters, Mma Palapye, highlighted the importance of friendship in the example below;

In our group we all treat each other the same even when some of our members are our seniors but we are all friends and pay our contributions and we all discuss and agree what do with our money, and that is why we do not have positions like chairman we only have organizing secretary who keeps records of our Motshelo. We all contribute, no one is paid; we are all friends, and some are relatives, but we work together as friends no one tells us what to do. We agree on what we want to do in our group. That's why we only deal with people we know because some people are difficult.

It appears from the above quotation that friendship ties can be used as cover to shield members from those who may want to exploit their relational and role related statuses from which power is normally derived among women (for example, mothers versus

daughters, elders or seniors versus juniors, mother in-laws versus daughter in-laws, and aunts versus nieces) to further selfish ends and tip the balance of power in their favour. Emphasis here is on treating each other the same as equals regardless of their social statuses and roles as relatives because the use of the term friendship to refer to all members regardless of their relational ties has the effect of neutralizing any power imbalances that such relationships may impose. The term friendship may remove barriers that may hinder uninhibited camaraderie that is common among friends based on sharing, equality, consensus and mutual understanding. Such networks of friendly associations provide community members with a sense of security, identity, commonality and solidarity that are important for the building of strong and long lasting relationships.

The affective quality and mitigatory effects of friendship on potential sources of power imbalance makes participatory processes such as *Motshelo* attractive to those involved. The problem of power imbalance and how to address them has been a challenge for both academics and development practitioners. What *Motshelo* seems to offer as a participatory practice is a means by which the poor and marginalized (who are considered powerless can ensure that they include in their group only those individuals that can “play by the rules” of the group as friends. As such, the issue of power and its negative effects on active engagement seem to be addressed well before the actual participation begins by selecting only those that are amenable to the group's founding principles, values, norms and goals. This makes *Motshelo* a “participatory space” that equalizes power imbalances thereby enabling those involved to take control of the decision-making process.

That associational power is manifest in this way is an important point for the practice of community participation. Powerlessness is never absolute and should not be assumed as

residing in particular forms of capacity. Power circulates outside the most visible expressions and manifestations of “community” seen as a political economy: it is found within the social practices of community, which include collectively (socially) regulated patterns of exchange such as *Motshelo* in which largely marginalised and poor women harness their strength in numbers to fight poverty. In his discussion of power, Allen (2003) highlights, the productive attributes of associational power in which he argues that power is not just negative, but can be harnessed by communities for the good of those involved. In this regard, the way local people exploit their network of relationships and associational life by forming groups of *Motshelo*, is indicative of the productive nature of associational power, which is used for the purpose of bringing about positive change in people's lives. When asked why group members do not establish individual savings accounts with established banks one of the members noted the advantages of a group owned initiative in supporting the interests of poor members who would otherwise struggle to meet the requirements of banking institutions. Mma Gauri, one of the five sisters pointed out that “The bank will charge us for keeping our money but it is better for us to exchange the money in a *Motshelo* because with the banks you will find out that the money is decreasing when you don't make deposits on a regular basis.”

What the women do instead is to borrow from their *Motshelo* and repay the money with interest, which will be shared by the whole group according to Mma Lerab;

Because we want our money to generate interests, we can allow members to borrow money like let's say if you have borrowed P100 it will come with an interest of P20 which is P120 when you pay it back.

If someone has borrowed money, let's say in January, we expect her to pay back may be in October, but each and every month we want interest for the money she has borrowed. The money that someone has borrowed generates interest each and every month because the money is not safe in Motshelo, so we want interest on our money to cover out for the money borrowed.

In this case, the money that is borrowed is the one that would have been set aside to buy for instance groceries that would be purchased after every six months. It is lent out to members or even trusted “outsiders” who would repay with interest. The advantage of lending the money is that it attracts interest which benefits group members because when it is repaid, they share the profits. This contrasts sharply with having to deposit the money in a bank account where the bank charges for its services as Mma Sithle pointed out earlier. The interest that accounts such as Barclays *Motshelo* pay is insignificant since some of it is used to cover bank charges. Therefore, some groups shy away from the mainstream banking system preferring to use an informal way of saving despite the dangers involved.

At another level the emphasis that is put on relational and friendship ties as social networks from which members of *Motshelo* are drawn, can be explained in terms of a strong inclination towards obligations or duty to one's own. There is a strong sense of extended family responsibility among most Bantu communities and the Tswana are no exception. There is a sense of being obliged by societal expectations for individuals to seek out and advance and protect interests of family, relatives and friends. The obligation to help one another is a strong one among most Southern African communities as noted by Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* (2006) and is understood within the context of Botho/Ubuntu discussed in Chapter 3, which prioritises one's duty to the community over an

individual's claim to rights. The strong obligations and a sense of duty to society and each other make Motshelo members think that there are no requirements for membership, as the secretary, Melo noted;

In Motshelo there are no requirements when you want to join as compared to opening an account for saving at the banks because most of us live through doing piece jobs like weeding someone's yard and get P50 in return which I will reserve for contribution at the Motshelo but the banks won't allow me to open an account for saving when I rely on piece jobs but with Motshelo you are allowed to join so I can save that P50 that I get from piece jobs in Motshelo and at the end I will have something better.

Although the participants in the *Molepolole Motshelo* gave the impression that there are no requirements for joining their *Motshelo*, such conditions however exist. Requirements do exist but since it is simply *expected* that family members and friends will be involved, they are not understood in such terms: it appears as if there are no requirements to satisfy. Because it is the duty of everyone to ensure that their relatives and friends participate and because such arrangements take place in everyday settings networks of relationships informed by *Botho*, there is no sense of joining an organization – it is a taken-for-granted (institutionalized) part of everyday life.

Drawing on their associational relationships and social networks, local communities utilize their associational power to pool resources together and make savings outside of the banking industry. Rather than organizing themselves to campaign against the banks' strict requirements, the local women formed their own credit scheme to meet their own needs by using their associational networks as a power base to advance their interests and to overcome difficult circumstances with very little resources. Power does not always

work *in opposition*, as it tends to be portrayed in PD: rather it can be used positively, collectively channelled for the common good. Collectivism is evident in the way the Tswana exploit their network of relationships and associations to turn a seemingly powerless position into a powerful capacity for mutual support based on the strength of carefully selected members (Allen 2003).

The importance of networks of relationships and associations in shifting the balance of power towards those often considered powerless, provides a different way of understanding power relations in CP. While current understandings of power have been dominated by the powerful versus powerless dichotomy, the evidence from *Motshelo* provides a different dimension to the study of power; by highlighting the importance of associational power in not only providing leverage for the poor in situations of skewed power relations, but more significantly, its role in promoting genuine empowerment.

Motshelo can be seen as an outlet for the marginalized to be empowered by giving these groups a way to manage their finances while generating more money through their own rudimentary way of charging “borrowers” interest. In response to the barriers that banks have put in place, which tend to side-line people such as those in this group, Barclays Bank and other banks in Botswana have introduced a *Motshelo* account to cater for these unregistered informal groups. The *Motshelo* account has incentives such as: “attractive interest; free SMS alerts; free cheque book; free cheque and cash deposits; free funeral cover of P2,000 for accidental deaths; no formal constitution documentation required” (Barclays Bank 2014: 1). The issue of a constitution as a requirement for opening a group account has been one of the reasons why such groups tended to remain under the radar given the fact that it is not an easy document to put together.

It appears Barclays's flexible approach to accommodate the unbanked communities has been positively received by some informal groups. According to the bank's spokesperson, Mr Sakaiyo Baitshapi, the *Motshelo* account was introduced to cater for hard to reach groups in an effort to encourage saving within the unbanked market. Such an account is said to "capture the essence of the *Motshelo* groups which foster social relations while working towards a common goal of saving with the intention to grow interest" (Daily News 2013: 18). Such an initiative by the bank is said to be intended to promote financial inclusion among Batswana while facilitating social and economic development among the hard to reach and marginalized communities but could be linked seen as a way that the banking elite are trying to capture this under the radar market. As a participatory space therefore, *Motshelo*'s development-oriented focus is fully recognized and its role in the economy appreciated. It is estimated that over P800 million find its way into people's savings under *Motshelo* each year, in which over 1.3 million adults out of a population of nearly 2.5 million participate (Mmegi Busine Online 2016). Such a thriving savings market has not gone unnoticed as evidenced by the Botswana Unified Revenue Services (BURS) appreciation of *Motshelo* accounts since it is considered no longer "difficult to locate people who [are] earning taxable amounts" (Daily News 2013: 18). This is, however, one of the reasons why these groups try to remain under the radar because in addition to bank charges, their income in partnership accounts is also taxed "if the annual interest amounts to more than P7800, it is taxed and if per month interest is more than P650, it is taxed" (Daily News 2013: 18). As noted earlier, such charges act as a deterrent as some *Motshelo* groups tend to stay clear of banks, thereby forcing them to continue operating informally.

However, some *Motshelo* groups like the *Cuzins*, *Tshela* Alliance and Club 10 Private (Pvt) Limited (Ltd), have transformed into recognized formal entities by registering as associations or companies and have since joined the formal banking sector. Barclays bank reported that its *Motshelo* account has proven popular with over 250 accounts opened in the first three months since its launch and an amount of over Pula 1.5 million of deposits (Barclays Bank 2014). Initially, the formation of *Cuzins* as a “group was purely based on *Motshelo*” and “the association has opened a *Motshelo* account with Barclays Bank” (Daily News 2013: 8) and had to produce a constitution in order to satisfy registration requirements. Similarly, *Tsela* Alliance and Club 10 started off as *metshelo* and grew to become established business entities. Club 10 in particular, was established by ten members who were contributing P1000 each and after a period of 6 months, the group invested P60 000 worth of certificates in the Bank of Botswana (Mmegi Business Online 2016). According to the Mmegi Business Online (2016), Club 10 (PVT) LTD once registered, it diversified its business portfolio to include property investments as well as venturing into the South African market. This means that with sound leadership and business knowledge, *metshelo* can be transformed into formal businesses once they satisfy registration conditions. Official recognition as formal entities is also important for tax purposes in which case they contribute to the country’s revenue, as well as satisfying issues relating to transparency and accountability.

Moreover, *metshelo* in general, are acknowledged to be having a positive effect on the retail sector as group purchases increase profits for supermarkets, especially during the festive period when most groups buy groceries. In an interview with the *Botswana Guardian*, the Finance Director of Sefalana Group, Mr Mohamed Osman makes the observation that “December is a very busy month across all retail sectors” and with

motshelo group members engaging in bulk buying from wholesalers. One of the wholesalers, “Spar, has since introduced *motshelo* bulk buys and competition for *motshelo* clubs that shop at Spar for their bulk buys” (Lonkokile 2016). In this regard, *motshelo* is important not only to the people involved, but also for the important role these informal groups play in Botswana’s overall economic development.

Not only do *motshelo* members rely on friendship and relational ties, but they also exploit their proximity to others as neighbours and use their knowledge of such people to judge their character and make decisions about associating with them or not. Being spatially close as a neighbour, is one of the dynamics that people use in order to consider one’s eligibility to join a *Motshelo* as discussed below.

7.4.1.3 Proximity and Neighbourliness

In addition to membership secured on the basis of familial and friendship relations, the Tswana also give privilege to spatial proximity and neighbourliness of people when determining who might be admitted to their *Motshelo* group. As Mma Munye pointed out, proximity promotes stronger bonds through a thorough knowledge of someone’s behaviour as neighbours;

We have not included anyone who comes from outside this neighbourhood because we just counted ourselves as we are living next to each other and formed our Motshelo so, our Motshelo is just confined to the people who are living within our neighbourhoods.

However, not every neighbour necessarily becomes a member of a particular group: such a privilege is reserved for those who are within a given group’s network of associations and relationships. Further, not everyone in the group came from the same neighbourhood,

because they have close relationships either as relatives or friends, they consider themselves as coming from the same neighbourhood. Social and spatial distance is in this sense conflated, and equivalent. The reason for inviting those who live in the neighbourhood is explained by Mma Lerab in terms of the importance of knowing somebody's character and way of life;

We are relatives, but there are some who are not relatives as we just live next to them, Motshelo needs someone who is truthful and more especially that other people whom we don't know do come to our Motshelo requesting to borrow money from our Motshelo.

In addition to being a neighbour, one also has to be considered to be truthful and trustworthy since *Motshelo* also involves the exchange of money. There is no better way to know who to deal with in such matters than people whom one knows better. As such, everyday experience provides members with vital lessons. The selectivity of membership contradicts the widely regarded spirit of inclusiveness that attaches to formalized participatory processes. Yet, this kind of selectivity is vital for the strengthening of the bonds between group members. This avoidance of “disruptive elements” is consistent with Cleaver’s (1999) observation that the majority of communities in Southern Africa can be characterized as conflict avoidance cultures as they tend to shun conflict preferring negotiation instead. A confrontational attitude has the potential to disrupt the flow of relationship and friendship ties, and group members want to work with people who are not only keen on advancing the developmental goals of the group, but also those who are prepared to put a premium on the sustenance and maintenance of their valued pre-existing associations and networks of relationships.

In these ways, participatory processes such as *Motshelo* should not be seen as simply exploiting existing networks, but they are also constitutive of them: *Motshelo* helps to build and nurture, nourish and strengthen associations. This raises a question about participatory processes that are divorced from people's everyday life experience in the way that formal processes tend to be given the business-like nature of the institutional structures they impose to regulate collective voice and decision. As seen so far, the fact that the informal process of *Motshelo* is characterized by networks of everyday life interpersonal relationships implies the significance of such arrangements in collective engagement processes that are part of the Tswana's collective existence. Allowing anyone to join *Motshelo* can be disruptive not only to their projects, but also the normal rhythm of life characterized by an interlocking web of relationships that foster harmony, consensus, respect and mutual understanding. Cleaver (1999) makes an interesting observation in her analysis of water management projects in Zimbabwe that the way people participated in formalized participatory processes was strongly influenced by their existing relational ties. She also notes that transactions that were expected to be conducted through formalized channels instead took place in informal ones characterized by networks of relational and friendship ties.

The invasive nature of existing networks of relationships and connections in participatory processes whether formal or informal, is important in understanding the dynamics of participatory practices in such contexts. As shown elsewhere in the literature on participation (Hailey 2001; Cleaver 2007), some communities tend to put emphasis on relationships regardless of whether the process is formal or not. According to Cleaver, in contexts such as these it is difficult to distinguish what is supposed to happen in formal or informal settings since project transactions are concluded as people's everyday life

experiences, with roles and relationships continuously being (re)enacted and relived in fluid social arrangements. As such, there is no clear-cut separation between how people relate to each other when they are engaging in project related activities and when they go about their everyday life activities. This implies that rather than viewing projects such as Motshelo simply as processes designed to help further the developmental interests and goals of group members, these schemes also provide a context for the nourishment of the associational ties and interlocking webs of relationships that bind group members together as they interact and engage collectively for the good of the group. In this sense, participation in Motshelo can be said to form part of the continuity of community life. As such, schemes such as Motshelo perform two functions: to afford communities with intervention strategies in times of need while at the same time providing contexts for promoting friendship, family and kin ties of those involved. Two implications for current CP theory arise from this discussion. First, practices that emphasize project imperatives at the expense of people's everyday relational experiences may be avoided or mediated through informal practices. Second, the importance of cooperation in community involvement, which is in line with the people's collective nature of their existence, is not fully reflected in the individualized conceptions of right, interests, needs, voice and action that are central to other forms of CP practice popularised in the literature.

By tapping into relational, friendship and other social network ties, the poor engage in self-mobilization and reveal not only that they are self-motivated to deal with challenges that confront them, but that they have institutional means of organizing collectively. These means are shaped by observance of other privileged customs and norms: the inclusion of relatives and friends in such a self-help project is the result of societal and moral obligations, to form a mode of practice that may be distinctly African: certainly,

this study of *Motshelo* corroborates the findings of other fieldwork in Southern Africa involving four countries (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006).

7.4.1.4 Cooperative Behavior

As mentioned above, the ability and willingness to cooperate is considered an important factor in determining whether an invitation to join a *Motshelo* group can be extended to a given individual. In addition, to relational ties, networks of friendship, proximity and neighbourliness considerations, *Motshelo* members also value cooperation among the membership as noted by Mma Mguni one of the friends who joined the group at the beginning noted that;

When I invite someone to join Motshelo I will consider if she is willing to cooperate in our Motshelo and it is someone who should not give us problems in our Motshelo because as you can see we are all friends and we don't like people who give us problems like if she has borrowed money she will not give us problems when it comes to repaying the money despite her either working or not working we just look at her willingness to cooperate.

In the above citation, it is clear that being simply a relative, friend or neighbour might not be good enough to become a member of a *Motshelo* group. In addition to these considerations, there are other qualities that are also important such as one's willingness to cooperate by following the group's laid down procedures. Cheating or lack of honesty is frowned upon as it does not only disadvantages other members, but it also destroys team spirit and relationship building, which are valued given that group members are in one form or the other, connected. As noted above, relationships are an integral part of the Tswana's social fabric, which means that their maintenance and sustenance is paramount. As such, anyone or anything that threatens the existence of strong relationships is frowned at, may not be accepted as Mma Tshelo pointed out;

We don't accept anyone who just passes by and request to join our Motshelo. We look at the person, her attitude and if she is willing to cooperate with us but if we realize that she can't cooperate with us then we will not accept that individual in our Motshelo.

In this regard, cooperative behaviour rather than confrontation is valued since people lean more towards conflict avoidance and negotiation strategies than anything that in any way, threatens to harm long standing relationships. It can also be argued that the emphasis on cooperative behaviour not only helps to promote long lasting relationships amongst the membership, it can also be a useful tool that can help to curb what has long been considered a serious problem associated with donor funded projects: cheating and free riding. By selecting relatives, friends and neighbours that are willing to cooperate, this process of excluding “bad apples” ensures that not only are cheats eliminated, but it also guarantees the long term sustainability of the project on the basis of the strength of the relationships that are maintained and nourished throughout. Closely linked to cooperative is the spirit of mutual trust upon which most collective communities rely to provide guarantees that in Western countries are otherwise enshrined in legally binding contracts and constitutions.

7.4.1.5 Mutual Trust

By far, mutual trust has emerged as the most important factor used to determine which people are acceptable and therefore easy to work with informal processes such as *Motshelo*, according to the secretary, Melo, trust is crucial: “We know each other because we are only those people who have been there, trusting each other.”

While, relational ties, friendship connections, proximity and neighbourliness, cooperative behaviour, and common interests are key, without the guarantees that mutual trust provides as the unwritten binding contract, which ensures compliance with laid down rules and procedures, and the security and survival of the group's investment (in both time and money) the other criteria will fall short. Mutual trust underwrites the worthiness of the other five dimensions. Its absence makes the rest of the factors ineffectual because commitment, certainty, and security cannot be guaranteed. It should be noted that unlike Western communities that rely on written contracts, constitutions, transparency, accountability and efficiency mechanisms that give assurance for effective project management through established operational frameworks, in communities of the South, participation is based on the assurances that mutual trust guarantees. The reason for putting so much faith in the attractive power of trust is summed up in the following citation from Mma Lerab: "It's difficult to understand a human being because you can't know them in detail but we consider the truthfulness of someone and also their loyalty towards other people."

Human beings are elusive and subtle, even when they are relatives, friends or neighbours they can betray someone's trust in them. This is why it is imperative that the trust is mutually shared and experienced between the parties involved. In any case, there are very strong beliefs in witchcraft among the Tswana, a dark art that is believed to be used to cast a spell on someone so that misfortune befalls them (Denbow and Thebe 2006). Ironically, it is believed that witchcraft spells are most effective when cast by relatives on their kith and kin. As such, the mere fact that one is a relative is not enough to guarantee a smooth working relationship. Given the strong beliefs in witchcraft among most Southern African countries, it is therefore important for them to be able to trust even their closest

relatives through assurances that they mean no harm as explained by Mma Buye, “We know each other like knowing who your neighbour is, and their personality and we invite people whom we trust and whom we think are not going to cheat us.”

In order to make sure those relatives, friends and neighbours who are to be part of the group are the right people to work with, members go beyond the relational and friendship ties to consider personalities in terms of their character, behaviour and conduct towards other people. Such an assessment is made the easier when those subjected to such scrutiny have close relations to the one who is doing the evaluation. As such, it is easier to trust relatives, friends and neighbours, because as noted by Mma Sotho, these are the people one is expected to know at a very personal level given their closeness spatially and emotionally. She points out that;

We look at the wellbeing of the person, her personal character and also how she relates or behave towards other people, and as you can see that we are neighbours, it's easier for me to tell the behaviour of my neighbours.

It is on the basis of the closeness between relatives, friends and neighbours that mutual trust is established, and in turn, it is the resultant mutual trust that guarantees the sustainability of these relational and friendship ties. Lastly, but by no means the least, the parties concerned ought to have shared goals or interests in order to work constructively in instances of collective community engagement.

However, it does not mean that having all these attributes guarantees that all *Metshelo* run smoothly. While in this particular *Motshelo* the group members did not mention any problems, in other groups there are serious trust issues. There are reports of serious

problems that threaten the viability of these community driven intervention strategies. For instance, reports in the media suggest that the viability of most of these participatory processes is constantly under threat owing largely to dishonesty, cheating and theft. According to one popular local online publication, Mmegi online news;

Survival rates of these cooperative savings schemes has plummeted in 2015 as members have struggled to keep up with contributions, while borrowers have taken flight with motshelo monies. Now it is the treasurers' turn to explain. And having been under strain themselves, many have dipped into the savings without a fall back plan on how to refund equally hungry and desperate fellow motshelo members (Kaelo 2015).

It is difficult to maintain the status of motshelo if investors cannot realise the benefits of their investments. Any breach of trust creates chaos to the smooth operation of such organic forms of participation, which cause dysfunction and the ultimate collapse of the rotation scheme. Defaulting may sometimes happen because those involved might not be earning a regular income, which means they may miss deadlines causing consternation among affected individuals. This makes *Motshelo* an unreliable intervention strategy which can implode anytime. While those members of the *Molepolole Motshelo* whom I interviewed insisted that no member had defaulted on payments because they are a close knit group reports in the media as well as the literature suggest that cheating and fraud and thefts are rife since in such informal settings disputes about the non-payment or fraud are difficult to bring before the courts for adjudication given the informal nature of such arrangements. As such, some people are reported to take matters into their own hands as reported below;

These types of stories naturally lead to confrontations, which often get ugly. In previous years, some motshelo treasurers have been assaulted, while others have even committed suicide after being accosted about missing monies (Kaelo 2015).

The fact that people end up assaulting one another is not only detrimental to the survival of *Motshelo*, but the fact that in most cases these people are relatives and friends, mean that mismanagement in these spaces also threaten the social fabric...destroying homes, families and relationships. In most situations, these cases are dealt with by the *kgosi* at the *kogtla*. According to *Kgosi* Thari of Old Naledi Customary Court cases in which people have defrauded other members of *Motshelo* are reported annually. He noted that as a court, “We already have three or four cases. We normally arbitrate when we have these issues. In most cases, the conflict is between those who have borrowed and *metshelo* owners” (Kaelo 2015).

The fact that the *kgosi* is already seized with cases of fraud and cheating that affect the smooth running of *metshelo* show that despite relational and friendship ties that help to strengthen mutual trust, there is however no guarantee that there would not be any serious problems. *Metshelo* are not insulated from fraud, thefts, and defaults which can destabilise the foundation of these schemes leading, in some cases, to total collapse. However, these problems can be resolved by utilising *metshelo* bank accounts available in the mainstream banking system. Connie Pule, a member of one of the numerous *metshelo* in Botswana who was interviewed by the *Botswana Guardian* newspaper, explained the importance of using formal banking systems when she said “*Motshelo* is a good initiative; we have opened a *Motshelo* account to avoid instances where money gets stolen or misplaced” (Lonkokile 2016).

Even if it means a lower yield on investment with respect to interest compared to what is earned through *motshelo* than risk losing everything in an unsecure informal financial system. Having discussed the associational requirements for having a viable *Motshelo* it is important to consider the institutional requirements for setting up formal spaces for participation and to compare these to those of the informal spaces for participation discussed above.

7.4.2 Institutional Requirements

Community Based organizations such as Village Development Trusts have to satisfy certain government requirements before they can become operational. These requirements include: having an acceptable and legally binding constitution, a business proposal, and a registration certificate and a bank account. In addition, to these registration requirements, any CBO has to have a twelve member committee, with the local chief and chairperson of the Village Development Committee (VDC) being *ex-officio* members with no voting rights. The VDT in each village functions as the economic arm of the village, the chief's office, the *Kogtla*, settles legal disputes, whereas the VDC deals with the political side of village administrative business as discussed earlier in Chapter 3. In order to be a *recognized entity*, a Trust has to apply to the relevant ministry in order to be registered before commencing work. Key requirements include the drafting of a constitution, registration, election of committee, education and training needs and knowledge sharing, and having a bank account. One of the key considerations when establishing a development trust is to ensure that it is properly registered with the relevant ministry depending on the trust's line of business.

7.4.2.1 Registration

Trusts need to be registered for them to be officially recognized and legally operational. These trusts are expected to register as CBOs under the Societies Act (1989, Chapter 18:01) and to ensure that they provide a constitution as part of the requirements for registration. This was confirmed by the vice chairperson, Mr Thob who highlighted the importance of a certificate of registration;

This interim committee led us until we managed to get the certificate for Mmamotshwaane, it kept going and we managed to vote for the actual committee which was now for the trust because we now have the certificate. Mmamotshwaane thrived and now because we had the certificate; we were recognized under the Ministry of Wildlife, Environment and Tourism and the minister also came to officially open the Mma Motshwaane gorges as a tourist centre.

The possession of a certificate of registration brings official recognition and this enables a CBO to commence the activities that are specified in the permit. Their registration is regulated by the relevant ministry under which the business interests falls. As far as the MMDT is concerned, its line of business falls under the Ministry of Tourism, and because the line of business involves the conservation of shrines and monuments it is directly linked to the department of Museums and Monuments. This explains the considerable level of support that the MMDT has continued to receive from this department. The fact that the minister came to officially open the site, shows the importance of these gorges to the government as a new tourist destination and the importance attached to the activities of the village as a registered development trust. Such official recognition not only signals the establishment of an institution with proper administrative structures as well as a regulatory framework for operating, but it also signals the beginning of a government directed management of natural resource use and conservation efforts through oversight

provided by the Department of Museums and Monuments, even though the project is presented as community owned.

On the other hand, *Motshelo* does not need to be registered in order to be operational. Most of these informal practices are not registered. However, when they decide to operate officially, they are expected to register and have a constitution as an association as we saw with the Cuzins *Motshelo*. In order to be considered for registration, a village's application has to be accompanied by an acceptable constitution, which clarifies issues regarding membership, organizational structure, line of business, duties and responsibilities of members, selection processes, and issues related to accountability and transparency, among others.

7.4.2.2 Constitution-making Process

One of the important documents required by authorities from a village that intends to register a trust is a legally binding constitution, which regulates membership and specifies how the trust is to be run including the rules, procedures and sanctions to be imposed for noncompliance. The extent to which such a requirement promotes or hinders CP, is important for this analysis. The importance of a constitution and the processes and procedures required are captured by Mr Tsepo the former of the interim committee member in the quotation below;

The role of the interim committee was to sensitize people on the importance of the conservation of Mmamotshwaane gorges under a conservation trust and again the major role of the Museums Department was to conduct the consultation process on the drafting of the constitution. The constitution of Mmamotshwaane Development Trust was developed by the community and the trust was formed on the premise that it will belong to the community

or what they say community based. And another thing is that the community had to consult lawyers in order for them to draft an acceptable document that satisfy the registration requirements and it was passed and it came into use. So, this was a major task for the interim committee and after we achieved the task of crafting a constitution, we now had the right to form a community development trust which was registered with government on the basis of a legally binding official document.

As noted above, the process was a consultative one which was conducted by government officials because they were the ones who knew the procedures involved in terms of registration requirements and the drafting of the constitution. Consultation is ingrained in Botswana's socio-political fabric, especially at the local level where most deliberations are held at the *kogtla*. As noted earlier, the framework for the establishment of the Trust was government-led and not an entirely community-led initiative.

7.4.2.3 Selection Process: Voting

Voting is important in that it gives community members decision making powers and control to elect people of their choice to run the affairs of the trust. By implication, having the power to vote individuals into positions of authority in theory, implies that the villagers also have power to remove such individuals if they are found to be incompetent. In order to fill the positions for the members of the board of trustees for MMDT, villagers nominate those they want to run the business of the trust. According to the *kgosi* of *Mogonye*, who is an ex-officio member of the trust, "the selection was performed by pointing to an individual by anyone at the meeting and others will support that individual who is contesting based on reasons such as their capability."

An interesting point highlighted here is the idea that the basis upon which people are identified and nominated is their *capability*, which, as we shall see below, entails how well they are educated. I argue later that this is not only discriminatory but impacts negatively on motivation, empowerment and the overall participation of villagers.

One of the important aspects of building lasting institutions is considered to be openness, and that property can be demonstrated by the way in which office bearers are selected. The emphasis in the development literature is on voting in a transparent manner, which gives legitimacy to the entire process. Mma Thob, a former chairperson of the VDC, who gave the Museum people information about *Mmamotshwane* gorge describes how the voting process was conducted;

This committee by the time it was voted, we were at the kgotla (the village court). I can just point at a particular individual whom I want to nominate, and others will also indicate those individuals whom they want to nominate and then we will vote for those people by raising our hands if we support that person. We then start counting and then we will get the one with the highest total. First thing we will vote for the chairperson, and then we will vote for the deputy chairperson then the secretary will also be voted in the same manner, this was before the introduction of voting with ballot papers which is currently being used and now when we vote for committees we do that. So, we were just voting using hands. And everyone in the kgotla was free to nominate a candidate of her choice.

As far as the above citation is concerned the selection process affords everyone the chance to nominate whomsoever they wish to become a member of the board. People attending the meeting are free to choose people of their choice to implement the projects of the trust on their behalf is intended to involve the community in decision making

processes about issues that concern them. However, the selection process may not necessarily be democratic: voting is not in secret and this might create problems for some who may end up voting for someone because they do want to be seen to be voting for the “wrong” person since this may affect relational, friendship ties or neighborliness as seen earlier in the discussion of *Motshelo* group. The fact that voting by secret ballot is now being promoted may help to enhance democratic practice in the selection process.

Finally, the fact that the selection process is based on one's educational level as discussed below poses serious challenges to the doctrine of inclusiveness that underlie most CP projects and programs in general, and the spirit of the policies that regulate rural development in Botswana in particular.

7.4.2.4 Educational Level and Training Needs

Formal institutional arrangements tend to rely on members of the community who are literate or in possession of a certain level of formal education at the expense of ordinary poor community members with low levels of education, who ironically, are the ones intended to benefit from the existence of such institutions. According to the former chairperson of Mogonye village development committee, who was instrumental in the formation of the Trust, certain positions within the Trust's board of trustees have to be reserved for people with recognized formal educational qualifications. This is also highlighted in the quotation by Mma Thob below;

When we were selecting people we were looking at how well they are educated, let's say if we have voted for this man to be our chairperson, he should be educated but his vice we don't mind that much about his level of education, but the chairperson whom we have voted should be well educated and even if he is to be deputized by someone like me it doesn't

matter because I have someone with open eyes in front of me and this is the same with the position of secretary, when we vote, we vote for someone who has gone to school and has something. As for the position of vice secretary we do not mind even if she/he has read up to standard 7, it doesn't matter because we know that the job will be done. So, we were looking at this when we were voting.

The fact that key positions in the trust such as chairman, secretary and treasurer are reserved for the educated suggests that decision-making and control is effectively in the hands of the educated elite a situation that relegates the uneducated to the periphery of community development initiatives. Although the participation of the less educated in the voting process can be praised as a sign of democracy and an expression of “voice”, in practice however, the fact that the poor are participating in their own exclusion does not in any way mitigate the negative effects of a flawed process. This means that the process is already biased against them to the extent they appear as if they are exercising their right to choose when in actual fact, they are forced by circumstances, into unwittingly relegating themselves to the periphery of decision-making and control. It is important to clarify the role of the elite in this instance, because while the eventual control of decision-making by the educated is presented in the literature as an example of elite capture, it is crucial to point out that the elite have not willfully hijacked decision-making control. It is important to revisit the point made by the treasurer of the trust Mma Sita, based on the importance attached to educational qualifications and how this allows for elite involvement in an otherwise pro-poor project. The question to ask is whether the elite hijack the participatory process or are invited to intervene in situations where the marginalized consider to be areas they are not competent enough to handle. Therefore, elite involvement in a case like this cannot be considered detrimental to the overall goals of the project.

Suffice to mention that the local elite are not rigging the system nor are they using their power and influence to sideline the already marginalized. Rather, they are being invited into induced spaces by the intended beneficiaries to assume control because the system that creates these formal spaces has no room for the marginalized in the decision-making process given that the very process of establishing these formal structures is skewed against the people it purports to empower: the poor. As such, this involvement by the elite is a good example of what I refer to as “elite intervention”; a case in which the marginalized “invite” the already empowered and with requisite skills and understanding - who can plug the gap in knowledge and skills by filling in on their behalf in order to implement, develop and run the project effectively for the benefit of the poor and marginalized. In this regard, it would be unfair to characterize such instances of elite involvement in negative terms since those involved are not using their power or position or status or influence to wrestle decision-making control from the poor. Instead, the elite are invited into spaces created for the poor because the marginalized cannot handle the technology of a development project that is largely technical requiring technocrats who know the “rules of the game”.

The sad irony of the predicament that the poor find themselves in is that they are forced by circumstances to cede control of the spaces that are created with the intention of including the marginalized are turned into exclusion zones by the excluded and poor – the very people who are supposed to benefit as they delegate. Right from project conception to implementation, the marginalized play a peripheral role: merely legitimizing centralized planning in a supposedly decentralized system of governance in which a purely government-conceived, planned, implemented and led initiative is presented as a

local level community-led project. In spaces like these there is more of co-option than active engagement on the part of the poor and marginalized who are merely drafted into a government agenda that most are ignorant of the purpose or benefits and are not aware of the consequences of their lack of involvement.

According to the secretary, Mma Sanyo (a professional in her own right) of the trust at the time of this research, important positions such as those of treasurer were reserved for people with at least an accounting background.

It was agreed that for the position of treasurer, we could not have somebody who does not know how to read or write, we need somebody with an accounting background because he or she will be dealing with a lot of money. So, I think from that people already had an idea that I wouldn't want to do this and that because I don't have the skills.

Rather than being participatory and all inclusive, such selectivity means that CP takes the form of representative democracy, where a few individuals are selected to perform certain functions on behalf of the entire community. The negative effect of this was seen during the recruitment process for participants for this study when the researcher failed to recruit ordinary members of the Trust who seem to know very little about its operations and referred the researcher to the committee members arguing that they are the ones who know. This shows an obvious disconnect by the villagers from the work of the committee that is spearheading development in their village on their behalf. It defeats the whole purpose of promoting participatory development since the idea is to have those who are marginalized and poor to manage their own development not through others. Such a goal is clearly spelt out in policies developed by the government. For instance, it is stated in the SFCDB (2010: 10) that “these and other policies and strategies, provide a strong

foundation for community development that is based on a community-driven approach. They all promote the notion of the empowerment of communities to make decisions”. The fact that decision making is supposed to reside with the poor and marginalised is consistent with the PD approach and crystallized in Botswana’s policies and guidelines for community development, especially when the projects in question are government funded.

In addition, the fact that a certain level of education is not only desirable but necessary was made the more obvious by the treasurer of the Trust, Mma Sita who notes that;

It is important to have people who are educated we can be given money by donors. Right now we have received support from the government and other business people and all this has to be recorded and accounted for. Not everybody can do this because you need the right skills and training so people were realistic and said we can't do this, and they chose me because of my background in government.

The above quotation illustrates the practical realities of participatory development: talk about control of decision-making by the marginalized is a pipe dream. In reality, the institutional requirements associated with the establishment of such formal spaces for participation demand that the elite take charge as a natural consequence of these structures involved and how they work. In practice therefore, positions of influence within MMDT are held by the educated elite - sons and daughters of the villagers even though the majority of the committee members are no longer permanently resident in the village. The secretary of the trust pointed out that three professionals who were members of the board live in the capital city, Gaborone. The effect of this is both positive and detrimental. In one sense the sons and daughters act as “translation agents” who are

facilitating development initiatives with the full backing and trust of the community as they are ‘doing development’ on behalf of their people – which I have refer to as “elite intervention”. The downside of this arrangement is that it dislocates representation from the community when the ideal situation would be to have those who live in the community on a daily basis leading the Trust. This subtle institutionalized form of discrimination is the most prevalent and endemic form of exclusion, which is difficult to detect because those excluded participate and collude in their marginalisation from decision-making and control processes as the secretary for MMDT noted in the quotation above.

This is despite the fact that participatory processes are supposed to be inclusive and to favor the marginalized and often poor people within rural communities. The notion of inclusion permeates the whole range of guidelines and policies for community development in Botswana and is succinctly summed up in the SFCDB in which it is noted that “an important component of Botswana’s concept of community development concept is **social inclusion**” (2010: 13, emphasis in original). Such emphasis gives prominence to the notion of inclusion, which is also a central in the PD approach to community participation associated with Robert Chambers.

The need to train local people in order for them to be able to understand how they should conduct the business of the Trust shows how delicate it is to try and promote rural development through the establishment of institutions that are alien to the local traditions. Training requires resources and in most cases, developing countries do not have such resources: this might mean that the necessary training is not provided, or it is not done properly owing to the shortage of resources. The fact that communities are being

encouraged by the government to embark on projects that the majority do not seem to understand may have a negative impact on people's motivation and enthusiasm for such type of project work. Even one of the committee members at the time of this research, Mma Peneng professed ignorance about how the Trust started arguing that she was not there from the beginning: “This one I don’t know it because there are those who found the committee before joining as I joined it recently.”

I had the impression of a community detached from the project: the only people who could talk meaningfully about the Trust were those in the committee for a long period of time. Deferring all questions to members of the committee might be interpreted as disassociating themselves from a project that has no resonance with community interests. It can also be an indication of the extent to which the community has been left behind through one or more of: a lack of understanding, a lack of interest, or a form of protest about what they perceive to be a takeover of their interests.

The idea of including everyone who belongs to a category targeted for empowerment is to make sure no one is left behind. This notion of inclusion common in PD is also part of Botswana’s development planning process. This is summed up in the way community based planning (CBP) is defined as a “planning process which empowers communities including vulnerable socio-economic groups and other leaders to actively participate in development interventions that are relevant to them” (MoLG 2012: 8) The active participation of the marginalized is considered central in PD since empowerment is directly linked to active engagement. According to the Government of Botswana’s operational guidelines for implementing the sustainable livelihoods approach, which pays attention to resource management and exploitation for income generation, this CBP

process is designed to: “empower communities to make choices for themselves and not to be patronized and become passive recipients of development interventions” through the promotion of “initiatives that do not impose and exclude, but rather empower and support vulnerable groups” (MoLG 2012: 4).

While such initiatives are considered crucial for the poor to realize genuine empowerment, the government laments the exclusion of the poor in the planning process by the elite. It is noted that “in most cases, local communities have plans that have been produced by a few elites without actively involving the different socio-economic groups that make up the community” (MoLG 2012: 7). The emphasis on the part of the government is that state sponsored development initiatives need to at least, “ensure effective representation of all [marginalized] groups so that all voices are heard” (MoLG 2012: 8). The idea of giving the marginalized platforms for expressing “voice” are well established in the consultative forum of the *kogtla* system of local governance discussed in Chapter 3. For instance, one of the key guidelines of the community-based planning (CBP) process is “the need to ensure that poor and disadvantaged people are included in planning” (MoLG 2012: 7). The inclusion of the poor is considered crucial in order to effectively address the problem of marginalization and facilitators from key ministries involved in the promotion of the community based planning process are encouraged to “ensure that there is a shared understanding and inclusion of all socio—economic groups in the planning processes” (MoLG 2012: 3).

However, the concern with inclusive participatory processes is not necessarily matched by what happens in practice given that the idea of conservation did not originate from the village’s development planning meeting, but was a government idea which was sold to a

suspicious village audience, with its own set of priorities as discussed earlier. In most cases local communities are invited to adopt and own a planning process conceived elsewhere. Moreover, the notion of inclusivity is not necessarily consistent with the norms and values that govern community collective engagement among the poor in Botswana. As we have seen from the evidence on *Motshelo*, villagers exploit their social networks and relational ties (which ironically exclude other marginalized individuals) to form closed groups for advancing developmental goals and survival strategies. In addition, being included also entails using local knowledge in project work. The extent to which the poor and marginalized can rely on their knowledge in these induced spaces is debatable. The section below focuses on how local and expert knowledge interacted during the planning and implementation stages of the village development trust.

7.4.2.5 Knowledge Sharing

As pointed out in Chapter 2, the success of PD projects is considered to depend largely on knowledge sharing between the locals and the outsiders. The vice-chairman, Mr Thob's's explanation below also highlights the different levels at which *local knowledge* (mostly of the educated elite given the complex nature of the issues involved) interacts with expert knowledge of government officials to produce what is then presented as local contributions to the constitution-making process. Although villagers are reported to have played a part in the framing of constitution, it is not clear whether the majority understood the significance of the document in question and its provisions because the process was controlled by the ministry officials. When asked to explain who was responsible for the drafting of the constitution the interim committee member Mr Tsepo pointed out that;

It was done by the Department of Museums and Monuments through workshops, and by conducting workshops through what they call consultation meetings where people were called to the kogtla and they came up with things which they asked people like if it becomes like this what can be done so that people can come up with the procedure that they want for the conservation of their gorge and museum people are the ones who came here to conduct workshops which were meant to benefit the community in writing of the constitution.

What is more revealing about the above quotation is that the whole process of consultation including the organizing of workshops was done by the Department of Museums and Monuments: they not only offered the idea for development, but carried the process as well. This included the construction of ablution facilities and the gatehouse (refer to pictures in section 6.1) which serve as the entrance to the gorges. These two were constructed under *ipelegeng* the food for work program. One of the committee members and the youth who took part in this study as interviewees, provided their labor under the scheme. The villagers participated in a government initiated and owned processes of resource management and conservation, what Mosse (2001) characterizes as “local collusion in the planning consensus” in which the involvement of the local community is simply intended to give legitimacy to a government-led process: on this reading, “pure tokenism” in the terms of Arnstein’s ladder of participation. There is every chance that in a situation like this, such a constitution largely represents the interests of those who understand the process. The expert (official) knowledge of the government workers frames the context, content and process of constitution making, and sets the project agenda for the villagers in terms of income generation and conservation as pointed out by the Minister of Tourism and the chairman of MMDT cited earlier.

According to the above quotation, government officials organized meetings, set the agenda, asked questions and framed the “communally” shared vision for the community

in the constitution. The fact that government officials guided the locals to 'come up with the procedure that they want for the conservation of their “gorge” reveals how “local need” can be fashioned. Indeed, it *corrupts* community interests, contradicting the community's expressed fears about losing access to the water point. The government's conservation plan is now presented as the people's agenda and the people collude and concur in advancing that development program as if it were their own. Through the consultation process highlighted above, this official knowledge together with contributions from the local elites is then presented as local knowledge. The fact that there is local consensus in the collusion is not surprising, especially when we consider the fact that the whole decentralization system of governance is based on a centralized planning system in which villagers are merely consulted and co-opted into a broader government agenda that is presented to the community as a local need.

At another level, the so called local knowledge or contribution from the villagers is passed on to the lawyers for drafting, which adds another layer of complexity to a process that has always been out of reach for many of the villagers as indicated by Mr Tsepo the former member of the interim committee;

And another issue was the need to engage lawyers in order to satisfy the constitutional requirement and it was passed officially then it came into use so this was a major task for the interim committee and after we wrote the constitution we were now in a position to officially register a trust, which is registered with government on the basis of our constitution.

It is at this early stage that institutions such as VDTs fall in the hands of a few educated elites because only they can understand the process and the significance of the document.

This marks the beginning of the systematic and systemic marginalization of all, but the elites of the community, a common, perhaps inherent characteristic of formalized institutional governance structures that are part of the development landscape in rural Africa. In the case of MMDT, the majority of the elite are children of villagers who villagers can somehow trust given their attachment to the village and maybe a genuine desire to develop their birthplace for the benefit of everyone. According to the Kogsi, an altruistic gesture shown by members of the committee was the opening of the Trust's account when they volunteered to make donations from their own personal savings in order to speed up the registration of the project;

Villagers don't pay any fees, to become members of the Trust. Let me say something here. For the Trust to open an account, the Trust committee members were the ones who voluntarily contributed money out of their salaries and went to open the account for the Trust because they felt that they are members and they have been voted legally by the community at the kgotla.

It is important to point out that the elite in this instance are playing an important intervention role of providing financial resources since they are the ones with the means to contribute given that the majority of them work and are professionals in their different lines of business. The involvement of the elite may not always be detrimental to local needs as this case seems to show, but should be considered as a case of “intervention” not “capture” because the elite are intervening on behalf of the people. Such a role is somewhat recognized by the government in one of its policy documents in which it is stated that;

It may also be necessary to identify the “invisible” and non-resident influential people who

could help in [the] smooth running of the [planning] process and avoid suspicion and disruption of the process. Buy-in and commitment of influential people may increase resource support for the CBP [community-based planning] process (MoLG 2012: 10).

Although in the same policy document the government laments the idea that community development plans are sometimes drawn up solely by the elite with little input from the marginalized and poor, which is regarded as a clear sign of “elite capture”, there is also recognition of the fact that elite involvement has its benefits. The elite could be relied upon to use their influence and status in the community to convince and persuade the poor to commit and effectively engage in government induced development. The example cited by the Kgosi earlier in which the elite opened a bank account and deposited their own money for the benefit of the trust illustrates why elite involvement can be beneficial as those involved managed to mobilise their own resources for the benefit of the whole community.

What is however problematic is that the way these formal spaces are set up and the requirements for their establishment promote elite takeover of local level development. For instance, the fact that expert knowledge is required in the drafting of a constitution creates problems for ordinary villagers as they need to engage with lawyers who control the process through their expert knowledge. It is important to note that the requirement that a constitution is needed in order to register a trust, places an additional burden on the community since they require legal expertise to help them in drafting a legally acceptable document. Such expertise might not be locally available which can create a state of dependence on experts and elites rather than the empowerment of the poor.

The case of expert knowledge is both a question of “authority” in general as well as trust: the extent to which those with delegated power can be trusted with power, because knowledge is power. While a constitution serves the government's goals for having systems in place for natural resource management and conservation, it does not seem to serve the interests of the villagers, *all* villagers, well. That the constitution making process excludes the majority of villagers who may not be educated enough to understand the process *let alone* the document itself, raises questions about the significance of formal participatory structures and their ability to promote the interests of the disadvantaged given the process. In this case, the rules of the game (structure) are hindering agents (the poor and marginalized) from seizing control of decision-making processes. In particular, important questions are raised about the effectiveness of the participation of most marginalized members of the community (perhaps also most directly affected by the proposed additional use of the natural resource) in the decision-making process regarding the contents of the constitution and the goals that such VDTs are expected. It is likely that the elites may assume the role of Eversole’s “translation agents” linking villagers’ local knowledge with that of the experts, which may actually benefit local interests given the local elites’ attachment to the village. At another level, the elite’s role as “translation agents” further marginalizes the already disadvantaged by taking a central role on issues that the poor are expected to have control over in order to be empowered, but cannot because they lack the necessary training or skills to be involved at the highest level where decisions are made.

7.4.2.6 Training Needs

The complexity associated with the establishment of trusts and the separation of the Trust officers from their “community” that is effected by the demands of the organizational

form are highlighted by the following quotation from Mr Tsepo former member of the interim committee that spearheaded the establishment of the trust;

Let me say that for the board we need our board of trustees to be trained in the management and running of the Trust because in most cases you will find that sometimes someone will be given the role of officer but because he/she does not have background knowledge, one needs to understand the kind of job he/she does in relation to tourism and conservation of Mmamotshwaane. I am saying this because up to now, may be right now, we have a problem because we may call for meetings for the community but maybe our major weakness is how to communicate our message clearly for the people to understand.

Since running a community project requires knowledge that may not be available in abundance within the village. Villagers turn to the relevant ministry and associated departments in order to ensure that progress is made, since the formality of the constitution of the Trust includes a strong sense of accountability – for progress against its purpose. First, it is difficult to exercise control over a process one does not fully understand. Second, a reliance on experts tends to relegate local knowledge and takes the initiative away from the ordinary villagers. When I tried to interview other members of the community they would always refer me to members of the VDT committee arguing that they were the best placed to know because they are the ones running the trust. The issue of training is raised in policies for community and rural development.

The discussion on associational and institutional requirements has shown that the formality or informality of “spaces for participation” impose some constraints on what agents can do in those arenas. For instance, informal spaces exclude on the basis of trust, relational and friendship ties while in formal settings, the institutional requirements tend

to favor the educated while sidelining the already marginalized. As such, the “invited” formal “spaces for participation” naturally attract the educated at the expense of the marginalized, which shows that such spaces dis-empower the poor since they do not control the decision-making process. Not only are the requirements for the two spaces different, but these formal and informal structures are also organized differently as discussed below.

7.5. Organizational Structure (Formal versus Informal spaces)

The way MMDT and Motshelo are organized is very different. While Motshelo can differ from one group to the other in terms of what key positions they have, VDTs in Botswana are characterized by rigidly uniform organizational structures.

7.5.1 Formal Structure

Formal structures define the way induced spaces are structured in terms of component parts, personnel, and formalised rules of conduct. According to the vice chairperson of MMDT, Mr Thob, their trust consists of the following elected members;

The trust has ten committee members elected at the kogtla that time when we formed the Trust. The chairperson of the VDT is also a member and the Kgosi here is also a member, but they do not vote because they are not voted they just attend meetings because they are members of the committee because of their positions in the village. There is a chairman and a deputy there is also a secretary and her deputy and treasurer the same. Other members, four members are committee members to make it ten people. This is the committee, the people who run the Trust of Mogonye.

These last two have no voting rights. This information was also confirmed by my informant, the executive secretary of BOCOBNONET and director of Local Government who point out that there is a template for every trust which is run by board of trustees, normally twelve in number, who include the chairperson and vice; secretary and vice; treasurer and vice; four committee members, and two unelected members who are the kgosi and the chairperson of the village development committee. As seen earlier, in Chapter 3, every village has a VDC. The VDT is considered the economic arm of the village while the VDC is the political arm. In this arrangement only the VDTs can engage in income generation projects because the VDC is an extension of the government so it cannot be involved such activities. Every VDT has the same organizational structure for purposes of monitoring, accountability and efficiency. Within such formalized spaces, which deal with public goods, accountability and transparency are crucial for the success of VDTs. According to the executive secretary of BOCOBNONET Mr Letsholo some VDTs are successful because they follow procedures as pointed out below;

The reason why they are successful is that they adhered to the constitution, they adhered to what is expected to do their books and they can't do anything without consulting the people in the village, the activities of the trust are led by the people themselves. We want this in our village, we want this we want to take this direction because the Trust as I have said they implement the resolutions taken at the annual general meeting. So those resolutions are followed, every annual general meeting they will report about the progress made hmm, progress reports, we have progress reports which are done by the management are given to the board, the board will report to the annual general meeting. So you find that the people in the village are engaged about their activities and they are appraised about what is to be done in their village. And if it is not done, they would question why this is not happening. So this is participation with the trust at the village level.

In his view, adherence to the processes and procedure of the Trust including accountability and transparency through consultation between the villagers and the board of trustees for the VDT is important. More so, the presentation of progress reports helps to improve accountability on behalf of the people who elected the committee to run the affairs of the Trust. However, issues about writing reports raise the same questions about educational requirements and a set of skills needed to produce such reports in English for purposes of auditing. This again disadvantages marginalized groups who may not even understand the contents of the reports and may also explain why villagers do not attend these annual general meetings.

The fact that there are educated people in the village is a good thing; the elite is considered important rather than being viewed as a problem. This perspective was expressed by Mr Letsholo, the BOCOBONET executive secretary;

And more interestingly, the fact that their [villagers] children who are educated, who were dispersed, have come back to the village and they are taking the lead in their area's own development and their parents' development. So, the management of the Trust is being done by educated guys and ladies who are now back at those villages they are the ones who have been appointed to the boards of the village development committees. The trusts are being run by these educated guys.

There is a sense in which what is normally referred to as 'elite capture' – the taking over of decision-making control by the elite, is celebrated as an achievement rather than a hindrance to the empowerment of the marginalized. This is what I referred to in Chapter 2 as "elite intervention" which I consider to be a better characterisation of the nature of elite

involvement than the notion of “elite control” suggested in Musgrave and Wong (2016). In this case the role of the elite is being celebrated as a force of good as the elite are playing the role of “translation agents” – translating government policy into projects on behalf of their illiterate parents, in other words, doing development on behalf of others. Given the practical realities that the marginalized face as they try to implement development in their local communities, is it possible to use invited spaces and still expect the marginalized to control decision-making processes at the same time? In particular, if we consider the rigid nature of the organizational structure and the requirements imposed, decision-making control will remain an attainable dream in invited spaces for participation. Such a set up contrasts sharply with informal structures that are characterized by flexibility in the way they are constituted and organized just like all other ROSCAs.

7.5.2 Informal Structure

Most Motshelo have a basic organization characterized by flexible organizational structures. At the time of this research the group had been in existence for more than three years having been formed in 2009. The women are of mixed age groups and all rely on subsistence agriculture in an area of very low rainfall. The group of 30 is divided into 5 groups of six specifically to benefit from one of the schemes in which each group would give one individual a specified amount per month (P100) in a rotating way so that all group members have a chance to benefit twice a year. They decided to have a secretary and a treasurer, and these roles are performed by Melo and her friend Mma Munye respectively as noted by Mma Sithle, Melo’s mother;

Everything is okay in our Motshelo because we are contributing each and every month and in our Motshelo we have a secretary and a treasurer. The duty of the secretary is to keep records and the duty of the treasurer is to record how much money has been contributed on the particular month and also how much has been borrowed and also how much interest is going to paid.

For this Motshelo, they felt that they did not need too many positions because all they need are people who record what is agreed, interest collected, fines imposed, and members contributions and sometimes making sure money collected for later use and not immediately borrowed is kept safe. It is also important to note that these two were chosen on the basis that that are able to read and write, which is similar to the educational requirements in the formal MMDT project. The difference though between the two spaces is that in Motshelo all decisions are made by group members not an elected committee.

Unlike formal “spaces for participation”, the informal Motshelo are characterized by flexibility in terms of organizational structure and the way they operate. According to the *Daily News*, Motshelo is “a finance lending scheme of some sort with rules peculiar to each establishment” (2013: 8), which is consistent with the general pattern of any other ROSCA. Flexibility means a Motshelo is fully subject to the needs of its founders who can change goals, priorities or focus depending on what they consider to be more urgent or deserving. According to Mma Palapye;

There are plenty of schemes because it just depends on what you can manage to do, if you can do all types of Motshelo that we do in our group you can do, if you can't manage to do you don't you just do the one you can do. I myself I am in one where I pay P100 per month for food and then I have another one for P300 every month for the money we just put aside

and then give another person every month until everyone has been given. Then I have another one for P200 where we are twelve (12) and per month I am getting P2400 like this, so it depends on what you want and what you can afford.

This also explains why there are so many types of *Motshelo* and in the group studied they have focused on a number of them, as noted earlier, such as wedding preparation, food, buying building materials and financial loans. Such a targeted way of trying to address pressing social issues help participants to devise ways that are relevant to their needs. The flexibility of *Motshelo* is a typical characteristic of ROSCAs, which contrasts sharply with the rigid nature of formal structures such as MMDT.

7.6 Decision-making Power and Control (Collective versus Delegated Agency)

Decision-making control is considered the highest form of citizen control, which indicates full empowerment of the marginalized and poor. Decision-making in informal and formal spaces for participation take very different forms: collective and delegated respectively. Delegated agency turns participation into a consultative process in which the elite consult the poor on priorities and needs while on the other hand it can lead to unilateral decisions being made by the elite without consulting the poor. This is an example of elite capture because what the elite might decide to do may not be in the best interests of the poor.

7.6.1 Collective Agency

Collective agency involves the active participation of group members in making decisions about the direction that their project ought to take. In *Motshelo* group members seem to participate fully in determining the course of action to take as noted by Mma Mma Tsepo;

We arrange the way we do it like we agree on the amount we can afford to contribute at the end of the month, like we started with the amount of P60 and it was around 2006 when we started our group of Motshelo. We were using this Motshelo to buy food at the end of the year. And after realizing that this Motshelo can help us to improve our lives at home we took the decision of increasing the contribution fee from P60 to P70 and then from P70 to P100 which is what we are contributing at the current moment.

Decisions seem to be unanimously arrived at with the full participation of members. Members tend to act in their best interests and in meetings deliberations are conducted and decisions made. Consensus seems to be a crucial aspect in the way business is conducted. This should not be surprising given the fact that members tend to have connections through a web of relational, friendship and neighborliness ties as well as mutual trust and cooperative behavior, all meant to promote a good working relationship that foster consensus rather than conflict.

This is supported by Mma Lerab who explains how members have control over what happens in their *Motshelo*;

We just sit down and talk, everyone comes with an idea and speaks their mind and saying that ok how can we do our Motshelo group and take things forward. In our group of Motshelo we just say ok fine let's do this and this and this. Let's say like right now I have given an example we said no, in our Motshelo we want to be strict, so if by 2pm when we meet you are not around we charge you, we fine you that's what we do so that our Motshelo doesn't fail.

The idea of giving each other the platform to deliberate and decide what to do, when to do

it, and how to, shows the extent to which these women have both individual and collective agency. They allow themselves to speak as individuals while at the same time focusing on collective interests demonstrating the importance of collective rather than individual agency. This gives participants associational power mentioned earlier which helps the poor to connect, harness resources and overcome obstacles as they seek to improve the socio-economic circumstances. As such, there is strength in numbers and the concept of associational power developed by Allen (2003) is a natural fit for some African cultural structures especially those of the *Bantu* speaking people who subscribe to the *Ubuntu* philosophy. The way collective agency and associational power work contrasts sharply with what I refer to as delegated agency associated with formal participatory processes.

7.6.2 Delegated Agency

As far as MMDT is concerned it is expected that all villagers take part in decision-making processes of their Trust in a genuinely participatory manner (empowerment, citizen control and so on). In this case, inclusiveness should be the hallmark of community-based VDTs that are registered for the purpose of exploiting natural resources within a given area. According to the vice chairperson Mr Thob of MMDT;

The community of Mogonye is the Trust, so there is a trust board and when we talk about the community of Mogonye or residents of Mogonye they are the owners of the Trust and the board is a representative of the trust.

The impression given is that by virtue of being members of the Mogonye village, the Trust is theirs: every member of the village owns it. It appears their ownership is more of tokenism than actual control of the way the trust is run.

Yet, according to Chambers (1997), the elite ought to stand aside as ordinary villagers take direct control of their development. While in theory, the idea of having ordinary poor villagers taking control of decision-making and planning and management processes sounds appealing and justified, the reality of the formal institutional requirements is that they limit and constrain the extent to which lay people can engage. The case shows the uneasiness that exists between representative and participatory democracy in development practice. The irony of it is that we end up celebrating the means (the existence of democratic process, for example, voting) rather than genuine outcomes (empowerment through inclusive decision-making and control). Institutionalism tends, then, to discriminate against the poor while elevating elites to positions of influence. When ordinary villagers are excluded because of their lack of technical knowledge of formal participatory practices, not only are their participatory levels often low, but empowerment for them will remain a pipe dream.

The AGM is where, constitutionally, all ordinary members can exercise voice and influence, where they can seek an account of the work of the Trust and assess whether their representatives have served their interests well. Indeed, the board of trustees of MMDT would prepare statements of accounts and update villagers on the state of affairs and the direction the Trust is taking. The MMDT has been struggling to fix a date for the annual general meeting for over a year, a situation that makes it difficult for villagers to effectively monitor the way the committee runs the affairs of the Trust. According to the secretary of the Trust, Mma Sanyo:

Meetings were pushed to the 26th of December because people were not attending, but because we usually come home around Christmas we said OK, we say on the 26th, first thing in the morning we go to the Kogtla...but the youth also decided to have football tournaments on the same date and now they will be saying we will be playing football. But we say we came up with this date on the basis that we are all around and we make time for this and this year we are even thinking of changing the date from the 26th to either the first two weeks of December because of that issue now.

And to make matters worse, the majority of villagers do not attend the annual general meetings, which make it difficult for checks and balances to be effected. This may result in token rather than genuine active participation. Such non-participation has been interpreted in another study (Hilhorst 2003) as signifying a passive form of protest. However, in the absence of hard evidence, I can only speculate whether such poor attendance is a form of protest or an indication that they have other more pressing priorities. Hilhorst argues that the poor can negotiate, change, or even disrupt how development unfolds in their communities. In fact, it is not just the youth: most members of the village do not attend meetings. There is little or no calling to account. This might imply, as suggested by Hilhorst (2003) that far from being overwhelmed by development, the villagers, transform, disrupt, withdraw, subvert, reinterpret and act in ways that show they may not necessarily be passive recipients of development technology and knowledge.

It is also suggested that in the event that villagers have lost faith in the board of trustees they can pass a no confidence vote and elect a new committee as noted by the Kgosi below;

They become members of the trust through their residence and their nature in Mogonye and again their role is to vote for the committee and they have the right if the committee does not function well to pass a motion of no confidence to remove the committee and they can inform the chief about this.

This gives the impression that villagers have the ultimate power and control of the way the Trust is run. The only problem ordinary villagers might face relates to their ability to identify incompetence especially given the superior levels of education of certain office bearers who might use the power of the knowledge they possess to confuse poor villagers. It appears that in theory, villagers have power over the board of trustees and according to another interviewee, if they are not happy with the way the board is discharging its duties, they can approach the Kgosi (chief) who is himself an ex-officio member by virtue of his position as village chief;

They have the village development committee but if they have any complaint they can present it to the chief and the chief as a result of his position as a member of the trust and being chief the community will approach him with their concerns and the chief is expected to act.

The fact that these avenues are available to villagers in order to seek redress, is in theory a good thing. However, it remains unclear how ordinary villagers could be in a position to challenge the authority of the elite (their educated children who run the committee, but live in the capital city) especially on matters that are more technical, which require expert knowledge in order to engage meaningfully in project implementation. In any case the members of the committee are the ones who meet regularly (once every month) to discuss, plan, review or implement project work. The rest of the members only attend the

annual general meeting at which the committee will give an update of the Trust's business for the whole year which makes forces them to engage in what Pretty refers to as passive participation in which people are told what has been decided or done on their behalf. Given the numerous reports including financial statements of income and expenditure, plans for the coming year and other issues of interest, it is difficult to see how on such a day, ordinary members will be able to take in everything, scrutinize and be actively involved since for the most part they are just passive recipients of numerous reports in English some of which are very technical specially for a poorly educated audience. This is likely to lead to participation that is more of consultation rather than active control of decision making as the discussion below seems to suggest.

7.6.3 Consultation versus Control: strategic plan as a mandate.

In MMDT it appears there are more of consultative forums than control of decision-making processes by the marginalised. The excuse given by the secretary of the committee to justify elite take-over of decision-making control is that, since they have a strategic plan drawn up in consultation with the villagers, then if the projects being carried out by the board are part of the strategic plan, it is not necessary to consult the villagers again on issues they would have already approved as highlighted in the citation below by the treasurer of the trust Mma Sita;

...we have a strategic plan where the community was invited to contribute, and they drew up that plan. It wasn't only the board who drew up that plan, they came up with projects that they wanted us to undertake, it's just that most of them have not yet been put in place. The strategic plan is there but it has not yet been implemented.

This would therefore imply that what the board decides to do does not in any way diminish the authority and decision-making powers of the villagers since they have already made decisions in the strategic plan. In reality, decisions that can be made may not have anything to do with the strategic framework, and the board can even claim that what they are doing is consistent with what is in the strategic framework. Such a setup leaves the already marginalized even more vulnerable to further exclusion and manipulation than before, as they are gathered together during annual general meetings to simply rubber stamp decisions made by the elected committee without their input. In this case villagers are simply co-opted (Arnstein 1969) into participatory programs that they have no control over and end up giving legitimacy to acts of elite take-over of the project in the name of democratic participation.

In addition to organizing planning meetings and constitutional consultative processes, officials from the Department of Museums and Monuments provided guidance on how the villagers could run the Trust in an effective and efficient way as noted by Mr Thob the vice- chairperson of the Trust at the time of this research;

In terms of advice, we are currently being helped by the Museums officials, they are the ones who advise us on how to run the Trust and they take us step by step and once we have understood they will leave us and go to work with others elsewhere.

The spaces that are created in order to regulate these collective processes of community are so complex that people have to be trained in order to run them. The villagers have a form of governance that is alien to them imposed, and once the Trust is formed, there is an inexorable logic that is to be followed through. The creation of such spaces brings into sharp focus the extent to which the marginalized can have firm control of institutions and

processes. It is not only control, but also the way in which the institution can be used – it takes away people's initiative and stymies or confuses the scope for collective action. There is no denying the fact that the registration and constitutional requirements are important for the purpose of regulating the exploitation and management of natural resources for the benefit of all villagers. However, effectively it takes control away from the local and poor, and hands over control and oversight to the government. Whilst there may now be a development opportunity, the initiative defeats the intention to empower. According to Mosse (2001), any talk of local knowledge can be interpreted as an attempt to give legitimacy to outside agendas that are presented as if they are local needs.

7.6.4. Unilateralism or “Elite Capture”

There are cases in which members of the committee sometimes make unilateral decisions without consulting the villagers, which is a good example of ‘elite capture’. Unilateralism refers to the idea of acting without consideration of the views of others. Given the elite status of its members, the committee can get away with unilateral decisions especially when we take into account the fact the issues they deal with may sometimes be out of reach for most ordinary villagers since they require expert knowledge. While it appears that there are avenues that the people can use in order to seek redress, in practice the board seems to have more power than it should in theory, have. According to the secretary of the Trust, the committee can from time to time act unilaterally on certain issues without consulting the villagers and will only have to inform the people of the decisions they would have made according to the secretary Mma Sanyo;

As a board we come up with projects we think maybe we could venture into, but then you have to take it to the whole community to say these are our thoughts and whether they

accept them or not. But then there are instances when we feel certain things, we don't need to have to consult the community, we go to them to inform them about what is going to take place or what we are intending to do.

The fact that the committee can sometimes work unilaterally by making decisions on behalf of the whole community without consulting the villagers, may have serious implications for the effective participation of the villagers. It has the consequence of taking away not only the decision-making power of the people, but also control of the organization from the ordinary villagers.

In any case, mere consultation of the villagers regarding ideas generated by a few elites is not good enough at least within the context of the typologies of participation discussed in Chapter 2. The rhetoric of development insists that genuine participation entails the involvement of the poor and marginalized in decision-making processes. The marginalization and exclusion of the poor seem to be evident at each stage: from the generation of the project idea initiated by government officials, to the establishment of the Trust by way of registration as well as implementation and decision-making. The poor are only left to play a very passive role where they are expected to attend annual general meetings at which they are given updates and reports regarding the Trust's operations throughout the year. Even though they are expected to question and challenge the committee on any issues of interest, the poor villagers would obviously be overwhelmed by an avalanche of information from and the reports about how the trust has been operating, which not only need more time to decipher, but also require technical knowledge to understand and make meaningful contributions; something that is highly unlikely. This shows how difficult it is to empower the marginalized to take control of

decision-making processes since the structures that are put in place tend to be inherently pro-elite.

I signaled in Chapter 1 my preference for the agency-structure framework in the analysis of data in this study. It is therefore important to ask: What then is instructive about the use of the agency-structure framework in this study and how is it linked to the meta-themes used in the discussion and analysis of data above? The agency – structure model is important since it can help to highlight the nature of relationship between the five concepts: *goal orientation – constituting the space – constitutive requirements – organizational structure – decision-making control*. Within communities whether rich or poor, people have goals they want to achieve, which transform them into ‘agents’ of or, for change in order to improve their situation. In order to achieve their goals the need to operate in some ‘space’ hence they ‘create’ or ‘constitute the space’ and when they cannot, they are ‘invited’ into ‘spaces’ by outside ‘agents’ such as governments. These ‘created’ or ‘induced’ spaces have government by rules or ‘constitutive requirements’ which regulate action consistent with some form of ‘organizational structure’ that agents put in place to facilitate change. By constituting spaces with a set of requirements and some form of organization, agents would have created the ‘structure’ that Giddens describes.

Once created, these structures regulate the actions of their creators and may enable or hinder the attainment of set goals. What is therefore needed is for agents to navigate ‘structure’ in ways that allow them to have control of decision-making in order to succeed. Control of decision making may be difficult depending on what structures exist. As we have seen from the discussion, it appears ‘agents’ operating in ‘created’ or organic

spaces stand a chance because they are more likely than not, to know the nature of the spaces in terms of their rules or requirements and how they are structured. On the other hand, induced spaces appear to be difficult to navigate for those who are not so familiar with the spaces they are ‘invited’ to participate in partly because the rules and the structures are alien. This is why they then approach those agents that are familiar with these structures which force them into tokenistic forms of community engagement. As such, an understanding of what spaces exist and how they are structured, allows agents to navigate such spaces using their associational power and connections informed by their values to attain empowerment. It is in this context that the agency-structure framework is considered insightful and fruitful. I have tried to show how the chosen framework for this study connects with the conceptual categories used in the analysis of empirical data. The section below provides a summary of the findings.

7.7 Conclusion

The discussion above has compared the findings from *Motshelo* and MMDT and highlighted the sharp differences the two in terms of how they are set up and the rules that regulate how such spaces operate. Based on the six categories presented above data from the two case studies has revealed that *Motshelo* is rarely susceptible to manipulation in ways that MMDT is. The reason is that despite Botswana’s vibrant democratic dispensation and decentralized system of governance, and the use of CBOs run by the locals the problem of the marginalization of the poor persists even though the involvement the elite is for their benefit in the form of ‘elite intervention’. The domination by the elite in these spaces is caused by the fact that the superstructures used to drive community development are too complex, inevitably requiring the involvement of the elite in order to unpack the blueprints. The fact that elite involvement can both be

beneficial and detrimental for the poor and marginalized makes the case for a rethink of the role of superstructures and infrastructures and to reevaluate the significance of concepts such as inclusion, empowerment, power, agency and participation in CP discourse and practice. I have analyzed and discussed data from the two cases and below I present an overall conclusion for the entire study and highlight the implications of the findings for theory, practice and future research.

7.7 General Conclusions and Implications for Study

This study has analysed the data collected from both *Motshelo* and MMDT informal and formal spaces for participation respectively. The main purpose of the study was to investigate how formal and informal participatory practices are constituted and organised with a view to examining the nature of dynamics involved. The reason for such a research focus was to ascertain whether the ways in which spaces for participation are set up promote or hinder decision-making control by the marginalized and poor. The evidence suggests that the way community involvement is organized in MMDT, and the experience of people of such a formal participatory process differ sharply from those of informal processes of *Motshelo* as discussed above. In the case of *Motshelo*, the villagers work on their own initiative on the basis of strong associational connections and driven by common ‘everyday’ interests: participation is ‘embedded’ in community life, practice and tradition. However, the formal process of community engagement experienced in MMDT takes a rather different form in terms of origin, purpose, organizational structure, and the intensity and experience of involvement of the local people.

It appears from the evidence examined above that the rolling out of community-based projects that are genuinely participatory and empowering by allowing the poor and marginalised to have control of decision-making processes, is rather problematic. The

simple reason being that marginalisation and exclusion are inherent features of formal induced spaces such as VDTs, starting at the project conception level, to implementation, decision-making and evaluation. Such a form of participation becomes one of co-option, consultation and tokenism rather than empowering and emancipatory. The structures that are put in place in order to have functional, 'legitimate', recognizable institutions, constrain rather than enable the active collective engagement of the poor in decisions that affect their community's development.

While the spaces for participation can be characterised as democratic since they are open with voting processes to elect members of the VDT committee, ironically, these 'fair and open' institutional arrangements serve only to sideline and dis-empower the very people such structures are designed to uplift and empower. Given such a situation, it is highly unlikely that the elite will be able to dis-empower themselves for the sake of empowering the poor since their services are in high demand, more than those of the poor as they are the ones who are able to understand and translate institutional blueprints into practice through the establishment of projects and programs that are meant to bring socio-economic transformation to rural areas.

The MMDT illustrates how a process that is supposed to provide villagers with control of decision-making processes ends up being tokenistic in nature and controlled by a few elites. It is therefore paradoxical that the principles that underlie representative democracy do not necessarily guarantee the effective control of the participatory processes by the poor and marginalized because the technology used is not only alien, but complex. Despite all the efforts directed towards the establishment of inclusive formal development spaces that are supposed to guarantee effective participation, the poor remain

marginalised from decision making processes. This raises important questions about the efficacy of formal opportunities for participation and gives impetus to the call for a rethink in terms of how development initiatives can be formulated in ways that meet the needs of the poor. Such a research focus makes the agency structure framework a fruitful way of explaining marginalization in such contexts. A growing body of knowledge suggests that formal institutional arrangements, whilst meeting the terms of ‘good governance’ as a discourse at least as powerful as that of empowerment, may not be the panacea to the lack of effective collective community engagement in development initiatives. Rather than being the antidote to the growing lack of community engagement, formal opportunities may be part of the problem since their requirements tend to hinder rather than enable the participation of the very people that they are intended to empower. This makes the agency structure framework a fruitful way of explaining marginalization in such contexts given the nature of interaction between agents (the poor) and structure (the rules and requirements of spaces for participation) in induced and organic spaces discussed above. It is important to take note of the significance of these findings in relation to CP theory and practice. The next section discusses the implications of these findings for CP theory and practice.

7.7.1 Theoretical Implications of Study: Contribution to Knowledge

This section focuses on the implications of this study in terms of CP theory. The important point for this section of the research is to find out the nature and character of ‘new’ insights if any, and the extent to which such ‘new’ ways of knowing can deepen our understanding of the dynamics of collective community engagement found in both formal and informal spaces for participation. The comparison in this study between formal and informal spaces for participation has revealed that the ways ‘invited’ spaces such as

MMDT are set up, tend to hinder rather than enable collective decision-making control by the intended beneficiaries. In contrast, Motshelo by nature seems to be pro-poor given its embeddedness in people's everyday life characterized by primary associational ties that are informed by the philosophical foundations of Ubuntu/Botho, which underpin collective community engagement. One of the key areas in which this study has made a contribution relates to the characterisation of elite involvement in PD projects. I have argued in line with Musgrave and Wong (2016) that elite involvement should be viewed as both positive and negative.

7.7.1.1 'Elite Capture' versus 'Elite Intervention'

The review of literature in this study raised a number of questions that need to be addressed. For instance, one of the important topics raised in this study relates to the status of elite involvement in CP projects, which is often characterised pejoratively as 'elite capture'. Questions were asked about whether the 'invited' spaces for participation were inherently pro-elite and what the real drivers of elite capture were. The impression given in the literature is that the elite use power, influence and social status to hijack otherwise pro-poor development projects for their own selfish ends thereby disempowering the already marginalized.

As such, the existence of 'capture' is blamed on the elite who are accused of using their unfair advantage as a result of power relations skewed in their favour to hijack supposedly pro-poor development initiatives. Yet evidence from MMDT has shown that the ways in which formal spaces of participation are set up inevitably attract elites because they are the ones who are able to understand the technical nature of projects. Rather than muscling out the marginalized, they are 'invited' by the poor themselves to

‘intervene’ and take the place of the less educated at the decision-making ‘table’ for the benefit of those overwhelmed by the ‘rules of the game’ in induced participatory spaces. As such, the poor ‘delegate’ their agency to the elite who participate on their behalf. It is therefore important to consider how the spaces for participation are organized paying attention to questions about the suitability of technical development projects to promote inclusive collective decision-making. Within the context of findings from this research it does not appear as if the elite are at an advantage. Most of them live in the capital city, but have to travel every month to the village to attend the Trust’s monthly planning meetings, which seems burdensome given their working life and other commitments far away from the village. As such, having the elite ‘managing’ development on behalf of the poor may in fact, turn out to be a not so bad idea after all. In this particular study, the elite are seen advancing the needs of the villages by plugging the knowledge gap within the community and acting as ‘translation agents.’

As far as the case study results are concerned, elite involvement can be viewed as a natural consequence of the ways in which formal spaces for participation are set up. For instance, the fact that even the whole idea about income generation was not locally generated – but a government agenda item clearly spelt out in policy documents about conservation of natural resources in rural areas ‘sweetened’ by the incentive for income generation to entice the villages, stands out as the first instance of the poor’s alienation from decision-making control. The villagers are simply being co-opted into a development agenda they do not understand and their participation by way of consultation is basically tokenistic and peripheral. Moreover, the requirements for the establishment of such spaces further alienate intended beneficiaries because in most cases, those who are poor and marginalized are likely to be the less educated and the least participative as

Mansuri and Rao (2013) pointed out in Chapter 2. The simple reason for this is that the establishment of formal participatory projects such as MMDT requires a constitution, official registration, transparency, accountability, holding of regular meetings, writing of reports and presentation of these reports in English, all of which require a good level of education.

As a natural consequence, such spaces attract those with the knowledge and skills who are able to read and write. In the example of MMDT local villages ‘invited’ the elite to ‘participate’ in decision-making processes on their behalf. As such, intimidated by the enormity of the task before them the poor ‘withdraw’ and ‘delegate’ through voting by identifying the working professionals and educated based in the capital of Botswana to take over decision-making control on the basis of their capabilities. This is not a case where the elite ‘hijacked’ or ‘captured’ the Trust through nefarious means, but it is a situation in which the poor inadvertently ‘participated’ in their own marginalization by colluding to empower the already empowered through ‘invitation’.

Indeed, within the context of this research, elite involvement does not appear to be a bad thing after all – the elite were ‘invited’ and they ‘intervened’ on behalf of the poor. According to the *kgosi*, the elites in the committee used their own financial resources to open an account on behalf of the Trust – a classic case of ‘giving back’ to the community that raised them. The fact that most of them do not reside in the village, but still find time every month to come back to the village for monthly planning meetings, shows their commitment to the cause and development needs of a village that made them who they are. It is doubtful whether this project would have taken off without the ‘intervention’ of the elites. They indeed acted as the “translation agents” that Eversole (2013) alludes to in

her study – acting as the link between the poor and the marginalized in the village on the one hand, and professionals from government ministries on the other. They have helped to translate and implement, complex policies and proposals into a concrete development project the MMDT, for the benefit of community. The important point to make here is that no matter how pro-poor such formal projects are described as being, their structure and requirements are inherently pro-elite and may not be able to support collective decision-making control by the poor. As such marginalization in such a situation is not a result of power imbalances, but the structural orientation of such spaces.

This therefore means that the involvement of the elite cannot simply be viewed as “capture” given the positive contributions that elites make to their communities when they get involved. As such, it is crucial in this case to highlight that elite involvement is not always negative. In fact, what is sometimes characterised as ‘elite capture’ is in essence ‘elite intervention’ done for and on behalf of the marginalised. In this instance, the marginalised ‘invited’ the elite to fill in a ‘skills and knowledge gap’ on their behalf and as an unintended consequence; they literally pushed themselves further away from the centre to the margins of decision-making control. On the basis of evidence reviewed in the literature and the empirical material, it appears that the character and scope of induced participatory spaces in practice, tends to be inherently pro-elite contradicting the pro-poor rhetoric associated with buzzwords such as empowerment and inclusion.

One intriguing finding from the literature and empirical data is that while induced participatory are designed to be pro-poor they are however ironically pro-elite and those organic spaces that the poor create for themselves, are the ones that tend to be genuinely pro-poor. In spite of the pro-poor orientation, organic participatory processes are

inherently exclusionary. There seems to be a no “blanket” inclusive mechanism in organic participatory processes neither in the literature reviewed for this study or in the data for this particular research. Participation appears to be considered a privilege that has to be earned and accorded based on who you know, how strong one’s connections to social networks within a given community are, and the extent to which an individual can be trusted. While this study has provided insights into how exclusion is effected in organic spaces, it is however not clearly spelt out in the literature how the elite actually “hijack” development projects. As far as “elite intervention” is concerned, at least within the context of this study, evidence suggests that the poor cede control to the elite by inviting the elites to participate on their behalf after auditing their skills and competencies and identifying gaps and deficiencies. In the light of these findings it is important to re-evaluate the role of the elites in development projects as ‘translation agents’ who intervene on behalf of the poor. Apart from the issue of elite involvement it is also important to comment on the concept of inclusive participatory decision-making and how in this study it was found to be difficult to attain in induced practices compared to organic processes.

7.7.1.2 Questions about Inclusion

The thesis has raised questions about the nature and character of CP as expressed in PD and CP literature. The empirical evidence has also raised questions about understanding of CP in the literature and the way people understand participation in everyday life. Evidence from *Motshelo* (demonstrating the importance of strong ties of relationships) and that from MMDT (suggesting lack of interest due to poorly attended meetings), might present a challenge to the development agency’s approach to community involvement and inclusion (as presented in PD). For instance, the assumption that by simply identifying a

‘concentration’ of ‘need’ or indeed ‘capacity to change’ (for example, income generation and conservation of gorges), there will be common interest, shared by those included in the ‘concentration’ and an interest in working cooperatively to address their shared issues might be problematic. Such assumptions, (that is if the evidence from the two case studies is anything to go by), may overplay the interest in collective benefit since the ‘capacity’ to work together and to ‘handle’ (in all sorts of ways) the process and potential gains of change simply is not there. A different form of collective identity and organization seem to be hard-wired into the way ‘community’ works. For instance, the rules of *Motshelo* regulate any tendency there might be for individuals to draw on status outside the group – the group harmonises and equalizes through reference to associational ties and the use of the coercive ‘we’ to emphasize closeness even in distant relations. *Motshelo* has shown that the basis upon which formal projects try to include everyone may be difficult to justify since the way it is organized tends to be discriminatory not on the basis of ‘need’, but rather associational ties and mutual trust. The poor, on their own, do not include every woman who is poor from the same village, in their *Motshelo*. There are other far more important considerations that people take into account, which implicate the philosophical foundations that inform such practices. This appears to challenge the veracity of the notion of inclusive decision-making control which may be incompatible with local norms and values of collective community engagement.

In other words, what seems crucial for this study is the role of understated dynamics in ways that bring together embedded aspects of everyday life into the domain of governance, decision-making, and accountability. The key difference seems to lie in the significance of the embedded nature of the process of everyday life as members simply activate existing knowledge in line with their cultural norms and values and tap into

associational networks in order to self-mobilise. *Motshelo* is synchronized with people's network of relationships whereas participation in *Mogonye Mmamotshwane* Development Trust is far removed from the immediacy of such networks. This therefore brings this discussion to the significance of the notion of embeddedness in participatory practices at least those of an informal nature such as *Motshelo*.

7.7.1.3 Notion of Embeddedness and Informal Participatory Practices

This study has drawn our attention to the interactive processes of notions of trust, norms of good and co-operative behaviour, relational ties associational networks as well as the process and context within which these 'unverifiable givens' operate. For instance, by seeking to understand how *Molepolole* women participate in *Motshelo*, they not only talked about themselves as a collection of individuals but they emphasised the importance of their relationships, why they work together and why they would not accept just any poor woman. In this regard, the embedded nature of *Motshelo* in people's lives can help explain why those included have strong bonds of relationships because as part of collectivist societies, primary associations are crucial to survival. As such, the way mobilisation, inclusion, and associational power are activated and deployed, is hardwired into the system of interlocking relationships into which *Motshelo* is embedded hence there is no need to emphasise rationality since all these dynamics are part of people's moral repertoire. In this study embeddedness is taken to mean the extent to which *Motshelo* and MMDT are entrenched in the social fabric of people's everyday life. A focus on the embeddedness or otherwise of the two processes helps to direct attention to the dynamics that makes one fully integrated in everyday life than the other. As such, embeddedness helps us to explore the connections between action and people's mores regarding how and why people participate in the way they do.

The concept of embeddedness can also be a useful distinguishing feature for the two participatory processes in the light of resource mobilisation and the attainment of empowerment, which is the important goal of CP. While the formal MMDT is able to identify what needs to be done through formal processes in order to manage resources that can lead to empowerment, in the informal *Motshelo*, embeddedness is able to explain how indigenous knowledge of collective self-help practices are relied upon to organise agency and the mobilisation of scarce resources. The availability of crucial knowledge about survival, resourcefulness, creativity, and cooperation is all embedded in people's everyday life and is activated in ways that are consistent with norms and values. In an attempt to achieve their goals - food security, education for their children, they do not lose sight of the importance of relationships. This gives the process of participation in *Motshelo* a relational dimension as opposed to an instrumental one as is the case with MMDT.

7.7.1.4 *Motshelo* as a Platform for Strengthening Relationships

In the *Motshelo* case study members who are sisters, friends and neighbours came together to try and deal with the challenges of poverty as a collective and made arrangements to form their own participatory groups. As the findings show how they relied on networks of relationships as relatives, friends and neighbours (primary associations) is instructive. Such a process is interactional and embedded in everyday life characterised by strong ties of associational life. This supports the argument that far from being a mere survival strategy, *Motshelo* is embedded in people's socio-cultural fabric as it provides members with an avenue to strengthen their social ties as well as security which are not consistent with the requirements of formal structures which put emphasis

on contracts, constitutions, accountability and transparency. These do not necessarily resonate with the philosophical foundations of people's cultures – rather ‘they go against the grain’. Relationships and trust are far more important than guarantees that can be given by institutions or even the state as the encounter in MMDT between the former chair-person of the village development committee pleaded with the government official to ensure that the traditional role of the gorges as water holes for their animals was preserved.

The insights from the way local participatory processes work contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding the way in which CP is constituted and organised in different contexts. For instance, the emphasis on formal structures highlight a more instrumental view of CP rather than a relational one characterised by moral ethical values of trust, relationships, good behaviour, and associational ties. In addition, the concept of embeddedness may help as a useful notion that distinguishes participatory processes on the basis of their connectedness to people's everyday life rather than the formal-informal distinction that puts emphasis on form at the expense of content and context. It is also important to highlight the fact the dynamics of CP within the context of *Motshelo* can be understood in terms of networks of associational relations and friendship ties that are part of people's every life.

In the context of this study, it is also worth pondering whether the relationship between concepts such as participation, empowerment, inclusion, and decision-making as presented in the literature is helpful in terms of improving people's well-being. There is disconnect between what these concepts mean and the means (development projects) used to achieve what they entail. The current study has raised some ‘red flags’ about how the

spaces are structured and argued that their pro-elite nature is not likely to support pro-poor ideals as espoused by those four concepts. It is important to have a rethink in terms of what the poor can possibly achieve and whether the 'invited' space of the project is a better way to change their situation.

In the development literature, culture is treated ambiguously either as a good thing that binds communities together or a bad thing that hinders development through outdated and conservative practices, a study of this nature with its detailed focus on the philosophical foundations that inform current CP thinking with emphasis on *Ubuntu/Botho* is refreshing. The link between people's everyday life informed by *Botho* and associational life and how the underpinning philosophy informs how people participate is important when explaining how people are included and excluded as well as the motivation to want to be involved. We need to be mindful though of the negative effects of some of these cultural aspects of people's traditions that have fomented inequality in order to ensure that strategies used do not perpetuate women's marginalisation for instance.

The use of agency-structure framework together with aspects such as ROSCAs, social movements, *Botho/Ubuntu* and associations is significant in that it brings concepts that have not been combined before in CP discourse, which might shed light on how to insert development in communities in ways that 'go with the grain' rather than against. In particular, the focus on structure in CP research draws attention to largely ignored areas of development research. The nature and status of 'spaces for participation' needs to be explored rather than taken for granted in an uncritical way. Questions about what spaces exist and how they are structured and the way in which such a set up enhances empowerment need to be spelt out rather than assumed. More often than not, the blame

for failure of empowerment in these spaces is placed squarely on the intended beneficiaries (blame the victims) for failing to take ‘advantage’ of opportunities to improve the socio-economic condition. Yet, it could be that the ‘invited’ spaces are the ones that actually stifle such engagement by being inherently technical and pro-elite.

Conceptual inclusiveness is important for providing insights on a topic that divides opinion in development discourse. The questions raised by the insight into the (different) terms by which inclusion and exclusion in participatory processes occurs suggest the importance of a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of local practice when considering how participation for development is considered. Community, in a way that challenges pro-inclusion norms of PD, has its own way of segmenting and partitioning energy and effort, voice and action. In Chapter 3, we noted that associational ties and relationships are of great importance to collective community engagement. The experience of *Motshelo* suggests very strongly that for some, participation is more than just about governance, voice and gain; it is embedded in processes that build and sustain relationships. Collective governance is there in the daily social and economic life of a community rather than separated, from known practices that are reproduced (and changed) through practice rather than through ‘abstract design’. A study of this nature can help to draw researchers’ attention to the value of cultural context in explaining how CP works, if not ‘naturally’, then through emergent and embedded processes. The constitution of such practices, deeply connected to cultural norms and social and economic needs, gives CP particular dynamics, which includes forms of partition and exclusion that challenge assumptions about community.

In addition, the study of informal forms of collective engagement has shown how an understanding of cultural context can help one's appreciation of the way in which participatory processes are embedded in people's everyday lives. One might also argue that the fact that in *Mogonye* villagers are content to have non-resident elites controlling decision-making processes may also mean that they are trusted and these elites may draw their legitimacy from their identity as 'sons and daughters' of the village. This might imply that associational ties can be used to delegate participation and decision making on the basis of trust and relational ties. Recognition of such local level dynamics could be remarkable. This might help to push these organic forms of practice from the margins to the centre of CP discourse and add a voice to the groundswell of opinions and insights regarding the existence of other ways of knowing that may add a different dimension to CP debate in ways that can only improve understanding.

The study of *Motshelo* in Botswana through a comparative analysis that emphasises the importance of context is new. One of the questions posed in this study asks whether there are other ways of knowing beyond conventional scientific knowledge. The findings from *Motshelo* suggest that there could be a body of untapped knowledge about, and embedded in, people's everyday life experiences that deserve to be more carefully considered. The practices that enable *Motshelo* to function and to command sustained participation are taken for granted because people know about them; they have been used for generations and they carry the values and particular rules of associational life that are privileged in African communities. This study raises the question for CP discourse, research and practice, of why the resource that such CP processes represents have not had much purchase, especially in theory despite its partial recognition in practice.

The study has also contributed to an understanding of personhood and community within the context of the researched case. Critics of participatory development have lamented at the way in which community is ambiguously characterized. While community is often defined as related to a geographically bounded entity, such as a village, the findings in both *Motshelo* and MMDT, suggest that at the most, these may only be a part of the picture. In MMDT, relatives who live in the city are part of the community project while, in *Motshelo*, not everyone within the locality were members of this participatory group. Community boundaries and those of the village do not necessarily coincide, as people's interaction is characterised by fluid relational ties that are considered more important than physical boundaries. There is more to people's sense of community than geographical boundary. And there may be less to community, too, than an assumed shared interest - in a local natural asset, for example. While this study is too small in both scope and focus to make bold theoretical pronouncements, there seems to be a sense of community that holds in both cases considered. On the basis of how participation is constituted in these processes, community might refer to networks of privileged relationships between relatives, friends or neighbours who share values and interests. I propose here a working definition of community limited to the data in this research. As far as the experience of *Motshelo* and MMDT hold, community may be defined as an associational network of shared values and interests. The value of this definition in other contexts, require further explication.

7.7.2 Practical and Policy Implications

This section discusses the practical and policy implications of the findings of this research in terms of how it can have an impact on CP practice. While it was never the intention of

this study to generalize its findings beyond the sample, some of the suggestions made here might influence thinking beyond the confines of this particular study.

7.7.2.1 Integration of Local Practices in Participatory Development

The possibility of connection between these everyday practices and other forms of participatory governance over public and collective issues that have implications for their members and that might command their attention and energy may also be of interest. But its scope for advocacy may be limited and linkage with other organisations may not be possible. On the one hand, the group is not formally recognised as it is not registered: it has no official approval or standing on which basis to enter the world of ‘representative’ democracy. Equally, members may wish to remain ‘hidden’, for autonomy: identifying such groups may not be easy since they tend to operate under the radar. *Motshelo* may therefore lack the capacity and will to relate to centres of power in ways that can broaden its reach and influence. On the other hand, those *metshelo* that have successfully registered to become formal business entities hold hope for *motshelo*’s transformatory abilities, which shows that these somewhat ‘hidden’ under the radar associations can be outward facing, competitive and economically viable. They could hold the future for the development of rural economies if properly understood and tapped into. What should be surprising is why, despite such a long tradition of women’s active involvement in self-empowering self-help projects (Steady 2006), women are considered in development literature as being the most vulnerable group in developing countries. On the basis of this long history, and the fact that informal associations such as *Motshelo* can be transformed into a viable business, then the call to use people’s practices as a starting point is justified, because this type of ROSCA acts as an empowerment tool as discussed below.

7.7.2.2 *Motshelo* as an Empowerment Tool

Organic forms of participation such as *Motshelo*, can act as arenas for empowerment and decision-making control. As pointed out in section (6.2), members have the power to associate with whoever they so wish as long as the *associational requirements* are met and all decisions are made by the members in relation to the purpose, amount to be paid, rotation, and interest on money borrowed. The fact that members are able to buy food throughout the year ensures that they have food security which is a basic human right and at the time of the research, was one of the UN's Millenium Development Goals. In addition, the fact that these *metshelo* can be transformed into formal businesses ensures that members are economically empowered, which is consistent with the government policy of promoting economic development in rural areas. I argue that given the near universal consensus in the literature on ROSCAs and what this study reveals about the inherent participative nature of the poor in different contexts through self-mobilisation, it seems about time to abandon the idea of labelling the poor as lacking in 'agency' and 'voice' through induced participation. The poor and marginalised rely on their network of associations to self-mobilise and marshal collective power and collective agency in order to improve their socio-economic condition using strategies available in their cultural repertoire and traditions.

In each culture there are embedded self-help strategies that people activate and deploy in response to crises. What is therefore needed is not to ask the elite to dis-empower or stand aside, but to understand how these marginalised groups self-mobilise and identify instances where the need expert help, especially when transforming informal associations into formal business ventures so that available knowledge within a community is harnessed and harvested rather than compartmentalised and lost. The starting point should

be what people know and are already doing, which ‘elite intervention’ can come in to support and help move forward to the next level. Acknowledging what already exists which is in use and how it works is important. This will help aid agencies, governments and NGOs willing to assist, to identify: a) what form of help is needed; b) suitable entry points, and appropriate response with bespoke solutions.

Another important point is that organic *Motshelo* and induced MMDT can be used as two processes operating at different levels. *Motshelo* can be used for projects that are meant to empower individuals or families working as small groups on the basis of associational ties and networks, well as the ability to self-mobilise. Once established these groups can therefore seek funding for their operations from aid agencies or the government to venture into profitable projects. Depending on their abilities, they may seek help after they set up, from elites who could assist them with the writing of applications for funding. It should be left to each group to see if it needs funding or not, which minimises the influence of the elite. Such a situation guarantees the group autonomy and control of decision-making remains where it should be – with the poor. At the community or village level, projects would operate like the MMDT with a special role for the elite as translation agents, participating on behalf of the villagers by being accountable to the community. In the case of MMDT, it is a community project for the benefit of everyone. As such representative participation makes sense because even if we insist of the poor controlling decision-making processes, they will cede centre stage to the elite who have the technical knowhow. Associational networks can be used in such projects as sites for promoting deliberative processes about decision-making, knowledge transfer and sharing, mobilisation, implementation, and issues relating to sustainability.

Given the nature of local practices, it may be necessary for aid and donor agencies to pay attention to embedded forms of participatory processes for clues regarding what works or does not work for communities, and the nature of the cultural dynamics involved, so that resources are directed where they are needed most. If well investigated, such practices may well be used to complement bigger community projects.

The research has also shown that the intense focus on inclusion may be misplaced. Depending on context, some communities include by excluding others on the basis of a culturally informed criteria that is justifiable as the results of *Motshelo* has demonstrated. The important point is that context is crucial to our understanding of the dynamics at play.

7.7.3 Implications for Further Research

Given the scope of this research, there are obviously some unanswered questions that require further exploration. It is important through research to establish whether the findings from this research are unique to the cases studied or the context, or there are other similar findings in other contexts. It would be important to explore the extent to which embedded practices can be used in a complementary way with outside interventions. What is crucial is to find out how organic local practices such as *Motshelo* can successfully be turned into a formally registered development project without destroying their character and role of nurturing relationships.

Exploring how such inward-facing-collective movements might also face outwards and, through their traditions of deliberation, provide representation, knowledge and voice in other processes is something that can be learned from those *metshelo* that have been transformed into formally registered entities, which are also successful in their respective

lines of business. It would be worthy investigating how these *metshelo* managed to transform from informal to formal and to ascertain what role if any was played by the elite. What is significant about this study is that it has shown that these *metshelo* are transformable and viable. The question for future research relates to how the transformation of *metshelo* can be done for those who are less educated such as those participating in the *motshelo* which was the subject of this investigation. The idea is to ensure that their ‘hidden voice’ of the poor expressed through self mobilisation, and self-help projects such as *Motshelo* in which the usually ‘hard to hear voices’ are slowly getting the recognition they deserve as seen by the interest from banks and supermarkets to accommodate these interests groups by designing bespoke accounts for their banking and shopping arrangements that cater for their needs.

Furthermore, it would be important to explore ways in which aid agencies can use processes such as *Motshelo* to promote small projects targeting small groups that are put together on the basis of norms and values of collective community engagement that regulate practices in those areas and making sure such an experiment is based on how CP is understood by the communities concerned.

The issue of “elite capture” and “elite intervention” needs further interrogation. For instance, it would be worthwhile for future research to try and establish whether cases that are described and presented as “elite capture” are not in actual fact, instances of “elite intervention”. It would be worthwhile to invest in research that seeks to establish which of the two – ‘elite capture’ or ‘elite intervention’ is more common and why. In my view, the literature on CP might be vilifying “heroes” – the elites, who in some instances serve their communities selflessly, by characterising their involvement as undesirable when in

essence, they deserve utmost respect for intervening to save otherwise doomed projects owing largely to a lack of skills and knowledge on the part of intended beneficiaries. Insights from such studies might help establish and strengthen a good working relationship between the poor and local elites, as opposed to the current situation in which the elite are treated with suspicion as anti-empowerment agents. In addition, insights from such research might lead researchers to rethink whether the poor are really capable of taking decision-making control or the need 'elite intervention' for them to be empowered – a case of participation on behalf of the 'other'. This would be different from the current position where local elites and outside facilitators are supposed to step aside and allow the poor (mostly less educated), to take control of decision-making processes of a development technology that is not only unfamiliar, but complex.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Participation in Development Theory and Practice: A Selective History

Era	Approach	Institutional and intellectual influences	Development theory: approach to immanent processes and imminent interventions	Approach to citizenship	Locus/level of engagement
1940s-1950s	Community development (colonial)	United Kingdom Colonial Office 1944 Report on Mass Education in Africa	<i>Immanent</i> (Re)produce stable rural communities to counteract processes of urbanization and socio-political change, including radical nationalist and leftist movements <i>Imminent</i> Development requires participation and self-reliance; cost-sharing. <i>Animation rurale</i> , adult literacy and extension education, institution-building, leadership training, development projects	Participation as an obligation of citizenship; citizenship formed in homogenous communities	Community
1960s-1970s	Community development (post-colonial)	Post-colonial governments (social welfare or specialized departments)	<i>Immanent</i> As above; also development of state hegemony, moral economy of state penetration <i>Imminent</i> As above; also health, education		
1960s	Political Participation	North American political science	<i>Immanent</i> Political development dimension of modernization theory. Participation as securing stability, legitimacy for new states and strengthening the political system <i>Imminent</i> Voter education; support for political parties	Participation (e.g. voting, campaigning, political party membership) as a right and an obligation of citizenship	Political system and constituent parts; citizens
1960s-1970s	Emancipatory participation (EP)	Radical 'southern' researchers/ edu-	<i>Immanent</i> Analyse and confront 'structures of oppression' within existing forms of	Participation as a right of citizenship; participatory	Economic and civic spheres; communities;

	Liberation theology (LT)	<p>ationalists. Frei, Fals Borda, Rahman</p> <p>2nd Vatican Council, Latin America Catholic priests. Gutierrez, Sobrino</p>	<p>economic development, state formation, political rule and social differentiation</p> <p><i>Imminent</i></p> <p>EP: Participatory action research, conscientization, popular education, support for popular organizations</p> <p>LT: Form base Christian communities, training for transformation, popular education</p>	<p>citizenship as a means of challenging subordination and marginalization</p>	<p>citizens</p>
1970s-1990s	'Alternative Development'	<p>Dag Hammarskjold Conference 1974. Development Dialogue, IFAD Dossier. Nerfin, Friedmann</p>	<p><i>Immanent</i></p> <p>Critique of 'mainstream' development as exclusionary, impoverishing and homogenizing; proposal of alternatives based around territorialism, cultural pluralism and sustainability</p> <p><i>Imminent</i></p> <p>Popular education; strengthen social movements and self help groups</p>	<p>Participation as a right of citizenship; citizenship as a key objective of alternative development, to be realized in multi-level political communities</p>	<p>Initially focused on communities and civic societies, latterly the state through 'inclusive governance'</p>
1980s-present	Populist/Participation in development	<p>Development professionals, NGOs (e.g.MYRAD AIIED), World Bank Participation Learning Group, UN Agencies, Chambers</p>	<p><i>Immanent</i></p> <p>Little direct engagement, implicit critic of modernization</p> <p><i>Imminent</i></p> <p>Failure of top down projects and planning; participation required to empower people, capture indigenous people's knowledge, ensure sustainability and efficiency of interventions.</p> <p>Participatory: rural/urban appraisal, learning and action, monitoring and evaluation; NGDO projects.</p>	<p>Focus on participation in projects rather than in broad political communities</p>	<p>Development professionals and agencies; local participants</p>
Mid 1990s – present	Social Capital	<p>World Bank Social Capital and Civil Society Working Group Putnam, Bourdieu, Narayan</p>	<p><i>Immanent</i></p> <p>Social capital promoted as a basis for economic growth</p> <p><i>Imminent</i></p> <p>Local institution building, support participation in networks and associations</p>	<p>Participation as a right and obligation of citizenship</p>	<p>Civic associations</p>
Late 1990s -	Participatory governance	<p>Participatory Research and</p>	<p><i>Immanent</i></p> <p>Development requires liberal or social democracy, with a</p>	<p>Participation as primarily a right</p>	<p>Citizens, civil society, state</p>

present	and citizenship participation	Action (Delhi) Institute for Development Studies, Brighton (Participation Group)	responsive state and strong civil society. Some focus on social justice <i>Imminent</i> Convergence of 'social' and 'political' participation, scaling-up of participatory methods, state-civic partnerships, decentralization, participatory budgeting, citizens' hearings, participatory poverty assessments, PRSP consultations	of citizenship	agencies and institutions
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(Adapted from Hickey and Mohan 2004: 6-8)

Appendix 2



RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Information Sheet

Study Title: *The Dynamics of Community Participation: Evidence from Practice*

This study seeks to explore how community participation (CP) works from your point of view. It focuses on both indigenous/traditional and agency-led participatory processes which you take part in.

Aim(s) of the Research

The research seeks to:

- *Compare how formal and informal opportunities for participation are organised in Setswana communities and on what terms.*

Such a comparison is intended to help improve how agency-led projects are managed in order to make them not only effective, but also culturally acceptable.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this research because you are either involved in village development trusts' participatory projects or you take part in local participatory processes (motshelo) or both.

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for my records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited for interviews as an individual as well as part of a group. You will also be observed while taking part in either agency-led work on indigenous participatory programmes.

If I take part, what do I have to do?

You will have to respond to certain questions I will ask regarding your involvement in both traditional and agency-led programmes. You will also be asked to engage in group discussions with fellow participants on chosen topics.

What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?

There are no financial or material rewards for participating but the information you provide can be used for the development of better policies that can improve service delivery as well as the standard of living for people in your communities.

What are the risks (if any) of taking part?

There are no risks involved as a result of your participation.

How will information about me be used?

The data collected from you will be tape-recorded or hand-written and will only be used for this study and will not be retained for any other future purposes.

Who will have access to information about me?

The information about you will be coded and anonymous. Nowhere in the data will you be identified by name. The data you provide will;

- *be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer*
- *be stored in line with the Keele University's guidelines and will be retained by me, the principal investigator, for at least five years*
- *be securely disposed of*

Who is funding and organising the research?

Keele University is funding the PhD research and I am responsible for organising it.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to me, the researcher and I will do my best to answer your questions. You should contact ***Kenneth Mawomo*** on k.mawomo@keele.ac.uk. Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact me, the researcher, you may contact my supervisor Professor Steve Cropper on 004401782 734511 or email s.a.cropper@hpm.keele.ac.uk

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton
Research Governance Officer
Research & Enterprise Services
Dorothy Hodgkin Building
Keele University
ST5 5BG
E-mail: n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 733306

Appendix 3

Interview Guide

Origins

Could you begin by explaining how your project started?
What led to the formation of your project?
Who came up with the idea?
Who was involved in its formation?
What role did you play in starting the project?

Organisational Structures

How is your project organised?
What different structures does your project have?
What positions can people occupy in the project?
What are the requirements needed in order to be in these positions?

Purpose

What is the purpose of this project?
What do you expect from the project?
Why is this project important?

Recruitment

How did you become a member?
How do people become members of the project?
Can you explain what qualities you look for in potential members?
What are the criteria for the membership?
Who is not invited in your project?

Roles and responsibilities

Describe what you do in the project as a member
Describe how decisions are made

How are decisions made?
Who decides what is to be done?
In what way do you participate?
What is the level of members' interest in this project?
Describe how people become members
What happens to those who do not participate as expected?

Challenges

What problems have you experienced so far in your project?
How have you resolved them?

Appendix 4

Letter of Affiliation



UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department of Sociology

Tel: [267] 355 2678

Corner of Notwane and Mobuto Road, Fax: [267] 355 4198

22-1-2013

Kenneth Mawomo,
Research Institute of Social Science,
Keele University,
Staffordshire,
United Kingdom
ST5 5BG.

APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATION TO THE SCHAPERERA PROJECT

Dear Mr. Mawomo,

The Department of Sociology and the Steering Committee of the Schapera Project are pleased to affiliate you to the Schapera Project from the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014.

Please note the following details on affiliation:

- Your affiliation is subject to the approval of your research permit by the relevant Government ministry;
- The affiliation will provide you with links to the members of the Department of Sociology, primarily facilitating fora (e.g. departmental seminars) for the discussion of your project;
- You, in turn, will be required to provide periodic reports on the progress of your work, and provide lectures in appropriate courses where possible in your schedule.
- The Department of Sociology is not able to offer office space to visiting researchers. We will, however, explore possibilities here at the University, and inform you accordingly.

www.ub.bw

Appendix 5



RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

20 March 2012

Dr Kenneth Mawomo
Research Institute of Public Policy and Management
Keele University

Dear Kenneth

Re: 'The Dynamics of Community Participation: Evidence from Practice'

Thank you for submitting your revised project for review.

I am pleased to inform you that your project has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel.

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application (30 September 2013), you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via Michele Dawson.

If there are any other amendments to your study, you must submit an 'application to amend study' form to Michele Dawson. This form is available from Michele (01782 733588) or via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Michele Dawson in writing to m.dawson@uso.keele.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

RP

Dr Roger Beech
Chair – Ethical Review Panel

CC RI Manager, Supervisor

Appendix 6



RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Tsebe ya dintlha tsa botlhokwa

Setlhogo sa Patisiso: *The Dynamics of Community Participation: Evidence from Practice*

Patisiso e e ikaeletse go seka-seka ka fa go tsaya karolo ga baagisane go berekang ka teng go ya ka fa wena o akanyang ka teng. E etebagantse le mekgwa/ditsamaiso tsa setso le bokaedi kgotsa boeteledipele jo bo ikemetseng ka nosi jo e leng gore o tsa karolo mo go jone.

Maikaelelo a Patisiso

Patisiso e, ekaeletse go:

- go tshwantshanya kafa mekgwa/ditsamaiso tsa setso di dirwang ka teng fa di bapisiwa le bokaedi kgotsa boeteledipele jwa morafe le kafa bo dirwang ka teng mo morafeng wa batswana.

Tshwantshanyo e e ekaeletse go tokagatsa boleng jwa maiteko a baikemedi mo ditlhabolong le gore a kgone go amosegela mo ngwaong.

Ka goreng go tlhopilwe nna?

O tlhopilwe ka mabaka a gore o itse mekgwa/ditsamaiso tsa setso kgotsa bokaedi jo bo ekemetseng ka nosi kana mo go yone yotlhe.

A mme ke tshwanetse go tsaya karolo?

O letelelwa go ithopela gore a o batla go tsaya karolo kgotsa gosa tsaya karolo. Fa o dumalana le go tsaya karolo ota kopiwa go baya monwana mo difomong di le pedi tsa tumelano, e nngwe ke ya gago gore o e ipeepele fa e nngwe ke tla e tsaya. O letelelwa go ka togela go tsaya karolo mo patisisong e ka nako ngwe le ngwe ntleng le go fa mabaka.

Go tla diragala jang fa ke tsaya karolo?

O tla lalediwa potsolotso ole mongwefela le go botsololwa le le digongwana. Gape o tla lebelelwa fa o tsaya karolo mo mekgweng/ditsamaiso tsa setso kana bokaedi jo bo ekemetseng ka nosi.

Fa ke tsaya karolo, ke tshwanetse go dira eng?

O tlaa tshwanelwa ke go araba dipotso dingwe tse ke tla dibotsang mabapi le go tsaya karolo ga gago mo mekgweng/ditsamaiso tsa setso le bokaedi jo bo ekemetseng ka nosi. O tla kopiwa go tsenelela dipuisano le bangwe ka wena mo ditlhogong dingwe tse di tla a beng di tlhopilwe.

Ke dipelo dife tse di ntebaganeng fa nka tsaya karolo?

Ga go dipe dipoelo tsa madi tse o tla di fiwang fa o tsaya karolo mo patisisong ya rona, mme dikarabo tsa gago di ka dirisiwa mo go tlhabololeng mananeo le ditlhabololo tsa selegae ka kakaretso. Dikarabo tsa gago di tla tswa mosola o motona le mo go tlhabololeng matsheho a batho.

Ke dife diphatsa tse di ka ntebaganang mabapi le go tsaya karolo mo dipatisisong tse?

Ga go dipe diphatsa tse di go lebaganeng mabapi go tsaya karolo.

Dikarabo tse ditswang mo go nna di tla dirisiwa jang?

Dikarabo tsa gago di tla gatisisa ka sekapa mantswa kgotsa tsa kwalwa. Dikarabo tsa gago di tla dirisiwa fela mo dipatisisong tse eseng dipe gape tsa boisago.

Ke mang yoo tla bonang dikarabo tsame?

Dikarabo tsa gago di tla tshegetswa mo sephiring ebile ga di na go amanngwa le wena ka tsela epe. Ga o tlhoke go tsenya lebitso la gago gope mo mekwalong ya rona. Dikarabo tsa gago di tlaa:

- *bewa mo lefelong le le sireletsegileng kgotsa sebala-makgolo (computer) sese lotetsweng.*
- *tshegetswa ka ditsetlana tsa Mmadiko wa Keele, di tla tshegetswa mo leineng lame mo dingwageng tse tlhano.*
- *di tlaa ntshiwa mo tirisong fa go tlhokafala, ebile di ntshiwa ka tsela e e babalesegileng*

Ke mang yo o thusang ka madi a a tsamaisang dipatisiso tse?

Mmadikolo wa Keele o thusa ka madi a go tsamaisa dipatisiso tse. Nna ke itebagantse le go netefatsa tsamaiso ka manonthoto.

Go tlaa diragala jang, fa go ka nna le bothata?

Fa o nale ngongorego epe mabapi le dipatisiso tse o ka bua le nna, ke tlaa dira ka botlalo gogo araba. O ka ikgolaganya le ***Kenneth Mawomo*** ka go romela molaetsa mo k.mawomo@ippm.keele.ac.uk. Kgotsa fao sa bate go ikgolaganya le nna, o ka ikgolaganya le moeteledipele wame ebong Professor Steve Cropper mo mogaleng wa 004401782 734511 kgotsa wa romela molaetsa mo s.a.cropper@hpm.keele.ac.uk.

Fa o sa kgotsofalela sengwe mabapi le dipatisiso tse kana o batla go ngongoregela sengwe, o ka kwalela Nicola Leighton yo eleng gore ke ene yo o amogelang dingongora mabapi le dipatisiso tse di ka fa tlase ga Mmadikolo.

Nicola Leighton
Research Governance Officer
Research & Enterprise Services
Dorothy Hodgkin Building
Keele University
ST5 5BG
E-mail: n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 733306

Appendix 7



RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study *The Dynamics of Community Participation: Evidence from Practice*. This project is being undertaken by **Kenneth Mawomo**, a second year PhD candidate studying at **Keele University** in the United Kingdom.

I have a keen interest in issues pertaining to community development, rural development and participatory development. In particular, I am interested in analysing the impact of participatory development policies on rural communities with a specific focus on Southern Africa. As a Shona speaking Zimbabwean who grew up in rural areas I understand the challenges that rural communities on the other side of the border face, some of which are similar to those you have experienced and continue to encounter. Given that background, I would like to explore the extent to which policies that are promoted by government aid agencies are designed to connect with communities and to address the challenges they face. It is my hope that this research will help in understanding how to make policies work better for the good of rural communities in Southern Africa.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish.

Do not hesitate to ask me if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like me to provide you with more information.

With kind regards

Kenneth Mawomo (Mr)
PhD Candidate

Appendix 8



RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Consent Guide

Title of Project: *The Dynamics of Community Participation: Evidence from Practice*

Name of Principal Investigator: *Kenneth Mawomo*

Please note that the consent statements below will be audio-recorded as I read them to you, and your responses will also be audio-taped. You will NOT be identified by your actual name on the audio tape or anywhere else in this research. By saying 'YES' you will have agreed to take part in this research.

Please say 'YES' if you agree with the statement

- 1 I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.
- 3 I agree to take part in this study.
- 4 I understand that data collected about me during this study will be anonymized before it is submitted for publication.
- 5 I agree to the interview/focus group being audio recorded
- 6 I agree to allow the dataset collected and any quotes to be used only for this project not any future research projects
- 7 I agree to be contacted about possible participation in future research projects

Thank you