

A framework for participatory communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality

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DECLARATION

I, **Tshepang Bright Molale** declare herewith that the thesis entitled: ***“A Framework for Participatory Communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality”***, which I herewith submit to the North-West University as completion of the requirements set for the Doctor of Philosophy (Communication Studies) Degree, is my own work and has not been submitted to any other university.

I understand and accept that copies that are submitted for examination are the property of the University,

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Signed at Mmabatho on this 25th day of November 2020.

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“ki olorun mu o posi, ko fun yin ni ogbon, ore ofe ati opolopo ibukun. ki o le pe ki o ma si se alaini ni gbogbo ojo ti o rin lori ile aye”

(English Trans: “May God expand you, may He grant you wisdom, grace, and plenty blessings. And may you not know lack all of your days on earth”).

DEDICATION

This PhD thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my Late brother, Tshepo Esau “lefty” Mkwatsi. Abuti, I know how much you wanted me to complete this and sadly I am unable to show you the finished product. But God is Good! May you lie in eternal peace!

ABSTRACT

Some of the key legislations regulating local government administration in South Africa, namely, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (see South Africa 1996) as well as the Municipal Systems Act (see South Africa, 2000), require municipal authorities to ensure participation of local communities in the planning and execution of a local development agenda. This includes coming up with a forum of institutionalised participation mechanism (or process) that guarantees the active involvement of local citizens in the development, drafting, finalisation and implementation of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). However, various communication-related gaps were revealed after reviewing literature on institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes in the South African local government context. These gaps include a lack of active citizen engagement and participation, a lack of proper feedback facilitation as well as the inability of local citizens to be afforded the space to make final decisions regarding local development and social change needs. Although community participation is a legislatively recognised concept within the municipal IDP framework, various studies have argued that the concept is misappropriated and applied as a means to achieve desired ends by those with the resources and power over municipal administration. The foregoing implies that the kind of participation required (and practiced) at municipal level does not necessarily adhere to the norm of the participatory approach to development and social change.

In fortifying the above argument, three theoretical lines of thought, namely, communicative action, dialogical praxis and intercultural communication, underpin the present study with the objective of theoretically grounding the participatory approach, which advocates for the use of dialogue as a facilitator of active and meaningful participation of local citizens in forums aimed at making decisions about their own development and social change. The above theoretical lines of thought are instrumental in addressing criticism levelled against the participatory approach where it has been viewed as utopian and unrealistic, thus suggesting a critical gap between theory and practice.

This qualitative study identifies four concepts namely participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture as having a conceptual connection with the above theoretical lines of thought and were used together in the development of a conceptual framework which was empirically evaluated by means of semi-structured interviews with five (5) municipal officials as well as focus group discussions with forty-six (46) community members of Ward 31 (Marikana) Rustenburg.

The perceptions of the participants helped in reshaping the practical operationalisation of the four concepts underpinning the participatory approach, leading to the revision of a framework for

participatory communication that is informed by theory and has practical relevance. This framework enables the facilitation of meaningful and active institutionalised participation of citizens in municipal IDP processes in a pragmatic sense. The framework was used to reimagine the steps followed in the IDP process of Rustenburg Local Municipality, with the aim of ensuring that the kind of participation required (and practiced) at municipal level, adheres to the ethos and the realistic requirements of participatory communication.

Key words: *Communicative Action (Habermas); Dialogical Praxis (Freire), Communication for Development and Social Change; Community Participation; Culture; Government Communication; Participatory Communication; Integrated Development Planning (IDP); Marikana*

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1 Introduction and Background

In the South African context, ordinary citizens are somewhat guaranteed citizenship rights, egalitarianism and the control of local development and social change agenda through community participation in the government process. Citizen participation, which is conceptualised from the context of rights-based participatory development, is legislated and enshrined in various pieces of legislation guiding all areas of public administration, including the local government sphere. In light of the above context, the developmental function of local government in chapter 7 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996, as amended) stipulates that a municipality must, “(a) structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community....” (South Africa, 1996: 74).

Chapter 4 (section 16) of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) qualifies this development function by adding a “participatory” requirement. It specifies that each municipality has to create a conducive environment for local citizens to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of development projects initiated by municipalities. Ideally, the community must participate in the preparation and implementation of a municipality’s Integrated Development Plan – IDP (South Africa, 2000: 30). One implications drawn from the above context, from a communication perspective, is that the local government sphere (i.e. the closest public administration sphere to citizens) should ensure that their interactions with indigent communities are implemented through a participatory communication approach (cf. Molale, 2014). This is because participatory communication is hinged on the salience of citizen-based egalitarianism approach where concepts such as participation, empowerment, dialogue, citizenship are qualified with the sole intention of advocating for their right to lead development and social change efforts involving their lives and the communities within which they live.

To assess the relationship between legislative imperatives for participation at local government level and the socio-economic realities of citizens, various studies have been conducted in the area of communication for development and social change (as well as in public administration and local government). These studies (conducted over the past decade in South Africa, Tanzania, Nepal and Brazil) have glaring indications of a lack of participation by local communities (cf. Bofo, 2006; Buys, 2006; Mojapelo, 2007; Mokone, 2007; Molale, 2014; Smith, 2003; Von Lieres, 2007; Williams, 2006;). Seemingly, local communities’ inability to receive proper and updated

information about the status of development programs, is one of the main failures on the part of municipalities. Furthermore, various studies (cf. Leboea, 2003; Mayekiso, Tailor & Maphazi, 2014 and Molale, 2014; Williams, 2006) have also indicated that local citizens are not decision makers when it comes to development programmes in municipalities. For example, Mogoba (2012: 78) concludes that, “the nature and extent of community participation in the IDP Process of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality is limited only to consulting and informing the community and lacks any effective input from the community”. This premise contributes to the proposition made by the present study, that a change in participatory communication must be considered as a suitable theoretical point of departure to bridge the communication gap that exists between local government and communities.

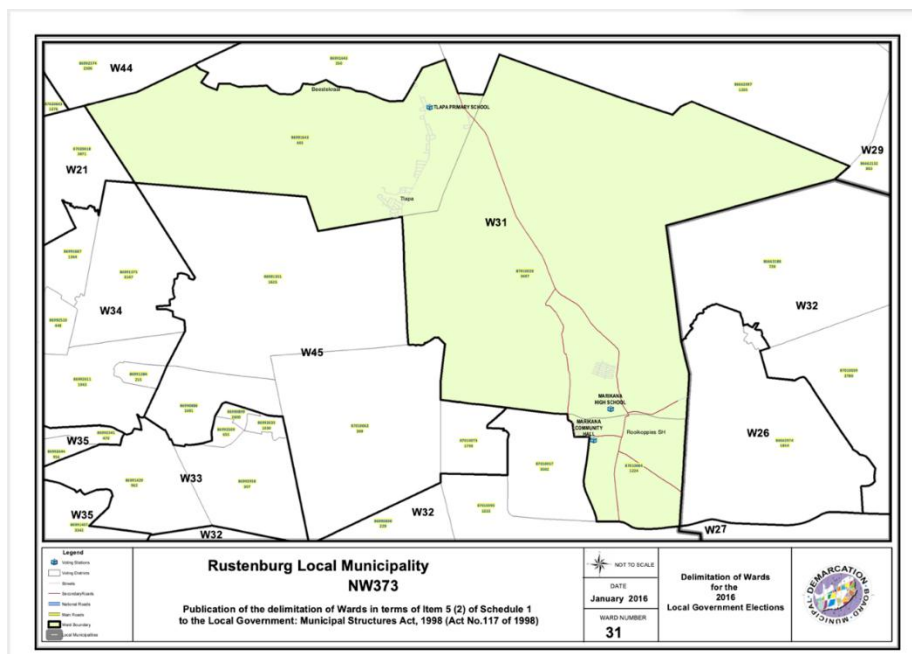
Considering the foregoing, the present study is theoretically rooted in communication for development (C4D) and social change, which proposes the application of communication theories, methods and channels to facilitate a development and change agenda aimed at improving citizen’s quality of life as well as the environment (cf. Amoyan & Custodio, 2019). The motive behind the C4D approach is that participatory communication is central to the discourse of communication for development and social change, thus it can arguably address the lack of genuine feedback facilitation, proper communication (i.e. dialogue), and the lack of genuine participation and citizen empowerment in municipal IDP processes. Moreover, within the communication for development and social change approach, and in light of the context of municipal IDP processes; we are required to take stock of features of communication that are linked to facilitating a participatory approach in an effort to ensure that community participation becomes an active, genuine and meaningful process on the part of marginalised constituent groups (i.e. citizens).

C4D emanates from a rich theoretical evolution of scholarship in communication studies, which was originally conceptualised as Development Communication by Nora Quebral at the Los Baños College of agriculture in the 1970s (cf. Quebral, 2012; Manyozo, 2012). It can be argued that there isn’t much conceptual difference between C4D and development Communication. In fact, in his introductory remarks on one of the seminal books on the subject, Jan Servaes (2008:15-17) makes the point both terms can be used interchangeably given that they both refer to the body of knowledge aimed at positioning communication as a facilitator of development and (social) change in an area, through the use of communication channels and media tools as well as other traditional ways of interaction and communication. To properly situate C4D within the development and social change scholarship and its relationship to participatory communication, Wilkins (2009) identifies a paradigm-shift that took place within the development communication scholarship from a modernistic approach to development (i.e. the modernisation paradigm), to a

more people-centred and citizen based approach (the participatory paradigm) (see section 3.2). These concepts and their relationship to one another are further clarified later in this study (see sections 1.2.3 & section 3).

Of primary concern to this study is the participation of culturally complex and heterogeneous societies, such as, those communities of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality (Marikana). According to the latest community survey from Statistics South Africa, the population in ward 31 (Marikana), widely known for the 2012 mass shootings where 34 mineworkers were killed by the police, comprises of people from different parts of South Africa (i.e North West, KZN, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga) and a migrant labour-force from various SADC countries (Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, etc.). As shown in the figure below (see figure 1-1), Ward 31, falls under the jurisdiction of Rustenburg Local Municipality. In line with the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), the municipality has to ensure the participation of this community in the formulation, preparation and finalisation of its IDP process. Further contextualisation of the municipal area is also offered in chapter 3 (see section 3.3), where the steps followed in the Rustenburg Local Municipality's IDP process are also outlined in detail.

Figure 1-1: Map of Ward 31 (Marikana) of Rustenburg Local Municipality in the North West Province (source: South Africa, 2018).



1.2 Insights from the Literature

Insights from the literature presented in the following section is categorised into two sub-groups. The first sub-group focuses on the literature within the context of the South African Municipal IDP

context, thereby identifying the gaps related to the dearth of research interest linking institutionalised participation with the participatory communication approach to development and social change. In the second sub-group, the literature review concentrates on the complexities related to the concept of institutionalised participation in the Local Government sphere with a special view on how the participatory approach can help address these complexities.

1.2.1 Participation in the South African Municipal IDP Context

When exploring the literature on the nomenclature around participation in local government in South Africa, it is rare to come across the concept of “participatory communication”. Instead, one finds concepts such as “public participation”, “community participation”, “citizen participation”, “citizen engagement”, “participatory governance”, “local participation”, and “participation of marginalised people” (cf. Ababio, 2004; Aklilu, Belete, & Moyo, 2014; Bauer, 2009; Barichievy, Piper, & Parker, 2005; Cash & Swatuk, 2010; Draai & Taylor, 2009; Govender, 2006; Heleba, 2008; Khan & Haupt, 2006; Mayekiso, Taylor & Maphazi, 2013; Matebesi & Botes, 2011; Motale, 2012; Mzimakwe, 2010; Reddy & Govender, 2013; Tau, 2013; Tshabalala & Lombard, 2009).

Other studies exclusively identify “citizens” through their demographic and sociographic backgrounds (“youth participation”, “women participation”, “participation of the rural poor, or “inclusive citizenship of women”) and examine their participation in specified contexts (i.e. agriculture, NGOs, public health campaigns, municipal IDP processes, or general public participation/ward committee systems) (cf. Ababio, 2007; Esau, 2011; Khan, Khan & Govender, 2013; Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008; Moyo, 2014; Phaswana, 2016; Roodt & Stuurman, 2011; Thabanchu, 2011; Thompson & Conradie, 2011).

The legislative framework directing the municipal government sphere in South Africa enshrines the participatory right of local citizens to lead local government decision-making processes (cf. South Africa, 1996; 2000). According to the municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), a municipal government has to:

“...encourage, and create conditions for, the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in: (i) the preparation, implementation and review of its integrated development plan in terms of Chapter 5; (ii) the establishment, implementation and review of its performance management system in terms of Chapter 6; (iii) the monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performances; (iv) the preparation of its budget; and, (v) strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services in terms of Chapter 8 ...” (South Africa, 2000:30).

This legislative requirement emphasises the supremacy of communication between municipal government and local citizens. In light of the above statement, this communication must be of a

participatory nature characterised by horizontal dialogic engagements aimed at consensus and mutual consent on local development initiatives. This builds a case for participatory communication as a key ingredient and methodology for participation and communication in municipal public participation and consultation processes as well as integrated development planning (Molale, 2014). Limited effort has been made to establish the link between public participation in municipal IDP processes (i.e. participatory democracy) and participatory communication (cf. Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010) despite efforts by various studies to relocate participation within a framework of communication for development and social change in recent years. A study by Waisbord (2015) broadly discusses the three challenges facing communication for global social change and reflects that, “the incorporation of ‘participation’ in undemocratic political structures and practices has paradoxically resulted in the disempowerment of ordinary citizens” (2015:153). As argued in chapter 2 (see section 2.4), a typology of participation is aligned to participatory communication in a study by Mefalopulos (2008). When conceiving participatory communication in the context of municipal government and integrated development planning (IDP) using these conceptual considerations municipalities seemingly apply “passive” participation in Mefalopulos’s (2008) context, White’s (1996) version of “nominal participation, or even Arnstein’s (1969) conception of nonparticipation (i.e. manipulation, therapy, informing).

This is corroborated by findings of various studies that argue how concepts such as participation, empowerment and dialogue are used in municipal IDP processes as means to achieve ratification of municipal budgets and fulfilling legislative mandates (cf. Leboea, 2003; Williams, 2006; Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010; Molale, 2014). Against the foregoing, literature on participation in local government indicates the state of disarray in local government due to its lack of citizen involvement, participation and lack of service delivery (cf. Bauer, 2009; Dywili & Draai, 2019; Masuku & Molope, 2020; Molale, 2019; Thebe, 2016). A significant contribution of studies in this area, is from the fields of political studies, management sciences, as well as public administration.

Although community participation develops civic pride as local citizens own their development, Ababio (2004) argues that the role of municipal councillors and politicians should remain dominant in the process. The author writes:

“...surely municipal councillors are not expected to submit all their decisions to the community for approval. Participatory governance should complement the political leadership of a municipality and not impede its ability to govern effectively” (2004:274).

This perspective aligns with Rosener’s (1978:457) assertion that we cannot automatically assume without evidence that citizen participation will translate to “better public policy”. The author calls

for more research to be conducted on the effectiveness of citizen participation. Rosener's (1978) argument resonates with contemporary "make-up" of participation discourse in local government.

Furthermore, Scott's (2005) study proposes a model on participatory development in local government. Rooted in participatory action research, Scott's (2005) "multi-criteria decision analysis" model, brings together stakeholders belonging to three groups in society (municipal authorities, local citizens and elected political leaders) to enhance the budgetary objectives of integrated development planning. Using these three different stakeholders with conflicting goals in the local government sphere, his model seeks to, "clarify the needs and aspirations of the communities, evaluate a number of alternative plans to address these needs, and monitor progress in the communities" (Scott, 2005:695).

In addition, Khan and Haupt (2006) contribute to the discourse on participation in municipal government in their study which looks at community participation in infrastructure delivery in the Western Cape. Their findings revealed that although a local community desired involvement and participation in infrastructure delivery, "their understanding of participation was limited to involvement during the construction stage only" (Khan & Haupt, 2006:59). This implies that local communities do not fully understand the possible extent to which they can participate in municipal service delivery programs. Given that the legislative framework regards community participation as a requirement for municipalities to obtain budgetary support from the national treasury to roll out development in a local area, the extent to which the community participates in this process needs clarification.

Notwithstanding, community participation in local government is still limited (cf. Masuku & Molohe, 2020; Thebe, 2016). This is not a new problem, in fact as far back as 2006, Williams (2006) critiqued community participation in IDP processes in contemporary local government and observed that the concept of community participation is co-opted and reduced to an undesired ritual- an exercise that must be followed because it is a legislatively required processes at local government level (Williams, 2006:197-198). This argument is backed by evidence from assessing community participation in Cape Town where the author also found that IDP processes are often not transparent because, at times, officials assume the role of gatekeepers by not providing the community with access to important information as a result of their personal political interests (Williams, 2006:211).

In addition, Bogopane's (2012) qualitative inquiry into democratic participatory development in one of the district Municipalities in the North West Province, finds that, in connection to IDP processes, the so-called democratic participatory development plans and processes that are adopted in the district are actually based on the sole perspectives and views of development

managers who wrongly claim to be fully cognisant of the needs and desires of their constituent community members but the author argues that the officials are not aware of such needs and desires of the community. After making this observation, the author warns against the possibility of side-lining community members from actively participating in important processes that require their input, such as, policy-making, project and programme evaluation, monitoring and planning (Bogopane, 2012:138). Rooted exclusively in development and political studies, Bogopane's (2012) study proposes a normative democratic participatory development model which can be used to enhance democratic participatory development based on its "pre-requisites", namely, "viability and sustainability, capacity, accountability, and purpose-driven" development (Bogopane, 2012:131). This study therefore does not consider looking at the concept of participation in isolation, but conceptualises it within democratic development, hence the nomenclature: "*democratic participatory development*".

With regards to women participation, Moyo (2014:5997-5999) identifies "patriarchy, culture and traditions, illiteracy, time constraints, and gender-based violence" as some of the setback deterring women from being active participators in development issues in South Africa. The author's study is a feminist critique (as part of development theory), rooted in the Gender and Development (GAD) approach, and carefully explores Women in Development (WID) with special reference to women's participation in rural development.

Equally, although other studies do not present any model for participation in local government, they also make a substantial contribution in terms of empirical research. For instance, when assessing youth councillors' perceptions of participation at a municipal level, Phaswane's (2016) study uses a district municipality in the Limpopo Province to note some form of exclusion of young people in decision-making processes of the council. The author adds that more still needs to be done to provide an empowering environment for youth participation given the observation that meaning youth participation in municipal government level is still limited (Phaswane, 2016:88-89).

Additionally, Khan, Khan and Govender (2013) argue that participation is merely reduced to "rhetoric" as a result of a "hegemony" that political actors enjoy in terms of power over public participation processes in local government. This is supported by Aklilu, Belete, and Moyo (2014:261), who in their analysis of participation in municipal IDP processes in Limpopo, found that during IDP consultative meetings, community members only serve the purpose of providing municipal authorities with information regarding their needs. Similar findings were made by Tshabalala and Lombard (2009), Motale (2012:137-140), Barichiev, Piper and Parker (2005), Cash and Swatuk (2011), and Esau (2011).

Outside the IDP processes, community participation remains essential when it comes to decision-making processes involving local citizens. For instance, a case study of the Khutsong cross-boundary protests following the 2005 processes of re-demarcating the community from Merafong local municipality (in Gauteng's West Rand District) to the North West Province, Matebesi and Botes (2011) observe that participatory governance, noble as it is, can have a paradoxical outcome when authorities display an illegitimate claim of power. This is after establishing that, "the demarcation processes in Merafong was not adequately participatory, nor inclusive, nor in line with democratic ideals" (Matebesi & Botes, 2011:17).

Regarding the imperative of participation in local government, Govender and Reddy (2011) say that civil society involvement in local government affairs has the potential of legitimising the constitutional and legislative imperatives of public participation in municipal planning processes, including IDP. This view supports a project aimed at linking participation in local government with participatory communication, which according to Otto and Fourie (2009:230), can be described as, "a facilitative methodology of interaction and knowledge-construction". Useful as this project might be, the above-mentioned theoretical problems facing participatory communication are affect any significant effort aimed at marrying participation in local government to the field of communication and social change. In short, the present study proposes a framework that attempts to answer the question of "*how to*", when applying integrated development planning in local government. This may be because of a gap that existing legislation and policy on local government, especially the South Africa constitution (Act 98 of 1996) as well as the Municipal Systems Act (Act 2 of 2000), fall short of prescribing what kind of framework can be adopted when ensuring that there is public participation in municipal IDP processes.

1.2.2 Institutionalised Participation, the IDP process and meetings within the South African Local Government Context

In line with the argument postulated in this study, the kind of participation that requires municipal officials across the local sphere of government to implement is termed institutionalised participation. Akin to Cornwall's (2017:1) remarks, institutionalised participation speaks to the need (especially as part of efforts led by governments), to allow for more direct citizen engagement through the creation of, amongst other things, invited spaces for public deliberation and public policy formulation. In the author's own words, this is backed up by some efforts aimed at, "addressing the 'democratic deficit' by strengthening liberal democratic institutions: urging politicians to listen more to those who elect them and bureaucrats to become more responsive to those they are meant to serve" (2017:1).

But, before we explore the challenge with institutionalised participation in the local government sphere, it is essential to detail how participation is understood and implemented by municipal officials. Regulated by three legislations, namely the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) as well as the Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998), the IDP process can be described as a participatory process guiding how a municipality in South Africa should implement its financial and budgetary planning activities in an integrated manner for the purposes of achieving local development and social change. This process emphasises the need for local citizens to participate and, through IDP meetings held with municipal authorities, decide on the implementation of local development projects.

The whole process culminates to the establishment of a Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) – the outcome of which is a draft IDP and budget document that details how development priorities will be identified (and budgeted) in a given year and how decisions on such priorities were arrived at. This process (spearheaded by a municipality) requires that sectional meetings with residents in their Wards (geographically demarcated areas in which local citizen reside) be held, where residents are consulted about development projects in their areas. At these meetings, there are several issues that need to be deliberated for local citizens to make their decisions: i.e. how will the development project be coordinated and what is its duration? What economic and employment opportunities will the project bring for local businesses and individuals? What long-term benefits will the project bring for the whole community? Are there evaluation mechanisms in place to assess project implementation, wellbeing and completion? Although the IDP process is a legislative imperative, it is however not prescribed how many sectional IDP meetings, for instance, should be held for each community/Ward for participation to be regarded as meaningful or genuine. The discretion and power is given to municipal authorities to determine if their interactions with communities are sufficient.

Having addressed the above issues, concluded sectional meetings, and completed the draft IDP document, the next step in the process is the holding of council meetings between municipal councillors, where private citizens are allowed to attend but can only sit in the public gallery. During these meetings, decision-making is given to municipal councillors who are allowed to vote and pass resolutions for the IDP document (in a specific financial year) to be approved and sent to National Treasury (the national department of finance) to release revenue for the municipality to implement the IDP document.

Arguably, participation in this sense is not a voluntary exercise or an end-in-itself process but a 'means-to-an-end' because of the prescribed legislative expectations and the repercussions that may be suffered by municipal officials if participation were not properly instituted. Moreover, when

conceptually locating institutionalised participation, it is interpreted from the vantage point of citizens, thus leaving out other role-players such as municipal officials and civic associations (see section 3.2.1 & 3.3). In light of recent studies (cf. Laquinto, 2016; Molale, 2019; Silverman, Tailor, Jr., Yin, Miller, & Buggs, 2020), conducted five decades after Arnstein (1969) observed that power is not redistributed to citizens in the participatory process; it is still the case in some areas and citizens are largely rendered powerless given that they do not have any material influence in any decision-making processes in development and social change affairs, including the municipal IDP processes.

From a theoretical perspective, the kind of institutionalised participation that is adopted in practice has a striking similarity with 'Development Support Communication'. Based on Eric Childers's conceptualisation of "close project-support communications" (Colle, 2008:111-112), Development Support Communication is a process that allows development managers (through the support of UN agencies, in the context of Eric Childers) to embark in a series of development-related steps, including preparing project-communities about the arrival of projects, explaining what benefits the projects will have for the people, what the project desires to achieve, to answer questions that may arise, to motivate the project-communities to participate in the project and also to demonstrate to the people what resources they can bring into the project, among other things (Colle, 2008).

Arguably, this kind of participation is similar to the one practiced across local governments in South Africa, when public participation is practiced and implemented. As will be explained in chapter 2 (see section 2.5.1), various studies have highlighted that local citizens are passive participators in the development processes and merely 'ratify' government plans without playing an active role insofar as decision-making is concerned (cf. Mefalopulos, 2008; Molale, 2019; Williams, 2006).

As Stefan Sonderling (1997) cogently argued, the theoretical position of development support communication (DSC) "...is naïve and misrepresents the complex processes of development and communication". In light of the above critical reflection on DSC, this study posits that the nature of participation which has been adopted in the context of municipal IDP processes is misconstrued and mistaken to be a feature of Development Communication (within the context of participatory communication approach) while in fact, it is a product of Development Support Communication. Clearly, a problem lies in defining the kind of participation needed to facilitate local governments in South Africa.

Defining participation has been a key research interest. For instance, the treatment of social movements often practised through a public display of frustration and protests, have been

regarded as bearing the revolutionary power to challenge governments to listen to the voices of marginalised citizens (cf. Della Porta, 2011; Fuchs, 2006; Ganesh & Zoller, 2012; Huesca, 2001; Tufte, 2017). Moreover, at the heart of the contentions on the definition of participation is whether it should be regarded as a means to achieve certain (external) ends or whether it should be regarded as an end in itself (Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Muturi & Mwengi, 2009; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a).

Clearly the current make-up of participation as part of a municipal IDP process is problematic and does not reflect what participation, in the context of participatory communication, entails. A theory versus practice gap can be identified in that, what is implemented as participation in practice is actually inconsistent with what is explained in theory. This observation is also made by a host of various other scholar in South Africa (cf. Williams, 2006; Molale, 2019).

1.2.3 Preliminary Review of the Participatory Communication Literature

A review of literature on participatory communication, shows that various scholars have grappled with the problem that it is utopian and have made different proposals aimed at addressing it (cf. Molale, 2019). For example, Wald (2014) is of the view that social movements have to become drivers of participatory development, and that participatory communication should adopt an anarchism theoretical framework. On the other hand, Otto and Fourie (2009:217, 225, 229), believe that a juxtaposition of the “communicative action” theory by Jürgen Habermas and the “liberation pedagogy” by Paulo Freire, can best clarify the criticism labelled against the field of participatory communication and create a strong theoretical framework based on dialogical praxis.

Otto and Fourie (2009:234) acknowledge that research is yet to be conducted to examine how the participatory approach can lead to empirical findings that will bring depth and measurement to development communication through Habermas’ communicative action approach in South Africa. A proposal by Hickey and Mohan (2005:237-238) is in tandem with the above sentiments because they are of the view that in order for participation to be transformative, it has to be undertaken as part of broader politicised and radicalised projects, which are associated with progressive social movements.

Following a Nexus search of completed and current studies, there were no indications of duplicate similar studies. Either, the studies focused on participatory communication from a normative perspective, or address the theoretical issues of participatory communication using different (and at times opposing) theoretical preferences. For example, in Naidoo’s (2010) study on the participatory development communication approach of Thusong Service Centres in Tshwane, participatory communication is forged with Martin Buber’s “*I-it*” and “*I-thou*” relationships to point

out the need for government agencies to treat communities as subjects and not objects of development initiatives. Chikozho's (2013) study on the other hand, though rooted in participatory communication, is exclusively focused on critiquing the ICT for development discourse and it analyses how this is translated into communication policies for international development represented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Various studies conducted on a variety of disciplines in the South African context, fail to address deep rooted concerns surrounding the theoretical predilection that participatory communication should take, as well as the challenges regarding how participation is understood in the municipal sphere of government. For instance, Mogoba's (2012) study on the role of community participation in the integrated development planning process of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in Limpopo exclusively looks at the extent to which communities "participate" in municipal IDP frameworks and applies the concept of "community participation" from a normative perspective. The same goes for Leboea's (2003) exposition on community participation through the ward system. This study analyses the entire ward-based participation system in Maluti-A-Phofong Municipality in the Free State Province of South Africa and exclusively seeks to "identify reasons of non-participation of the community" in ward committee meetings.

Similarly, Buys' (2006) exposition on the participation of a rural community in South Africa focuses exclusively on reviewing how globalisation and the new economy have affected the rural community of Mogopa Village in the North West Province. In the same vein, Mojapelo's (2007) research on the effectiveness of integrated development planning as a tool for accelerated service delivery, attempts to evaluate how IDP can improve the delivery of services to a local community of Aganang Local Municipality in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

The present study is driven by the fundamental assumption that the fluidity of participation has led to a misunderstanding of what it truly means. Like the discoveries of various scholars, this line of thought may explain why participation at municipal government level in South Africa has failed its intended objectives (cf. Leboea, 2003; Molale, 2014; Tau, 2013; William, 2006). In the next section, let us now identify the problem statement underpinning the present study.

The following databases were consulted as part of an in-depth literature review for the present study:

Ferdinand Postma Library, Nexus; Emerald Online; Ebsco Host; Pro-Quest; Science Direct; Sabinet; Ebrary; Google Scholar; Jstor; and SAE Publications.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, as evidenced by available research works identified using the abovementioned databases, no studies are identical to, or have sought to achieve the

same objectives as, the present study, thus symbolising its unique relevance. In the following subsections, preliminary review of the literature is provided as a build-up to the problem statement. Reviewed literature was categorised in two sections. The first section of the literature review focused on participation in the municipal government sphere while the second section identified studies that address the theoretical problem that participatory communication is facing.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The literature reviews above exposed a two-fold problem: first, it identifies communication-related problems within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes and proposes participatory communication as a suitable methodology to address such issues. This proposition is based on the idea that a conceptual relationship exists between the participatory approach and the kind of participation referenced in municipal IDP (cf. Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010; Molale, 2019). This argument is backed by the idea that participatory communication presents an opportunity to conceive communication within the context of municipal IDP processes differently, it cannot just be viewed as a mundane interactional process where the sender (municipal official or development manager) sends messages to the receiver through a particular channel (face-to-face IDP meeting) with a desired reciprocal effect (Steinberg, 2007). Communication within the participatory framework is about dialogue, which is ‘genuine discourse’ (cf. Jenlink & Banathy, 2005), empowerment, collaboration, and co-creation of meaning between equal partners/role-players irrespective of their social standings (Lie & Servaes, 2015; Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Wilkins & Mody, 2001). Thus, participatory communication should not only be viewed as a “tool” to enable bureaucrats to achieve their intended municipal planning objectives and budgets in a given financial year, but as a process that creates communicative spaces and channels between the municipality and its community with the aim to ensure joint decision-making and collaboration. This strengthens trust and rapport between these groups of role-players.

The second part of the problem identified in the preliminary literature review is the difficulties associated with the participatory communication approach. Different scholars (Pieterse, 1998: 351; Otto & Fourie, 2009: 217; Wald, 2014: 621) concur that the participatory approach to development communication has been strongly criticised for its utopian nature and for not having a coherent theoretical position – which might contribute to the problem behind the abovementioned failures in municipal IDP initiatives insofar as the proper facilitation of dialogue, community participation and empowerment are concerned. Another interesting twist to this debate is that, perhaps the current conceptualisations of communication theory and its transactional (information transmission) models have been applied and adopted incorrectly in the communication for development field and social change as it has often been used as a means-

to-an-end, instead of being appropriated as an-end-in-itself (Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Muturi & Mwengi, 2009;).

This is reflective in the IDP process where participation is *required* to complete the process and unlock national treasury budgets in line with legislative prescripts, guidelines and regulations (see South Africa, 2000). This often leads to a piecemeal approach where, arguably, cultural and ethnic diversities in each community are not acknowledged through the adoption of cultural sensitive behaviour which might guarantee the need for meaningful dialogue as genuine discourse (cf. Dutta, 2015; Jenlink & Banathy, 2005) and also guarantee the need to use collective power and decision-making in development planning.

The foregoing suggests challenges associated with facilitating participatory practices to culturally and ethnically diverse societies, given that participation may mean different things to different people (Eversole, 2003). Although it may be interpreted as the normative approach, participation is not always culturally appropriate. Building on this line of thought, the present study further explores the issue of multiplicity in communication for development and social change, an issue widely researched by Jan Servaes (cf. Servaes, 1988b; 1989; 1999; 2013).

From an intercultural perspective, reality is a subjective interpretation in which culture plays an important role. Arguably, when implementing institutionalised participation municipalities are unable to ensure that their participatory approaches are not devaluing local community's cultural orientation and belief system. Municipalities are unable to apply cultural sensitivity (i.e. from sociocultural traditions) and to accommodate the communication-related needs of diverse communities; such as the need to use different languages as sociocultural symbols of self-expression and diverse literacy/educational levels (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005; Kim, 2005; Craig, 2007; Gumucio-Dagron, 2014).

It is against the background that the general research question is posed: *What principles of participatory communication could be suitable for a framework that can facilitate institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes aimed at creating 'meaning' and 'active' participation in ward 31 (Marikana) in Rustenburg Local Municipality?*

1.4 Specific Questions

- What, according to literature, are the theoretical foundations of participatory communication with the focus on Jürgen Habermas's communicative action, Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis, and culture in relation to the creation of meaningful and active participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa?

- What theoretical complications does participatory communication have in relation to its applicability for the facilitation of meaningful and active participation in South African municipal IDP processes?
- What are the perceptions of municipal officials regarding the community participation processes, platforms and/or policies employed during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) within municipal IDP frameworks?
- What are the perceptions of ward 31 participants (Marikana) in community forums regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations within municipal IDP frameworks?

1.5 Research Aim

To propose a framework, based on suitable components of participatory communication, that can facilitate institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes aimed at creating ‘meaning’ and ‘active’ participation in ward 31 (Marikana) in Rustenburg Local Municipality.

1.5.1 Specific Research Objectives

- To examine the theoretical foundations of participatory communication focusing on Jürgen Habermas’s communicative action, Paulo Freire’s dialogical praxis and intercultural communication with an aim to create meaningful and active participation in local government in South Africa.
- To explore the theoretical issues that participatory communication has in relation to its applicability for the facilitation of meaningful and active participation in South Africa’s municipal IDP processes.
- To probe the perceptions of municipal officials on the community participation process, platforms and/or policies employed during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) within municipal IDP frameworks.
- To determine the perceptions of community forum participants (i.e. community members) in regards to the community participation process, platforms and/or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations within municipal IDP frameworks.

1.6 Theoretical Assumptions

The assumption is that various scholars have made divergent and overlapping contributions to the ‘theoretical turn’ in the field of communication for development and social change, in an effort to address criticisms against its utopian nature, however without a singular configuration in their proposals. This creates a ‘quo-vadis conflict’ in identifying a meaningful and active theoretical approach that could be employed in participatory communication (i.e. where to from here?). Thus, this study examines the theoretical lines (see section 2.5) of Harbermas’s communicative action/rationality, Paulo Freire’s dialogical praxis and the principles of intercultural communication. These theoretical perspectives are used to address the theoretical challenges experienced in participatory communication and especially the institutionalised participation challenges experienced by municipalities when facilitating public participation during IDP development.

Due to the complexity of the problem at hand, the study combines multiple theoretical approaches to formulate a meaningful and active participatory communication framework for municipal IDP processes. The abovementioned theoretical predilections are presented with the aim of dealing with theoretical challenges posed by current conceptualisations of participatory communication while addressing communication and developmental challenges experienced by local government in South Africa (i.e. institutionalised participation). Thus, this study presents a critical, social, cultural and phenomenological perspective to participatory communication in municipal IDP processes. The theoretical propositions made in the present study can be summarised in the following three statements:

- ***Participatory Communication should be infused with Habermas’s Communicative Action approach to strengthen and create ‘meaningful’ participation in municipal IDP processes.***

In the context of municipal IDP processes, a public sphere is a space where ‘private’ citizens voluntarily converge “in public spaces, for the expressed purpose of deliberating on matters of mutual interest” (Ndlovu & Mbenga, 2013:172). Moreover, their conduct during these public engagement opportunities should be guided by communicative action – a process in which rational knowledge is used by all members of a group during their interaction. Gicheol Han’s PhD thesis correctly presents two practical circumstances guiding how communicative action is undertaken:

“In the first case, the rationality of the subject in his or her goal-directed action is measured, by an observer, by how successfully the goal is accomplished; in the second case the subject’s rationality in his or her communicative action is evaluated, by a hearer, by how truthfully he or she makes an assertion. In both cases, the knowledge they use either for their teleological action or for their

communicative action is about the objective world shared either by the subject and the observer or by the subject and the hearer.” (Han, 2002:68)

Using this approach, moral judgements can be made on the practical motives for rolling out development projects while observing whether participation is used as a means-to-an-end or as-an-end itself.

- ***When applying participatory communication in IDP processes, a municipality needs to incorporate intercultural communication in its engagement with communities.***

This means participatory communication in municipal IDP processes should be sensitive to patterns of interaction displayed by local citizens because they use the process of interaction to create meaning, roles, rules and cultural values (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). This can only be achieved through the application of intercultural communication, which gives more gravitas towards the concept of “inter-culturality” over multiculturalism – using dialogue and interaction to go beyond just tolerating, accepting, and recognising ‘other’ cultures (Gumucio-Dagron, 2014:109).

- **Participatory communication during municipal IDP processes should be underpinned by Paulo Freire’s Dialogical Praxis approach with specific reference to the correct interpretation of dialogue and empowerment.**

Participatory communication when contextualised in Paulo Freire’s dialogical praxis, exposes how “beneficiaries” of development interventions are often treated – whether as subjects or objects of development interventions (Naidoo, 2010). Central to this approach is the proper facilitation of dialogue and empowerment as a means to foster equality, interfaces and engagement aimed at ensuring that local citizens are empowered in terms of information and improvement of their skills and livelihood (Mefalopulos, 2008).

1.7 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative approach using various qualitative data collection techniques and analysis methods. Fouché and Delport (2005:74-75) argue that the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the meaning that people attach to everyday life as they construct detailed descriptions of reality. Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative research design is concerned with “understanding rather than explaining; naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurements; and the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider”. This is consistent with Nieuwenhuis’s (2010a:50) assertion that qualitative research is the kind of “research that attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied”. To this end, the present study employed qualitative semi-structured

interviews and focus group discussions for data collection, while thematic analysis was employed during the data analysis phase.

1.7.1 Empirical Research Methods

- Semi-structured interviews

Rugg and Petre (2007: 138) describe semi-structured interviews as sets of questions with predetermined topics though leaving room for the researcher to probe important sub-topics. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five municipal officials who are directly involved in the IDP process (i.e. three administrators/officials and two politicians in Rustenburg Local Municipality). The method of data collection is unpacked in chapter 4 (see section 4.4).

- Focus Group Discussions

The last stage of data collection was focus groups (after having asked consent from municipal officials). According to Anderson (1996), a focus group discussion is “a carefully planned and moderated informal discussion where ideas collide and create a chain reaction of informative dialogue. Its purpose is to create an in depth discussion in a comfortable environment so as to elicit a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of individuals who share common experiences that are relative to the dimension under study. Focus group discussions produce a unique form of qualitative information which brings understanding about how people react to an experience or product” (cited by Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003:90).

A total of 46 purposively selected community members participated in focus group discussions. They comprised groups of general members of the community (men and women and young people of different age groups). Interactions with these community members served as a platform where different people voiced out their perception about “participation” in municipal IDP frameworks, irrespective of their age group, gender or ethnicity. Full details of this method as part of the research procedure is unpacked in chapter 4 (see section 4.4).

- Sampling

A stratified purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents from the community (also referred to as “beneficiaries” of development programs) as well as municipal officials, who participated in focus group discussions as well as in semi-structured interviews, respectively. Nieuwenhuis (2010b: 79) defines stratified purposive sampling as a means of selecting participants (in a research study) according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The criteria for selection into the sample is that, one must be directly involved

in Ward 31's (Marikana) IDP process, spearheaded by the municipality. A detailed discussion of the sampling technique adopted in this study is outlined in chapter 4 (see section 4.4)

1.7.2 Data Analysis

The data collected through semi-structured and focus group discussions was analysed through thematic analysis. Throughout the data collection and analysis processes, the researcher kept journals and reduced data by creating categories, codes, and reflexive notes from data collection in the form of asides, commentaries and memos (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019:312-315). Collected data was analysed, categorised and sorted according to themes linked to theory. These themes were used to provide critical reflections (insights) on the study's research questions and objectives. Voice recording enabled transcription of all data to ensure original/intended meanings, expressions and interpretations by all respondents were not lost/misconstrued during data analysis.

1.8 Ethical issues

Although this study ventured into an ethically difficult field of local government, its main focus is communication while maintaining independence from politics and policy issues. This study does not focus on the effectiveness of local government but on communication in the participation process of the IDP. Respondents were not required to reveal sensitive information, such as political affiliations or voter preferences (see section 4.4. for a detailed discussion on ethical issues experienced and how they were addressed). Questions were delimited to their perceptions and participation in IDP processes as prescribed in the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000). Step 4 in chapter 4 (see section 4.4) provides a detailed treatment of all ethical issues experienced in the present study and how they were dealt with.

1.9 Chapter division and layout

Table 1-1: Brief overview of how chapters are divided in the present study.

Chapter 1	This chapter provides a summary of the background of development communication for social change, the problem statement and the research objectives of the study. Subsequently, a contextualisation of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes is made with a view of underscoring challenges as well as identifying opportunities for participatory communication to serve as a facilitator of this kind of participation in practice.
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Chapter 2	In this chapter, the relevant literature is discussed and the first research question is answered. It comprises an investigation into the most important premises of dialogical praxis, intercultural communication and communicative action to theoretically ground participatory communication in municipal IDP projects
Chapter 3	Having reviewed literature, this chapter identifies four key concepts inherent in participatory communication, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture, with a view of building up theoretical statements and context-specific definitions of each. This chapter significantly proposes a conceptual framework as a normative attempt to address the challenges identified with institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.
Chapter 4	Research methods and the research design were discussed in this chapter. It explains how focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews are used to collect data. Problems, obstacles as and ethical considerations experienced in the study are also discussed.
Chapter 5	The findings obtained from focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews are interpreted and discussed in this chapter with a view of answering the study's research questions.
Chapter 6	This last chapter draws conclusions based on the findings made in Chapter 5. It proposes a new framework in which participatory communication can be rooted and implemented within municipal IDP frameworks. Lastly, recommendations for practice, policymaking as well as for further research are also provided in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction

In chapter 1 (see section 1.3), a background to the problem explored in this study was outlined. In summary, the problem experienced with institutionalised participation in the South African local government context is that the IDP process is fraught with communication-related problems. Arguably, these communication-related problems contribute to the prevailing lack of meaningful citizen participation (see sections 1.1 & 1.2). In light of these real-world problems, participatory communication is proposed as a suitable methodological framework to facilitate citizen participation and alleviate the experienced communication-related problems. Participatory communication is a paradigm of development communication hinged on the need to address challenges related to the participation and empowerment of marginalised role-players (i.e. ordinary citizens) in the decision-making processes concerning local development and social change. Thus, to solve the communication-related problems, the participatory approach proposes facilitation of dialogue as genuine discourse. However, a critical review of the literature around institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes reveals a dearth of research aimed at conceptually locating the participatory process within the participatory communication approach. But, the reviewed literature (see sections 1.1 & 1.2) on participatory communication shows that the approach is fraught with conceptual difficulties. This implies a gap between theory and practice.

The purpose of the present chapter is to answer the following specific research question outlined in chapter 1 (see section 1.4):

What, according to literature, are the theoretical foundations of participatory communication with the focus on Jürgen Habermas's communicative action, Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis, and culture in relation to the creation of meaningful and active participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa?

In doing so, the present chapter proposes three theoretical lines of departure, namely, communicative action, dialogical praxis, and intercultural communication; as key theoretical predilections for anchoring participatory communication. This enables the advancement of key theoretical principles of participatory communication to address the criticisms labelled against the approach. Structurally, the chapter begins with an extensive review of the literature within participatory communication (with a brief background given on the development communication field). Furthermore, the chapter outlines the research trends on the participatory approach so as to situate its potency as a suitable framework for facilitating institutionalised participation in

municipal IDP processes. Informed by these points of departure, the chapter aims to interrogate the problem of a gap between theory and practice.

The chapter broadly aligns with three schools of thought, namely, the Bretton Woods, Latin American and the Communication for Development and Social Change (i.e. Post-Freire) School. It identifies with these schools of thought for two reasons, firstly, to expose the nuanced interpretations and the conceptual transition to participatory communication. Secondly, this is because the schools have dominated and led debates within the development communication discourse in the last seven decades (see also Manyozo, 2006; Manyozo, 2008; Tufte, 2017). Lastly, a concluding summary at the end of this chapter is provided (see section 2.5) to answer the research question posed above.

2.2 Development Communication: An Overview

Perhaps as a precursor to a treatment of Development Communication, it is essential to situate and contextualise it against the concept of development, especially from an African perspective. From the 1950s, following years of colonisation in many African countries, a wave of independence from Western and European colonial rule set in for “new” democratic African nations, such as Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, etc. In the South African context, although independence from the British colonial rule was gained in 1910, a non-racial, democratic system allowing for equal rights for all- only came into effect in 1994 after an atrocious Apartheid regime was overthrown. Pathways towards reconstruction and development- with the objective of improving the quality of life for all and abolishing racial segregation laws, allowing popular participation in all government programmes- were adopted across democratic African states. Defining development, in these instances, was dependant on the whether to adopt “modernist” approaches heralded by the Bretton Woods institutions of economic development or to adopt an African Socialism agenda, rooted in the ideals of egalitarianism (see section 3.2.1). the latter consideration seemed to resonate for many African nations (cf. Adesoye, 2017) and participation of local citizens became an essential marker for development and social change. In this way, development refers to bottom-up process where local citizens come together with their elected public office bearers and jointly contribute ideas towards transform the quality of life for all people in a sustainable manner. It is a process where those charged with government resources aimed at bringing about this transformation are transparent in their activities as well as accountable.

The above discussion augers well with the nuanced interpretations and an historical evolution that the field of Development Communication underwent. The field of Development Communication has been well documented over the past few decades with the purpose of

examining practice-oriented and theory-based approaches aimed at facilitating “development” in developing nations that were previously referred to as “Third-World Countries” (cf. Baú, 2016; Escobar, 1995; Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Manyozo, 2017; McPhail, 2009; Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Otto & Fourie 2009; Dutta, 2015; Otto & Fourie, 2016; Pieterse, 1998; Servaes, 1999; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005; Servaes & Lie, 2013; Servaes & Lie, 2015; Tufte, 2017).

In terms of research in the field of development communication, there is no unilineal movement from one paradigmatic-conceptual framework to another. Manyozo (2006:80-83) records the following six schools of thought as part of the field's historical appraisal: The Latin American school, the Bretton Wood school, the Los Baños school, the African school, the Indian school, and the Post-Freire school with an emphasis on participatory development communication, respectively. In addition, various scholarly works provide a comprehensive historical appraisal of the field of development communication (cf. Manyozo, 2006, 2017; Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte, 2017; Wilkins, Tufte & Obregon, 2014), which arguably dates back to the 1920's (Manyozo, 2006). For the purpose of the present study, a synopsis is given on how three schools of thought (i.e. the Bretton Wood, the Latin American and the Post-Freire school) influenced critical deliberations on theoretical underpinnings of the field of development communication (i.e. from modernisation to dependency and to participatory communication from the 1940's onwards).

Selecting these schools of thought enables us to characterise and contextualise the genesis of, and transition to, participatory communication (i.e. how development communication was conceptualised before and within the context of this paradigm). This does not imply that other schools of thought have not contributed to the transition of development communication, from a modernisation paradigm to newer interpretations of communication for development and social change (where agency has been reconceptualised to be from the bottom-up and not the top-down format).

The present chapter therefore gives a brief historical appraisal of the field of development communication, from the perspective of three schools that have been at the forefront of, and are behind, the three fundamental paradigms that have been the subject of wide interest in development communication literature since the late 1940s, namely, modernisation, dependency and participatory communication (see Huesca, 2008; Manyozo 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Molale, 2019; Thomas, 2014; Tufte, 2017). This effort will help in building a critical dimension explored in the present study regarding the problem of normativity and/or utopianism of participatory communication, and prepare the grounds for the development of a framework in chapter 3 (see section 3.4). In the following three sections, a brief discussion on the three schools

of thought as well as the three paradigms/approaches to development communication, is provided.

2.2.1 The Bretton Wood School and Modernisation (i.e. the Dominant Paradigm)

The Modernisation paradigm (commonly referred to as the dominant paradigm) originated in the late 1940s, as part of the Bretton Wood school of thought. This school of thought was premised on the Marshall Plan of economic growth and the liberalist principles that were rooted in the proposals and decisions of the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, which led to the establishment of institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Manyozo, 2008; Van Zyl, 2008). The conference was geared towards proposing and establishing a global new economic world order that placed emphasis on coming up with strategies for developing and modernising underdeveloped countries in the aftermath of World War II.

During this period, progressively developed countries, particularly the United States, adopted media-centric and behaviour-change theories as the blueprint for developing underdeveloped countries in the so-called 'Third World' (particularly Africa, Asia, and the global south) (cf. Manyozo, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015b). The Bretton Wood School adopted western conceptions of communication theory (rooted in the cybernetic tradition, cf. Craig, 2007) which embraced the use of transactional and linear (information dissemination) communication as a means of transferring western forms of innovation, knowledge and culture to countries in the so-called Third World, modernising them in the process (Manyozo, 2006; Melkote & Steeves, 2015b).

This school of thought was led by scholars such as Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm and Everett Rogers, among others, where powerful media theories such as "Magic Bullet" theory and technological determinism (among others) were relied upon as necessary means for informing programmes that were positioned to usher development and change in developing countries. This resulted from the belief that development problems in the third world were caused by the lack of access to information as well as the reliance on "primitive" and uncivilised cultural beliefs and practices (Manyozo, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Waisbord, 2001).

This belief can also be traced in a 1949 inaugural address by U.S. President Harry S. Truman to an American audience when calling for his nation to embark on a program to use its technological advancements to help transmit change and development to underdeveloped countries, since people in those countries were living in abject poverty, and that, "their economic life is primitive and stagnant...." (Truman, 1949). Such a strongly-worded statement paved way for the adoption of a foreign policy, where the U.S. played the role of a donor in the international development

arena, effectively elevating and transferring western ways of life to these recipient underdeveloped countries, while in the process, local indigenous knowledge was regarded as primitive, stagnant and antithetical to what was viewed (i.e. in the western worldview) as growth and advancement.

The fundamental assumption was that, if western development trends and knowledge were to be transmitted (through a linear and top-down communication technology transfer) to impoverished and underdeveloped countries in the Third World, then development would occur and poor countries would rise to become '*civilised*' and '*Westernised*' societies (Manyozo, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008). Central to the modernisation paradigm was economic growth (industrialisation and ICT-led development) and the spread of capitalism (private ownership of the means of production) (Melkote & Steeves, 2015b).

By the late 1960's, there was growing discontentment due to failed development projects in the so-called Third World despite increased donor aid, which led (particularly by Latin American Scholars) to the reassessment of linear communication approaches adopted within this school of thought (Manyozo, 2006). This was because modernisation was seen to be, among other things, 'culturally insensitive' (cf. Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 1991). Concerning the literature on development communication, from a modernisation perspective, Barranquero (2011) adds to a number of criticisms, arguing that literature is inherently shrouded with colonial ideas about development and social change in western terms, and how it is approached from the perspective of development agencies and multinational bodies as if they ought to be the primary decision-makers concerning development in local regions of developing countries.

Following this line of reasoning, and considering the global political developments from the 1960s onwards, it can be argued that since the global socio-political and economic tensions heightened as a result of, among other things, proxy-wars between the U.S and Russia, many development projects failed to facilitate the promises made by proponents of modernisation. This was primarily because the proxy-wars, that took place mostly through colonisation in African countries, had an impact on the failure of those projects. In the process, it would seem that as a result of such political instability, some developing countries were deliberately "underdeveloped" so that they can continue to be dependent on their colonial masters. This is because predefined measures of development and growth for countries in the so-called Third World were set by western countries and modernisation was accepted as a global world order despite the atrocities it created (i.e. colonisation, globalisation, resource exploitation, among other factors) (cf. Escobar, 1995; Mefalopulos, 2008). These are the kind of issues that paved way for the dependency paradigm to emerge, particularly from within the Latin American School of thought.

2.2.2 The Latin American School and dependency

The dependency paradigm, as highlighted by scholars from the Latin American School of thought (e.g. Escobar, 1995), identified fundamental weaknesses of the dominant paradigm. It was from this school, particularly in Brazil, that critical studies in the late 1960's began to emerge and identify some weaknesses relating to the ideological interpretation of communication and participation within the modernisation approach. The Latin American school brought a 'new' counter-hegemonic account to development communication, by eloquently exposing the "dominance" of modernisation (i.e. the dominant paradigm) in development discourse and its deep-rooted cultural imperialist agenda, as perceived from the Marxist critical perspective (i.e. from the Frankfurt School).

Notably, much of the work in this paradigm was inspired by how a Brazilian scholar, Paulo Freire, pioneered research in adult education and paved way for the exploration of critical consciousness in transforming pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning, from 'banking-education' to bottom-up, horizontal and co-created learning approaches. Additionally, the Latin American school of thought used concepts such as 'Alternative development' and 'Alternative-to-development' through a number of research efforts with the objective of critiquing the theoretical flaws rooted in the dominant paradigm's approach to development (Barranquero, 2011).

The identified weakness in the modernisation approach was a reliance on non-participative, top-down, 'underdevelopment' as well as a cultural imperialist agenda, mainly from the West. Indigenous knowledge and culture from countries in the so-called Third World were assumed to be antithetical to their development, hence the need for them to be "modernised" by adopting western-based cultures, social structure and economic growth perspectives through media-centric diffusion of innovation programs (Mansell, 1982; Shah, 2008).

In light of the context above, underdevelopment is the deliberate unequal distribution of resources to countries in the third world, using institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ensure that these countries are in debt. Furthermore, creating "close ties between domestic and international capital" (Fair & Shah, 1997:7) in order to keep the recipient countries heavily reliant on their donor counterparts. This is a negative outcome of development efforts as noted by Escobar (1995), and other critics, including Luis Ramiro Beltrán (1967), Cardoso (1982), and Barranquero (2011). In view of the Latin American school of thought, "underdevelopment" was observed as a result of power struggles between super powers (i.e. capitalism versus communism/socialism) and the resultant perpetuation of modernist approaches that were used to maintain the hegemonic status quo on developing countries in favour of their colonial masters (cf. Manyozo, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008).

What became evident in the late 1960's was that development, as promised by proponents of the dominant paradigm, brought about the exact opposite of what was promised in line with the modernisation paradigm. This view is meticulously captured by a Brazilian scholar, Arturo Escobar (1995), in his timeless piece of writing, entitled *'Encountering Development'*, where he argued how development's western perspective brought underdevelopment, instead of progress and growth. He says, countries in the Third World experienced a debt crisis and impoverishment because of western interventions. Akin to Escobar's (1995) critical observation of underdevelopment, the modernisation paradigm interpreted the changes experienced in Western Europe and North America instead of predicting the change or effects to be experienced in developing nations. Moreover, the 1980's world recession, as well as economic policies and reforms that were adopted following the crisis, left countries in the so-called third world far behind in terms of development (Melkote & Steeves, 2015b:387-388), while the superpowers recovered.

Notably, proponents of the dependency paradigm (Beltrán, 1967; Cardoso, 1982; Escobar, 1995; and Barranquero, 2011) studied the far-reaching consequences and morass of development (i.e. from the perspective of modernisation). They provided a critique of underdevelopment (for a full discussion, see section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) and channelled research towards charting a "new international economic order" so as to explore a different methodology and approach to development and social change on an international scale. Such an order was prominent between the 1960s and early 1980s (Servaes & Lie, 2013:10).

Arguably, the dependency paradigm was based on a Marxist view of class relations and the whole division of first-world and third-world countries perpetuated the problems faced by underdeveloped countries, including the capitalist development agenda which meant a global expansion of Western capitalism across the developing world. This said, proponents of this paradigm emphasised the need for self-determination and independence from the narrow U.S.-based definitions of development and social change which were based on a one-sided replication and transfer of its political-economic system and development approaches to developing nations (Servaes, 2002:2-7).

Proponents of the dependency paradigm included the likes of Luis Ramiro Beltrán (1967) and Uche (1994), among others, who strongly opposed the modernisation paradigm and its effects to Latin American and African countries, respectively (Waisbord, 2001:16). Their concern was how the dominant paradigm relied on behaviourism theories that cast the blame of underdevelopment on the recipient nations and their people, without examining whether the socio-political and environmental effects of systems may have been responsible for the lack of development in those regions (Huesca, 2008:181).

Put differently, “underdevelopment” was also observed to be a result of the paucity of adequate, reliable, relevant and timely information to overcome a lack of knowledge and skills about recommended innovation among potential adopters of western-based modernisation projects. This was one of the main criticisms levelled against the modernisation paradigm within the dependency school of thought (Melkote & Steeves, 2015a:56-57). The above stinging critique against the dominant paradigm was based on the observation that its proponents unquestionably believed in models and systems around the adoption of new technologies and behaviour change without critically examining them for their economic and socio-political proportions and implications (Huesca, 2008:181).

Furthermore, historical readings such as Cardoso’s (1982) seminal treatise on dependency and development exposes imperialist investment and economic dependency in Latin America as a result of the (mainly western) development agenda. He argues how this leads to a development of underdevelopment since internal structural circumstances and fragmentation of “dependant nations” are not considered when such investments are made, and this assumption is reached through the aid of Lenin’s theory of imperialism-an adaption of Marxism theory.

In light of the criticisms against the dominant paradigm, it was clear that an “alternative” and different orientation of development was needed. Seeing this, Everett Rogers (1976), an influential scholar of a strand of development communication named diffusion of innovation, wrote a historical and reflective treatise entitled, “the passing of the dominant paradigm”. Thus, adding to seminal works that were already marking an end to the modernisation-based narrative and charting new grounds of research bordering on participatory communication.

2.2.3 The Post-Freire School and Participatory Communication

The participatory turn to development communication marked an end to an era of the dominant paradigm. This resulted from the influence of Paulo Freire’s work on critical consciousness and the critical capacity of people (in his context, adult learners) in challenging traditional norms of knowledge construction through dialogue and praxis (i.e. naming the world through the word). To contextualise Freirean thinking in development communication, participatory communication requires dependant nations (and by extension, dependant/local communities) to take an active-participant role in determining local problems, identifying solutions, and taking part in decision-making processes regarding the development needed in their area (Mefalopulos, 2008; White, 1996; Tufte, 2017).

This is opposed to the external and top-down format of approaches where external donors centrally make all decisions about development and social change in a particular area (Manyozo,

2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Tufte, 2017). A fundamental assumption behind participatory communication research is that, both at a micro (i.e. local community) and a macro levels (i.e. nation state), development cannot be externally and exclusively determined by outside agents without granting local beneficiaries, space for meaningful debate and decision-making ability (Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Waisbord, 2008;).

The above kind of thinking presumes that through collective action and empowerment, citizens (at a micro level) can engage in the kind of dialogic communication that enables them to come up with solutions concerning their own development and social change, mindful and acutely aware of the prevailing social, economic and cultural realities from the bottom-up. This interpretation is arguably behind the paradigm-shift identified in the literature, where participatory communication is used to redefine, and transform the field of development communication into communication for social change (see Wilkins, 2009). This is based on the premise that the term “development”, is inextricably intertwined with the modernisation paradigm through top-down approaches, while “social change” is used to highlight the role of marginalised role player (i.e. citizens); as well as acknowledging prevailing social, economic, environmental and cultural factors, in bringing about the desired change for public benefit.

In light of the above interpretation, participatory communication entails the use of communication processes (i.e. the use of dialogue) and resources (including the use of different media platforms) (cf. Sáez, 2013.), through a concerted collective effort (involving marginalised citizens and institutions irrespective of geographic bounds), to establish ways in which a desired social change agenda can be attained (Wilkins, 2009). This can be done in a number of ways, for example, a participatory communication approach can be used to establish sustainable small-scale agricultural practices geared towards bringing an end to poverty for citizens in a local area (cf. Quebral, 2006). In addition to examples that can be offered to reflect how participatory communication is conceptualised in practice, Manyozo’s (2012) case studies depict the role played by the media in the facilitation of bottom-up communication, dialogue and empowerment of ‘subaltern’ voices in development and social change endeavours, as part of his theory broadly termed Media, Communication and Development.

Wilkins (2009) argues that the participatory communication approach has nullified contestations in the literature and calls for redefining development communication through the pursuit of, for example, “post-development” or “re-development” approaches. Furthermore, one may argue that this approach nullifies arguments and narratives that call for the terms “alternative development” or “alternative-to-development” to be used when defining the field (see Escobar, 1995; Pieterse, 1998). This view, however does not imply that the field cannot be referenced as development communication, in fact, Servaes (2008; 2016) uses both terms “development communication” and

“communication for development and social change” interchangeably as he also notes the subtle differences in interpretation as part of an effort to trace the history and mapping of the different research trends of the field.

Two other concepts which are strongly linked to the above interpretations of participatory communication are governance and community engagement (cf. Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi & Herremans, 2010; Cavaye, 2004; Eversole, 2011; Head, 2007). On the one hand, the concept of governance, from the perspective of participatory communication, cannot be dissociated from themes such as deliberative and participatory democracy as well as participatory governance. On the other hand, community engagement is inherently linked to participatory communication in that it focusses on the active role played by local citizens in development and social change efforts in their local areas (cf. Chickering, 2008; McCabe, Keast & Brown, 2006).

The foregoing, along with other benefits of participation in development and social change endeavours, makes the participatory communication paradigm a more favourable approach to development and social change. It is therefore not surprising that words such as “inclusiveness”, “involvement”, “empowerment”, “dialogue”, “participation”, “bottom-up” and “grassroots communication” have characterised research in development communication since the early 1970s (cf. Fair & Shah, 1997; Shah, 2010) onwards, which is in contrast with the modernistic approach which was popular during the pre-1970s era.

As evidenced by two meta-studies of research in development communication between 1958 and 2006, one by Fair and Shah (1997) and a follow-up by Shah (2010), the participatory paradigm seemed to have gained traction and favour among communication research scholars since the 1970s. In the post-2010 era, following Shah’s (2010) meta-study, more research trends that are aimed at fortifying the participatory paradigm have continued to emerge and themes that been treated include, among others:

- The development of policy for efficient utilisation of media and communication tools within a development communication context (Manyozo, 2011);
- The role of the media in communication for social change (Choudhury, 2011),
- Sustainable development and the sustainability of research in communication for social change (Servaes & Lie, 2013, 2015),
- The need to evaluate and assess the sustainability and effectiveness of development projects on development and social change (Lennie and Tacchi, 2013),
- Dialogue and multidirectional communication (Kumar, 2011),
- The importance of listening before telling and a pedagogy of listening (Manyozo, 2017), and,

- The experience of social movements in development and social change contexts (Tufte, 2017) as well as the potency of collective action (Obregón and Tufte, 2017).

The above themes are by no means exhaustive, in fact, the following two sections outline the key definitions underpinning the participatory approach as well as research trends that have further directed research efforts in participatory communication.

2.3 Trends in Participatory Communication Research

Having given an overview of Development Communication through a reflection of three schools that have represented much research work in the field, focus is now turned to participatory communication and research trends leading debates and discussions in the literature. With respect to critical accounts in the literature spanning from the mid-1990s, a continuing trend has been to research and address the idea that participatory communication is somewhat utopian (see Huesca, 2008; Wilkins, 2009; White, 2009). Several studies, discussed below, suggest the suitability of different theoretical predilections to address the utopian nature of participatory communication and give it pragmatic relevance. It is arguable that when studying literature, participatory communication is broad and cannot be bracketed under a singular or unified set of methodologies or theories. This is because various scholars have, and rightfully so, presented multidisciplinary accounts of how participatory communication can be theoretically grounded and at times, these accounts have led to an extensive corpus of literature behind this field. This observation emanates from an in-depth study of literature on participatory communication (spanning about two decades).

In addition, it is essential to highlight two caveats related to the literature review. Firstly, and as would become apparent in the sections below, the inquiry into the literature on the research trends that have been followed when exploring the participatory approach, is broadly outlined according to themes rather than chronological sequencing. This is based on the fact that the research conducted on the participatory approach was not presented in a linear order, for example, a section dealing with contributions from Hickey and Mohan (2005) on participation as one of the “buzzwords” in the development discourse is inextricably linked to Andrea Cornwall’s (2007) treatment of the same issue two years later. Therefore, as outlined below, these two studies are discussed complementarily in spite of the time lapse between them, and this does not imply that there were no other themes existing in the literature that were explored in between this two-year time difference. In fact, in the subsequent section, we can trace a theme on social movements as far back as 2005. This back and forth movement across time periods is a necessary part of the thematic treatment of the corpus of literature, as it provides a complete picture of key research trends that are linked to the present study’s focus. Secondly, treatment of the research trends

below does not reflect the entire corpus of research conducted on the participatory approach, but it is a brief outline of the broad themes that are linked to the present study's context of participatory communication and institutionalised participation in local government.

As part of a common practice in participatory communication literature, various theoretical propositions are offered to theoretically ground the participatory approach as a way of addressing the utopia and normativity critiques (see also section 1.2.3). Given the foregoing, the following are some of the theoretical predilections proposed as suitable theoretical solutions to redefine participatory communication over the years, by different scholars:

- Class struggles (e.g. White, 1996), Radical Politics of empowerment and Development (e.g. Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Williams, 2004)
- Social movements (e.g. Hickey and Mohan, 2005; Tufte, 2017);
- Structuration theory (e.g. Chitnis, 2005);
- Anarchist theory (e.g. Wald, 2014);
- Sustainability and sustainable development (e.g. Servaes, 2016)
- Practice-based models (e.g. Chambers, 1994a, 1994b & 1994c)
- Research and evaluation models (e.g. Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009; Lennie & Tacchi, 2013)
- Communicative Action (e.g. Jacobson and Storey, 2004; Otto & Fourie, 2016);
- Dialogue, Critical Consciousness and Conscientisation (Otto & Fourie, 2009, 2016)
- Culture and social change communication (Dutta, 2011; 2015; 2018)

Perhaps as a precursor to an overview of the research trends on the participatory approach, Lie and Servaes (2015) contributed, in the *Journal of Communication Theory*, an insightful review of the sub-disciplines in the field of development communication as a way of recording themes that have been the focal point in the literature for over six decades, including strategic communication and participatory communication, crisis and risk communication, development journalism and international communication, as well as online media and internet studies (Lie & Servaes, 2015: 245-248).

Furthermore, they also recorded three thematic sub disciplines, namely, health communication, rural communication and agricultural extension as well as environmental communication (Lie & Servaes, 2015: 249-252). Although they do not mention government communication as one of the sub-disciplines, noting that the present study is focused on this theme, Lie and Servaes (2015) do locate the development communication work in government agencies alongside themes such as crisis and risk communication as well as international communication. With respect to the former, the authors situate the body of knowledge related to the kind of development communication efforts that government agencies need to adopt during, say, natural disasters and

non-man-made catastrophes. In respect to the latter, they explore development communication as a study that involves how government agencies in developing countries are able to contribute to international communication governance, policymaking, among other activities (Lie & Servaes, 2015:246-247). This is an important contribution and it summarises decades of research trends that have continued to lead the debates and arguments in the field of development communication. Based on its contribution, it is also helpful insofar as positioning and locating the present study within the broader field of development communication, namely, government communication within the context of institutionalised participation in local government.

In this respect, the present study is located in the sub-discipline named participatory communication in communications science given that it is rooted in a critique against the top-down and linear approach of institutionalised participation involving government institutions, community and opinion leaders, politicians and local citizens (see Lie & Servaes, 2015:246). Mindful of these notes, the present study contributes to literature on this sub-discipline and the following romp through the literature is based on research trends that have been the subject of interest within the participatory approach to development communication.

2.3.1 Interests in Participation, Radical Politics of Empowerment and Development.

By reflecting on, and analysing, the different interests that the process of participation serves in community development from a political perspective, White (1996:6-7) makes a Marxist-leaning critique of class struggles and the complexities of class relations. The author asserts that in order to achieve true participation in development projects, we should follow a series of steps, led by firstly acknowledging that participation is a political issue and thus, needs interrogation with respect to who is involved in a participatory process, what level of authority do they have, how are they involved and “on whose terms” (White, 1996:14-15). These steps and questions resonate with, and are aligned to, participatory communication and its underlying assumptions that are emphatic of collective action and the critical review (mainly from the Latin American School) of entrenched top-down and modernist approaches to development by situating the following two important conceptual issues, namely:

- The inherent power dynamics, and structure, existing between those in charge of development processes and marginalised citizens; and,
- The use of participation as a way of redefining and transforming “development” into “social change” by reflecting the importance of collective action and bottom-up approaches, instead

of inherently top-down and modernistic approach to development underpinned in the dominant paradigm (cf. Wilkins, 2009).

By approaching the subject matter in this way, White's (1996) descriptive study acknowledges that at the heart of any participatory process, there are two sides of the spectrum where interests of specific parties could be fulfilled. On one side, interests of those with the power (either political or financial influence) are fulfilled since they have an upper hand in 'participatory' processes which are inherently top-down and serve as means to achieve, for instance, cost effectiveness (i.e. in the case of nominal or instrumental participation); while on the other side, through collective action and mass mobilisation, marginalised citizens can claim authority and play a leading role in addressing their socio-economic realities (i.e. in the case of representative and transformative participation). These observations are similar to Robert Huesca's (2008) treatment of a historical appraisal of participatory communication. They are similar since both studies situate nuanced interpretations of the participatory approach where, on one hand it can be viewed as a means to an end, while on the other viewed as an end itself.

In particular, Huesca (2008) touches on this participation-as-end versus participation-as-means nexus, by summing up those conditions that may necessitate the adoption of a latter dimension of participation as well as those conditions that may warrant the former. Instructively, this means although the two dimensions of participation may be necessary conditions for contextualising development, participation-as-means may only be warranted in, for instance, "projects focused on teaching skills, carrying out prescribed objectives or producing highly polished media products", while participation-as-end is suitable for projects that are "...aimed at organising movements, transforming social relations, and empowering individuals" (Huesca, 2008:187-188).

The conceptual issues raised by White (1996) are related to the current study, given that they are also relevant when contextualising the power dynamics existing between municipal authorities and marginalised communities during IDP participatory processes. They are also important when evaluating a contextually suitable participatory approach for the community under study, given their cultural uniqueness, socio-economic circumstances and the nature of their political relationship with municipal authorities (including with ward councillors) during the IDP process.

Taking cue from the above lessons by Huesca (2008) on the two dimensions to participation, the present study is careful in contextually describing the warranted form of participation in municipal IDP processes. This way, the present study accepts that participation-as-end is the relevant conceptualisation to explore institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. This is because the notion of community participation, as legislated in South Africa, requires that citizens be empowered in making decisions on local development planning. The process should fortify

relations between citizens and local municipal authorities, considering collective action as an essential condition through which decisions can be taken. This line of thought is part of the present study's conceptualisation of a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.

White's reference (1996) to power dynamics, the resonance of collective action including the interpretations of representative and transformative participation, arguably reflects two inherent concepts in the study of the participatory approach, namely, dialogue and empowerment (see 3.2.2 & 3.2.3). For instance, when referring to representative participation, White (1996:8) illustrates and argues that this kind of participation is about people who are involved in meetings and discussions aimed at facilitating their active voice and granting them leverage and influence with respect to decision-making over a local development project.

Granted that collective action and mass mobilisation cannot take place without the facilitation of dialogue (cf. Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009; Obregón & Tufte, 2017; Tufte, 2017), it is arguable that although White's (1996) study is not rooted in communication studies and does not directly refer to the use of dialogue, her interpretation of representative participation is similar to how dialogue is extrapolated or interpreted within the corpus of literature in communication for development and social change (cf. Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Obregón & Tufte, 2017). The same assumption can also be drawn, that reference to transformative participation symbolises the notion of citizen empowerment (cf. Mefalopulos, 2008; Wilkins, 2009), given that she describes it as a process that leads citizens to attain "greater consciousness of what makes and keeps people poor, and greater confidence in their ability to make a difference" (White, 1996:8-9).

Unlike White's (1996) focus on participation and its underlying contribution to the participatory paradigm, Pieterse (1998) joins the debate by questioning our regard for modernisation and the participatory approach as "paradigms" independent from one another. His approach is akin to the theoretical position espoused within the Latin American school of thought given his use of concepts like "alternative development", "alternative-to-development", and "Post-development" to refer to the participatory approach (i.e. participatory communication) (cf. Escobar, 1995). To this effect, he argues that since the participatory approach represents to a large extent a critique against modernisation, one vulnerability might be that in a revisionist sense, it is seen as an extension of the dominant paradigm, not necessarily an alternative. This argument is part of the author's theoretical proposition that it is problematic to use concepts like 'paradigms' when seeking to identify fissures of difference within the social sciences when referring to modernisation and the participatory approach (Pieterse, 1998: 343-345).

The issue brought up by Pieterse (1998) is an argument that, perhaps, the participatory narrative is still clothed in the same top-down and modernist approaches of the dominant paradigm and has not brought about an alternative to development problems identified within, for instance, the Latin American School and dependency since the 1960s. This argument finds expression when looking at how since the 1990s, for instance, NGOs have proliferated (especially in Africa and the global south) as they were initially proposed as part of project to proffer an alternative bottom-up approach aimed at addressing poverty and improve the quality of life for the poor (cf. Chikozho, 2013).

However, upon close inspection, the supposed 'participatory' nature of NGOs in terms of structural make-up, hierarchy and ways of doing things (i.e. communicating) have been found to be inherently top-down, thereby justifying the argument that the participatory approach seems to be an extension of the dominant paradigm (cf. Chikozho, 2013; Manyozo, 2013; Waisboard, 2008). In this respect, Pieterse (1998) makes the following argument upon making this close observation:

“A basic question is whether alternative development is an alternative way of achieving development, broadly sharing the same goals as mainstream development but using different means, participatory and people-centred” (Pieterse, 1998:345).

This kind of reasoning conveys that, what makes participatory approach an extension of the dominant paradigm (i.e. modernisation or 'mainstream development'), is the fact that it reflects 'participation-as-means' (as means to achieve predefined targets, goals and objectives), instead of being conceived as an end in itself. This essential argument provides a springboard for the present study to formulate a framework for participatory communication. This makes it essential to consider the nuances relating to participation and examine whether the participatory approach can resemble both features of participation-as-an-end as well as participation-as-a-means, when conceived within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. What is helpful with Pieterse's (1998) account, is the need to interrogate the conceptual difficulty of 'participation', and most importantly, to locate this difficulty within recent literature.

Instead of merely unpacking what the participatory paradigm entails, seemingly, Pieterse (1998) is more concerned with how it relates to or has transformed development discourse within the context of the global political system, given its political or -apolitical implications (from top-down to bottom-up approaches, from structural adjustment to agency, from 'development' aimed at economic growth to participation towards social change). This contribution, similar to the one made by Huesca (2008) above (in this present section), is relevant for the present study because it equally outlines the kind of interpretation needed to unpack participation insofar as positioning

participatory communication as its facilitator. This means that Pieterse's (1998) remarks lay the foundation for the need to unpack the conceptual difficulties related to the concept of participation, with an aim of contextualising an interpretation that is suitable for participation. This idea is expressed further in chapter 3 (see section 3.2).

On the political implications of the participatory approach, Williams (2004) argues that an explicitly political analysis of participation is needed to not only evaluate existing participatory programmes, but also to show the strong bond between participation and development practice as it has the potential to influence the emancipation and empowerment of citizens (Williams, 2004:570). Akin to Pieterse's (1998) views, Williams (2004) believes that participation is a political construct and the narratives or decisions around participation and non-participation, are inherently political. In this way, Williams (2004) argues for political learning to be realised as one of the outcomes of a re-politicised analysis of institutionalised participation so as to capacitate local citizens. To this end, Williams (2004) postulates that:

“Within examples of mass participation in local government, ‘success’ is not found only in individual projects completed, or particular instances of corruption that are challenged, but also through the wider institutional learning that occurs” (Williams, 2004:571).

The reasoning behind this statement is that the object, and measure, of genuine participation goes beyond just the ritual where people are engaged in individual project deliberation and decision-making, and, translates into an emancipatory and empowerment project aimed at imparting all those involved with skills and know-how in the long-term. This perspective justifies one of Molale's (2014) recommendations in the case of Matlosana Local Municipality (in the North West Province of South Africa), that local citizens need to be skilled when it comes to understanding their intricate role in the IDP processes to increase the value and meaning to their participation. This recommendation stemmed from an observation that one of the challenges experienced in that Municipality was the lack of understanding and confusion by local citizens concerning their role when it comes to participation in IDP meetings (Molale, 2014: 77). For the present study, these views are pertinent because they locate participation and empowerment as central, and key concepts, relevant to the participatory approach.

In addition to the argument that participation should be re-politicised, Hickey and Mohan (2005) suggest that it should be relocated within a critical modernist approach to development and, specifically, be theoretically informed by a radical notion of citizenship (Hickey & Mohan, 2005:237). This contribution differs from that of Pieterse (1998) who approached the debate from the reflexive modernist approach, but both contributions support an argument that the

participatory approach has caused a shift in the development discourse from structural adjustment to agency.

Hickey and Mohan's (2005:237) critical outlook on the participatory approach is useful, given their observation that participation is one of the buzzwords and 'shibboleths' of the development discourse. This perspective was later underscored in a number of scholarly contributions, including Cornwall's (2007) endeavour to highlight the elusive nature of 'participation' as a concept, in a special issue of the journal entitled *Development in Practice*. In a series of published seminal works with Cornwall as guest-editor (cf. Eade, 2007), various scholars, such as, Pablo Alejandro Leal (2007:539) and Andrea Cornwall (2007:471-473) raise concerns about concepts such as participation, empowerment, and citizenship, as having been adopted as buzzwords and as such, have lost their "philosophical and ideological meanings". Although these seminal works were published over a decade ago, the views and perspectives held on the special journal issue are still as relevant today as they were over a decade ago. For example, in a recent study aimed at reconceptualising the term participation for application in theatre practice, Afolabi (2017:68) observes that perhaps participation has been ineffective because it has been used as a catchphrase that serves "hegemonic realities". This preoccupation with the problematic nature of participation within the development discourse is at the heart of the argument carried in the present study (cf. Hickey & Mohan, 2005).

As a theoretical contribution, Hickey and Mohan (2005) propose that, if participation is rooted in a radical theory of citizenship and a radical politics of development, then the concerns raised about participation being utopian can be sorted. This theoretical approach may help identify a shared political context wherein a "political sense of party-social movement dynamics" (Hickey & Mohan, 2005:256) can be ushered in to encourage local actors (i.e. citizens) and all relevant social (and state) institutions (e.g. Municipalities, NGOs, Political Parties, etc.) to come together and seek consensus towards addressing common development problems. This contribution, understandably so, is not rooted in communication studies and therefore it is not concerned with the nature of engagement between local actors in that 'political party-social movement' nexus and thus, it does not speak to what kind of participation, in practice, is needed when conceptualised in this theoretical framework. The contribution, like with other scholarly works sharing this line of thought (cf. Pieterse, 1998; Williams, 2004), is essential as a build-up towards the identification of a conceptual framework together with its underlying and key concepts (participation, dialogue, empowerment, and culture) for a participatory communication approach in municipal IDP processes.

By investigating the conceptual difficulty with participation and how it is assumed the status of a buzzword or 'shibboleth' in the development discourse, Pieterse (1998), Williams (2004), as well

as Hickey and Mohan (2005) have helped advance the need for the present study to first, and with reference to relevant literature, identify theoretical/definitional statements for these concepts (in the context of municipal government's IDP processes) as a way of unpacking what each concept entails and how it should be conceived. Related to this point of departure is another research trend around social movements, which has also been the subject of much interest when critically interrogating the participatory approach in the last two to three decades.

2.3.2 Social Movements and Class Struggles

The research trend on social movements as well as other theoretical contributions such as the radical political approach and the class struggles, are inextricably interwoven, given that together, they help identify the link between participatory communication, participation and empowerment (see section 2.3.9). Pieterse's (1998) reference to the emergence of new social movements in the social sciences is one example. Perhaps as an even more important contribution to the present study, the author's conceptualisation of participatory communication as 'reflexive development' (Pieterse, 1998:367), recognises that the approach is buttressed by the shift in development thinking from structural adjustments to agency, information-sharing and the facilitation of feedback as objects of social change. This argument relates to how interfaces, negotiations and engagement among people from the bottom-up, take centre-stage as part of a re-politicisation that has taken place, "in manifestations such as special interest, social movements and localisation" (Pieterse, 1998:369). This line of thinking is relevant to the present study as it speaks directly to the role that local citizens should play in opportunities of public consultations as well as those conditions that can enable this role to be meaningful. Such a reflection is essential to a framework for facilitating institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes especially given that community participation is a key requirement in such processes.

Other scholarly works where social movements are proposed as a mechanism for redefining the participatory approach include contributions by Huesca (2001) as well as Hickey and Mohan (2005). Their concern, was on how the voice of the disenfranchised can be mobilised and claim power over imbalanced power structures where national and international institutions have the ultimate control over development decision-making processes of all kinds. Although both studies similarly provide a conceptual basis for linking the participatory approach with the body of work on (new) social movements, they are slightly different in terms of conceptual orientation. On the one hand, Robert Huesca (2001) approaches new social movement from the perspective of resistance and their capacity in facilitating a voice for marginalised social actors when interacting with transnational development agencies in "space-less spaces" through the aid of cheap technology and their ability to create alliances and networks beyond national borders as part of a 'global village'. For Huesca (2001), one key feature about new social movement is their unique

capability, paying attention to the process of identity formation as part of facilitating coordinated action and challenging prevailing dominant and statist ideologies about development that might as well be antithetical to the development needs of the local, thus facilitating 'globalisation from below' (Huesca, 2001:416-419).

On the other hand, Hickey and Mohan's (2005) inquiry into social movements is not limited to exploring their resistant character to neoliberal frameworks of mainstream development (i.e. modernity) or their potency in addressing the regional and ethnic identity concerns for specific localities; but on their significant transformative capability to influence change for the marginalised on a 'national' or larger political scale as part of their argument for relocating participation within a radical politics of development theory. To contextualise this argument, the authors cite various examples of transformative social movements that have led to meaningful political change for many disenfranchised voices in various areas in the global south, for instance the '*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*' or Rural Worker's Movement (MST) in Brazil (cf. Koch 2010); the Zapatistas movement in Mexico (cf. Tufte, 2017); as well as the '*Narmada Bachao Andolan*' (NBA: Save the Narmada Movement) in India (cf. Nilsen, 2007). As a takeaway, the study draws our attention to the idea that social movements, within a participatory context, can help in conceiving possibilities where development, citizenship and access to land are not treated as mere alternatives to mainstream development, but are part and parcel of a broader project of facilitating agency and social justice within a radicalised politics of citizenship and participation.

From a theoretical perspective, such works can be associated with the Frankfurt School of critical theory dating back to the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, through to ideas of modern-day thinkers such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Max Weber, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. Arguably, Thomas Tufte's (2017) book entitled: "communication and social change: a citizen perspective", captures the research around social movements in modern times during various uprisings in different parts of the world examining how they all contested and disrupted the rigid power structure in various countries, including the Arab Spring, which led to regime change in Egypt; the Fees Must Fall movement in South Africa which caused the government to issue free tertiary education to students in higher education; as well as the mass demonstrations in Spain by the unemployed youth and university graduates (i.e. the '*Juventud Sin Futuro*', Youth Without Future), leading to mass dialogue over common problems affecting Spanish citizens in Barcelona as well as in Madrid, and attracted social media support from millions of people worldwide (Tufte, 2017: 89-93). In this way, Tufte (2017) uses the global proliferation of social movements as a springboard towards unpacking how the media (in particular, social networking sites) can help in mobilising the disenfranchised through 'alternative'

participation, non-participation and resistance so as to disrupt current power dynamics and redefine the current and nuanced interpretation of participation.

Moreover, through an exploration of collective action and social movements, Obregón and Tufte (2017) propose a new agenda in communication and social change by posing a series of questions aimed at harnessing collective action in development discourse (i.e. from the bottom-up). Such questions inquire what theoretical frameworks inform our understanding of collective action and social change. These are critical questions aimed at interrogating the purpose of all development and social change efforts in theory and in practice, from interdisciplinary as well as pragmatic perspectives. They include asking: “What actors drive processes of collective action? What are the communication features of their intervention? What type of social change process do they enhance? What evidence demonstrates the impact of collective action processes? What theoretical frameworks inform our understanding of collective action and social change? What is the role of communication scholarship in this context?” (Obregón & Tufte, 2017:635).

Such questions critically reflect the extent of participation of local citizens from the perspective of collective action and social movements if we are to regard a mass effort by citizens as an essential driver of accountable public participatory processes. For the present study, such questions relevantly guide the process of deconstructing institutionalised participation to examine the role of local citizens in integrated development planning processes of local government in South Africa. This is done through an inquiry into their behaviour when claiming a voice over the development process, how they organise themselves and prepare for consultations as part of integrated development planning, what power dynamics are at play during these consultations and what is the nature of their relationship with municipal officials (who are also important role-players in the development process). Additionally, the above questions by Obregón and Tufte (2017) also help us to identify what kind of communicative processes, methods, and channels/platforms are used in the collective action value chain as a way of facilitating a ‘voice’ that local citizens should have. Of importance in the above perspective is the attempt by both scholars to bridge the theory-versus-practice gap, by linking communication scholarship with real-world issues experienced when critically observing the dynamics related to collective action.

In essence, research on the role of social movements in development literature has contributed to how the participatory communication paradigm, within the field of communication for development and social change, is conceived. This argument is based on the fact that narratives on social movements unpack ‘development’ from the bottom-up, thereby enabling us to focus on understanding the social and material conditions in which active citizen participation can take place. In this way, the concern around the nature of participation, whether active, genuine, or meaningful, stems from the need to redefine participation since it has been appropriated as one

of the shibboleths in development thinking, given that participation can mean different things for different people (cf. Eversole, 2003; Cornwall, 2007; Wilkins, 2009).

Notwithstanding, there has been a scholarly effort aimed at elucidating what kind of participation is ideal when considered and conceptualised within the participatory communication approach, infused by themes relevant to the emergence of social movements. To this effect, Mefalopulos's (2008:11) typology conceptualised the concept of 'empowered participation', where all relevant role-players, especially local citizens, give consent for participation in dialogic processes that will lead to them jointly contributing ideas and jointly making decisions about what, and how, (social) change will be achieved. When studied closely, this line of thinking is also concerned with participation being an end in itself and not just a means to achieve certain predefined ends and objectives.

As noted in chapter 1 (see section 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3), the literature into the participatory approach offers considerable efforts around theory-building, thereby creating multiple pathways which, at times, may be seen as divergent. In the section below, two examples of such pathways namely structuration theory alongside the duality of development (Chitnis, 2005) as well as anarchist participation (Wald, 2014); are briefly explored as part of the research trends on the participatory approach akin to the theoretical contributions that have emerged over time.

2.3.3 A further look at some examples of theory-building in the scholarship on Participatory Communication: Structuration and Anarchist Theories

2.3.3.1 Structuration Theory and duality of development

Chitnis (2005) cogently observed that the constantly changing political dynamics and the political restructuring that have continued to exist in the global geopolitics sphere, might have caused the seemingly ununiformed approach towards universally identifying a theoretically grounded foundation for participatory communication. To address this concern, Chitnis (2005) proposes the infusion of participatory communication in a political context, aiming at recasting it within Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theoretical framework.

This theory looks at society as having a duality (not tension) between individuals and the social structure. Accordingly, this duality can cause necessary structural properties in a social system which serve as both enabling and constraining forces of human action. The fundamental construct of structuration theory is the premise that human beings cannot bring about social change on their own, but they can "act as knowledgeable objects in conjunction with the social order to change their social reality" (Lamsal, 2012: 112). This point argues that the idea of collective action as a

mechanism through which human beings can shape social order for positive social change is hinged on the concept of empowerment (cf. Wilkins, 2009).

Moreover, Chitnis (2005) suggests that structuration theory can give participatory communication some practical relevance since the theory can “inform us how societal systems can overcome the tensions caused by the structural problems that impede the process of social change” (Chitnis, 2005:231). Implied in this statement is the idea that, based on its dialogic nature, participatory communication is one of the “social systems” that can usefully alleviate tensions experienced during development and social change. Additionally, the argument suggests that a duality exists between structure and agency, where human beings are able to create the social structure in which they live by means of establishing agreed-upon and socially acceptable norms and values (through communication, negotiation and interactions); and find themselves constrained by the social structures they have created (Lamsal, 2012:113).

In this way, Chitnis (2005:243) is of the view that recasting participatory communication with structuration theory, produces a framework that helps to “understand the role of communication for development within the complexities and inextricable relationship between people and the larger social structure within which societies operate”. It is from this point that participation, dialogue and empowerment can be seen as central to a participatory approach aimed at revamping the social structure as a way of addressing the objectives of development communication. If we are to apply this way of thinking to the present study, the municipal IDP context and its processes may be interpreted as the social structures created by people to embark on development and social change endeavours through their participation in the identification and implementation of IDP projects. This can be achieved through a facilitation of dialogue and communication.

One of the ways for them to achieve development and social change is by participating in IDP meetings, which are part of the social structure they have created. This can be a useful framework to understand the complexities of the process and the inherent power dynamics existing in this structure and agency duality. However, beyond just understanding the structural make-up within which (institutionalised) participation occurs, the present study seeks to identify a framework that examines how to empirically operationalise participatory communication in municipal IDP processes amidst restrictive power and control dynamics, as well as the need for collective action and agency in bringing about social change.

This theoretical approach by Chitnis (2005) finds relevance to the present study because upon close interpretation, it reflects how participatory communication, through participation, empowerment and dialogic communication, can lead to positive social change and achieve the

objectives of development. One essential lesson drawn from Chitnis's (2005) study is that, it would be futile to ignore the social and political structure that directly affects human action if we are to explore ways in which development communication (within the context of the participatory paradigm) can catalyse development and social change. This strong relationship between development communication and the social and political order presents a realistic theoretical account, of how participatory communication can be applied in practical development and social change settings, mindful of the constantly changing political landscape and institutional complexities involved in, for instance, government communication.

The above takeaway from Chitnis (2005) serves as a foundation for the present study, upon which the complex relationship between human behaviour and structure is explored within the context of participation in the IDP process (which is also a legislative imperative for development and social change), from the approach of participatory communication. Accordingly, Chitnis's (2005) contribution is not the only useful theoretical predilection offered as an anchor for the participatory approach. To this end, the following section provides a brief appraisal of anarchist theory and participation (Wald, 2014) as yet another possible pathway through which the participatory approach can be theoretically rooted.

2.3.3.2 Anarchist Theory and Participation

Also concerned with exploring ways to theoretically ground and predicate participatory communication, Wald (2014) suggests that participatory development should be rooted in a practice-oriented theoretical framework of anarchist political philosophy. This in an attempt to "address the so-called NGO-social movement divide" by offering anarchism as a possible theory aimed at attaining "radical and transformative development practice" (Wald, 2014:618). Wald (2014:619) approaches this argument from the position shared by Hickey and Mohan (2005) that social movements are better positioned to achieving transformative participation, instead of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that face criticism for being an extension of mainstream development and are limited insofar as enabling transformative participation to ensue.

The author sees anarchism as a relevant theoretical framework due to its point of similarity between participatory communication and post-development, namely, the fact that it is also founded upon the critique of the authoritarian and top-down structure of the dominant paradigm and that it also cherishes ideals such as, advocating for the "struggle against domination..., and diversity and openness" (Wald, 2014: 619-620). In this way, anarchism can be viewed as a framework aimed at creating "anarchist partnerships" where the relatively privileged can meaningfully engage in dialogue with the marginalised and the oppressed in the kind of

relationship where there is no hierarchy between them (in the form of a most powerful versus those with less power) (Wald, 2014).

Arguably, this way of thinking is pertinent when considering the critiques that participatory communication has faced over the years (see Chitnis, 2005; Williams, 2004). By focusing on making participation transformative, the issue of empowerment becomes important, while dialogue also becomes an essential facilitator for the kind of engagements between the proposed “anarchist partners” in the development and social change process.

For the present study, an important takeaway from Wald’s (2014) contribution is the centrality of dialogue between partners who may not always see eye-to-eye when it comes to the complex process of finding solutions and negotiating a local development agenda. What is key in the acknowledgement of the fact that consensus is not always the outcome of a development process given that conflict is an inevitable eventuality, hence the need to forge ‘anarchist partnerships’. Additionally, Wald’s (2014) study realistically acknowledges the inherent power dynamics that exist in any development process, thus, advocating for the ‘powerful’ to be mindful of their position so as to find ways where they can denounce their influential position during dialogical interactions to facilitate an enabling environment for the ‘less-powerful’ to reasonably have an equal voice/role during deliberations. Given that Wald’s (2014) study, like with those already explored in this inquiry about the research trends underpinning the participatory approach (in section 2.3), borders on the concepts of empowerment and dialogue, it becomes essential that the theoretical predilections underpinning the concepts ought to be explored.

The reason is simply that one cannot accept either of the proposed theoretical directions without focusing on the theoretical implications that these concepts pose for participatory communication. Against this background, an in-depth study of the literature around these concepts reveals how they are rooted in ‘critical’ and ‘applied’ social theories such as communicative action, dialogical praxis as well intercultural communication. Another reason for focusing on these concepts and their theoretical underpinnings is to avoid ‘reinventing the wheel’, by blindly following the trend of offering interdisciplinary accounts aimed at theoretically rooting participatory communication at the expense of exacerbating the already existing fault lines. These faults lines exist between “theory and practice, technology and the social, policy and the implementation of policy, the global and the local, technocratic and managerial approaches versus endogenous, people-centred approaches” (Thomas, 2014:8).

Besides the above contributions to participatory communication scholarship, there has been considerable contribution along the lines of proposed research methodologies, and practice-based models offered with the intention of showing practical implications or relevance that the

participatory approach can have. A few of these models are discussed in the following section as part of the research trends in participatory communication.

2.3.4 Research methodologies and Models underpinning the Participatory Communication

Practically, perhaps the greatest challenges facing the participatory approach, is the absence of 'how-to' models that are rooted in theory and aimed at implementing participatory communication for the attainment of social change. Presently on offer are practice-based models as well as research methodologies concerned with ways in which data is collected for the purpose of identifying, in a 'participatory' nature, local problems and challenges that impede development and social change. The issue with these type of models is that they are not rooted in theory.

Arguably, these models are project-based where participation is approached as a means to achieve predefined ends. The NGO sector, as an example, is largely reflective of these kind of practice-based models, where desired goals are outlined and if public consultation takes place, it happens with the sole purpose of achieving predefined and desired ends. One thing about these models is that they are not concerned with conceptually deconstructing the role of, for instance, dialogue, participation, culture and empowerment within a participatory communication process. Moreover, it would seem that the move towards research methodologies for community development (e.g. Chambers, 1994) in the post-modernisation era was a result of a 'reformist' stance embarked by proponents of the modernisation approach in response to the critiques of the Latin American school, against their erstwhile-dominant view of 'development' (Huesca, 2008). Seemingly, such models have a propensity of giving short-term and context specific solutions to specific development problems leaving evidence of the gap between theory and practice (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013; Muturi & Mwengi, 2009; Servaes, 2016). Let us explore this assertion by closely examining a few models below.

2.3.4.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Robert Chambers (1994) is a leading scholar who devoted significant research interest towards Participatory Rural Appraisal (hereinafter, PRA). According to Chambers (1994a: 953-957), PRA is a family of multidisciplinary methodologies (ranging from agroecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, farming systems, rapid rural appraisal and activist participatory research) used for forecasting, interpreting and identifying the "emic" worldviews and solutions to development problems from the perspective of local citizens.

He regards PRA as a "family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act" (Chambers,

1994a:953). What is interesting to note is that in his treatise, Chambers (1994a:954) enlists what he calls “activist participatory research” alongside four other methods used to define PRA. He then describes activist participatory research as a “family of approaches and methods which use dialogue and participatory research to enhance people’s awareness and confidence, and empower their action”.

This description of activist participatory research is relevant for what is currently conceptualised as participatory communication, considering the fact that the author also acknowledges that what he calls activist participatory research was influenced by Freire’s work on critical consciousness (Chambers, 1994a:954). As a research method, this model is useful only as a research strategy to guide other models with practical relevance on how to apply and adopt activist participatory mechanisms rooted in dialogic communication and collective action. This is because it places emphasis on practical research methods (such as diagramming, analysis of systems, informal mapping, innovation assessment, etc.) as strategies that can be employed in the development and social change process from the bottom-up. Also, what is distinctive with PRA is that it is described as having a thematic difference with Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), by being a bottom-up approach towards social change while the latter applies a top-down approach (Chambers, 1994a, 1994b). This position of PRA is reflective of, and consistent with, the paradigm-shift in the development communication discourse from instrumental action and structural adjustment to agency.

To this effect, Chambers (1994b:1253) posits that RRA and PRA differ “...basically in the ownership of information, and the nature of the process: in RRA information is more elicited and extracted by outsiders as part of a process of data gathering; in PRA it is more generated, analysed, owned and shared by local people as part of a process of their empowerment” (1994b: 1253). Alongside PRA, another model named participatory Action Research (PAR) can also be included in the discussion of research and practice-based models that have been offered in the literature on the participatory approach. This model is briefly discussed in the following sub-section.

2.3.4.2 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory Action research (hereinafter, PAR) refers to the social action of involving local people in the processes of identifying and reflecting on local problems by means of data collection, identifying and designing solutions, as well as analysing and applying research findings with the aim of pursuing social change and worthwhile human purposes (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). PAR is commonly used as a research methodology in the kind of

social research aimed at decentralising power relations between, for instance, the expert researcher and research subjects.

The model, in its application, resonates with the goals and objectives of participatory communication, which are to give agency in social change settings to the marginalised, so that they may have a voice in deciding how the process of bettering their lives should be undertaken. The challenge with this model is the fact that, like with PRA, it is focused on the field of research methodology and it overlooks the complex power relationships existing, if it were to be applied, between the rural poor and their institutions of development and social change (e.g. municipalities). The same observations made with respect to PRA above can be made here: PAR, as a research method, can only go as far as guiding the other facilitative models of participatory communication so that they can achieve development and social change. Apart from these research methodologies, which are useful in conceiving ways of applying participatory approach in practical settings to achieve development and social change; there are some practice-based models that have been offered to address the theory-practice gap. A few of such models are briefly treated in the following section.

2.3.5 Practice-based and Evaluation Models of Participatory Communication

In this present section, three different practice-based models are explored to illustrate the multifaceted research trends into the participatory approach. In no particular order, the models treated below are the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) which was developed in 1996; the Communication for Participatory Development model by Kincaid and Figueroa, which was offered in 2009; as well as Lennie and Tacchi's (2013) Framework for evaluating Communication for Development. These models, represent different approaches that have consistently been on offer, at least as far back as the mid-1990's, as part of the multidimensional work-streams that have contributed to the growth of the participatory approach in terms of practice-based work and theory-building.

2.3.5.1 Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

Developed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1996), Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is a practical framework used to initiate community development based on a needs-and-strength-based approach within the community. It is presented as a bottom-up process aimed at enabling local citizens to identify pre-existing assets and use them to initiate local development. Haines (2009:38) says the essentiality of the ABCD model is the whole idea of using pre-existing assets of a community to achieve development instead of only focusing on what it needs. This can be achieved by drawing community needs and community assets maps. Arguably the emphasis on

the need to gather local knowledge, thereby making citizens key role-players in the process of identifying solutions for development and social change, is fundamentally linked to what the participatory approach seeks to achieve when looking at the desired outcomes of development and social change.

Rooted in psychology and social work studies, asset-based community development is about harnessing the idea of 'social capital' by fostering a sense of community and social cohesion with the aim of gathering resources from the community to address a common problem (cf. Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, and Bearsley-Smith, 2008). In addition, what makes the ABCD model unique to conventional development approaches is its focus on building capacity within the community, as a way of strengthening a community's assets, instead of focusing on problems and things that a community lacks. This line of reasoning is essential for the present study and can become useful to the process of developing a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, especially when conceptualising empowerment of key role-players (i.e. local community members) in the participatory process.

In order to achieve this, those who seek community development should first embark in a process of identifying assets in the form of community-based organisations, local businesses, and people as a way of establishing strategic linkages and forging rapport. Assets can range from soft skills and attributes that people possess, to entities such as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), government institutions, local businesses/entrepreneurs (Boyd *et al.* 2008; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Mathie & Cunningham, 2005).

The basic assumption of the ABCD model is that through local meetings and forums, discussions can be held where these assets are identified and tasked with addressing community problems (such as crime, unemployment, poverty, ailing public infrastructure, etc.). For instance, if a community is battling with poverty, men and women can gather themselves and organise farming co-operatives that can, in turn, grow vegetables and feed members of the community. For sustainability purposes, excess vegetables can be sold and income can be generated to ensure continuous crop production for the locals.

Essentially, the ABCD model is a solutions-based approach to development instead of focusing on, among other things, marginalising and denigrating local citizens to the extent that they feel despondent and hopeless about their problems. This kind of assumption is essential to the present study's main argument for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. This is because it provides important clearly defined roles of citizens in the participatory process and the way in which they should be empowered by being key and active role-players in the process. This way, community-driven development is

ideal for development, especially given that citizens have the potential to mobilise and identify assets with the purpose of “creating local economic development” (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:474). One advantage that the ABCD approach has is its ability to mobilize community members and provide a platform for their use of indigenous knowledge as they jointly collaborate in offering solutions for common problems. This advantage is essential to the present study, especially when considering factors such as empowerment as well as culture, given that the concepts are essential to participatory communication as well.

In an empirical study about mental health reform and the participation of youth in government-funded projects in rural parts of Australia, Boyd *et al.* (2008) argued that benefits brought by the application of the asset-based community development framework, include, addressing social problems through the identification of local resources, breaking the stigma and stereotypes concerning mental illness, and creating awareness for all citizens to learn how to deal with the problem. Accordingly, this can be achieved through the establishment of linkages and social networks, which are regarded as essential driving forces for the ABCD approach (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Mathie & Cunningham, 2005:176).

However, there are three identifiable fault lines concerning the ABCD model. Firstly, its view of development is simplistically premised on assets identification for the purposes of economic growth. Secondly, it emphasises community mobilisation and participatory engagement without due regard for the duality of structure and agency in bringing about development and social change. Thirdly, the model translates to the use of participation-as-means to achieve certain ends (i.e. identifying assets so to achieve commercial and economic ends).

With respect to the first issue, the model can arguably be associated with the dominant paradigm of development communication, although as part of a ‘reformist’ project aimed at infusing the paradigm with ‘participatory’ narratives to tone down critiques from utopian scholars (cf. Huesca, 2008). Regarding the second issue, and from the perspective of structuration theory, the model fails to consider the extent to which the social structure, infused with human action, can affect any effort aimed at bringing about positive and long-lasting social change (cf. Chitnis, 2005). Thirdly, the nature of participation in this community-driven model (i.e. participation-as-means) is identified given the background that citizens mobilise to find assets and turn them into a commercial enterprise for the whole community. Here participation is not seen as an end in itself, it is project-specific (short-term) and does not satisfy the issue of sustainable development (cf. Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Huesca, 2008; Muturi & Mwengi 2009; Servaes, 2012).

In spite of the aforementioned fault lines, some elements of the ABCD model are crucial in anchoring the participatory approach in facilitating institutionalised participation in municipal IDP

process, given that it accounts for the fact that any participatory process should be aimed at empowering local citizens through capacity and skills transfer. In addition, through this kind of role, the participatory process can be liberating for local citizens in that it affords them equal chances to express their views without anyone feeling alienated for holding unpopular perspectives during the communication process (i.e. see Mefalopulos, 2008, for a discussion of 'empowered participation'). This can be a painstaking process and can last for hours and consensus may be difficult to achieve. On the other hand, the model does not account for the role that powerful institutions (such as municipalities) or persons (such as politicians) can play in influencing decision-making processes. In addition to this approach is the Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model, which is briefly explored in the next section.

2.3.5.2 Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) Model

The CFPD (see figure 2.1) model is a multidisciplinary model aimed at evaluating social change through a process of community dialogue and collective action. This model focuses on how community members, as a collective, can bring about individual and social change by jointly identifying a common problem and work together towards proposing solutions and bringing an end to the problem. The establishment of Community Policing Forums (CPF's) in the South African context can be regarded as an example of instances where this model can be applied or utilised.

The formation of CPF's is a common response in many South African communities where citizens organised themselves and formed community watch or patrol groups as a way of fighting the scourge of crime in their neighbourhoods. In order to prevent these groups from committing crimes themselves (such as the killing of suspected criminal gang members or robbers) as well as to prevent cases of mob justice, the CPF's partner with the South African Police Service (SAPS) to bring criminal gangs to justice and restore safety within their communities.

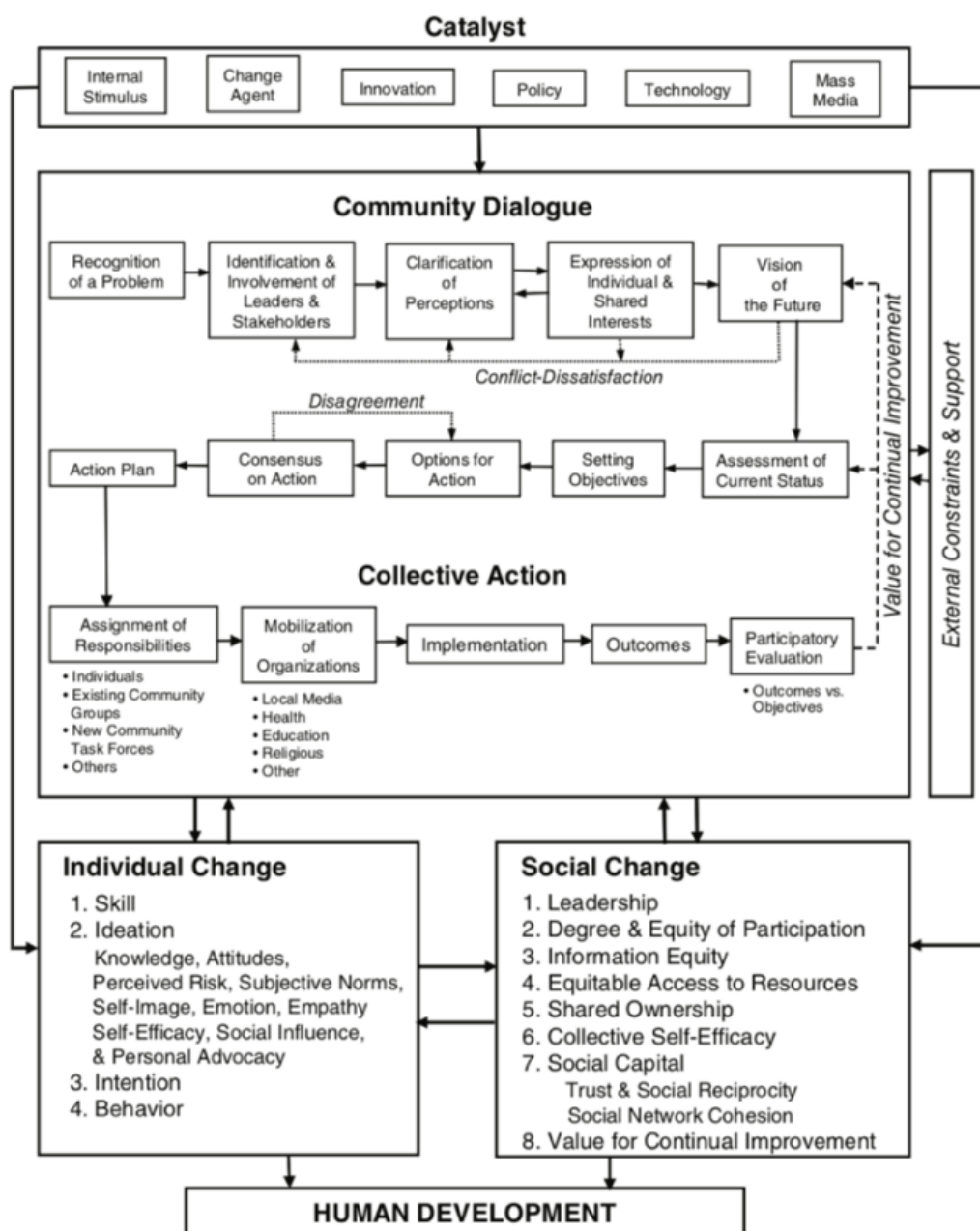


Figure 2-1: Kincaid & Figueroa's (2009) CFPD model

Although such a model draws on multiple theories such as convergence theory of communication, conflict management, future search and leadership as well as group/organisational dynamics (Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009:513); it is context-specific and it only fits in contexts where citizen participation is a voluntary exercise and not a legislative requirement (e.g. institutionalised participation in local government). Additionally, what makes this model inconsistent with participation in local government is the fact that complex power relationships between municipalities and citizens within the IDP context require reinterpretation given the nature of participation required to ensure the active and meaningful participation of local citizens. Like the

ABCD model, it is tailored around the idea of community participation, where community members initiate their own deliberations about how to address social problems. Likewise, Lennie and Tacchi's framework for evaluating Communication for Development is also indexed in these research methodologies and practice-based models as part of broad contributions that have been offered in the participatory communication discourse. This framework is briefly discussed in the following section.

2.3.5.3 Lennie and Tacchi's Framework for evaluating Communication for Development

Linked to the discussion below on sustainable development, Lennie and Tacchi's (2013) framework (figure 2-2) for evaluating communication for development (C4D) initiatives comes at a time when literature critically questions the role of communication in facilitating long-lasting development and social change, namely, the idea of sustainability (see section 2.3.3.6). This line of thought emphasises the nature of communication and asserts its potency for sustainable social change and development.

In short, Lennie and Tacchi (2013) are of the view that communication contains a set of unique principles poised for the essential function of contributing towards sustainable development and social change. These principles include being participatory, critical, holistic, realistic, learning-based, emergent, and, complex. Each of these principles are components of this framework, which places emphasis on "people, relationships, processes, and principles such as inclusion, open communication, trust and continuous learning" (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013:1). This is part of a process to explore and critically examine complex social change issues that the field of development and social change aims to address.

In addition, what is different about this framework is that it identifies communication and dialogue as central participatory aspects of communication and social change. Discussing the origins of this framework, Lennie and Tacchi (2013:13) reveal that the framework stems from 15 years' work on participatory research and evaluation, thus it can be used to evaluate whether communication for development initiatives are a fitting influence towards genuine and sustainable development and social change.

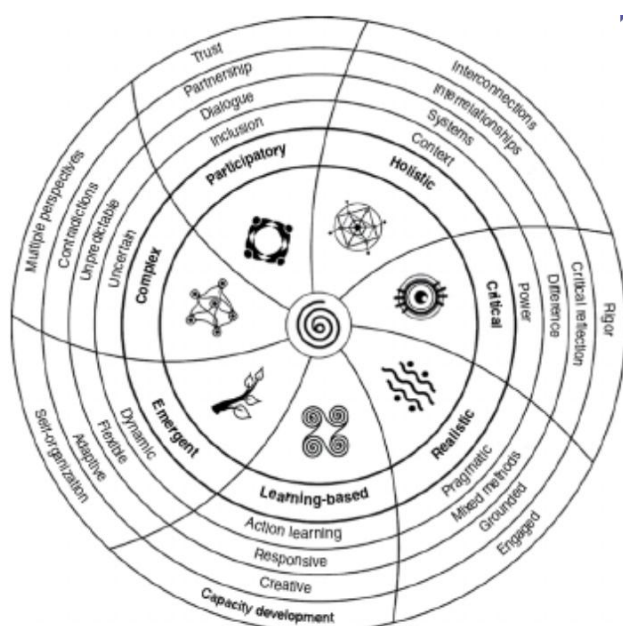


Figure 2-2: Lennie and Tacchi's (2013) key components in the framework for Evaluating C4D

This framework is an essential contribution to the field of development communication as it presents a checklist of main participatory communication ideals that each development project should espouse. As essential as this model may be when evaluating whether development projects reflect the above ideals, the model does not address or guide how participation, within the participatory communication framework, ought to be facilitated. One may argue that this model can only be used as far as evaluating other models and pre-existing participatory projects, to assess if they are reflective of the abovementioned participatory communication ideals and principles. It does not describe, in a practical sense, how to implement certain steps in order to achieve the mentioned participatory communication ideals. For large organisations using Communication to Development (C4D) in their international and regional development programmes, such as UNICEF, budget constraints remains one of the stumbling blocks experienced when having to Implement evaluation models such as this one to identify the long-term effects of intangible communication for development projects in a large scale. This is especially because they face the difficult conundrum of having to appeal to donors, partners and “clients” who demand short-term “look-good” PR campaigns at the expense of long-term “feel-and-do-good”, strategic and sustainable strategies towards social change (Noske-Turner, Tacchi & Pavarala, 2018). In a follow-up collaborative research project, Lennie and Tacchi's (2013) model was empirically operationalised and “rethought” to incorporate the concept of accountability as one of the central components of the model, useful of evaluating development projects against the dictates and requirements of C4D (cf. Noske-Turner, 2020a; Noske-Turner, 2020b).

In sum, the above efforts at addressing the practice-based as well as the conceptual weaknesses of the participatory approach have, in one way or another, attempted to redefine the participatory approach against the notion of ensuring that sustainable development and social change are guaranteed for marginal social actors. Central to this line of thought is the idea of sustainability (see section 2.3.6 below), where natural resource management, ecological and environmental factors, long-term skills and knowledge-base of marginal social actors, have emerged as some of the key issues central to the communication for development and social change scholarship.

2.3.6 Sustainability and the case for Sustainable Development

Another research trend that has become the subject of much interest in the 21st century literature on participatory communication, is the idea of having sustainable development as one of the outcomes of long-lasting development and social change. In fact, the turn towards linking communication with sustainable development, as Mefalopulos (2005) observed, traces back to 1992 following the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where there were broad discussions regarding the need to consider ecological, environmental and socio-economic factors when defining sustainable development and when solutions are sought.

Institutions such as the United Nations (UN) have, since inception, been involved in long-term projects aiming to influence sovereign nation-states across the world to explore and commit to ways and means of ending poverty, hunger, inequality, and food insecurity (Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Waisbord, 2008; Wilkins, 2009). The idea of sustainable development has become an important aspect for the field of communication for development and social change, especially within the confines of the participatory paradigm. This perspective is centred around the idea of inclusivity, bottom-up communication and dialogue as well as civic-led collective action when implementing development and social change projects aimed at alleviating ecological and social problems to ensure positive change in the quality of life for all citizens.

In a study by Johnson *et al.* (2012), the exploration of different participatory scenarios or “narratives deliberately crafted to describe multiple plausible futures” in Minnesota, yielded insights towards understanding how forums for active social engagement led towards uncovering and achieving positive social learning outcomes for natural resource management. In this line of thought, we see participatory communication being employed to facilitate social interaction and learning when looking at preserving environmental resources and using them in a sustainable manner. Through this concept of sustainable resource management, we can see that participatory communication is linked to one of the emerging trends (or ‘thematic disciplines’) of sustainable social change, which Lie and Servaes (2015) refer to as environmental communication.

Arguably, such ways of thinking are also the subject of much interest, at an international scale, when it comes to exploring ways in which the Global Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals (MDG's which later became SDGs from 2015 onwards) can be achieved (cf. Servaes, 2007; Servaes & Malikhao, 2016). Regarding the idea of sustainability, Servaes, Polk, Shi, Reilly and Yakupitijage (2012) believe that coming up with a framework of sustainability indicators for projects (by institutions and by government around the world) based on communication for development and social change, is an important step towards assessing their sustainability and whether they have long-lasting potential.

This is an important argument, considering that the participatory approach is awash with 'participatory' approaches and frameworks that are, on one hand 'practice-based' and centred on the idea of community participation in specific development projects, without due regard for sustainability indicators, or on the other hand "more system-based" around the idea of sustainability (Servaes, 2016:701-702) when it comes to deconstructing social change. It is arguable that Lennie and Tacchi's (2013) model for evaluating the existence, or absence, of communication for development (C4D) in projects aimed at development and positive social change, attempts to address the concern around sustainable development.

For the present study, the idea of sustainability (i.e. sustainable development) is crucial and it presents a challenge that when conceptualising a framework for participatory communication in municipal IDP processes, the focus should not only be on short-term quick fixes or on the 'success' of individual projects (i.e. structural adjustment). Focus, instead, should be fixed on the long-term and sustainable view of participatory communication which is broadly about empowering local citizens with agency, voice and transformative ability to collectively coexist in the process of changing the quality of their lives from the bottom-up. What is central to this crucial point is how participation can be adopted, due to its potential for facilitating social interaction and dialogue, in contexts that require genuine and meaningful contribution of different individuals with the common purpose of addressing problems about human development as well as environmental resource management (i.e. social change). This line of thought presents a sense that participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture, can become key concepts used in the process of linking citizens and development managers to agree and adopt participatory communication as a facilitator of their sustainable development interface around environmental resource management and social change. Strong similarities, can be recorded between this kind of use of participatory communication as well as how it is adopted in the present study.

2.4 Summary on “takeaways” from research trends: Gaps in the literature and Synthesis

Noting the aforementioned, the present study establishes that although theoretical accounts have attempted to address the theoretical issues facing participatory communication (cf. Chitnis, 2005; Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Jacobson & Storey, 2004; Otto & Fourie, 2009; Otto & Fourie, 2016; Pieterse, 1998), none of them relate to institutionalised participation in local government and how participatory communication can contribute towards development and social change in an institutionally, and legislatively, required process of integrated development planning. Similarly, González and López (2019) observe a lack of attention provided to institutional participation in their study, although their focus is on participatory communication in the context of Spanish public universities.

Despite not focusing on participatory communication from the IDP context of local government, the abovementioned studies have provided much needed insight and lessons on the paradigm: how it has been critiqued and from which perspectives. Furthermore, literature reveals that most research works have applied theoretical approaches from applied social theory, sociology, development studies and anthropology, Communication Studies, Pedagogy and Education, and political science, to mention a few. This shows that participatory communication is a distinct multidisciplinary approach, which arguably warrants operationalisation within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.

In addition, the different theoretical perspectives within which the participatory approach is tackled, include Communicative Action; Structuration Theory; Radical Politics; Freire’s Dialogical Praxis; Anarchist Political Philosophy; Social Movements; Convergence Theory of Communication, among others (cf. Chitnis, 2005; Obregón & Tufte, 2017; Otto & Fourie, 2009; Otto & Fourie, 2016; Tufte, 2017; Wald, 2014; Williams, 2004). The present study further argues that the extent to which a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator for participation in an institutional setting (i.e. participation in municipal IDP processes) remains underexplored. To address this issue, the following section outlines three chosen theoretical lines used to anchor the participatory approach so as to further advance reasons why it should be adopted as a facilitator of institutionalised participation within the said context.

2.5 Theoretical points of Departure

2.5.1 Jürgen Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action

The theory of communicative action by critical social scholar and theorist, Jürgen Habermas, is born from a presupposition that language is the uncontested basis of man and his actions

because it is central to the facilitation of human interactions. The caveat here is that, though language is a tool for us, how we use it is our responsibility (Thomassen, 2010:9). As a form of social action theory, communicative action is a theory used to describe, measure and evaluate the behaviour of actors against their intentions and meaning with the aim of accounting for different actions they are engaged in (Jacobson, 2003:103). Put differently, there are two questions that this theory is designed to answer, firstly, what are the conditions that permit social interaction to take place? And secondly, how is social order conceivable? (Niemi, 2005).

Originally offered as a German publication in 1984 (and later becoming available to the English-speaking world, through a translation by Thomas McCarthy, in 1987), the theory of communicative action takes a linguistic turn to critical theory and breaks away from Adorno's philosophical orientation by building on work by Husserl and Heidegger on phenomenology and hermeneutics (Morris, 2006:234-235). This is done in two volumes: the first one focusing on the concept of 'communicative rationality' and a critique of the theory of modernity. The second begins with a prehistoric account of foundational influences from George Herbert Mead and Emile Durkheim (i.e. as a critique of Weber's theory of action) focusing on the idea of "linguistification" so as to arrive "at the concept of a rationalised lifeworld with differentiated symbolic structures" (Habermas, 1987:2).

Thomassen (2010:10) describes Habermas's notion of language pragmatics as being rooted in the principle that "social action is more than instrumental and strategic action where I try to manipulate the world and other people in order to achieve an end". This line of thought might explain why in the last two to three decades, there have been considerable interest by scholars and researchers in communication for social change studies to integrate this theory with participatory communication (cf. Barranquero, 2005; Chang & Jacobson, 2010; Jacobson & Kolluri, 1999; Jacobson & Storey, 2004; Otto & Fourie, 2016; Ramella & De la Cruz, 2000).

Given this context, Habermas's theory of communicative action provides the much needed theoretical and definitional basis for participatory communication and participation. Habermas's theory of communicative action contributes to the conditions in which human action and behaviour can be judged against intent, and checks whether they espouse communicative rationality. Otto and Fourie (2016:31) argue that Habermas's communicative rationality concept "focuses on how increasingly unstable capitalist society, based on instrumental reason, encroaches on all other forms of social life and action...". This means that communicative rationality can be used to distinguish 'communicative' action from 'instrumental' action. In this sense, rationality "refers to various forms of argumentation as possibilities of continuing communicative action with reflective means" (Habermas, 1984:10). This can be achieved through the use of four validity claims about criticisable reality, which are:

- Truth or fairness: A validity claim that requires human behaviour and action to be judged and assessed whether they are fair and a true reflection of reality as well as the stated intent.
- Sincerity of truthfulness: A claim seeking to assess whether the stated intent is sincere, is in good faith and is reciprocally a reflection of the truth.
- Normative rightness: A claim requiring any speaker's stated intent, action and behaviour to be judged and evaluated against what is socially acceptable, what is right and what is in the best interest of all concerned.
- Comprehensibility: A validity claim checking whether the stated intent, actions and human behaviour are clear, understandable and lucid.

The above four validity claims are essential components of a theory of communicative action, as well as the idea of communicative rationality. As part of critical social theory, the purpose of these claims is to discern whether human behaviour, action and intent are virtuous when measured within a political context involving citizens, state institutions and its bureaucrats/administrators, as well as politicians. The primacy of validity claims and their relevance is to determine whether human actions, intentions and behaviour are not influenced by instrumental/strategic action which can be identified by instances when one manipulates others, whether he or she covetously represents facts and is deliberately untruthful because of an innate pursuit for achieving and fulfilling selfish interests. As a summary to the theory of communicative action, Habermas (1984) maintains that it is a construction of three "intertwined topic complexes", noting that it contains:

"...first, a concept of communicative rationality that is sufficiently sceptical in its development but is nevertheless resistant to cognitive instrumental abridgments of reason; second, a two-level concept of society that connects the 'lifeworld' and 'system' paradigms in more than a rhetorical fashion; and finally, a theory of modernity that explains the type of social pathologies that are today becoming increasingly visible, by way of the assumption that communicatively structured domains of life are being subordinated to the imperatives of autonomous, formally organised systems of action" (1984:xi).

This summary presents important points when interpreting what the theory of communicative action is about, some of which have already been mentioned in this present subsection. They can be summarised into the following three bullet points:

- Through the use of communicative rationality, our interactions (based on our actions, behaviour and stated intent) must always be treated with suspicion, scepticism and caution if we are to extract, and hopefully believe in, what is reasonably true, sincere, right and comprehensible.
- Communicative action is underpinned within two broad concepts, namely, 'lifeworld' and 'system'. These concepts can be used to describe whether people regard their interactions

with others as either meaningful, genuine and sincere, or meaningless, hypocritical, covetous and deceptive. This can be determined through a careful study of human actions, behaviour and their stated intentions.

- Communicative action can loosely be regarded as a theory of modernity, used to caution us that through communication, people are able to do whatever they want in their interaction with others, even if it means using carefully thought-out mischief to deceive others and serve their self-interest.

In essence, the theory of communicative action (as a form of critical social theory) is useful when it comes to conceiving human interactions. In fact, to understand its usefulness, Habermas (1984) employs the notion of communicative rationality in ideal speech situations (i.e. an ideal communicative interaction between people or a speech act). He says:

“If we start from the communicative employment of propositional knowledge in assertions, we make a prior decision for a wider concept of rationality connected with ancient conceptions of logos. This concept of communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the inter-subjectivity of their lifeworld” (Habermas: 1984:10).

In simpler terms, Habermas (1984) points out that it is common cause that in an ideal speech act, human beings approach one another with views and perspectives based on what they know. Through communicative action, human beings are required to firstly decide that theirs is to achieve rationality. Secondly, to discuss with others seeking to engage in robust debate without being constrained in anyway without fearing to hold unpopular views. Thirdly, to pursue inter-subjectivity or consensus by not seeking to force others to relinquish their opinions and then accept foreign perspectives through relentless persuasion. By emphasising “inter-subjectivity”, Habermas theorises that if human beings choose to recant personal and subjective worldview or perspectives and opt to use interactions for the purpose of reaching mutual consensus towards a common “good”, then instrumental and strategic manipulation inherent in our social order today, will lose its grip and authority. This is what he refers to as the ‘public use of reason’.

Perhaps a simplified description of Habermas’s communicative action theory can be borrowed from Kemmis (2006:472) who interprets it as a communication process that takes place when we pause and use Habermas’s four validity claims to reflect whether what we understand about

ourselves as individuals and as a collective as well as what we understand about how we conduct ourselves, is really geared towards intersubjective agreement about mutually agreed upon solutions on common problems without manipulation and coercion. This interpretation of communicative action critiques an instrumental line of thinking by showing how the latter defeats the purpose of universal interactions and communication, which is to reach mutual consensus and not to be coercive or manipulative to one another through, for example, persuasive communication. Furthermore, communicative action seeks to show that as human beings, we should critically reflect on our utterances (in our interaction with others), ensuring that we are on the right side of what is morally correct (i.e. moral judgement) and socially acceptable, and that our utterances resemble an ethic of care for others and their viewpoints.

Like all theories and constructions of knowledge, communicative action has been criticised from different angles. For instance, Cooke (2004) proposes a strategy aimed at avoiding 'bad utopianism' (that most critical theories tend to be vulnerable towards, as a result of their normativity in a quest for an 'alternative' and 'better' social order). The author argues against Habermas's fully rationalised social order and claims that it is necessary to conceive an imperfect social order, that contains those conditions that make human interaction possible, such as, misunderstandings, misinformation, or inadequate information. However, in response to this type of criticism in an interview with Mikael Carleheden and René Gabriëls, Habermas argues (as he differs with purely normative conceptions') that:

"...the weight of normative expectations is carried primarily by the forms of communication contained within civil society which itself arises out of private sphere that remained intact, and by the flow of communicative process in an active public sphere that is embedded in a liberal political culture" (Carleheden & Gabriëls, 1996:2).

Further critiquing Habermas, Cooke (2004:417) refers to Albrecht Wellmer's work arguing that Habermas's fully rationalised social order does not refer to any specific social condition but presents a picture of a society where imperfections of the current social order would be eliminated. A condition that, as the author warns, would signal the end of human interaction as we know it. Referring to the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Porter and Porter (2003:138) also critique Habermas's theory of communicative action, arguing that it is "problematic to the extent that it implicitly involves the issuing of an imperative or order that cannot be accounted for within the normative framework that he envisages" when opting for '*communicative*' instead of '*strategic*' action. This is in reference to John Langshaw Austin, who distinguished illocutionary and locutionary speech acts in order to loosely dissociate polite utterances (illocutionary speech acts allowing for others to use free will and discretion) from persuasive talk (locutionary speech acts, which lead to desired/expected resultant actions from others). This argument relates squarely to

how participation should be conceived: whether as-means-to-an-end or as-an-end-in-itself (see section 2.3.1. of this chapter).

Given that Habermas reinterpreted Austin, Searle and Vanderveken's theorisation of the Speech Act Theory to present a theory of Communicative Action, Cooren (2000:295-296) makes the argument that there are two displacements made by Habermas in the original speech act theory, which are "far from representing a convincing reinterpretation of the initial theory", thus, "result in internal inconsistencies which allow Habermas to purify communicative action of any rhetorical dimension". The so-called displacements are Habermas's re-conceptualisation of 'illocutionary success' and his redefinition of 'perlocutionary act' (Cooren, 2000:295). This critique argues that Habermas's reinterpretation and pursuit of a rationalised society by way of seeking ideal speech situations through illocutionary speech act is flawed because he tries to 'purify' it from any rhetorical dimension, despite the initial theory conceptualising illocutionary speech act as an aspect of rhetoric (i.e. Habermas's reinterpretation of the speech acts to a distinction between communicative action and strategic action).

Like the above, Habermas's critiques (cf. Cooke, 2004; Cooren, 2000; Nielsen, 1987) are mostly rooted in Philosophy, Sociology and Political Science (among other disciplines). Arguably, the basis of their criticism might be that Habermas broke ranks with traditional norms of the critical school by grounding his theory in communication science, instead of wholly basing it on the fields known to be influencing much theorisation in critical social theory: philosophy, sociology, anthropology, etc. Therefore, to treat and deal with all of these criticisms would require specialised and undivided attention, and this would be antithetical to the purpose of the current study: which is to address theoretical challenges facing participatory communication and rid its underlying concepts (participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture) of a perceived underlying conceptual difficulty.

Despite these criticisms, the contribution of Habermas's theory of communicative action in communication for development and social change (i.e. participatory communication) cannot be overlooked. As illustrated above, it presents an important foundation for participatory communication as it provides ways in which human interactions can be guided by methods aimed at guarding human behaviour and actions against being coercive, deceptive and manipulative. Given this background, various scholars have attempted to use this theory in different contexts and case studies as a way of exploiting its usefulness when grappling with communication for development and global social change issues. Interestingly, an in-depth review of the corpus of literature into communicative action, reveals how scholars have attempted to use the theory as a hub for participatory communication's theoretical basis. For instance, in their theoretical contribution, which is insightful insofar as highlighting the relevance of Habermas's

communicative action theory in participatory communication, Jacobson and Kolluri (1999) advance a position that communicative action, through the exploration of an Ideal Speech Situation (ISS), can be used to create an evaluation mechanism to check if practical communicative situations place a participatory agency on local citizens (Jacobson & Kolluri, 1999: 810-813). The above sentiment puts into focus the centrality of dialogue and participation in practical communicative spaces where the Ideal Speech Situation (ISS) can be conceived.

Similarly, and in support of such an effort, Ramella and De la Cruz (2000) advanced a social psychological approach to combine Habermas's communicative action theory and Paulo Freire's concept of critical consciousness (see section 2.3.8) in order to accentuate a radical approach to participation (i.e. collective action and citizenship) in health promotion. Their approach is rooted in the belief that if one were to fully adopt and administer a participatory process, they ought to be cognisant of the fact that participatory processes are, by nature, designed to place agency on the participants, in particular citizens (Ramella & De la Cruz, 2000:272). After generating useful insights into the participation of Peruvian adolescents in health promotion, Ramella and De la Cruz's (2000:282) strong theoretical grounding of participation concludes that if any attempt that is made to deprive a participatory process its practical relevance (i.e. that of full agency being exercised by local citizens) then those at the helm of this enterprise run the risk of having their efforts "tarnished by an immediate shadow of suspicion". Also rooted in social psychology, the study critically reflects on the theoretical and empirical aspects of participation to root out underlying contradictions relating to how it has been used both in theory and practice.

The theory of communicative action has proven to have high theoretical currency for participatory communication studies. In one of the studies, Jacobson (2003:105) employs a set of action-types to differentiate *communicative* from *strategic* action by dichotomising between communicative action-types and strategic action-types. Communicative action-types are "oriented to reaching understanding and consensual action" while strategic action-types are either open or concealed, with the intention of achieving conscious or unconscious deception through a systematic distortion of communication as well as manipulation (Jacobson, 2003). The former action type is predicated by the kind of communication that can be achieved through dialogue, which is about collaboration and co-creation of meaning among people who do not aim to coerce others in their interaction; while the latter action-type is rooted in a rather top-down communication approach mired by coercion and manipulation.

Furthermore, the latter action-types are antithetical to the goals and objectives of participatory communication. Linked to participation as means versus ends debate (see section 2.3.2), communicative action-types can be used to describe participation as an end in itself while strategic action-types characterise the idea that participation is a means to achieve certain ends.

Additionally, through the use of Habermas's notion of the ideal speech situation, Jacobson (2003) sees participatory communication as a dialectical, as well as, a two-way reciprocal process at the level of interpersonal communication. Regarding scale, this view sees participatory communication as being suitable to address small scale and locally-based forms of development and social change. This view is limited considering how Information, Communication and Technologies (ICT's) have transformed ways in which we can define 'communities' beyond the geographic and endogenous descriptions (cf. Wilkins, 2009) in contemporary times. It is worth noting that Jacobson (2003:108-109) tried to examine the usefulness of the communicative action theory in large-scale development initiatives (development social change in multiple cities or localities in a region or province in the context of public hearings or referenda, for instance).

Furthermore, Jacobson and Storey's (2004) scholarly works continue with the tradition and empirical attempt to conceptualise Habermas' theory of communicative action, using the ideal speech situation concept and public sphere in a participatory communication context. The study uses the USAID case in Nepal to gather empirical evidence by testing whether such a conceptualisation of participatory communication can help analyse small-and large-scale projects related to development and social change (Jacobson & Storey, 2004:99). The study concludes that through the use of ideal speech situation and public sphere, different levels of political and social dynamics (involving the question of bringing development for citizens) can be analysed and achieved. For instance, they found that the ideal speech situation can be used to analyse and define the participation of people during their interaction about development projects; while the public sphere concepts can be used to analyse how people participate in democratic processes on a local or national level (Jacobson & Storey, 2004:116).

Jacobson and Storey's (2004) critical reflection may expose some nuances and confusion in some definitions of participatory communication that have been offered over the years. An example is that in Bessette's (2004) definition of participatory communication as a planned activity towards attaining development for local citizens. The idea that the participatory approach is a planned activity, implies that it is a strategic and top-down process involving pre-planned objectives and project designs towards what development planners perceive as solutions for changing the lives of people at the grassroots level for the better (see section 3.2). Such an interpretation is similar to how participation is described under, for instance, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model (see section 2.3.3.3).

The problem with this kind of a definition is that even when locals are included, their participation can be regarded as participation by consultation in Mefalopulos's (2008) typology (see section 3.2). This interpretation of participation is usually where stakeholders are involved in discussions regarding their development with the sole purpose of proving the use of a participatory approach,

but there is little evidence to show if local citizens take part in decision-making processes. Furthermore, given that Jacobson and Storey (2004:102-107) aimed to recast participatory communication within Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action, the process of redefining participatory communication within communicative action is premised on the need to highlight, and accentuate, the role played by intersubjective dialogue and empowerment, as key facilitators of any participatory process aimed at influencing positive social change. Moreover, given that communicative action originates from within critical social studies (i.e. the Frankfurt school of critical theory), it also presents a critique on the oppressive social structure which, often, characterise development and social change processes with top-down instrumental action aimed at manipulating and coercing those who are supposed to participate in dialogue freely, honestly and without being repressed.

The above kind of clarification might explain why different authors have concerned themselves with theorising participatory communication as communicative action, especially when they attempt to address the critique against the paradigm based on its perceived 'utopia' (cf. Chitnis, 2005; Huesca, 2008; Jacobson & Storey, 2004:99-100; Otto & Fourie, 2016; Pieterse, 1998; Wald, 2014; Williams, 2004). Barranquero's (2005) has also made a similar attempt with communicative action, infusing it with Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy to theoretically fortify the field of communication for social change (see section 2.3.8).

In another study, Jacobson makes a collaborative effort in an attempt to measure participatory communication as communicative action in a case study about the involvement of citizens in a smoking cessation policy development process in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Chang & Jacobson, 2010). In this study, the authors use Habermas's validity claims to accentuate the fact that when a speaker (i.e. a policy maker or development manager in local government, for instance) tries to communicate with the public, they may not be able to get them to understand him/her unless they fully accept the speaker's validity claims (Chang & Jacobson, 2010:664). After using a practical setting to test this normative and epistemological association between communicative action and participatory communication, Chang and Jacobson's (2010:674-675) findings suggest a need for the evaluation and measurements of communication procedures (in practical settings where participatory communication is being assessed, albeit through a communicative action lens) should include "(a) the assessment of a decision maker's validity basis of speech and (b) the assessment of individual participants' perceived freedom to initiate dialogue".

In addition, the authors found a conceptual relationship between communicative action and legitimacy. Their results confirmed an expectation that through the participatory processes, stakeholders are able to make judgements and assessments on whether decision-making was

legitimate or whether theirs was a formality-based talk for them to merely ratify what has already been decided upon through a top-down communication approach (Chang & Jacobson, 2010). For the present study's purposes, insights from this kind of work imply that when conceptualising a framework for participatory communication in municipal IDP processes, it is crucial to consider ways in which some form of assessment can be performed to unearth the perceptions of role-players on the processes they are involved in, especially insofar as unearthing whether they view the processes as legitimate, if there is validity in all speech acts, or if they feel coerced and are not free to engage in dialogic communication. This further implies that there should be ways in which all role-players are able to access their notes and feedback publicly, and transparently, in the event of negative perceptions gathered from the assessment stage.

Further conceptual insights can be drawn from Otto and Fourie (2009), who attempt to expose the dialogic nature of participatory communication and conceptualise communicative action as social dialogue in the context of South Africa's post-apartheid era. The authors (2009:230) argue that Habermas's public sphere concept provides an inherent critique of "existing development discourse and practice" in South Africa. What is notable with this contribution is that Otto and Fourie (2009) use a specific context and expose a gap that should be filled by means of empirical research.

Similarly, Burnside-Lawry (2012) affirms the use of Habermas's theory of communicative action as a suitable normative framework for participatory communication in her model aimed at assessing listening competencies of employees and stakeholders during organisational engagements. She observes two leading Australian-based public organisations and further builds on the work by Thomas Jacobson, by drawing a collaboration between 'listening' and 'participatory communication' (these concepts were then used interchangeably in the study). Her study's purpose was to use a specific context as a way of exploring listening practices in an organisation, thus contributing to literature on the use, and application, of communicative action (Burnside-Lawry, 2012:107). With regards to speech conditions, there were situations in which stakeholders "were not afforded the platform to voice their opinions during stakeholder engagement dialogues and at times, they did not feel free to question any proposal during committee meetings" (Burnside-Lawry, 2012:111). This finding confirms Chang and Jacobson's (2010) assertion that if stakeholders have some reservations regarding the 'participatory' nature of their engagements, the process will not achieve mutual understanding, and thus, the policy maker's validity claims will not be fully accepted.

Expanding on this trend, Jacobson, Chang and Zhang' (2013) study evaluated citizen support for a government's smoking policies, using the 'hybrid political system of the city-state of Singapore' (Chang, Jacobson & Zhang, 2013). Methodologically, this study, tested a set of variables in

addition to Habermas's four validity claims, including seven variables about smoking as well as 'legitimacy' as an independent variable (Chang, Jacobson & Zhang, 2013:1161). To this effect, the study found that in order for the participatory process to be regarded as legitimate, role-players should have a sense of mutual understanding and tolerance.

In the South African context, Otto and Fourie (2016) build up from their treatment of the same issue in 2009 (cf. Otto & Fourie, 2009) and call for a critical inquiry to ascertain whether Habermas's theory of communicative action is pragmatic and relevant to context-specific approaches to participatory communication in South Africa (Otto & Fourie, 2016). This is the gap that the present study wishes to fill. Additionally, it is Habermas's turn to "inter-subjectivist philosophy", critical theory of society and his emphasis on the use of language and communication (and the so-called 'public use of reason'), that makes his theory essential for exploring its viability in participatory communication and participation in municipal IDP processes. Therefore, the following have been gleaned from the above review of relevant literature on communicative action as a suitable theoretical predilection for participatory communication, especially what is relevant for the present study:

- The theory of communicative action, as a critical social theory, is a suitable approach given that it borders on the participatory approach's paradigmatic shift from structural adjustment to agency (along themes such as citizenship, emancipation and empowerment, and collective action).
- What makes the theory suitable is its theoretical and practical relevance for communication studies, with a strong development and social change background. The concepts such as participation and dialogue take centre-stage when the theory is deconstructed and its implications unpacked for practical relevance.

Additionally, one useful consideration when conceptualising participatory communication as communicative action is that if a participatory process is to be undertaken, specifically the part of the process where municipal authorities are required to hold participatory meetings with citizens, there should be some way of assessing (through participatory research methods: surveys and anonymous questionnaires that can be made public available) whether all parties are conscious of the purpose of the meetings, and that they are aware of the fact that theirs is to seek intersubjective agreement and mutual consensus without any attempts of seeking to attack those who may hold unpopular views. This kind of assessment serves the purpose of vetting accuracy and suitability of validity claims made during of all speech acts, thus allowing participants to determine if the speech acts are in the best interest of all those who are concerned. In addition,

by extracting validity claims from Habermas's communicative action theory, one is able to forecast normative participatory processes for municipal IDP public meetings.

The above reflective task of communicative action, may provide local citizens with confidence that the ideal speech situation, in which they participate, is normatively acceptable and capable of producing long-lasting local development and social change. This is because such a situation, as Dahlberg (2013:24) maintains, is "constituted through rational-critical deliberation over practical problems, deliberation that leads to critically (in)formed public opinion, which in turn enables the democratic scrutiny and guidance of official decision-making processes".

Since Habermas's communicative action theory focuses on the speech conditions within which language (through dialogue) can be used to engage stakeholders, it is pertinent to couple this theory with Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis to further conceptualise participatory communication as dialogue in municipal IDP 'participatory' processes. To begin this initiative, the following questions are worth noting: what kind of dialogue should be facilitated between municipal authorities, local politicians and citizens in their participatory IDP meetings given the power and resource imbalance between these stakeholder groups? And by extension, should dialogue be facilitated through a top-down and form of communication since the power balances are skewed toward municipal authorities being the custodians of municipal budgets and spending while citizens are dependent on their intentions, decisions and actions?

2.5.2 Freire's Dialogical Praxis

"...the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly, we must seek its constitutive elements. Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed- even in part- the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world"
Freire (1970:87).

Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis is dubbed 'revolutionary' within the context of adult education programs and has also been reconceptualised in the field of development communication. This is for two reasons:

- Freire's work of dialogue, in the context of liberation and emancipation, for over four decades, has formed the basis of a conceptualisation of participatory communication (a strand of development communication that places agency on 'beneficiaries' of development) or the so-called Post-Freire school of thought in development communication (see section 2.2.1, 2.2.2, & 2.2.3 for a detailed treatment of the different schools of thought in development communication);

- His work has also been the subject of theoretical grounding on participatory communication as various scholars have attempted to use dialogical praxis as a theoretical framework underpinning their studies, when addressing the complex issue of development and social change in different contexts, especially in Latin American (Manyozo, 2006; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Obregón & Mosquera, 2005).

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educationalist and philosopher whose “anti-elitist and anti-strategic action” pedagogy was sparked by his critical observation of reality while he was in charge of studying the relationships between learners, parents and teachers at an organisation called Social Service of Industry (SESI) (Gadotti, 1994:6-7). As indicated in the above quote extracted from his “*pedagogy of the oppressed*”, Paulo Freire regards dialogue as a process that requires a constant interface between reflection and action, which then leads to ‘praxis’. He argues that “there is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis, that is to speak a true word is to transform the world” (Freire, 1970).

Having been largely influenced by his Catholic upbringing, Freire’s preoccupation with dialogue was predisposed by the works of Theologian and Philosopher, Martin Buber, whose fundamental contribution to scholarship was in interpreting the relationship between men, whether be it at an equal footing: “I-Thou” (that is Subject and Subject), or at a dominant-inferior level: “I-IT” (that is Subject and Object) (cf. Buber, 1937). In light of this, the central presupposition concerning dialogue, for Freire, is that it cannot exist if those involved in the process do not regard the ‘other’ as an equal, ‘critically conscious’ and independent subject. Freire accentuates this fact when equating dialogue with the normative concept of “love”, as he writes:

“Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself” (Freire, 1970:89).

With direct reference to Buber’s work, Freire illustrates how valuable dialogue is when using concepts such as “anti-dialogical action”, which involves a subject who has dominion over another person, a “thing” (i.e. an “it”); and “dialogical action”, which involves the subject who does not have any dominion over others and regards another person as the “thou” (Freire, 1970:167).

In this way reference to dialogue, whether positive or negative, can reflect the extent to which one regards the other (whether as a subject or an object) during speech acts and communicative situations; thus implying that ‘inter-subjectivity’ is one of the essential characteristics that can be used to determine if dialogue is a feature in any communicative or speech act setting. In this way, Freire makes the point that dialogue is:

“...the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence dialogue cannot occur between those who name the world and those who do not wish this naming- between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them” (Freire, 1970:88).

These are essential points of departure: if participatory communication is to be dialogical in nature, it should be understood as an action-reactive process used by equal subjects to name the world, through the word, and then transform it (i.e. praxis). Arguably, Huesca's (2008) critical appraisal of participatory approaches to development, gives an insightful historical overview of research devoted to applying Freire's concept of dialogue to participatory communication. Additionally, Jenlink and Banathy (2005) provide an essential precondition for interpreting dialogue as relational to social discourse. To this effect, they point out that “dialogue is not something we do or use; it is a relation that we create and sustain by conjoining agreement and through shared discourse” (Jenlink & Banathy, 2005:5-6). Additionally, Huesca (1995) also traced works of the likes of the Bolivian scholar, Luis Ramiro Beltrán (1979) who, among other researchers from Latin America, attended a Costa Rican conference in 1973 [funded by the Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores para América Latina (CIESPAL)] with the aim of charting a “new” research and methodological approach towards “horizontal”, “participatory” or “alternative” communication (Huesca, 1995). This research effort captured the “disenchantment” with western-based cultural bias and modernistic approaches- which were replaced by research efforts devoted to exploring agency-led participatory approaches and how development can be achieved through building social capital, and enhancing the participation on local citizens in decision-making processes through dialogue (cf. Huesca, 1995, 2008; Manyozo, 2006; Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a).

The implications of this definition are that, firstly, dialogue should be facilitated between those who consent to participate in it. Secondly, dialogue cannot proceed if those involved are repressed and are not afforded the platform to openly make input irrespective of whether their views are unpopular or not. Lastly, it is rights-based as it cannot ensue if there are those involved feel like they need to be ‘privileged’ in order to make input; on the contrary, their right to participate in dialogue should be protected and guaranteed by those with a higher power-base in the process. Through this kind of conceptualisation, participatory communication, in a dialogical sense, should serve the following purposes:

- To empower men and women, during their engagement about social life, to regard one another with love and as equal subjects;

- To empower human beings, who are equal partners, to engage in a “communicative process” of action and reflection- aimed at reaching consensus about the world in which they live, in order to transform it (i.e. ‘praxis’);
- To empower human beings, through their engagement about social life, to challenge any form of domination without fear of castigation or oppression since dialogue cannot occur in the midst of any form of victimisation of any sort against any member (given that they all regard one another as the “thou”).

Akin to participation, dialogue plays an important role in participatory communication as it presents a critical account and a normative methodology through which institutionalised participation, infused with collective action, can be implemented to achieve sustainable social change. Seemingly, this approach to dialogue is a foundational theoretical basis for most, if not all, studies seeking to explore the basic construct of the participatory approach. Moreover, it is impossible for any study exploring, for example, collective action, agency or social movements within the context of the participatory approach, to not reflect on dialogue, participation and empowerment, as key concepts. The same can be said for culture, a concept that we will focus on in the next section.

Like with communicative action, Paulo Freire’s dialogical praxis approach has also received much attention over the years in participatory communication discourse. As a matter of fact, Freire’s thinking is credited with giving birth to one of the six schools of development communication (i.e. the Post-Freire School) responsible for research work along the themes central to the participatory communication approach, including, citizenship, agency-led communication for social change, collective action, social movements, empowerment, dialogue (cf. Huesca, 2008; Manyozo, 2006; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Tufte, 2017; Wilkins, 2009). Freire’s writing is also credited with inspiring the formation of the Latin American School, with notable scholars such as Antonio Pasquali, Louis Ramiro Beltrán, Juan Díaz Bordenave, among others (Sáez, 2013).

Earlier attempts to conceptualise Freire’s dialogue in participatory communication include, among others, works by José Marques de Melo (1979), who focuses on conceptually explicating the concept of communication in a Freirean sense (i.e. from the perspective of Freire’s Pedagogy of the oppressed), Brown (1985), who’s inquiry was centred in examining people-centred development and participatory research, as well as Riaño’s (1994) treatment of a typology of women participation and their social movements.

Conclusions and/or implications drawn by these studies provide important notes for consideration of the usefulness of Freire’s dialogical praxis in a context-specific interpretation of dialogue in

municipal IDP processes. De Melo's study (1979) links Freire's work on dialogue as praxis, with Marxist attributions to communication by saying it cannot be regarded as a "mere instrument of sociability (sheep or flock consciousness) but as an instrument of labour leading to socialisation" (De Melo, 1979:184). Meaning that communication in the form of dialogue has a critical and transformative role by empowering those who are marginalised to challenge the hegemony of those in power through critical consciousness and dialogue. To this effect, the following argument is made: "it is not in silence that men are made, but in words, in labour, in action-reflection" (De Melo, 1979:185). This argument provides clarity behind the liberating role that dialogue has, when considering its application in context-specific development approaches.

Furthermore, Brown (1985:280) argues that through an interpretation of Freire's work, participatory research has the potential of disrupting the power dynamics in the context of development at local levels as well as enable mobilised groups of people to challenge the "concentration of power in a few hands". Lastly, Riaño (1994) focuses on a feminist approach and shows how participatory communication through the use of media tools and periodicals such as women newspapers owned by women of different minority racial groups in America, are able to create alternative spaces to voice out their frustrations about marginalisation, racism and social oppression in a male-dominated world. Such an empowerment perspective on women is useful in that helps build the basis for the current study given that it also explores perceptions of women and their participation in municipal IDP processes.

From the early 1990s to date, research efforts around Freire's dialogical praxis approach and its relevance to participatory communication, have not dissipated since various scholars have continued to apply it in different contexts. These include Servaes (1996) and Mefalopulos (2008), who explore the different typologies of participation and explore participatory communication from the perspectives of the World Bank as a multinational aid organisation; Melkote and Steeves (2015a) who provide a global picture of participatory communication, tracing how it has developed over time with reference to developing countries in the third world; Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) who give a practical guide to participatory communication through advocacy and aid projects undertaken by the World Bank in rural communities as well as Manyozo (2006 & 2008) who provides a historical appraisal of the six schools of thought in development communication. Other scholars include Otto and Fourie (2009); Ganesh and Zoller (2012) as well as Thomas (2014).

In the South African context, Freire's conceptualisation of dialogue among subjects has been empirically adopted in practical settings and research cases. For instance, Templeton (1999) applies Freire's concept of conscientisation to examine how sustainable community development can be achieved in an experiment aimed at building citizens' social capital through a process of identifying citizen roles in community development programmes. Through a process involving de-

socialisation, critical thinking, power awareness and self-organisation, the study concluded that people are able to develop 'conscientisation' over time in their continuous negotiation with, or developing coping mechanisms for, social circumstances that bring certain changes for them. These changes include relocation from rural areas, for instance, to urban areas. This conclusion confirms that conscientisation, or a process wherein people use their critical consciousness to analyse the social change process and challenge anything they perceive as not being fruitful for them, as theorised by Paulo Freire in his dialogical praxis theory, is a useful tool for analysis of social life and order.

In addition, Durden (2003) employed Paulo Freire's notion of dialogue in a case study aimed at exploring the role played by Entertainment Education (EE) and participatory forum theatre in HIV/AIDS education in the workplace. The study found that theatre, as a participatory and the EE strategy, enabled factory workers and managers to jointly challenge the stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS and to jointly cooperate in finding solutions, through dialogue, to the challenge of coping with the issues relating to HIV/AIDS in the workplace and fears of disclosing one's status.

In another study, a somewhat follow-up with a different HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in Durban, Botha (2009) used Freire's pedagogy as part of a participatory action research aimed at addressing stigmatisation and negative attitudes towards HIV/AIDS awareness among young people in the higher education sector. This study recommended that among other important factors, mainstream awareness campaign messages on HIV/AIDS need to be revised because they do not take into account the real life experiences of people given their socio-economic circumstances and their "specific needs for sexual information" (Botha, 2009:78).

One of the important findings of this study is that female students (women) often fall victim to gendered narratives and social constructions around HIV stigmatisation due to the dominance of male sexuality, high-risk sexual behaviour and the perpetuation of stereotypes. Having made such findings, the study reflects that dialogue is central to social change because platforms for unrestricted interaction enable people to use their critical consciousness to analyse circumstances they find themselves in and using dialogue to find solutions to their problems. This links squarely with Freire's notion of 'praxis'- the process of naming the world, with the word.

Likewise, Naidoo (2010) applied Freirean dialogues as part of a theoretical framework in a study aimed at exploring whether Thusong Service Centres (i.e. Government's one-stop-shop towards service delivery) in Gauteng Province employed a participatory communication approach during interfaces with communities. The study found contradicting occurrences and a disconnect with what is said in policy documents regarding what was practiced.

Naidoo's (2010) study noted that although the ComTask Report – a policy document (among other policies) used to establish the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) department (responsible for Thusong Service Centres), specifically outlined that government communication should be implemented within a participatory communication approach to development communication. Additionally, the author observed that in practice, GCIS officers used a one-way SMS system to communicate with community members and in some instances government appeared to be using authoritarian and top-down approaches during this communication, without allowing them space to contribute on how they wish development of their local areas should be undertaken (Naidoo, 2010:138-140). This is a typical case where dialogue is not correctly applied along a Freirean dialogical praxis approach and judging by the findings of the study, it is clear that participatory communication was not practiced.

Similarly, Usadolo's (2011) thesis applied Freire's conceptualisation of dialogue as part of a theoretical framework in a study aimed at establishing factors affecting participatory communication in a developmental cattle project; as well as to investigate the nature of the relationship between stakeholders involved. The study also found that contrary to what participatory communication is about, beneficiaries of the Nguni Cattle project, in rural parts of the Eastern Cape, were not involved in the formative stages of the projects and those who were in charge of the project cited their lack of skills and know-how as one of the reasons why the citizens were not included.

Studies with similar findings in different contexts and with case study examples in the South African context include those by Magongo (2012), Chikozho (2013), Jooste (2014), Govender (2015) and Ali (2017), among others. This shows the depth of research in the South African context and an appreciation for Freire's dialogical praxis when it comes to exploring the extent to which dialogue, communication and critical consciousness in human interactions, are applied. Equally, the same can be said of research efforts aimed at using Freirean dialogues in participatory communication beyond the borders of South Africa. For instance, in the United States of America, one can find studies by the likes of Mefalopulos (2003) who explored Freire's dialogues when treating the theory and practice of participatory communication in a project by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Additionally, Lofranco's (2009) doctoral thesis applied Freire's notion of dialogue with the aim of investigating the role of participatory development communication as understood by Filipino migrants in the diaspora. Likewise, Wade (2010) used Freire's notion of dialogue in a study aimed at examining the role played by theatrical performances in Kenyan community-based organisations as a way of addressing critiques of participatory development methods. Similar

other studies include contributions by the likes of Chitnis (2005), Chang (2007), Diallo (2007), Llano-Arias (2014), among others.

When carefully studying Freire's notions of dialogue and empowerment, Morrow and Torres (2002) observe that they complement Habermas's views on a critical social theory of society. Read from an understanding of the foundation of their scholarly work: "the origins of thought and action in intersubjective communicative relations of mutual recognition" (Morrow & Torres, 2002:3), both scholars share the same ideas about intersubjective relations, theory on self in relations to the other ("subject") and a critical and radical stance/observation about modern society, oppressive social order and structure (Morrow & Torres, 2002: 2-3).

Freire's notion of praxis and the use of critical consciousness relate with Habermas's (1984) critical approach and the use of communicative rationality (through the aid of four validity claims about criticisable reality) as justifications for people to question and measure the behaviour, stated intention and actions of others against what they see as socially acceptable towards the attainment of common development and social change goals.

With regards to the idea about the self and inter-subjectivity, Freire's reference to 'Buberist' notions of the self, the use of dialogue as the type of interaction aimed at the attainment of mutual consensus, and one which is guided by 'the love of another', links directly with Habermas's (1984) description of communicative action. What is common between the two is fact that they are both aimed at reaching inter-subjectivity and the latter theoretical approach draws a distinction between communicative and instrumental reason, which can both be likened to Freire's dialogical and 'anti-dialogical' action. Both communicative reason and dialogical action can be viewed as falling in the same category while instrumental reason and anti-dialogical action fall on the alternative and undesired extreme which refers to instances where some who are involved in communicative interactions are not regarded as equal subjects but are mere objects who can be manipulated and coerced.

Arguably, in the field of development communication, both Freire and Habermas are useful when adopted "*together*" as part of a "postmodernist" trajectory, and theoretical conceptualisation, which looks at how value and agency can be "afforded" to the "subaltern" (i.e. "critical consciousness" for Freire, and a critical inquiry into social speech acts based on "Validity claims and communicative rationality" for Habermas) through communication for development and social change (i.e. Participatory communication).

Adding to this debate, Otto and Fourie (2009) also support the idea of rooting participatory communication in Habermas' communicative action, but they postulate that this project must be

taken further. In their view, communicative action should be combined with Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis approach because they have observed that:

“for both theorists, transformative action can only occur if reflective and collective learning occurs in linguistically constructed settings where the normative dimensions of truth (logos), rightfulness (ethos) and truthfulness (pathos) are raised and met in the developmental conversation” (Otto & Fourie, 2009:217).

Furthermore, Otto and Fourie (2016:21) reaffirm their earlier position in this debate by accentuating the need for Habermas's communicative action theory to be used to theorise, in their view, the “elusive notions of participation and participatory communication theory...”. This is a further indication of how, to this day, the issue of theoretically and conceptually rooting participatory communication and the notion of participation remains unresolved.

Manyozo's (2017) pedagogy of listening as a theoretical construct centred around the ideal of 'listening before telling' can also be seen as another essential contributor when looking at the creative ways of conceiving the nature of interaction within the scope of dialogic communication and collective action. The latter conceptualisation highlights the importance of dialogue as another key concept to the participatory communication approach. These views are in line with Servaes and Malikhaio's (2005) contention that, for people (especially the disenfranchised) to have a voice there should be willingness to listen to them and this is the only way in which development and social change can take place.

Noting that several scholars, as discussed above, have provided different theoretical arguments to address this issue, it can be summed up that Freire's critical approach to dialogue is the foundation that is relevant for the present study. Primarily because, akin to communicative action, it emphasises similar key issues relevant for theoretically anchoring participatory communication with the aim of helping to address criticism on the basis of its perceived normativity.

2.5.3 Culture and Intercultural Communication

According to Kim (2001:140), culture can be loosely described as the sum of all life experiences associated with either large groups (such as national or racial groups) and smaller groups (such as subcultural social groups based on gender or sexual orientation). However, acknowledging the diverse and at times confluent definitions of culture, Rao and Walton (2004:4) define it as a concept that is “...concerned with identity, aspirations, symbolic exchanges, coordination, and structures and practices that's serve relational ends, such as ethnicity, ritual, heritage, norms, meanings, and beliefs”.

Broadly, the term culture can be defined as the basis through which a group of people or a community negotiate their collective values, rules, beliefs and expected behaviour to help identify

who they are, what they believe in and what makes them unique (cf. Brennan, Flint & Luloff, 2008). Brennan *et al.* (2008) postulate that, there can either be sub-cultures within the community reflecting a heterogeneous or diverse community, or, there can be a uniform, holistic, and homogenous community ascribing to the same culture. Against this background, the notion of intercultural communication competence becomes a key focal point if we are to approach culture from the perspective of development communication theory and practice. Conceptually rooted in intercultural communication studies, the concept of intercultural communication competence is useful in providing a framework through which conceptual issues on culture can be flashed out and streamlined for operationalisation within institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.

However, as Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) correctly state, defining Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is not easy given the subjective purpose that the concept serves in relation to culture. It is important to identify a couple of its inherent concepts individually, 'intercultural communication' on one hand, and 'competence' on the other. Intercultural communication, according to Kim (2001:140), is the kind of communication process that takes place between individuals from different cultures during a direct interaction with each other (cf. Kim, 2005). For Stier (2006:5-6), the term intercultural communication is a symbolic and complex communication process beyond just a mere encounter between people of different cultures wherein they attribute and give meaning to their experiences, and in the process, learn about each other's culture.

Spitzberg (2000) in his model, defines intercultural communication competence as a social evaluation process of appropriate and effective behaviour unique to a specific intercultural context, and is aimed at fostering deeper understanding as well as reducing difference and misunderstandings between people from different cultures. Appropriate and effective behaviour, according to Spitzberg (2000:380), is one that does not violate the valued beliefs, norms and practices of another in the relationship and one that leads to "the accomplishment of valued goals or rewards relative to costs and alternatives". Similarly, Braddock (2013:42-43) explains the term competency (with the help of Wiseman and Ting-Toomey), as the ability to use a host of attributes, including cognitive and behavioural tools to accurately assess the results of their interactions against desired goals- those of attaining "the necessary knowledge, motivation and skills for success".

Given this backdrop, Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) can be defined as a social evaluation process of appropriate, effective behaviour and actions aimed at fostering mutual understanding while strengthening relationships beyond cultural barriers and differences. These actions and behaviours include accommodating as well as respecting beliefs, norms and values

different from one's own. Adding to the research on the narrative of culture and its influence on development communication, Servaes' (1988b) contribution on what he calls 'multiplicity' has provided a strong foundation for the need to seek and explore the meeting point between culture, participation, dialogue and empowerment in the context of IDP processes in one of South Africa's culturally diverse communities in the present study. This compelling three-decade-old treatment of "culture between East and West", advances an important argument that cultural identity is a complex matter. Moreover, given the differences between one community to another, a specific regard of a particular community's cultural identity is important and experiences gained in such a community cannot be used to generalise to others given their uniqueness as well (Servaes, 1988b).

In a collaborative effort with Patchanee Malikaho (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005), the authors position culture in the same wavelength as other immanent factors espoused in participatory communication research, namely, participation, people-centred dialogue and empowerment. In addition, a critique against the employment of vertically and externally-driven models purported to bring genuine social change and development, without placing agency on local citizens is at the centre of their exploration of culture. Against this background, culture has become one of the important reference points in the research on participatory communication (and in the broader field of development communication) over the past four-to-five decades. This is because, to a large extent, culture alongside participation, dialogue and empowerment place agency on local citizens- a central critic levelled against the dominant, and 'westernised', paradigm that placed economic growth as the main development factor in the late-1940s and mid-1950s.

The above argument is largely advanced by research scholars in different contexts relating to communication for social change, such as rural and agricultural contexts, health communication, and communication for sustainable development and social change (Anacleiti, 1993; Basu & Dutta, 2007; Braden & Mayo, 1999; Crabtree, 1998; Dutta, 2014; Dutta & De Souza, 2008; Gumucio-Dagron, 2009; Malan, 1998; Obregón & Mosquera, 2005; Riecken, Scott & Tanaka, 2006; Rogers, 1976; Servaes, 1988a, 1988b, 1999; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005).

Research studies with empirical findings on the treatment of culture in development include that of Sengupta's (2007) who explored how 'subaltern', isolated and poor community members in the Peruvian Amazon participate in, and experience, social change efforts. By exploring the role of a local Non-Profit Community-Based Organisation (NPCBO) in promoting social justice, human rights as well as gender equality in Peru's Lima and Loreto regions, the study identifies culture, alongside feminist and postcolonial approaches, as a key factor in the 'struggle' towards renegotiating the hegemonic gender norms and established power hierarchies between men and women. This struggle, as observed by the study, is achieved through a project led by the NPCBO,

which involves providing women with income-generating skills such as farming (fish and poultry) and handicraft production, as well as enabling their participation in an Entertainment-Education (EE) based radio program called “*Bienvenida Salud*”.

Furthermore, Qasmi’s (2013) investigation into the role of participatory communication in building solidarity and social cohesion in Afghanistan presents interesting findings on the work by the Afghan National Solidarity Program (NSP). The study shows that through a participatory development approach, the NSP facilitated solidarity and social change by granting citizens ownership of the decision-making processes about issues affecting them. On culture, the study discovered that since Afghan’s diverse cultural communities trust and respect elderly community members, agency and active participation in development and social change issues was given to them and the NSP in collaboration with a partner-organisation called CARE international. They ensured that decisions, about local development and social change, which were taken by the community were implemented.

Likewise, Braddock’s (2013) treatment of intercultural communication competence and its link to communication for development and social change towards achieving effective development is, essentially, one of the building blocks for the current study’s theoretical conceptualisation of participatory communication through an ‘intercultural communication’ lens. By exploring U.S.-based development practitioners’ (in institutions such as government organisations, non-profit organisations, religious organisation, etc.) perceptions of field work (mostly in inter-and-transnational settings) as well as their intercultural communication strategies and communication challenges (among other themes); the study found that development practitioners regard intercultural sensitivity (used interchangeably with the term *Intercultural Communication Competence*) toward local cultural practices as an important factor in tailoring development programmes aimed at addressing locally identified needs. A strong implication of this study, when viewed in the context of participatory communication in municipal IDP processes in South Africa, is that intercultural sensitivity is one of the appropriate and effective skills-sets necessary for implementing a participatory process in the form of municipal IDP. This implies understanding cultural differences, nuances and committing to being respectful and accommodative of different people’s norms, beliefs and values.

The study found that development practitioners are actively involved in identifying the cultural sensitivities of the diverse citizens they serve as a way of playing a catalytic role in communication for development and social change (Braddock, 2013:147). It is this finding, amongst other key discoveries, that led to the author’s proposal for a Cultural Separation Theory, which distinctively explores development communication from the perspective of practitioners and how they confront stereotypes from their work in intercultural settings (Braddock, 2013:166). In addition to this

proposed theory, Braddock (2013) suggests a model for effective development communication, as a tangible tool for practitioners to use (also informed by data collection in the form of surveys and qualitative interview discussions with these development practitioners) before entering field work and experience foreign cultures (Braddock, 2013: 176-194).

Arguably, this kind of contribution seems to address Malan's (1998) earlier observation that generally, culture and its influence in development and social change planning, seem to be disregarded by development practitioners as a result of their scepticism. The cause of this scepticism was the modernistic and top-down approach to development which placed saliency on external solutions for internal problems as well as rejection of local values as if they are antithetical to economic growth and modernisation of third world countries.

Uttaran Dutta's (2013) PhD thesis based on a culture-centred ethnographic inquiry into the 'struggle' of subaltern and marginalised people in "indigenous villages of jungle, Himalayan and coastal regions of eastern India" in cementing their voice in development discourse, is also essential. The study essentially underscores the need for "legitimising subaltern articulations in discursive spaces" in a quest to accommodate their voices through active citizenship and participation in development and social change issues affecting their lives (Dutta, 2013: 21). What is also key in this study, is its critical stance against a modernistic and dehumanising approach to development, which has reduced the subalterns to the status of non-humans and objects of development. The study is related to consistent scholarly works by the scholar's PhD promoter, Professor Mohan Dutta, whose critical reflections into the field of development communication, from the perspective of participatory health communication include a 2015 essay entitled "Decolonizing Communication for Social Change: A Culture-Centred Approach".

In the treatise, Mohan Dutta (2015) argues that although the dominant development approach led by Bretton Woods Institutions (controlled by Western 'First-world' countries) embarked on a "revisionist" trajectory, seeking to adapt to a more inclusive and transformative paradigm, the outcome of such processes was the co-optation of culture and participation into the 'logics of neoliberal development' objectives that are still reflective of previous top-down modernisation-driven approaches. This is in spite of their so-called approach to position the 'subaltern' participant at the centre of development and social change by acknowledging her culture and participation from the bottom-up. In this way, he argues, the reach of ('western') transnational corporations in the development agenda of developing countries was extended thereby erasing the voice of the subaltern participants in the discourse (Dutta, 2015: 123-125). By using a Culture-Centred Approach (CCA) as a conceptual framework (cf. Dutta, 2007), he critically interrogates development communication scholarship by exposing conceptual inconsistencies of its neoliberal mainstream development agenda and offers "possibilities for resisting the mainstream

development agenda of neoliberal governance through solidarity with subaltern communities grounded in principles of listening, participation and co-governance” (Dutta, 2015:141).

Dutta’s (2015) critical work is interesting in that, similarly to the contribution previously made on participation (cf. Huesca, 2008), he finds citizen participation being entangled in the means-versus-end complexity. This is rooted in his analysis that in the neoliberal mainstream approach to development, reference to culture is made a way of fulfilling the requirement of having to apply cultural sensitivity by still not overhauling the system that remains mainly modernist in nature. Moreover, his reference to a Culture-Centred Approach disrupts the dominant development ways of thinking by placing culture at the centre of the transformation discourse by seeking to explore potentialities for organising the participation of the ‘subalterns’ and facilitate their voice, thereby fostering a more inclusive and accommodative alternative approach to development and social change.

Pertinent in the above inquiry is a reference to culture that is consentient with how participation, dialogue and empowerment are interpreted in the communication for social change scholarship. When interpreting culture, focus is placed on how the subaltern participant (who can also be described as a marginalised role-player) has a recognised voice and is actively involved in all development and social change spaces in their communities. This perspective is essential for the present study because a framework for participatory communication in facilitating institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes should be hinged on the role played by the subaltern participant in the development discourse. This way, particular interest should be placed on how their cherished cultural values, norms and standards are accommodated in the same way their voice and representation are also viewed as pertinent to a successful, meaningful and active participation.

In summation, what is common with the empirical studies discussed above is their focus on the influence of culture and/or intercultural communication in development and social change. Their attempt is in showing the significance of culture (and its accompanying themes, namely, participation, dialogue and empowerment) when examining how participatory communication can contribute towards facilitating development and social change in marginalised and postcolonial societies. However, research interest has not only been limited to the role of culture in dialogical processes within communication for development and social change; it has also been extended further and conceptualised within the fields of corporate communication, public relations, as well as organisational and political communication (cf. Gardner, Paulsen, Gallois, Callan, & Monaghan, 2001; Macnamara, 2004; Ravazzani, 2016; Werbner, 2012; Zaharna, 2000).

Broadly, the aim of such a conceptualisation has been to investigate how culture affects interpersonal relations of different cultural groups in the workplace setup in regional/local, national and/or multinational contexts. This speaks to its fundamental contribution towards forging 'new understandings' and bridging the gap between different social groups based on their cultural preferences, as well as their position in relation to external forces such as power, resources and social institutions in which they belong (e.g. affiliation in political parties, churches, organisations, etc.).

Coming back to how it can be approached within participatory communication, culture in the form of 'cultural identity', values and worldview(s), is based on the basic assumption that any communicative interaction that is dialectical in nature (i.e. a two-way and 'subject-to-subject' process) requires all role-players (especially those in charge of implementing development and social change at local level: development managers, local authorities, etc.) to have grounding in intercultural communication, including an understanding of cultural differences within a community. Given this background, culture and intercultural communication competence are part of the determining factors to consider when it comes to examining participatory communication. Their presence in participatory communication, therefore, is significant to the extent that they have a 'make it or break it' dual influence when looking at the success (or lack) of participatory approaches. This view has a prehistoric foundation:

Participatory approaches raise concerns about the degree of bias brought by an outsider to a project context. The risk is that the presence of the powerful outsider will evoke the kind of responses that the people suspect they will want to hear, or that they hope will influence them, with the result that neither party is able to learn anything useful (Braten & Mayo, 1998:197).

Dated as it is, Braten and Mayo's (1998) observation regarding the complexities experienced when employing participatory approaches in a local community still holds true today. It saliently presents a conundrum faced by participatory development practitioners relating to the difficulty of guaranteeing that their development efforts and intentions are 'genuine' and that they do not lead to possible cases of mistrust between themselves (often perceived as 'outside experts') and local citizens (especially the marginalised and 'subaltern' community members).

Central to this perspective is the influence that culture has on whether local citizens view development efforts of development practitioners and local authorities as 'authentic' towards sustainable social change; or as manipulative threats towards the erosion of local values, norms, beliefs, symbols of 'local identity' and cultural practices (Braddock, 2014; Spitzberg, 2000). For instance, if the presence of mining activity in a rural area were to prompt a potential threat of dolomitic and dangerously unstable landscapes, prompting authorities to relocate local citizens to new low-cost housing projects in other locations or even come up with proactive participatory

measures to mitigate risk (cf. Chagutah, 2014) based on agricultural and geographical research; participation and negotiations may prove to be daunting tasks.

This 'critical consciousness' of local citizens may lead to conflicts, and development practitioners may be confronted with difficult questions that need immediate attention:., such as, how do you persuade citizens to leave their land in which they are accustomed to growing their crops, feeding and maintaining their livestock, established cultural and symbolic relationship with the environment, and have also buried their loved ones there?; how do you persuade villagers to leave their land based on something as abstract as 'scientific research and knowledge' without the existence of any physical experience of the threat (e.g. tremors, sink holes, earthquakes and the cracking of their houses, or even accidental death of some community members as a result of any related natural disaster)?; does your proposed relocation process guarantee a 'better life' and, at the same time, the preservation of culture, values, norms and tradition of local citizens as it has been the case in their native land?; or, are you moving them to urban spaces and life, which has the notoriety of forcing the erosion of cultural practices?

Consistently, and central to the current study's purpose, this transformative perspective on culture (cf. Dutta & Basnyat, 2008) is linked to the Habermasian view on the use of 'validity claims', as well as the Freire's use of 'conscientisation' in dialogical processes, which leads to praxis (i.e. the process of transform the world, through the word). With the above scenario in mind, validity claims can guide role-players to extrapolate 'genuine' intentions of local authorities (or any other involved stakeholders) by probing, through dialogue, the accuracy, sincerity and truthfulness of their utterances regarding the proposed relocation and safety precautions. In the context of Freire's notion of 'conscientisation', local citizens can use their critical consciousness capacity in a dialogue situation where the proposed 'development effort' is met with critical interrogation, interpretation, debate and discussion to test if the proposal is to their detriment or benefit. An extreme example of similar cases in the South African context, where development practitioners failed to adequately involve local citizens in their development planning, leading citizens to use their critical consciousness and resistance against government's top-down development approach in the 2005/6 cross-boundary and demarcation protests by Merafong (and by extension, Khutsong Township) community members in Carletonville. Residents of this area, which is located in the West Rand district of Gauteng, did not want to be incorporated under the North West Province (cf. Matebesi & Botes, 2011) and they ultimately compelled government to withdraw its planned demarcation process.

This critical view of culture directs the current study to adopt Martin and Nakayama's (2010) "critical humanist" paradigm of intercultural communication. Essentially, a critical humanist perspective focuses on "consciousness" as the foundation for a fundamental critique of society,

thereby enabling people (in this case ‘subaltern’ and marginalised community members) to critically examine whether, or not, the interventions of social structures and their material conditions are driving a wedge between themselves and a more liberated consciousness (Martin & Nakayama, 2010:61-63).

Similarly, this dialectic and critical humanist nature of intercultural communication is also linked to an eloquent and holistic account of intercultural communication by Durant and Shepherd (2009). In their treatise on ‘culture’ and ‘communication’ as fundamental and influential variables in intercultural communication studies, they foreground various interpretations of culture, cultural diversity, intercultural communication and multiculturalism as a result of globalisation, hybridization, and the contribution of the internet in reinterpreting cultural barriers.

The study also presents a linguistic turn to intercultural communication, which examines how geography (i.e. cultural geography) and location have affect cultural interactions (Durant & Shepherd, 2009: 153). By adding to Habermas’s communicative action as well as Freire’s dialogical praxis approach, this perspective, including a critical humanist paradigm of intercultural communication, support a critical stance adopted by the current study. This position theoretically grounds participatory communication in a critical-reflective nature in order to contribute to genuine and active participation in municipal IDP processes towards ‘sustainable’ development and social change. In light of this view, intercultural communication competence (ICC) becomes an important hub of skillsets and characteristics that all role-players (especially development practitioners and local authorities) should possess. In this way, ICC can be seen as a dialectic process where communication (i.e. transformative dialogue) is employed by communicators in a resourceful and ‘effective’ manner, with the objective of circumventing possible misunderstandings and hindrances to their cross-cultural relations (Braddock, 2013; Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

Unlike most societies where English is used as a “lingua franca” for uniting diverse cultures in speech acts (cf. Durant & Shepherd, 2009), the intercultural context of South Africa, especially that of participation in municipal IDP processes, is different. It is characterised, mostly, by people who are not conversant with the English language. Thus, development practitioners ought to develop a multilingualism ‘competency’ in indigenous languages of South Africa (e.g. Setswana, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sesotho, etc.) and for them, together with all other stakeholders involved in these processes, to identify any of the abovementioned indigenous languages so as to maximise interaction opportunities and ensure that active participation ensues.

2.6 Conclusion

Having outlined the field of communication for development and social change as well as having explored the research trends in the literature, this chapter highlighted the important role played by four key concepts in participatory communication; namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment, and culture. These concepts, moreover, have been conceptually situated within three theoretical points of departure underpinning the present study, namely, communicative action, dialogical praxis and culture (or intercultural communication). In doing so, the chapter has prepared ground for an exploration of what these key concepts entail and how they can be defined against the context in which they will be applied (i.e. as part of a framework for participatory communication in municipal IDP processes). Most importantly, this chapter was charged with answering the following research question:

What, according to literature, are the theoretical foundations of participatory communication with the focus on Jürgen Habermas's communicative action, Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis, and intercultural communication in relation to the creation of meaningful and active participation in the IDP processes in local government in South Africa?

From the extensive review of literature, the above research question was answered in the following way. In Section 2.8 and 2.9, an exploration of communicative action, dialogical praxis and culture led to the following conclusions:

- Participation is inherently a political concept and therefore conflict is inevitable in any participatory process since it is characterized by a 'struggle' (and possibly, a 'negotiation') based on interests of specific role-players that should be fulfilled. Which means that any participatory process that is without conflict should be met with scepticism given that participation should also play a facilitator role so that role-players find common grounds through dialogue (see White, 1996).
- On a theoretical level, it is instrumental to locate participation as an interdisciplinary concept between communication studies as well as politics (i.e. along the lines of democracy, citizenship and agency) from the perspective of power dynamics that are inevitable when exploring any participatory process in development and social change practice (see Arnstein, 1969; Carpentier, 2016; Carpentier *et al.* 2019).
- The assumption that participation (within the context of participatory communication) should be approached from a political orientation is reasonable, given that it is also linked to 'empowerment'- which is about exploring how collective action, collective power, and

collective decision-making are achieved and how they shape the participatory process in development and social change.

- Dialogue, which implies the extent to which there is interaction, engagement and negotiation, is an important aspect of participatory communication. This makes participation inquiries within social change contexts dependent on the existence of facilitation of 'genuine discourse' and interaction (i.e. '*dialogos*'). The assumption here is that in order for dialogue between social actors to ensue, they each have to convey mutual respect for the 'other'- as a '*subjects*' and not '*object*' (see Jenlink & Banathy, 2005:6) in the participatory process.
- Through an exploration of communicative action-types and the Ideal Speech Situation (ISS), Communicative action as a theory allows for participatory communication to be approached as a facilitator of the kind of communication that is non-coercive and non-manipulative. In essence, this argument puts into focus the two key concepts or processes, through which communicative action can enable participatory communication to achieve the desired non-manipulative and non-coercive communication. These being participation and dialogue.
- Although the imbalanced power relationships existing between local citizens and municipal officials cannot be overhauled, citizen empowerment can still be achieved on two fronts, namely, from a capacity-building perspective (where their knowledge-base of government processes is enhanced) as well as a from a perspective where communicative and dialogic spaces are widened for active citizen involvement (through the adaptation of the IDP process to include opportunities for ongoing dialogues and feedback facilitation) as well as reflection on the "genuineness" of the participatory process.
- Instead of being "top-down", any participatory setting involving citizens should be adapted to accommodate indigenous knowledge, the use of local languages as well as the respect of cultural difference, diversity and fairness. This enables all citizens to meaningfully contribute to development and social change without feeling inferior to others or feel that their alternative form of knowledge is not acceptable to the 'modern' forms of knowing.
- Intercultural sensitivity is one of the essential skill-sets for those charged with facilitating participatory processes. This implies having an acute interpretation of cultural differences in a community and being able to factor these differences during all deliberations with a view of being accommodative of how citizens use their own cultural norms, values and

standards to inform their interpretation of what kind of social change they wish to see in their own local community (cf. Braddock, 2013; Dutta, 2015).

In summary, participation contextually refers to the process of involving local citizens in communicative spaces aimed at fostering negotiations, leading to consensus and key decision-making about locally and collectively desired development and change. Having noted the complex challenges relating to development and social change experienced in the local government sphere of South Africa, this study does not assume that all these problems are as a result of a lack of communication or a lack of implementation of participatory communication. However, it makes an attempt to solve the communication-related problems to alleviate or reduce, the communication gap between municipal officials and politicians in the local government sphere and citizens. This is one of the main reasons why focus is put on the four key concepts and why participatory communication is associated with the three theoretical points of departure.

Given the foregoing, It may be posited that the calls for relocating participatory communication (in available literature), as well as the ones made for more inclusion of local citizens in local government's institutionalised participation discourse (i.e. either through collective action, class struggles or social movements) create a springboard for the need to seek a redefinition of participation, on the one hand, as well as participatory communication on the other with a view of seeking common ground between theory and practice. One thing is clear, the three theoretical leanings are central insofar as postulating clear, and context-specific, theoretical statements for key concepts underpinning the participatory approach – which will be used in the formulation of a conceptual framework.

It is also important, when these theoretical statements are conceptualised, to ensure that they also account for the complex power dynamics between municipal authorities (who are empowered by legislation to make decisions and pass budget votes on IDP processes), and ordinary citizens (who are not given any decision-making power in the legislation but are referred to as an important stakeholder-base in the IDP process).

This line of thinking is linked to Baü's (2016:713) descriptive thoughts on the realistic goal and purpose of development communication in society, which is an endeavour aimed at ensuring that there is genuine social, and not only individual, change (Baü, 2016:713). Therefore, the theoretical statements need to be examined to ascertain if they are realistic and can meet the real-life demands, and expectations, of role-players during their participation in municipal IDP processes.

In the following chapter, the conceptual difficulty with the four key concepts is discussed with a view of presenting the four theoretical statements and then a conceptual framework for participatory communication in municipal IDP processes is proposed.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL DIFFICULTIES WITH REGARDS TO DEFINING PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores conceptual difficulties relating to core concepts espoused in participatory communication which emerged following a critical theoretical reflection on the paradigm with reference to Jürgen Habermas's theory of Communication Action, Paulo Freire's Dialogical Praxis approach as well as the role of culture in participatory communication in chapter 2 (see section 2.5). The core concepts, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment, and culture; are critically reflected upon with a view of extracting core definitional/theoretical statements for each of them, to show how they can be practically operationalised as part of a conceptual framework is proposed and will be used in the empirical side of the study. The aim is to build a theoretical and pragmatic framework for participatory communication, that is informed by the four theoretical concepts.

Furthermore, it is of importance to reiterate that the context referred to in this study is that of municipal IDP processes in South Africa, and therefore, the theoretical statements and a framework arrived at cannot be used to interpret other contexts without due regard for the uniqueness of the kind of setting referred to in the present study. Having noted the research trends in the literature and an existing gap that is highlighted in section 2.3, where participatory communication in the context of institutionalised participation in in South Africa and Africa seems neglected; this chapter aims to answer the second specific research question, namely:

“What theoretical complications does participatory communication have in relation to its applicability for the facilitation of meaningful and active participation in South African municipal IDP processes?”

Structurally, the chapter answers the above question through a critical review of the literature aimed at identifying conceptual difficulties related to participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture. After which, the chapter builds a set of four contextual definitions/interpretations for these concepts in view of how they can be theoretically understood and applied within a framework for participatory communication when facilitating institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.

Following the above process, the chapter further summarises a set of steps followed in the IDP process of Rustenburg Local Municipality, including the instances where institutionalised participation is undertaken in terms of meetings and public forums as outlined in section 1.2. Moreover, the contextual definitions/interpretations are run through these steps of the IDP

process as a way of identifying opportunities for a realistic approach to ‘genuine’ and ‘meaningful’ participation as envisaged in the theoretical constructs underpinning the participatory communication approach. This process leads to the formation of a conceptual framework which is added in the penultimate section of the present chapter (see section 3.5). The chapter’s concluding section (see section 3.6) provides a summary of how the structural make-up above addresses the second specific research question guiding the present study.

3.2 Conceptual difficulties and the Participatory Approach

As part of an effort to unpack the basic assumptions of participatory communication (see section 2.2.3), several definitions of participatory communication are worth highlighting. For example, Bessette (2004:9) defined participatory communication as “a planned activity, based on participatory processes as well as media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates a dialogue among stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realisation, and which supports and accompanies this initiative”.

Seemingly, this definition is approached from the perspective of development planners who are responsible for planning all communication and participatory processes and ‘allowing’ for public participation in development projects. This view of participatory communication is rather problematic because it is modernist in its approach which reflects a top-down perspective to development, where the authority and discretion for planning and carrying out development is unilaterally afforded to specific role-players (those charged with the responsibility of planning). This kind of approach is inconsistent with how, especially within the Latin American School of thought, participation is viewed and perceived (i.e. an unrestricted bottom-up engagement aimed at broad discussions, negotiations and engagement with the goal of reaching consensus) (see section 2.2.2).

In contrast, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009:17), define Participatory Communication as an “approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised”. Unlike the one offered by Bessette (2004), this definition emphasises the nature, purpose, goal and role of communication when it comes to agency. In so doing, the definition accounts for how participatory communication has been approached from the bottom-up perspective, placing agency on marginalised citizens on the basis of collective action- which represent a paradigm-shift from development to social change as well as from instrumental action to agency (cf. Wilkins, 2009). This definition seems to be in harmony with, and highlights, the dialogic nature of participatory communication from a theoretical

standpoint, in line with research efforts that originated from the late 1970s as influenced by Paulo Freire's "dialogical praxis" approach (see section 2.2.3).

From the definition offered by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), there is an emerging theoretical breakaway from the previous 'information-transfer' paradigm and focus is placed on identifying those spaces and platforms where stakeholders do not only exchange ideas and information, but are central in the process of identifying problems and solutions for the betterment of their lives as well as immediate surroundings. Notably, the definitions (i.e. the first one by Bessette, 2004 as well as the second one by Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009) reflect what Huesca (2008: 185-188) observed as two opposing sides of the spectrum which have sparked much contestation in the literature (Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Muturi & Mwengi, 2009), when interpreting and defining participatory communication. On the one hand, we see participatory communication being interpreted as a strategic and planned activity that can be interpreted as a means to achieving certain ends (i.e. participation-as-means); while on the other hand, it is defined as a dialogic process aimed at empowering marginalised citizens to raise their voice in the face of skewed power imbalances- with no time limits imposed on this kind of process.

The latter interpretation reflects Huesca's (2008) second part of the definitional spectrum, where participatory communication is viewed as an end in itself (i.e. participation-as-end) (cf. Carpentier, 2016; Carpentier *et al.* 2019; Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Laquinto, 2016; Muturi & Muengi, 2009; Parfitt, 2004; Silverman, Taylor, jr., Yin, Miller & Buggs, 2020). Proponents from the Latin American school of thought (e.g. Louis Ramiro Beltrán) can be credited with introducing this participation-as-end aspect of the debate to the scholarship on participatory communication. This action essentially caused those from the Bretton Wood school to reconsider and reform their initial stance on modernisation, into a more pragmatic approach to development which is more expansive and humane (Huesca, 2008:186).

For those who see participation-as-end (i.e. the Latin American scholars), Bessette's (2004) definition is problematic and typical of the theoretical incoherence with what it is designed to achieve. By being a "planned activity", participatory communication is presented as practice-based and rooted in instrumental action which emphasises linear communication, rigid time constraints as well the rigidity of structure and a fixed program from the top-down. The reformists, on the other hand, who are proponents of the dominant paradigm, regard participatory communication from the perspective of dialogic and non-restrictive communication coupled with the embrace of self-reflectivity and praxis, as being utopian and unrealistic (see Huesca, 2008).

However, there is somewhat, a middle ground where both sides of the spectrum can be infused and regarded as a "convenient and fruitful way of guiding communication decisions in

development projects” (Huesca, 2008:187). This implies that a participation-as-means approach (postulated by dominant paradigm scholars) in instances where administrative action is needed to carry out predetermined objectives as part of participatory communication; while participation-as-end (offered by the so-called utopian scholars) can be useful in instances where grassroots community engagement is needed and citizens are empowered to make decisions (i.e. through collective action) concerning their development and social change. Arguably, such an infused conception of participatory communication, as both participation-as-means and participation-as-end, may be suitable when conceptualised in municipal IDP processes given their joint reflection of what Wilkins (2009) interprets as a shift from development to social change.

To this end, participation is a key concept for participatory communication as it provides a mechanism on how participatory communication can be approached if social change through communication is to be achieved. Additionally, dialogue is also essential to participatory communication since, unlike words such as ‘discussion’, it carries a prescriptive connotation which guides how interactions ought to ensue during any participatory process: meaningful negotiation and debates which ultimately lead to consensus regarding local development needs and projects.

Additionally, dialogue provides the means through which citizen empowerment can be attained. To this effect Servaes and Malikhao (2005:91) use the concept of voice to postulate a view that when people are voiceless, it may not necessary mean they have nothing to say, but on the contrary, it may be because they are not listened to and platforms are not provided for them to make a contribution that will be heeded. Manyozo (2016) equally uses the concept of a pedagogy of listening to make the argument that listening to “subaltern” views may be key in facilitating community empowerment and that their indigenous knowledge and cultural ways of life may be regarded not as antithetical, but essential, to their social change endeavour.

In the context of public participation processes in South Africa, and as evidenced by the sporadic protest actions across municipalities (cf. Alexander *et al.* 2018), citizens often feel voiceless not because they cannot speak, but because the processes wherein they ought to raise their voice and make key decisions about their own development, are reduced to politically controlled processes mired by coercion with citizens only attending to ‘ratify’ government’s pre-planned activities and projects-as in spectator politics (cf. Molale, 2019; Williams, 2006).

It is undeniable that integrated development planning in South Africa lacks the facilitation of a genuine participatory process (see section 1.1 & 1.2). Ideally, municipal authorities should hold public meetings with their local constituents and in those meetings, local development projects should be identified and decided upon. However, evidence exists, with respect to the IDP

meetings in communities, where participation is practiced as a means to obtain the buy-in and ratification of local citizens on predefined ideas and project aims (see sections 1.1 & 1.2), thus legitimising the critique that participation is used as a process that merely seeks to achieve specifically desired ends instead of being an end in itself (see section 2.2.3). The foregoing implies a conceptual difficulty pertaining to interpreting and defining what participation, both in theory and practice, means. Moreover, since there can be confusion on how participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture, are defined from the perspective of the participatory approach as compared to how they are interpreted in practice (i.e. in the context of municipal IDP processes), there is a need to conceptually review how they are defined so as to generate context-specific theoretical statements for each concept, which are both grounded in theory and realistically applicable in practice. In the following four sub-sections, these concepts are explored in detail.

3.2.1 Participation

One can argue that one of the reasons why participatory communication lacks clear and universal operational definition is the fact that participation itself, as one of the key concepts in participatory communication, is not clearly defined. In essence, a clear-cut and context-based definition of participation can help address the definitional issue facing participatory communication so that direction can be sought as to how it can be operationalised in municipal IDP processes.

When studying the term ‘participation’, one understands that it has many levels and shades, thus it is not an absolute concept (cf. Mefalopulos, 2008:40-41). Within the development discourse, one of the outcomes of participation is empowerment. This is where agency is given to citizens from the bottom-up so as to create avenues for their ‘voice’ to be heard (see Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). Beyond the provision of just having a set of legal rights, citizenship is linked to participation as it refers to the status given to citizens as being “active social subjects, defining their rights, and struggling for these rights to be recognised” (Dagnino, 2007:549).

As Carpentier (2016) and Carpentier *et al.* (2019) say, the term participation cannot be described without looking at the political purpose it is supposed to fulfil when it comes to redressing and empowering a seemingly marginalised constituency group as a result of past injustices (see section 2.6). Equally, communication (which is a part of participatory communication) should play a role in the definition of participation- which understandably, is viewed from a political science perspective. This is because participation and communication are equally as important when highlighting the extent of citizen participation or involvement (see Servaes & Malikhao, 2005:91) in development and social change processes.

However, one might argue that defining participation from the perspective of this one group of role-players, might be posing a challenge of not accounting for, or not clearly defining, the role that is equally played by other more 'powerful' role-players in the participatory process- whose roles may affect the extent to which ordinary citizens participate. This phenomenon, which Waheduzzaman, As-Sharif and Hamid (2018) termed 'elite capture', has been a concern in various studies attributing a lack of active citizen involvement in local decision making processes around development and social change to the influence, actions, and in some cases, intimidation by local 'elites' such as politicians and development managers who use participation as an 'empty ritual' (cf. Arnstein, 2019; Molale, 2019; Williams, 2006. Also see section 1.1 & 1.2 for a detailed review of the literature citing, among others, this concern). The presupposition from the above restrictive interpretation of participation is that those who are tasked with facilitating citizen participation in any context can willingly ensure that citizens normatively have collective power, authority as well as autonomy over all decision-making processes; which will lead to their active, genuine and meaningful participation.

Although this argument holds significance when considering small-scale development projects with clearly defined roles, objectives and life-cycle (such as an agricultural project started by through a partnership between external development managers/volunteers and local community in a typical rural area); it becomes flawed or insufficient when factoring in the complexities of institutionalised participation where there are power imbalances between municipal officials and citizens – whose marginal power can only be exercised during community IDP meetings that do not translate into final decision-making and finalisation of IDP projects.

Additionally, institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes has been found to be inconsistent with genuine, effective and active participation envisaged within the participatory communication perspective and the post-Freire School of thought (see sections 1.2 & 2.2.3). Put differently, when conceived within the context of municipal IDP processes, participation is not a process that is implemented voluntarily by municipal officials. It is a process that seeks to fulfil legislative imperatives, which if failed, a municipal council may be dissolved in line with chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (see South Africa, 2000).

Against the foregoing, it cannot be ignored that for community members, participation takes place in the form of invited spaces for interaction and they are often limited to only ratify predefined goals and expectations by certain role-players in the IDP process (cf. Molale, 2019; Williams, 2006), which also implied that citizens are not empowered to enjoy the full and active citizen participation in participatory processes instituted by development managers and officials (cf. Silverman *et al.* 2020). It is confounding to find that this is still the case, especially after more than five decades since Arnstein (1969) cautioned that not distributing power to citizens in a

participatory process actually frustrates them and renders them powerless to make any meaningful contribution, therefore maintaining the status quo. This is precisely what is meant by a 'participation-as-means versus participation-as-end' struggle (see section 2.3.1 where participation-as-means and participation-as-end are discussed in detail). However, if we are to argue that such a realist approach to participation is theoretically unwarranted, can we blame municipal officials for seeking to fulfil what is prescribed in legislation?

It is in light of the foregoing that it can also be argued that the genuine and normative participation that is expected (or preferred) in theory might just be an overreach and it might also be said that it is practically impossible when contextualised in practice. This is in light of the fact that by presenting a set of rules and prescripts on how the community participation process should be followed, the legislation (specifically in the context of the South African Local Government system) is rightfully seeking to level the playing field and advocate for a rights-based representation for 'marginal' voices in society who as a result of South Africa's apartheid past, didn't have a voice in development and social change issues affecting them. Therefore, there is a need for a context-specific definition of participation that will seek to find common-ground between theory and practice.

Furthermore, the reason for seeking a context-specific definition of participation is also in reaction to the problem of fluidity of the concept and to help address the concern that it is a mere 'buzzword' in the development lexicon and discourse (see section 2.3.1). Such a definition would come in handy when addressing development challenges experienced when implementing a participatory approach in the context of municipal IDP processes in a culturally diverse society.

One can further argue that if participation is to be clearly situated and unpacked, the first step that should be followed is to elucidate, specifically, who is participating? In what? Under which circumstances? And for what purpose? These questions are arguably the foundation of Obregón and Tufte's (2017) exposition of how collective action can contribute to development and sustainable social change (see section 2.3.2 & 2.3.9). As pointed out in chapter 3 (see section 3.2), the conceptual difficulty with reference to participation is that, while it might be understood as a consultative process through which people may be informed about pre-planned activities concerning upcoming development projects in an area, it can equally be understood as a radical process where citizens use social movements as a form of resistance against what they see as a one-sided and interventionist development approach from higher authorities- who often do not seek consent from those at the grassroots.

The above kind of a nuanced approach to participation, as Mefalopulos (2008) pointed out, finds expression in, for instance, a typology used to determine the extent of citizen participation where

different levels, such as passive participation, functional participation or empowered participation are described. In the context of political science this approach is similar to what Sherry Arnstein (1969) referred to as a ladder of participation (figure 3-1) which presented similar different “levels” or “degrees” of participation in an attempt to understand how citizen participation is applied in real-life situations.

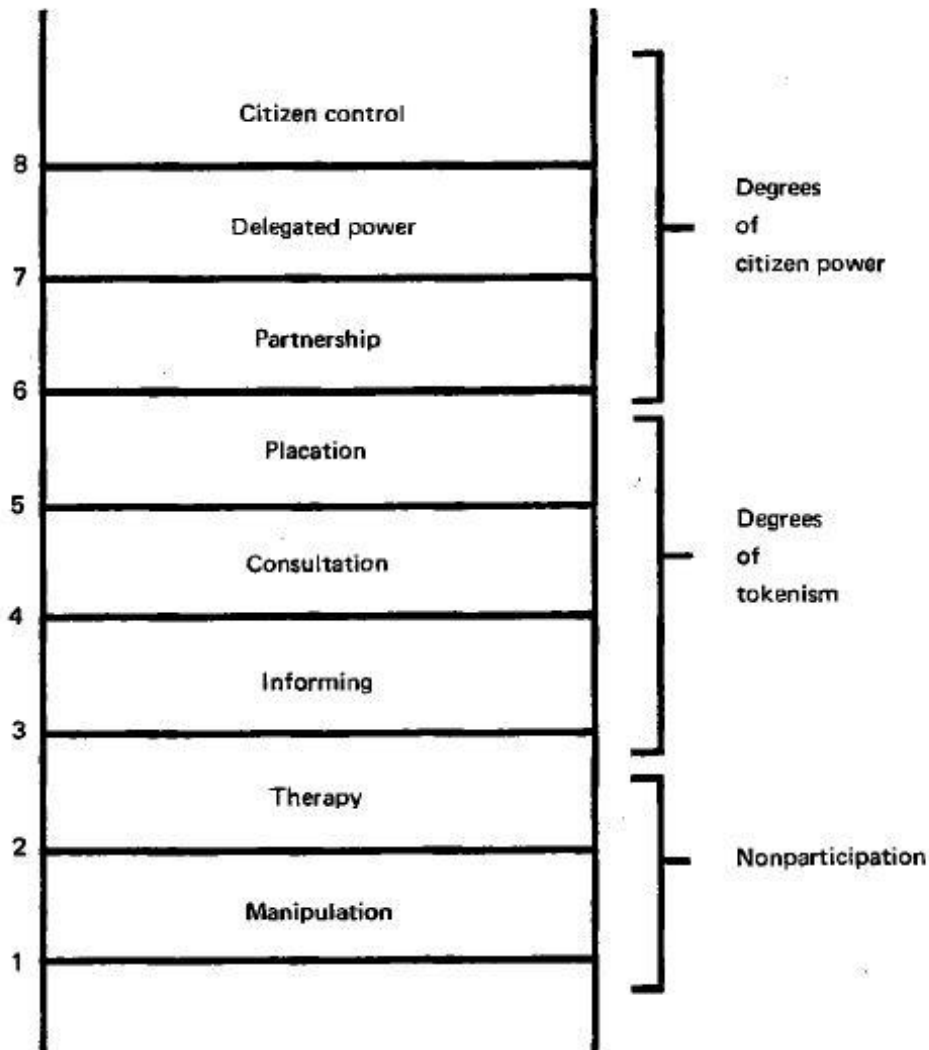


Figure 3-1: Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969)

Although Arnstein's ladder of participation is not rooted in communication theory, it provides a useful framework for analysing the different forms of participation in community development within a participatory context. Reference to Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation can also help to explore how participation from a political orientation can be normatively construed within the perspective of institutionalised participation in a context that is, by definition, political in nature (i.e. municipal IDP process, where the participation of local citizens is expected and guaranteed

by state legislation). This is a fundamentally important position upon which the participatory approach is hinged, especially when approached from a development and social change perspective (cf. Wilkins, 2009).

Moreover, exploring Arnstein's (1969) ladder is also relevant and realistic because it enables us to consider institutional politics that lead to undesired forms of participation (i.e. therapy and manipulation) as well as the idea of citizen power and delegated power. These are key factors relevant to the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes because we can be able to, for example, examine instances where both development managers and local citizens interact and how 'power' is shared between them during local development and planning interactions. This might explain the kind (or level) of participation that is enjoyed by citizens as well as politicians- who have a material influence on the participatory process.

Furthermore, even the nomenclature "community participation" is referenced in the Municipal Systems Act's guiding chapter, that requires municipalities to ensure that citizens are part of municipal development affairs. This, however, may explain the one-sided focus when participation in municipal IDP processes is treated (i.e. focus on participation is placed squarely on the role played by citizens). However, Wilson's (2006) position on the role played by the so-called 'technocrats' (cf. Laquinto, 2016) in a development and change process, it is clear that we cannot ignore other role-players who are involved in participatory processes and only define participation from the vantage point of one constituent group (i.e. local citizens).

In fact, one would argue that the author's suggestions for technocrats to collaborate with citizens as a way of building trust, creating 'learning spaces' as well as establish shared values (Wilson, 2006:519); is one of the indications that bureaucrats have a material influence on how we define participation within the context of municipal IDP processes, which is why their involvement too, is essential when exploring institutionalised participation. This rationale stems from the fact that the Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000) gives municipal officials the right to delegate authority and run the participatory IDP process, while community members are not provided any leading role in the community participation, thus suggesting a skewed and inevitable power imbalance between these groups of role-players.

Moreover, in light of an assumption gathered from Arnstein's (1969) ladder, participation can only be meaningful or genuine if citizens are afforded some degree of control and delegated power over decision-making processes in development projects. However, the power relationship that exists between municipal officials and community members as a result of legislative guidelines on community participation, do not provide ways in which citizens can exercise meaningful authority over the IDP process. Again, when looking at the communicative nature of the

participatory process, dialogue and communication do not feature as essential facilitators of the kind of participation referenced in Arnstein's (1969) ladder. Although the ladder was not intended to explain a communication process, a gap exists where an opportunity of a clearly defined communication process is needed to describe the circumstances under which the different degrees (and levels) of participation ought to take place. Even though participation has a political nature and is applied in a political context, hence reference is made to Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, the concept needs to be studied from a communication perspective, where dialogue and communication can become essential cornerstones of a participatory process.

In 1996, Sarah White (1996:7-9) presented a typology where she highlighted the different interests that a community participatory process would typically seek to serve. This typology, like the above ladder, shows the different levels and grades of participation that people may be afforded as a way of accentuating the extent to which participation can be understood in community development. They are:

- Nominal participation: Which serves the purpose of "legitimation" and fulfilling the legislative mandate;
- Instrumental participation: Which serves the efficiency interests of outside funders;
- Representative participation: Which serves the sustainability interests of the local poor and enable them to take ownership and control of their projects;
- Transformative participation: Which advances the idea of empowerment for the local poor.

The typology is similar to the above contribution by Arnstein (1969) in that it focuses on the different kinds (i.e. degrees or levels) of participation, where nominal participation can be equated to Arnstein's (1969) nonparticipation and transformative participation can be equated to the different degrees of citizen power in the ladder, such as partnership, delegated control and citizen control. There is still no mention of dialogue and communication as facilitators of these participatory practices in the typology, despite the use of concepts such as "representative" and "transformative" participation- which cannot be explored without having due regard for those conditions that are central to the facilitation of these types of participation. Contextually, if one were to scrutinise representative and transformative participation, it would be discovered that it refers to the idea that people use dialogue and communication in a transformative manner to resemble agency and representation as equal partners in the development process.

Additionally, when observing Arnstein's (1969) ladder, one can argue that a precursor for participation to be transformative and representative in nature is that it should be rooted in dialogic

communication given that it allows for grassroots citizens to play a leading role in decision-making, thereby empowering them in the process of development and social change.

To their credit, the ladder (offered by Arnstein, 1969) and typology (presented by White, 1996) are not rooted in communication science and this might be why communication and dialogue do not feature within them. This fact, however, highlights Molale's (2019) contention that most of the literature focusing on participation as a concept seemingly stems from the field of public administration, government studies and political science, and there is scant body of work recognising the concept as part of participatory communication within the field of communication for development and social change.

This stance also finds expression in one of Silvio Waisbord's (2008) observations that institutional dynamics in the form of factors and expectations (i.e. from international aid agencies) are to blame for the reliance in the (multi)disciplinary use of participation in developmental aid and the perceived undercutting of a contribution of participatory communication in the discourse. By using international aid agencies as an example, Waisbord's (2008:505) argument is that "...weak status of communication as a field of study and practice in development organisations.... [And] the institutional predominance of a technical mind-set..." are some of the institutional challenges faced by participatory communication, which arguably account for a dislocation between participation and participatory communication in the development discourse.

Although it has been over a decade since these observations were made by Silvio Waisbord, the same lines of thought, which also find expression in the more recent literature (see section 1.1 & 1.2), are used in the present study within the context of participation in local government as a build-up towards a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in IDP processes (see section 3.3 & 3.4).

From a development communication perspective (rooted in the participatory communication paradigm), the link and relationship between dialogue, communication and participation is an essential one, although it has been neglected in most studies that treat the idea of development and social change (cf. Chitnis, 2005; Pieterse, 1998; Wilkins, 2009; Williams, 2004). For instance, although Mefalopulos's (2008) typology (figure 3.1.2) presents the different degrees reflecting the extent of "participation" ascribed to (mostly local poor) people in development processes; this typology is used as a foundation to explain the process that the World Bank undergoes when practicing development communication, from an international aid organisation's standpoint. As a result, it does not account other contexts such as institutionalised participatory communication in local government.

Passive participation	Stakeholders participate by being informed about what is going to happen or has already happened. People's feedback is minimal or nonexistent, and individual participation is assessed mainly through head-counting and occasionally through their participation in the discussion.
Participation by consultation	Stakeholders participate by providing feedback to questions posed by outside researchers or experts. Because their input is not limited to meetings, it can be provided at different points in time. In the final analysis, however, this consultative process keeps all the decision-making power in the hands of external professionals who are under no obligation to incorporate stakeholders' input.
Functional participation	Stakeholders take part in discussions and analysis of predetermined objectives set by the project. This kind of participation, while it does not usually result in dramatic changes on "what" objectives are to be achieved, does provide valuable inputs on "how" to achieve them. Functional participation implies the use of horizontal communication among stakeholders.
Empowered participation	Stakeholders are willing and able to be part of the process and participate in joint analysis, which leads to joint decision making about what should be achieved and how. While the role of outsiders is that of equal partners in the initiative, local stakeholders are equal partners with a decisive say in decisions concerning their lives.

Figure 3-2: Typology of Participation (Mefalopulos, 2008: 11)

As seen from the above (figure 3-2), this typology of participation examines whether people's involvement in development programs is, for example, *passive*, *functional* or *empowered* participation. In essence, the typology demonstrates that passive participation and participation by consultation are the least desirable forms of participation in development programs, while 'functional participation' and 'empowered' participation are the most desired forms of participation given that they symbolise bottom-up and grassroots development and social change approaches. In this way, participation becomes an agency-led kind of process, one in which, the people (from the bottom-up) understand what they are participating in, and that they have an equal role to play when it comes to raising one's voice. Although one may argue that this typology attempts to address and clarify how "participation" in the context of participatory communication should be understood, it still fails explicate or give clear direction on how empowered participation looks like when implemented in a practical development context (e.g. in the IDP context of a municipal government in South Africa). This observation also applies to all other typologies

explored above, since one can rightfully ask how transformative participation or citizen-controlled participation looks when implemented practically?

In addition to the above rhetorical question, and, in line with a Freirean line of thought, there is a specific kind of dialogue that is suited for these kind of interactions (the idea of naming the world with the word and thereby leading to praxis) (see section 2.5.2). In the context of Mefalopulos's (2008) typology, passive participation can be described as a process where there is therapy and information-sharing between the authorities and the public, whereas empowered participation is facilitated by dialogic, transparent and horizontal communication flows where the public are given space to debate and are afforded the power to make decisions in their development.

Furthermore, Arnstein's (1969) ladder shows instances of non-participation such as "non-participation", "therapy" and "informing", which are examples of instances where there is a lack of active citizen participation during their engagements with development managers. This is essential because, in practical terms, one can easily judge and evaluate any participatory process by referencing the above yardsticks. Thus, examining the level of citizen participation in development projects helps to trace whether there is the kind of participation employed is passive, or it resembles some degree of tokenism as well as nominal participation. Although it is normal to consider the unavoidability of factors such as, for instance, conflict in group settings or the fact that participation is employed as a means to achieve legislative imperatives, efforts should be made to ensure that participation leads to the empowerment of local citizens as one of the outcomes of the development and social change practice.

This issue has become a subject of much concern in 21st century participatory communication literature. Waisbord (2008:505-507) argued that most health-related development projects in international aid, applied the shibboleths of 'diffusionist' perspectives which were popular in the 1950s and 1960s during the period in which the modernisation paradigm (i.e. the spread of information using mass media technologies) was seen as a panacea for international development and social change (cf. Rogers, 1976). This issue is further buttressed by Tufte (2017:63) who observes that the irony in the idea of participatory governance, which is supposed to reflect a transformative agenda on the basis of citizen power and radical participation, is that the concept is plagued by elements of co-option and manipulation when implemented by organisations with visions of efficiency in their pursuit of service delivery.

Furthermore, in an African perspective, a common interpretation of participation in a political context means having laws that guide how citizens should be consulted when it comes to addressing their socio-economic challenges. For instance, this is achieved through political participation and electoral reform; the use of radio for development, as well as through allowing

room for freedom of the press and other media in the context of development journalism (cf. Banda, 2007). It would seem that in line with this African approach, a 'paternalist' or 'guardianship' view of participation (cf. Tufte, 2017), can be traced to the formation, and democratic ruler-ship, of liberation and revolutionary movements led by the likes of Nelson Mandela (of South Africa), Kenneth Kaunda (of Zambia), Kwame Nkrumah (of Ghana) and Julius Nyerere (of Tanzania).

However, although these interpretations of participation are ideal for bringing stability and order in society, they do not fully resonate with the Freirean interpretation of participation from a dialogical praxis perspective especially when looking at how participation should be interpreted in the context of municipal integrated development planning. They are problematic in that they characterise participation as a tool to achieve certain ends (i.e. a means-to-an-end) (cf. Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Muturi & Mwengi, 2009). Beyond just being about electing an individual who will almost independently run a branch of the state on behalf of ordinary citizens, through a top-down approach, participation is about creating communicative spaces (i.e. whether invited or claimed spaces) that guarantee shared decision-making and legitimisation of voices that come from a citizen-base (cf. Cornwall, 2017).

Another popular approach to development and social change, from an African perspective, which closely resonates with the idea of allowing for the participation of marginalised community members at grassroots level in identifying development problems and solutions in their local areas is that of Theatre for Development- which was pioneered by African scholars such as Chris Kamlongera (2005) and Penina Mlama (2002), amongst others. In essence, Theatre for Development has its strength in enabling the facilitation of active citizen participation in analysing and identifying local problems and jointly propose solutions through joint decision-making. Another strong point that Theatre for Development has, as Mlama (2002) puts it, is the fact that it is an effective community-based media tool- which unlike traditional top-down broadcast and print media platforms- where community member are mere passive audiences of externally produced messaged about development, local community members are able to use locally available and creative media tools such as dance, drama, poetry, song, story-telling, among others, to share their stories, and creatively identify development problems and solutions through the use of local languages. Although this approach to development and social change is progressive, and radical, in mobilising the masses at grassroots level to have an active and participatory role in matters of their own development, it does not account for institutionalised participation- where formal government structures are required (in line with legislation) to meet with local citizens and jointly identify development issues and propose their solutions on an annual basis.

In a practical sense, the kind of participation that is essential in municipal IDP process requires that these communicative spaces be continuous and not become once-off events where people

come to a single meeting and provide their needs to external development managers. In addition, participation should be inclusive of all voices in the community leading to jointly agreed-upon compromises and decisions about local development and change. In sum, the following theoretical statement can be regarded as a context-specific definition of participation, which emanates from the different points of departure and perspectives within the literature:

Theoretical Statement 1: Participation

Participation can be defined as a continuous and social process which involves people, irrespective of their social status or power, so that they can collectively reflect on problems affecting them, and decide how to address them through open dialogue and negotiation with the aim of reaching consensus regarding solutions about common development problems.

3.2.2 Dialogue

Bohm's (1995) etymological breakdown on dialogue predicates this section's definitional attempt at the concept, in order to present its challenges and implications. The author's perspective is simply that dialogue, as derived from its Latin origin- '*dia logos*', meaning "through the word" is the kind of engagement where nobody tries to win, but everyone wins if each contributed idea is collectively agreed upon (see section 2.5.2). Consequently, dialogue is not the kind of engagement where one pushes for his ideas to be largely adopted, effectively ensuring that others lose their arguments in group interactions so that he can emerge as the winner (Bohm, 1995:6-7). The latter scenario broadly defines what can take place in a 'discussion'- where a win-lose situation for those involved, is possible. In essence, dialogue can only be held between equal subjects and those involved in dialogue, should not wish to win anything but to simply make a contribution that may lead to the attainment of collaboration and consensus, instead of co-optation, coercion and manipulation.

This idea can be linked to a Buberist notion of "*I-IT*" (subject-to-object) and "*I-Thou*" (subject-to-subject) relationships (see section 2.5.2). Within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes (from a participatory communication point of departure), dialogue can only be facilitated in circumstances where all people (including citizens) are perceived as subjects (i.e. in a subject-to-subject relationship) and not as objects (i.e. in a subject-to-object relationship) in the development and social change practice. The central argument here is that if people are passively overlooked in deliberations that are meant to be participatory in nature (in line with Mefalopulos's (2008) typology, see figure 3-1), it may be argued that they are not engaged in

dialogue and that they are regarded as objects (I-It). By contrast, if they are active and empowered in the deliberation process, it can then be argued that they are engaged in dialogue because their views are being heeded and they are equal subjects in the deliberation process (I-thou). In this way, dialogue is at the heart of any participatory process and it can be argued that participation cannot ensue without the facilitation of dialogue.

Although it is normatively ideal, this line of thought is impractical in a real-world setting of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. This is because as per legislation, although the aim of community participation is not to marginalise anyone, some role-players (in this case government officials) have to be empowered to direct the participatory processes so that decisions about a local development agenda can be made. This is so that IDP project implementation can be ratified and put into action within a specific timeframe for the benefit of all interested parties.

In terms of its purpose, Paulo Freire (1970) sees dialogue as essential to achieving a form of praxis (see section 2.5.2 where Freire's definition of dialogue was offered). In Freire's terms, dialogue is conceptualised as an action-reactive process used by equal subjects to name the world, through the word, and then to transform it (this is the notion of praxis, which was briefly referenced in sections 2.5.2 & 3.2.1 above). This means that through dialogue, participants need to continuously self-reflect and ensure that they regard the contribution of others as equal to that of their own, and that they jointly use language in order to find common solutions to common problems. Within the context of development communication, this conceptualisation of dialogue places emphasis on the transformational role of language towards "true" social change and development. As postulated in chapter 2 (see section 2.5.2), it is from this basis that the concept of inter-subjectivity becomes an essential feature of dialogue.

Ganesh and Zoller (2012:68) regard Bohm and Buber's perspectives on dialogue as prescriptive, because they perceive it as a "rare form of communication composed of certain conversational and interactional features". This prescriptive account of dialogue is relevant when studying the practical implications of participatory communication in local government's institutionalised approach to development and social change. This is because as a key feature, dialogue needs to be examined for its practical implications so as to accentuate its distinctiveness in ensuring the success of the development process. This argument is based on a presupposition that dialogue is a key ingredient towards achieving social change, through social mobilisation and engagement with local citizens in decision-making processes concerning development issues.

Additionally, in light of an observation by Ganesh and Zoller (2012), dialogue can be interpreted from a descriptive sense, instead of a prescriptive orientation. In accordance with the former

interpretation, dialogue can be approached from an understanding that it is a process reflective of “everyday pervasive aspect of language use and interaction” (Ganesh & Zoller, 2012:68). This descriptive approach to dialogue is conceptually problematic given that it falls victim of being manipulated in whichever way. Put simply, if dialogue is viewed as a mundane aspect of language use, we can refer to any kind of discussion and discourse, irrespective of its content, as dialogue: an instructive discussion between a mother and her child to wash the dishes and do the laundry; a command by an irked teacher to students that they should stop making noise in the classroom; a moving sermon rendered by a pastor during a church service to a congregation shouting “Amen”; or cross-examination of a witness by a defence lawyer in court, etc.

By approaching dialogue in this descriptive sense: a mundane, two-way, and everyday aspect of language use, we are faced with a conceptual problem for explaining the kind of dialogue that should ensue during a participatory process within the context of development communication. Surely, it cannot be approached in that form because there are prescriptive connotations that ought to be taken into consideration. This idea runs centrally to the main arguments of critique presented against the modernisation paradigm, and it echoes the key essence of participatory communication (or alternative development, in a Latin American sense) as a framework that can achieve development and social change (see section 2.2.2 & 2.2.3). The approach to dialogue highlights the importance of reaching intersubjective agreements about what the collective needs, as far as local development and social change is concerned. In any dialogic process, therefore, local citizens need to feel a sense of involvement and ownership of ideas and decision-making about their lives and livelihood. This is in line with Jenlink and Banathy (2005) who view dialogue as something that cannot be done, but a relational feature of social discourse (see section 2.5.2).

This perspective is supported by various scholars and proponents of communication for development and social change, for instance, when contextualising public participation as participatory communication in environmental policy decision-making, Walker (2007) says that dialogue and deliberation go hand-in-glove though it does not always lead to good decision-making. The author further postulates, notwithstanding, that dialogue does, at the very least, foster mutual understanding, collaborative learning and shared consensus (Walker, 2007:101).

The same idea on dialogue is echoed by Kincaid and Figueroa (2009:513) who note that within the context of participatory communication, dialogue boosts social capital in terms of skillsets and knowledge gained by local citizens during discussions and deliberations on local issues and development, as well as to increase their civic apathy, collective ownership and contribute in producing local citizens with leadership capabilities. Manyozo (2017) furthers this point by providing a precondition for dialogue when treating community participation with subaltern voices. He argues that dialogue requires tolerance, where any student of social change ensures that they

are prepared to first listen to “subaltern views” (i.e. views of the marginalised people) with the intention of listening to evidence, listening to themselves and applying listening as a form of speaking (Manyozo, 2017:130). This is part of what he calls a pedagogy of listening (Manyozo, 2017:130-148).

In the context of municipal IDP public participatory processes, the communicative nature of dialogue, from a critical tradition of communication theory, requires collaboration and reconfiguration of pre-existing power dynamics (see section 2.4.1). In this sense, dialogue requires collaboration, openness (cf. Ganesh & Zoller, 2012:70), transparency, and the idea that each individual is free to voice their opinions, irrespective of whether they are in a minority or in a majority- in respect of favour (cf. Freire, 1970). Regarding power, this prescriptive account requires that power relations be set so that unconstrained and balanced dialogue can ensue, ultimately leading to consensus (Ganesh & Zoller, 2012:68).

Arguably it may be practically difficult to discern if, in the context of a public participation meeting involving municipal officials and citizens, power (im)balances have been flexed to accommodate dialogue and allow citizens to use collective power to direct local development and social change (i.e. a scenario in which ‘empowered participation’ may be identified). In addition, it may also be challenging to determine if the social actors in the same participatory platform are indeed transparent and open in their interaction, thus making this theoretical requirement for facilitating dialogue a normative ideal. However, if municipal IDP meetings can be subjected to a reflection process (see section 3.3. below as part of a discussion on opportunities for participation), it might be that the ideal speech act (i.e. an ideal interaction between municipal officials and citizens) may be measured as a way of fulfilling the said normative requirements of dialogue and thereby affording citizens to place the institutionalised participation process under scrutiny.

In light of the foregoing, through dialogue, participatory communication is able to guarantee, at least conceptually, the constitutive conditions within which a communicative process of participation in municipal IDP process can take place. Additionally, the above approach to dialogue allows participatory communication to fit within what Melkote and Steeves (2015a) refer to as a co-equal knowledge-sharing model of communication. Rooted in radical participatory approach (i.e. Freire’s liberation pedagogy, see section 2.4.2), this model places emphasis on “symmetric relationship” between equal subjects yielded by participatory communication and its ability to enable the voicing out of a multiplicity of ideas, decentralisation (of knowledge patterns and problem-solving practices) “...and co-equal sharing with an interchange of roles between senders and receivers” (Melkote & Steeves, 2015a:384).

Against the fear of making unsubstantiated “universalist” claims when looking at the contributions of Communicative Action and Dialogical Praxis towards theoretically rooting participatory communication, there is a need to add an intercultural communication dimension to this project of theorisation. This is because the study, as stipulated in the background, seeks to conceptually forecast the kind of “communicative” process followed when participation in municipal IDP processes involves a culturally diverse group of citizens, such as the one in Marikana (Ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality, South Africa). In conclusion, the following theoretical statement concerning dialogue can be formulated in light of the argument advanced in this section:

Theoretical Statement 2: Dialogue

Dialogue can be defined as an intersubjective process, characterised by mutual tolerance and respect, whose members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) are first prepared to listen to one another and accommodate all views, even those that are ‘subaltern’ to allow negotiation and the joint contribution of ideas so that consensus about solutions related to development problems is reached. Through dialogue, all interactions should be aimed at affording interlocutors to contribute ideas aimed at achieving praxis (i.e. transformation, development and social change), free of coercion and manipulation.

3.2.3 Empowerment

Like participation, development and poverty alleviation, the word ‘empowerment’ is one of those frequently overused concepts in development literature and discourse (Cornwall, 2007; Melkote & Streeves, 2015a). Empowerment refers to the short-and-long-term positive impact of development projects in the lives of local citizens as a result of their involvement in the decision-making process, and their contribution in local development activities as well as the extent to which they get opportunities to grow, learn and develop themselves in the process (see Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Mefalopulos, 2008; Williams, 2004).

Melkote and Steeves (2015a) correctly note that in order to understand empowerment, we should first define power, which in their view, is reliant on social relationships and can be categorised according to the following types “power over (controlling power), power to (generates new responsibilities without domination), power with (collective power, power created by group process), and power from within (spiritual strength that inspires and energises)” (Melkote & Steeves, 2015a:17-18). With reference to the first type (i.e. power over), the authors argue that it reflects power inequalities and assumes that there are those people in a development process with decision-making ability over others, therefore, change cannot occur unless the power

relationship between marginalised citizens, bureaucrats, and politicians is addressed. All the other alternative types of power (power to, power within and power with) can be used to define what empowerment is. This is fortified by a Foucauldian perspective that instead of defining power, it is essential to look at the ways in which it is exercised. This argument implies looking at the “networks of relations” in order to examine how it is used by those who have latitude (Gallagher, 2008:399). Similarly, when conceptualising Freire’s notion of conscientisation (see section 2.3.9) within the context of the participatory approach, one can argue that citizen empowerment can be achieved if they are afforded the space and latitude to critically reflect on the participatory process, so as to determine if it is not laced with manipulative or coercive behaviour or attitude by other role-players, in particular those with power over the development process. Additionally, Habermas’s notion of validity claims, in line with the communicative action theory, provides a methodology (i.e. a ‘how-to’ guide) as to what the purpose of such a reflective process should be (see section 2.6).

Scholars such as Tufte (2017) as well as Obregón and Tufte (2017), in their contemporary treatment of empowerment within the context of communication for development and social change, have explored the concept from the perspectives of collective action and social justice. These include exploring how citizen empowerment has led to the use of collective power and mass mobilisation in some parts of the world (see section 2.3.2).

In this way, empowerment in development communication discourse has been reconceptualised to refer to how citizens use collective action as a means to either resist pre-existing and hegemonic power exercised by those with bureaucratic and political leverage over social development and the institutions they lead; or to collectively participate in decision-making processes regarding social development issues in their own localities as a means of exercising their collective power to change their lives. According to Asuman and Diedong (2019), empowerment cannot be examined without exploring the change within the social setting in which it is exercised. By implication, they regard an empowered community as one in which people and the institutions they are involved in, use their skillsets and resources as a collective in order to meet social needs.

Applying this understanding of empowerment from the perspective of institutionalised public participatory process in local government poses some challenges. This is because the legislation governing how participation in municipal IDP processes empowers certain individuals to spearhead the process. Moreover, they have the power (as prescribed by the Municipal Systems Act) to determine how public participation takes place in the IDP process. This means that the power balances are skewed, leaving citizens to be directed by municipal authorities in terms of how they ought to participate in the IDP process while the ultimate decision-making responsibility

is left to municipal council members who have the prerogative of deciding which projects will be prioritised in a given financial year. Given the foregoing, the following theoretical statement about empowerment, based on the diverse points of departure in the literature, can be extracted:

Theoretical Statement 3: Empowerment

Empowerment is a relational process characterised by inter-subjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collective power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development, they wish to see in their immediate surroundings. To be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect on whether the participatory process is not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure. Any development projects undertaken without following this process, do not reflect the ideas contributed and decisions made during this process should be regarded as illegitimate.

3.2.4 Culture

It would be incomplete to conduct a theoretical reflection on the usefulness of participatory communication towards development and social change if attention is not devoted to culture and its influence on the attainment of long lasting social change. This is because, like participation, dialogue and empowerment; concepts such as culture, identity, language, values and worldview are also critical when considering the role of participatory communication in development and social change in any development context (i.e. at government level: national, provincial, regional and local; or at multinational organisation level: UN, FAO, UNESCO, UNDP, USAID; or at civil society/organised groups level: NGOs, civil society organisations, ratepayers associations, social movements, etc.).

Notably, the notion of culture within the field of development communication was, to a large extent, influenced by the body of work from the Latin American School with greater links to Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy. The premise of this work was based on the fact that all human beings (in Freire's case, adult learners) irrespective of literacy levels or status, have a right to contribute to the process of "naming the world" in which they live, through dialogue (cf. Braden & Mayo, 1998; Obregón & Mosquera, 2005). The central idea behind culture in development communication is the fact that development is, in itself, complex and it requires a sense of context-specific cultural sensitivity as well as an appreciation of difference when engaging with local citizens. This argument implies that the experiences from one context or community cannot be expected or anticipated to be the same in a different community within a different context. Servaes (2013:5) succinctly accentuates this view when he observes that development is "an integral, multi-

dimensional, and dialectic process that differs from society to society, community to community, context to context”.

Therefore, when employing participatory communication in development, universalist claims, assumptions and models are antithetical to the objective of social change and development. Thus, justifying the need to explore the curious nature and role that culture as well as identity have in this space, especially in cases where culture is defined according to a heterogeneous and diverse community. These discussion notes are related to Dutta’s (2015) arguments when proposing for the use of a culture-centred approach in development communication (see section 2.5.3).

It is from this premise that intercultural communication as well as the concept of ‘competence’ (cf. Koester & Lustig, 2015) are essential points of departure when cultural considerations are to be contextually interpreted in development communication. Additionally, language plays a vital role as a form of symbolic exchange (cf. Rao & Walton, 2004) available to indigenous communities when participating in meetings aimed at generating their ideas on development and social change. Noting that most communities in South Africa are culturally diverse, special attention is required to observe language needs of these communities in public participation processes. When facilitating the public participation process in relation to IDP, a multiplicity of language difference can be accommodated, thereby leading to shared understandings and agreements being made by way consensus. Notable in several international studies on citizen participation and governance, it is a fundamental necessity to use indigenous language as a sociocultural feature for canvassing local communities to participate in decision-making process around local development and social change issues affecting them (cf. David-Chavez & Gavin, 2018; Fontana & Grugel, 2016; Fung, 2015; Ruwhiu & Carter, 2016). Against this background, the following theoretical statement about culture, based on several points of departure in the literature can be extracted:

Theoretical Statement 4: Culture

Culture can be defined as the collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity, including indigenous language. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members should guard against any attitude or decision-making process that may erode their sacred norms and standards and the adoption of ideas that are incomprehensible and unfavoured by all.

Having constructed theoretical statements on the four concepts underpinning the participatory approach, let us now turn our attention to the context within which a participatory communication approach- which is reoriented in line with the above theoretical statements, will be applied as part of the present study's proposed framework.

3.3 Contextualisation of the study

As outlined in sections 1.1. and 1.2, the South African municipal IDP processes require the participation of local citizens in the formulation of the municipality's IDP. The whole process, which is extrapolated from a legislative framework (i.e. Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000), as well as Rustenburg Local Municipality's summary of the 2018/19 IDP process (see South Africa, 2018: 29-32), can be summarised in the following six steps:

Step 1: The municipality holds internal meetings whereby the offices of the municipal speaker, municipal mayor and municipal manager, arranges logistics around when public meetings will be held in specific communities. The speaker and mayor are assisted by community development workers and ward councillors, who are responsible for all logistics involved in the preparation of meetings, especially the ones organised with the community.

Step 2: One public meeting is scheduled and held for each ward within the municipality by way of consultations, where citizens are called to hear about development projects proposed for their area.

Step 3: Further meetings are held internally by different responsible units (e.g. finance, infrastructure, community safety, roads and transport, etc.) within the municipal council, where data from public hearings are collected and a draft IDP document is compiled. It is during this process that further meetings are held with other government departments as well as state or private institutions, with the aim of determining how community needs will be catered for. In addition, other consultative meetings, in the form of IDP representative forums, may be held as part of this step. This is where organised groups, especially from civil society, are also afforded the space to add their voices in the IDP process as part of a process identifying and catering for the needs of the community in the respective wards.

Step 4: The draft IDP document is then completed and tabled in a municipal council meeting, where councillors will vote for the IDP and budget plan, which will become the municipality's blueprint for local development in a given financial year (starting on the month of July of each year). Moreover, this annual IDP blueprint is part and parcel of a municipality's five-year draft IDP that generally informs its development agenda- which is required as part of the term of office of new municipal political principals shortly after an election year.

Step 5: After approval by council, the annual draft IDP document is then adopted and submitted to the following departments of government and strategic partners, for ratification and release of strategic funds so that the identified development projects can be financed:

- National Treasury and the North West Provincial Department of Finance for the release of its annual funds (through the division of revenue Bill),
- National Department of Cooperative Governance and traditional affairs,
- North West Provincial Department of Local Government,
- Relevant oversight bodies in both the National Parliament and the National Council of Provinces, as well as relevant oversight bodies in the North West Provincial Legislature.
- The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and other interest groups in civil society.

Step 6: Lastly the draft IDP document is then published and made available for public consumption.

Rustenburg Local municipality has 45 wards and public participation is conducted by means of public consultation in a series of meetings across the municipality (with one community meeting reserved for each ward). In 2018 the municipality held all 45 public IDP consultative meetings between 17th and 26th of April, as recorded in the municipality's 2018/19 IDP document (see South Africa, 2018: 32).

When carefully studying the above steps and reviewing them against the four theoretical statements in section 3.2 above, there are instances where the steps can be improved through a facilitation of participatory communication that is redefined according to the newly reinterpreted four key concepts it espouses, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture. For example, in order to enhance participation, an opportunity lies in the need to increase community meetings from just having one meeting with communities in each ward. It would seem that, in line with Mefalopulos's (2008) typology of participation, the current type of community participation practiced in the municipality's IDP process is what can be referred to as participation by consultation. This argument is advanced especially considering the fact that it is impossible for IDP meetings that are held across all 45 wards within a space of 9 days can yield meaningful and active participation of all role-players in all communities.

As a way of ensuring that community participation in each ward is continuous and active, an opportunity exists where the communication office within the municipality can be used to hold

continuous dialogues (in the form of meetings) each month with each community in the background, as a way of mapping community satisfaction, recording community needs and facilitating feedback ahead of the formal IDP meetings that are usually held by the office of the mayor and municipal manager. This is against the background that if Rustenburg Local municipality can have 45 community meetings (to discuss IDP projects) in a space of nine days, then they can afford to have a substantial number of on-going meetings with the community in the build-up to the main IDP meetings that are reserved for a specific time frame.

In this way, community participation in the municipality can be practiced in two ways, firstly, by way of continuous meetings through the communication office of the municipality (led by the municipality's communication manager); and secondly, through consultative IDP meetings that are usually held once in each ward and spearheaded by the office of the municipal speaker, mayor and municipal manager.

Concerning dialogue and empowerment, an opportunity to enhance the participatory nature of the IDP process lies in the manner in which the on-going community meetings held by the municipality's communication office can be organised. Given that there are no time constraints for the facilitation of these on-going meetings, the meetings can be organised in such a way that community members are prepared and afforded the opportunity to take the lead in all dialogues, where no idea is suppressed and all community members are afforded the opportunity to present ideas they think are of importance concerning how development can ensue in their area.

Through the contribution of diverse ideas, the meetings can be facilitated with the goal of reaching consensus regarding the main community needs in the short-term, medium-term and long-term (i.e. specific time-frames can be set out by the community members themselves). Once consensus is reached, these ideas can be used to inform municipal priorities that will be consolidated as part of the formal IDP process.

With respect to culture, officials within the municipality's communication office need to ensure that on-going monthly dialogues with communities are sensitive to, and accommodative of, the different cultural backgrounds that community members espouse. Given that some communities like ward 31 (Marikana) in the municipality are culturally diverse, officials responsible for holding dialogues with communities need to master appropriate and effective behaviour aimed at accommodating the different cultural beliefs, norms and values cherished by all citizens.

Lastly, if community members contribute ideas and solutions informed by the indigenous knowledge systems they cherish, officials need to ensure that the ideas are presented for discussion and negotiation with all community members in order for consensus to be reached,

without suppressing or forcing anyone to compromise their cultural values. In this way, the ongoing meetings with the community can help in reinforcing rapport between citizens and the municipality and this effort can legitimise the participatory nature of the IDP process.

This opportunity for a facilitation of participatory communication also reflects an important role to be played by the office of a communications manager in the municipality. This role is sacrosanct in building and maintaining trust, as well as establishing the hallmarks of a positive relationships between the communities and the municipal authorities. However, it is important to note that this type of a reimagined and realistic account of community participation in the IDP process does not directly translate what Mefalopolos (2008) refers to as 'empowered participation' in his typology, or the radical interpretations of Freire's ideas around conscientisation and resistance to power (see section 3.2.1). This is because for any participatory process to exist in the IDP process of Rustenburg Local Municipality, permanently skewed and pre-existing power imbalances between municipal authorities and citizens cannot be ignored. However, during specific meetings, those representing the office of the municipality's communications manager need to be mindful of the potential risk of damaging relationships with community members if they don't apply inter-subjectivity and do not engage in a process that is dialogic, empowering and culturally sensitive in nature.

3.4 Towards a Conceptual Framework for Participatory Communication to facilitate Institutionalised Participation in Municipal IDP Processes

From the above overview of conceptual difficulties, it is essential to note that participatory communication is broad and therefore requires a context-specific definition. This definition can help outline the kind of participatory process needed in the IDP context of the local sphere of government in South Africa, particularly in Rustenburg Local Municipality. Moreover, the definition offered is mindful of the diverse perspectives in literature concerning participatory communication and the four theoretical statements on participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture:

Context-specific definition: Participatory Communication

Participatory communication is a culturally sensitive and interpersonal communication process, rooted on inter-subjectivity and mutual expression of tolerance, sincerity and empathy- which involves equal people with collective power over decision-making to come together, listen to one another and jointly contribute ideas, views and opinions, with the goal of reaching mutual consensus about local development problems. This process is aimed at continuously providing knowledge and skills to transform the quality of their lives (i.e. praxis). Thus, it is not a once off but continuous process where feedback is facilitated between all those involved as part of monitoring and evaluation of all efforts geared towards social change.

In this process, dialogue and inter-subjectivity, as Hinthorne and Schneider (2012) put it, are important traits of participatory communication when viewed against its contribution to development and social change. The definition also straddles on the participation-as-means versus participation-as-end debate as a way of accentuating the fact that by being a continuous process, participation should be viewed as having both traits: meaning there are instances where it should be viewed as a means to achieve certain ends while in some instances, it should be viewed as showing traits of being an end in itself (i.e. continuous dialogue).

This is where local citizens are empowered to cognitively reflect on the information shared with them, their inputs as well as those of others, thus being afforded the latitude to evaluate whether the information shared a local development agenda is in their best interest (see section 3.2.3). Furthermore, the above definition gives participatory communication a cultural outlook and effectively reflects the way in which dialogue and empowerment ought to be interpreted.

The starting point for the proposed conceptual framework is not rooted in the assumption that it will act as a 'panacea' or 'universalist tool' aimed at solving all development and social change issues. Regarding its contribution to the identified theoretical problem facing participatory communication (i.e. that of being "theoretically void" and "utopian"), this proposed conceptual framework should neither be construed as an 'ultimate' nor an 'omnipotent' framework aimed at 'ending' long-standing issues within the field of development communication. Alternatively, it should be understood as a context-specific attempt at exploring and suggesting an approach towards theoretically reinterpreting participatory communication and applying it within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes (i.e. public participation processes). The conceptual framework is offered especially because, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no available framework or model that can be used in this way. It is prescriptive

for similar contexts, given that the literature in participatory communication is awash with multiple models that have been developed, over the years, with different objectives (see section 2.3.4).

Following a careful review of the legislation guiding participation in South Africa, the literature on participation within the context of the local government sphere in South Africa, as well as in participatory communication (see sections 1.1., 1.4, 1.5, 2.2.3, 2.3, 2.4, & 3.3), there are six key factors that were identified as defining features of participation in the municipal IDP process if we are to consider conceptually rooting institutionalised participation within the context of participatory communication. Although they are based on a review of literature, the factors are part of the researcher's own construction when reflecting on some of the ways in which institutionalised participation can be enhanced, hence, they are identified as the determining factors to consider if we are to have an active and meaningful participatory process related to integrated development planning.

These are the key factors that the context-specific conceptual framework for participatory communication is based upon, namely, identification of role players, the plurality of (public) participation, transparent evaluation of participation in the IDP process, the role of the municipal communications office, the nature of participation, dialogue and empowerment, and the value of culture (see theoretical statements in sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, & 3.2.4). When reflecting on each of the factors, it can be argued that they equally have a role to play in enhancing the kind of participatory process that is required in the legislation that guides institutionalised participation in the South African local government sphere, as well as in the theory on participation as a key concept of participatory communication.

3.4.1 Role-Players

Role-players are people who have material interest in the municipality's IDP processes. These range from municipal officials/bureaucrats, to municipal councillors and politicians, ratepayers' associations and NGO's, opinion leaders and ordinary citizens. Regarding the nature of the participatory process, there is a requirement for some role-players (i.e. municipal officials, including ward councillors) to be tasked with the responsibility of arranging all logistics for meetings, invite other role-players (i.e. community members as well as interest groups), and facilitate their participation so that decisions can be taken around locally-desired development objectives. This is where a participation-as-means interpretation is a required necessity. The success of any participatory process is, arguably, reliant on the involvement of different role-players in the different stages of the process. Additionally, the behaviour of each role-player in the process (i.e. how they conduct themselves especially when interacting with others in a group setting) can also affect the outcome of the participatory process. Therefore, it is essential for those

role-players that do not have the authority to constitute IDP meetings to be afforded the latitude to critically reflect on IDP process. This can be through determining whether the process was meaningful or not; whether there was active or passive participation; whether the process was characterised by the subjective experiences/perception of coercion on the one hand, or of sincerity and truthfulness on the other.

3.4.2 The Plurality of (public) participation

Stemming from a reflection on the opportunities for participation, the plurality of the public participation process was identified as one key factor that can help enhance institutionalised participation with a view of turning it into a continuous process. In summary, the participatory process can be presented in two sub-processes, where in process 1, there can be on-going dialogue between the municipality's communications office, opinion leaders and civic associations and ordinary community members as well as with ward councillor and their committees. In process 2, pre-existing formal IDP meetings which includes an IDP a follow-up IDP meetings, where final decisions about IDP projects are taken, can continue to be held. The only difference in this reimagined participatory process is that process 1 can help inform and streamline the kind of discussions and progress being made in process 2.

Presented as a two-step flow of the participatory process, the proposed conceptual framework tries to find common ground (or a compromise, if you will) by satisfying the theory-versus-practice gap. This is where on the one hand, it seeks to satisfy the participation-as-end requirement in literature by positioning institutionalised participation as a continuous dialogic process of engagement and interaction. Additionally, it is normative since maintaining an on-going dialogue requires certain preconditions, in line with the communicative action and dialogical praxis approaches, to be met. These preconditions include the need to guarantee that the principles of ideal speech act will be followed in order to increase confidence in the minds of all role-players about the genuineness of all speech acts; and the need to ensure that all participants are free to make valid judgements about the extent of participation in the IDP process.

On the other hand, the conceptual model helps to legitimise the institutionalised participation that is required in practice (i.e. spelled out by legislation), which can be described in terms of participation-as-means, where municipal authorities can plan all logistics around participatory processes where local citizens will make inputs as part of IDP, and that the officials can be empowered to make final decisions on behalf of the citizens at municipal council level (where citizens have no power to participate in internal municipal meetings), as long as the decisions represent the views that were approved by citizens or are in their best interest.

3.4.3 Transparent evaluation of the participatory process

As part of opportunities for participatory communication in institutionalised participation in the context of IDP, the proposed process 1 can be described as one where an opportunity for genuine bottom-up dialogue and deliberation is identified by further fostering trust, which necessitates the facilitation of feedback around community issues that otherwise would cloud the normal IDP consultative processes (i.e. process 2). This is where citizens may be able to make input on local development issues as well as make decisions on what kind of social change they want to see taking place, thereby solidifying and building rapport between municipal officials and citizens. Among other functions, once the IDP and budget plans are complete, this is the process where citizens can be afforded space and time to reflect whether all decisions are consistent with initial interactions and input they made during formal IDP meetings. In order to achieve this, community members should be allowed to make anonymous submissions, preferably to a mediator (i.e. representative from the national department of Cooperative Governance). This reflection process should be aimed at evaluating whether the participatory process was legitimate and whether citizens perceive the consultative process as having been fair and was characterised by unconstrained (i.e. coercion-free) agreements or compromises. This can be achieved by means of a feedback mechanism, where the community members are requested to give input and reflect on the nature of their interactions with municipal officials.

3.4.4 The role of the municipal communication office

Under the current regulations guiding the IDP process, the municipal communications office is only used for media and public relations purposes. In this framework, the communications office is given latitude to communicate with citizenry at the grassroots level, where dialogue can ensue and there can be a way in which communication channels, including feedback, are opened.

3.4.5 The nature of participation, dialogue and empowerment

During process 1, dialogue, participation and empowerment are on-going processes of participatory communication and this is consistent with how they are theorised as part of the theoretical points of departure underpinning this study. In this way, participatory communication is poised to open channels for reciprocity of information, evaluation of all speech acts and facilitation of feedback.

3.4.6 Culture

Culture plays an important role in that those involved in process 1 & 2, especially those representing the municipality should develop a sense of intercultural communication competence

in order to effectively, and appropriately, accommodate cultural values espoused by local citizens, even if it means inputs made on development and social change are premised on a citizen's cultural and indigenous knowledge.

In sum, a newly defined and context-specific theoretical statement of participatory communication is relevant for the proposed framework in that it shows how development and social change can be attained through a redefined participatory process. The framework also shows a balance between, on the one hand, the inclusion of a dialogic process that is on-going, and the normal once-off IDP consultative process, on the other. In figure 3-3, the conceptual framework proposes a restructuring of the participatory process so that it can be followed in two sub-processes linked to the identified opportunities for an enhanced institutional participation in the municipal IDP process (see section 3.3). Moreover, the conceptual framework below also shows how participatory communication, informed by a context-specific definition as well as the six factors, can facilitate institutional participation in municipal IDP processes. Although not expressly stated in the framework, communication plays an essential role as represented by how, for instance, dialogue is indicated as an important facilitator of process 1 as well as in process 2. Additionally, in the framework's ultimate step, where citizens are granted the space to analyse and reflect on the participatory process, communication is an integral feature of that process since there can never be any participatory process that is devoid of meaningful interaction, engagement and communication.

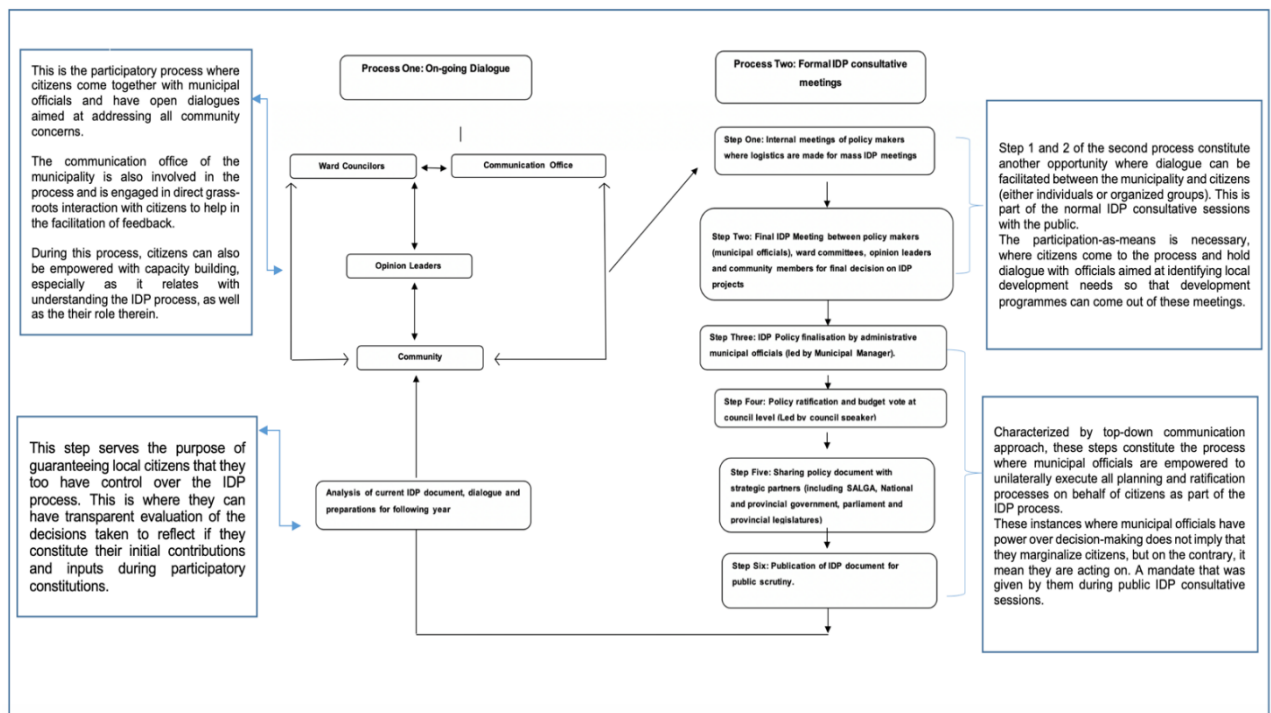


Figure 3-3: Conceptual framework for Participatory Communication as a facilitator of Institutionalised Participation in Municipal IDP Process at Ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the present chapter answered the second specific research question (see section 1.4), namely:

“What theoretical complications does participatory communication have in relation to its applicability for the facilitation of meaningful and active participation in South African municipal IDP processes?”

In answering the above question, the present chapter approached participatory communication from the perspective of the four concepts underpinning it, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture. It identified theoretical issues based on how these concepts can be interpreted, thereby reviewing them against their theoretical constructions from the perspective of the three theories used in the study, namely, communicative action, dialogical praxis, and intercultural communication. Additionally, they were interpreted according to practical operationalisation within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes in Rustenburg Local Municipality. The outcome of these interpretations were the development of four theoretical statements used to describe how participation, dialogue, empowerment, and culture, can be operationalised in a framework for facilitating institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, through participatory communication. The theoretical statements are as follows:

- **For Participation**

“Participation can be defined as an inclusive and social process which involves people, irrespective of their social status or power, who are afforded the space to interact and outline problems affecting them, and contribute ideas leading to decisions on how they can be addressed”.

- **For Dialogue**

“Dialogue can be defined as an intersubjective process, characterised by mutual tolerance and respect, whose members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) are first prepared to listen to one another and accommodate all views, even those that are ‘subaltern’ to allow negotiation and the joint contribution of ideas so that consensus about solutions related to development problems is reached. Through

dialogue, all interactions should be aimed at affording interlocutors to contribute ideas aimed at achieving praxis (i.e. transformation, development and social change)”.

- **For Empowerment**

“Empowerment is a relational process that characterised by inter-subjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collectively power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development they wish to see in their immediate surroundings. To be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect on whether the participatory process is not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure. Any development projects undertaken without following, and do not reflect the ideas contributed and decisions made during, this process should be regarded as illegitimate”.

- **For Culture**

“Culture can be defined as the collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity, including indigenous language. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members should guard against any attitude or decision-making process that may erode their sacred norms and standards and the adoption of ideas that are incomprehensible and disfavoured by all”.

In addition, a context-specific theoretical statement for participatory communication was developed when conceiving how it can be approached in the chosen real-world setting, namely:

“Participatory communication is a culturally sensitive and interpersonal communication process, rooted on inter-subjectivity and mutual expression of tolerance, sincerity and empathy- which involves equal people with collective power over decision-making to come together, listen to one another and jointly contribute ideas, views and opinions, with the goal of reaching mutual consensus about local development problems. This process is aimed at continuously providing the knowledge and skills to transform the quality of their lives (i.e. praxis). Thus, it is not a once off but a continuous process where feedback is facilitated between all those involved as part of monitoring and evaluation of all efforts geared towards social change”.

Against the foregoing, these theoretical statements were then taken and used during the process where a conceptual framework for participatory communication was developed (see section 3.4), informed in part, by a review of all steps taken when the IDP process is implemented in Rustenburg Local Municipality. The conceptual framework is presented based on six factors that reflect the identified opportunities for the facilitation of meaningful participatory development with the aim of achieving sustainable social change, namely, role-players; the plurality of (public) participation; transparent evaluation of the participatory process; the role of the municipal communication office; the nature of participation, dialogue and empowerment; and culture. It should be emphasised that these six factors (constituting the opportunities for meaningful and active participation) also stem from a careful review of legislation as well as the literature in participation within the context of the South African local government sphere; and the literature on the participatory approach (see sections 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3 & 3.4). The next chapter focuses on the philosophical and methodological framework buttressing the study, in order to determine the feasibility of the conceptual framework developed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

4.1 Introduction

As in line with the problem outlined in chapters 1 and 2 (see sections 1.3 & 2.1), the present study is hinged on the need to address the complex communication-related problems experienced in institutionalised participation within the IDP context of the South African local government sphere (see section 1.2.2); as well as the identification of participatory communication as a potential facilitator in the processes so as to mitigate and address the said challenges. As a way of reimagining how participatory communication can facilitate institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, the present study proposed a conceptual framework (see section 3.4). However, there is a need to critically and empirically interrogate the practical implications of the proposed framework against a collection of real-world experiences and inputs from key role-players involved in the participatory processes of integrated development planning in Rustenburg Local Municipality- the study's chosen research area. This is so that a pragmatic and realistic compromise between theory and practice can be found.

Against the foregoing, the present study must apply relevant and credible methods for data collection and analysis so that its findings can be dependable and credible. To this effect, the data collection and analysis strategy employed in the present study includes the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (with municipal officials involved in the IDP process as well as community members in Ward 31 in Marikana). All the data gathered in the study was analysed by means of a thematic analysis strategy, thus satisfying the hallmarks of a research design that is consistent with the study's research problems and objectives that stem from the identified research problem; as well as, the study's chosen philosophical underpinning, worldview or paradigm.

Furthermore, this chapter seeks to achieve three objectives. First, it seeks to elucidate on the suitability of the chosen research strategy, secondly, it seeks to explicate the study's philosophical and paradigmatic worldview on the basis of its ontology and epistemology; and lastly, it seeks to provide a breakdown of how data was gathered, what underlying processes ensued from the initial stages when the data collection guides were developed, to the first point of contact with research respondents (when logistics were arranged for data collection meetings) until the data was gathered and prepared for analysis.

Structurally, the chapter begins with a section where three leading research paradigms, namely, positivism, constructivism, and critical worldviews (cf. Gemma, 2018) are explored with the

objective of justifying how the study's chosen paradigm (i.e. constructivist/interpretivist) links with the study's orientation towards qualitative research methodology. Then, a section is provided where the present study's chosen paradigm given conceptual justification in line with its orientation. Moreover, the study's research design is further presented where the chosen sampling procedures as well as data collection and analysis techniques are outlined. Additionally, the chapter further outlines the ethical issues experienced throughout the study's lifespan. In the concluding sections of the study, a discussion on rigour and reliability is offered, together with a reflexive account of how the researcher's personal experience, bias and background were relied upon as useful instruments of the data collection and analysis procedure, in line with the participatory approach.

4.2 Philosophical Approaches

A worldview or philosophical approach, according to Tracy (2013:38), refers to a preferred method and approach for constructing knowledge, understanding reality and collecting information about the world in which we live. Academic research is premised on three methodological approaches, namely, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approach. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies differ in terms of worldviews and philosophies they underpin, as well as the strategies they employ for collecting and analysing data. Mixed-methods is a combination of the two research approaches with a focus on minimising the weaknesses of each approach and strengthening their potential by means of a merger (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Bahari, 2010; Feilzer, 2010; Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013).

The choice for selecting any mode of inquiry in research is dependent on the philosophical approach guiding each study, which presupposes that one cannot just elect whether to use quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods, based on, for instance, a feeling or without careful thought. It is a matter of carefully spelling out the philosophical assumptions espoused in each methodological approach, about the nature of reality and how knowledge is acquired (on the basis of ontology and epistemology) (cf. Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Bahari, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Tracy, 2013).

According to Tracy (2013), paradigms may differ based on ontological, epistemological, or axiological assumptions guiding each study. Ontology refers to the claims we make about reality, about nature and what exists. Sutrisna (2009) explains ontology by giving an illustration related to the ontological assumptions rooted in "objectivism vs. constructivism". In this way, the author posits that "an objectivist believes that there is one objective reality experienced the same way by each and every one of us whilst a constructivist believes that reality is 'constructed' by each and every one of us differently" (Sutrisna, 2009:52).

On the one hand, objectivism can be regarded as an ontological position that asserts that reality and its meaning exist independently from human beings; while constructivism, on the other hand, is an ontological position that asserts that reality and its meaning is continually shaped, produced and reproduced by human beings as social actors (Bahari, 2010; Sutrisna, 2009).

Epistemology focuses on the theory of knowledge- as in what procedures can be employed to gain knowledge about reality (Sutrisna, 2009). Tuli (2010:99) maintains that epistemology in research focuses on questioning the relationship between what is known (i.e. reality) and 'the knower' (i.e. researcher), what constitutes knowledge and the process followed so we can know what we know (i.e. methodology). This approach towards knowledge acquisition differs depending on one's paradigmatic view into reality (i.e. worldview). Against this background, a careful study of the literature yields the following six worldviews that underpin academic research, namely, the positivist, constructivist, transformative, pragmatic, critical, and the postmodern/post-structuralist worldviews (Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Creswell & Creswell, 2018:4-11; Elshafie, 2013; Hussain, Elyas & Nasseef, 2013; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013; Tracy, 2013:38-51; Wahyuni, 2012).

The reason for exploring the points of difference between the different methodologies is not, as Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) as well as Allwood (2012) cautioned, in perpetuating the dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research approaches without exploring pros and cons of the approaches in view of a specific research problem they are charged with solving. Instead, the purpose of identifying these differences is primarily aimed at situating clear justifications for the chosen research approach and explicate a suitable philosophical approach that can help in answering the study's research questions outlined in section 5.1. This does not, in any way, suggest that other philosophical approaches to research are 'weak', on the contrary, based on the researcher's chosen worldview, other philosophical approaches are just not suitable for achieving the study's said aim (see section 1.3).

In spite of the above reasoning, however, the present study acknowledges that there is a plethora of literature which presents cases where different philosophical approaches, for instance, the pragmatist or critical worldviews, can inform the exclusive use of any research methodological approach (either qualitative or quantitative) or cases in which a mixed-methods approach can be employed as a way of toning down the so-called 'paradigm wars' of yesteryears between research methodologies, and their philosophies (cf. Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Bahari, 2010). Moreover, Mesel (2013) asserts that even though we can present the dichotomies between the different research approaches on the basis of their disparate philosophical assumptions (i.e. when looking at their ontology and epistemology), this should not, however, imply "that they are necessarily incommensurable" and "cannot be shared with other research communities" (Mesel, 2013:752).

For the purpose of the present study, a brief discussion on the three leading philosophical approaches is offered, these being, the positivist/post-positivist approach, the constructivist/interpretivist worldview and the critical worldview (cf. Gemma, 2018). The purpose of this discussion is to show why the constructivist/interpretivist worldview is preferred, why it is relevant, and how it justifies the present study's chosen qualitative research methodological approach.

4.2.1 The Positivist/Post-positivist approach

The positivist approach to research is premised on the belief that reality and knowledge are discovered through objectivism and in the pursuit of causality (i.e. cause-and-effect ways of thinking) by using statistical inferences and measurements for collecting data, with the value being in externally bracketing bias out of the research process to prevent pre-empting or tainting research findings (Bahari, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tracy, 2013). The fundamental basis of knowledge acquisition within the positivist paradigm, includes, verification of theory by way of setting out hypotheses, empirical observation and measurement, generalisation of data and reductionism (Creswell, 2003). Likewise, Hussain *et al.* (2013) point out that the positivist approach presents a set of overlapping perspectives such as empiricism, behaviourism and naturalism.

Researchers who are pronged to adopt the positivist worldview “assume that the world is stable and organised and their job is to measure data, process information and propose the most suitable solution to the identified problems” (Hussain *et al.*, 2013:2377). This perspective implies that the most suitable strategy for collecting and analysing data within this paradigm is the quantitative research approach (cf. Tuli, 2010). This is because, unlike qualitative research methodology, the quantitative approach places emphasis “on measuring variables and testing hypotheses that are linked to general causal explanations...” and in collecting data “in the form of numbers to enable evidence to be presented in quantitative form” (Tuli, 2010:102).

There is, however, an existing body of work around post-positivism, which is aimed at revising the absolutist perspective of the positivist paradigm, challenging the paradigm's perspective on truth about knowledge and “recognising that we cannot be ‘positive’ about our claims of knowledge when studying the behaviour of humans” (Creswell, 2003:7). The goal of the post-positivist perspective is to forge some form of compromise between the positivist and constructivist paradigms, because similar to constructivism, the post-positivist paradigm is premised on the rationale that there are multiple layers upon which reality can be observed and measured (cf. Dina, 2012; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

However, like the positivist paradigm, post-positivism is aligned with the quantitative approach to data collection and analysis because it is rooted in the belief that knowledge should be acquired by means of approaches such as observation, measurement and testing of hypotheses (Creswell, 2003; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:3) for the purpose of identifying causality.

4.2.2 The Constructivist/Interpretivist Approach

Also referred to as social constructionism (cf. Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014; Tracy, 2013), the constructivist approach is premised on the belief that “both reality and knowledge are constructed and reproduced through communication, interaction, and practice” (Tracy, 2013:40). This view is also highlighted by Spencer *et al.* (2014:85) who further point out that “we create our own reality through social interactions, relationships, and experiences” and that reality is “context-specific and socially relative”. Put differently, in order to fully understand the phenomenon under exploration, the researcher, informed by the interpretivist worldview, relies as much as possible on the interaction with others and on getting their perspectives of the phenomenon in question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:8).

It is other people’s subjective experience and their construction of meaning about the phenomenon that enables the researcher to gain a rigorous, rich and clear understanding of the situation (Gemma, 2018). The implication here is that there can also be multiple constructions of reality, which means that the researcher needs to carefully differentiate the perspectives of different research subjects in order to identify commonalities, differences, or accentuations of facts with the goal of drawing a big picture from assumptions made about the symbolic meanings that research subjects ascribe to phenomena (cf. Lindlof & Taylor, 2019:11; Weaver & Olson, 2006).

Within the constructivist approach, the use of multiple methods, mostly qualitative, are essential in understanding the complex nature of reality with the aim of attaining “*verstehen*” (i.e. an empathic understanding of human behaviour from the point of view of the research subject) (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gemma, 2018; Weaver & Olson, 2006).

In addition to the attainment of ‘*verstehen*’, Gemma (2018) adds that the constructivist approach is rooted on three more core values, namely, Hermeneutics, Symbolic interactionism, and Phenomenology. Hermeneutics is about interpreting texts produced by the research subjects and identify meanings that they ascribe to them, Symbolic interactionism is about understanding people’s behaviour and interpreting meanings that stem from their social interaction (i.e. through observation or ethnography), and phenomenology is about interpreting your research subjects’ lived experiences (i.e. through discussions in the form of interviews/focus group discussion).

Moreover, the constructivist approach is centred around the different meanings that research participants, including the researcher, ascribe to social phenomena through their experience, background, and interpretation; and on the fact that social reality is not static and may change (cf. Dina, 2012:71). Based on the idea that there are multiple views of reality and knowledge, the constructivist approach is intuitive, subjective, contextual and holistic in that it accepts that the different interpretations of participants, informs our view of the unique social world within which we exist (Creswell, 2003; Gemma, 2018; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

The researcher also plays an important role in the research process based on the constructivist worldview, through reflexivity, the researcher's bias, background and experience can prove to be essential ingredients of the research process. Essentially, it is worth noting that qualitative research methodology and its underlying strategies for collecting and analysing data are mostly associated with the constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2003; Gemma, 2018; Tracy, 2013).

4.2.3 The Critical Paradigm

According to Gemma (2018:10), Critical theory is aimed at challenging “worldviews and the underlying power structures that create them”. This argument stands to reason that within the critical paradigm, the purpose of research is to challenge alienation, oppression and marginalisation created by social structures within which people exist. Furthermore, Hussain *et al.* (2013:2378-2379) are of the view that critical theorists are mainly concerned with changing and transforming the world by challenging the prevailing power structures and unequal social order with the objective of bringing equality and justice in favour of the oppressed.

In this way, critical researchers acknowledge, and are conscious of, their role in the research process with the aim of ensuring that their actions are liberating for the research subjects and they are not oppressing them or studying them as if they are mere objects. Thus, critical theory is appropriate to a research process if the intention is in studying the “historical, social and political nature of communities” (cf. Gemma, 2018:15). That is, to ascertain the extent to which power imbalances exist in society where the political and social structures have historically gained the control and marginalisation over ordinary citizens.

This view is similar to that held by Weaver and Olson (2006), who argued that the desired focus of a critical theorist is in attaining praxis or “the combination of reflection and action to effect transformation” (Weaver & Olson, 2006:461) on behalf of those who were marginalised by the social order. This is what Hussain *et al.* (2013) refer to as an ontology of historical realism, which implies that the critical worldview is based on the perception that society is “...a cultural practice

that needs to be explored in terms of interests, power structures and policy implications.” (Hussain *et al.* 2013:2379).

Through active engagement between the researcher and the research subjects, critical theory is subjective in nature and sees value in reflexivity. However, methods for collective data can span across qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, including participatory action research, interviews, questionnaires, and journals (cf. Gemma, 2018; Hussain *et al.*, 2013). According to Krauss (2005), critical theory can also espouse a specific type of orientation called critical realism. The author argues that this type of approach to critical theory can represent a mixture of both positivist and constructivist orientations (thereby infusing a mixed-methods approach) where the objective is in “researching underlying mechanisms that drive actions and events”, employing a host of data collection methods such as statistical analyses, case studies, unstructured or semi-structured interviews, as well as those stemming from “structural equation modelling...” (Krauss 2005:761-762).

4.3 Justification for the study’s chosen Constructivism Paradigm and Qualitative Methodology

Mindful of the above discussion notes, the present study is rooted in constructivism or interpretivism and employs qualitative methodology. This philosophical approach is relevant since the study is aimed at developing a framework for participatory communication in the IDP processes involving ordinary citizens and municipal authorities in the rich mineral-endowed Rustenburg Local Municipality in South Africa. In order to achieve this objective, knowledge-sharing as well as interactions with research subjects based on their perception of the phenomenon under study are vital activities. This is what Denzin and Lincoln (2018: 98) refer to as ‘transactional knowledge’- a process reliant on “the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world”. This implies that for a study about the participatory communication in the IDP context of a local municipality involving a culturally diverse community, the researcher relies on interaction and communication with research subjects in order to gain insights into their interpretation of reality.

By espousing a qualitative methodological approach, the present study seeks to “explore, describe, or explain social phenomenon; unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations, events, or artefacts...” (Leavy, 2014:2) and build deep understandings about a phenomenon under study. Although reference to the critical theoretical predilections is made in chapter 2 when dealing with the concept of participation, dialogue and empowerment (see sections 2.3, 2.3.8 and 2.3.9), this study is mainly focused on how these concepts can

theoretically ground participatory communication in order to facilitate development and social change establishing collective action aimed at reaching mutual consensus.

Moreover, one may further argue that ‘*verstehen*’ and phenomenology are essential to participatory communication since it is based on enabling people to collectively contribute ideas and collaborate in an effort to bring positive change to local communities (Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Gumicio-Dagron, 2014; Huesca, 2008; Lie & Servaes, 2015; Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Otto & Fourie, 2016; Pieterse, 1998; Tufte, 2017; Waisborad, 2008; Wilkins, 2009; Williams, 2004). The present study is not necessarily interested in studying the extent to which citizens are oppressed by social structures on ordinary citizens (although this is one of its corollary discoveries) or on seeking the causal relationship between the natural world and human behaviour for the purpose of generalisation.

Its value is in exploring lived experiences of the research subject with the aim of developing a framework that will help strengthen participatory communication in IDP processes to facilitate participation. Therefore, the present study might as well be regarded as belonging to what Kamberelis, Dimitriadis, and Welker (2018) regard as “Figured Worlds 2” in their description of the kind of research embarked upon within the constructivist/interpretive paradigm. A striking point they make, in their description, is that “although researchers in Figured Words 2 typically conduct their work using critical-theoretical frameworks, they generally do not engage in political advocacy work with their participants” (Kamberelis *et al.* 2018:699). Essentially, this is the kind of approach taken in the present study.

This kind of approach, methodologically speaking, is essential because the aim of the present study is in working deductively as well as inductively (cf. Locke, 2007). In addition to verifying whether there is a link between theory and practice (as it is the case with deductive reasoning), the present study adopts an inductive mode of reasoning, where data is collected with the objective of achieving “...understanding (*Vestehen*) of a particular situation, or individuals, or groups of individuals, or (sub)cultures, etc...” (Bendassolli, 2013), in line with the constructivist worldview (cf. Bendassolli, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gemma, 2018; Locke, 2007; Tracy, 2013).

This is valuable since the choice for employing qualitative research methodology, as emphasised by Silverman (2013:6), is not so much on whether the methodology is right or wrong, but is based on the judgment of whether the methodology is less or more appropriate for the chosen study and its context. In furtherance, the present study employs a qualitative research approach based on a research strategy found suitable for its context. Perhaps, Creswell’s (2007) descriptive definition

of qualitative research crystallises, and justifies, why the present study has adopted a constructivist approach as well as a qualitative research methodology:

“Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes” (Creswell, 2007:37).

The above definition offered by Creswell (2007) shows how the choice of methodology (in the case of the present study, qualitative research approach) is linked to the researcher’s worldview (constructivism), the theoretical framework underpinning the study, mode of reasoning, as well as research design used to collect and analyse data with the objective of understanding human behaviour in relation to a social problem. In view of this, the present study is exploratory and explanatory in nature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Now that the study’s worldview and choice of methodology have been outlined, the following is a presentation of the study’s research data collection and analysis strategy (i.e. research design).

4.4 Research Design

Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that a qualitative research design is a process of research that “involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of meaning of the data” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:3). In simple terms, a research design is a strategy or procedure used in the collection, preparation, reduction and analysis of data as part of a research study. To this end, the following reflection about what a research design is, made by Kothari (2004), remains pertinent:

“Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measuring and analysis of data” (Kothari, 2004:31).

The implication from these perspectives concerning a research design is that, for any study to be regarded as scientifically sound, researchable and doable, it has to have a clearly defined and detailed strategy outlining acceptable data collection and analysis methods linked to a methodological approach and worldview (cf. Creswell, 2007). The central focus of a research design is in providing guidelines towards answering the study’s research questions and to also allow the researcher to apply reflexivity as a way of explicating how, through interaction with research participants, they can include their own interpretation of their personal experience and background to the study (i.e. from a phenomenological point of view).

In addition, several steps were followed as part of the study's research design process. These steps were preceded by processes already outlined in chapters 2 (see sections 2.2 to 2.8) and 3 (see sections 3.2 to 3.5), where key concepts underpinning participatory communication were gleaned from an in-depth review of the literature and theoretical statements for each concept were formulated. Linked to these two important processes, and as part of the research design procedure, the following summary presents all steps that were followed in collecting the data and preparing it for analysis. The researcher spent over twelve hours, spanning over a period of seven days, while conducting semi-structured interviews (with the 5 officials) as well as focus group discussions (with the 46 community members) until data saturation was attained.

- **Step 1: Identification of the Study's population and sample**

A population can be regarded as the whole set of cases/people or items from which, or whom, a researcher draws their sample as part of understanding the phenomenon under investigation (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017:18-20; Taherdoost, 2016; Rahi, 2017:3). A population from the area under study constitutes all municipal employees at Rustenburg Local Municipality, councillors (including ward councillor and committee) and community members from Ward 31. As explicated in chapter 1 (see section 1.2 & 1.6), the municipality, in particular Ward 31 (Marikana) was chosen based on the fact that it has a multicultural and multilingual society- which makes it an appropriate case for exploring how institutionalised participation is undertaken involving such a diverse society, especially given that cultural difference is rarely dealt with in the literature on participation in the South African local government sphere.

As a non-probability sampling technique (cf. Rahi, 2017), purposive sampling is about selecting participants or units of analysis "because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study" (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:79). Based on this principle, five respondents for semi-structured interviews and forty-six focus group discussants were selected to participate in the present study. Although such a qualitative sample size might be questioned, particularly by those pronged to the quantitative research methodology, on the basis that it is too small a sample for generalisation of results (cf. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2013). The rationale behind selecting this sample is based on the nature of the study and research design. In line with Strydom and Delport's (2005:329) assertion, the chosen sample size was a product of critical thinking and reflection on the main characteristics of the population needed, as well as the suitability of the chosen respondents to give appropriate inputs that may be central to answering the study's questions.

The study's uniqueness lies on the fact that it is explorative in that it seeks to explore the meanings that role-players in a local municipality ascribe to participation in the IDP process. In addition, the

study is also explanative in a sense that it seeks to present a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of participation in the IDP process. Judging by the sampling frame in Table 4.1 (below), two issues stand out, namely:

- The chosen respondents for the present study all have one defining characteristic that makes them relevant: they all have a central role to play in the IDP process, in particular the roll-out, drafting, ratifying and finalisation of the IDP document that serves as a blueprint for a municipality's development objectives and planning in a given financial year. This is also confirmed in Rustenburg Local Municipality's own 2018/19 and 2019/20 IDP review documents (cf. South Africa, 2018; 2019).
- More importantly, the semi-structured respondents were selected on the basis of their direct involvement in the IDP process especially because they are relevant people to share experiences that may be important in answering the second research question. This choice of respondents was made after the researcher reviewed chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act as well as Rustenburg Local Municipality's 2018/19 IDP review document, to spell out some key municipal officials who are directly involved in the IDP process as well as community members.
- With regards to community members, the only defining criteria for these recruited discussants was the fact that they all reside in ward 31 and that they are in the age group of 18-years or older. In order to get hold of community members, the researcher was assisted by one of the ward councillor and a community leader- who also reside in the same area.

Table 4-1: A Purposive Sample of respondents for the present study

Sampling technique	Respondents sampled for Semi-structured interviews	Respondents sampled for focus group discussions
Purposive sampling technique	• 5 municipal officials who are directly involved in the IDP process in Ward 31 (Marikana)	46 community members in Ward 31. Each focus group discussion ranging from about 6-14 members.

- **Step 2: Development of constructs derived from theoretical statements**

In Step 2, a process of building a set of constructs that serve as characteristics of the key concepts underpinning participatory communication – the means by which each concept is identified, was

followed. During this step (as shown in Table 4.2.), the constructs emanated from the theoretical statements and were also used to catalogue each of the concepts.

Table 4-2: constructs from concepts and their theoretical statements

Theoretical statements	Concepts	Construct
Theoretical statement 1: participation Participation can be defined as a social process which involves people, irrespective of their social status or power, who are afforded the space to interact and outline problems affecting them, and contribute ideas leading to decisions on how they can be addressed.	Participation	• Social process • People/Community Involvement • Communicative spaces (space for interaction)
Theoretical statement 2: dialogue Dialogue can be defined as an intersubjective process, characterised by mutual tolerance and respect, whose members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) are first prepared to listen to one another and accommodate all views, even those that are 'subaltern' to allow for negotiation and the joint contribution of ideas so that consensus about solutions related to development problems is reached. Through dialogue, all interactions should be aimed at affording interlocutors to contribute ideas aimed at achieving praxis (i.e. transformation, development and social change).	Dialogue	• Intersubjectivity • Mutual tolerance and respect • Language use and negotiation • The nature of interaction, feedback and input
Theoretical statement 3: empowerment Empowerment is a relational process that characterised by intersubjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collectively power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development they wish to see in their immediate surroundings. To be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect on whether the participatory process is not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure. Any development projects undertaken without following, and does not reflect, the ideas	Empowerment	• Sharing of power (i.e. collective power and equality) • Collective decision-making and inclusivity.

contributed and decisions made during, this process should be regarded as illegitimate.		
Theoretical statement 4: culture Culture can be defined as the collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity, including indigenous language. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members should guard against any attitude or decision-making process that may erode their sacred norms and standards and the adoption of ideas that are incomprehensible and disfavoured by all.	Culture	• Cultural sensitivity • Values and norms • Accommodation • Identity

- **Description/categorisation of research respondents: The outcome of the study's sampling frame**

In keeping with ethical standards of research (i.e. keeping the identities of all respondents anonymous), the research participants were clustered according to different groups and allocated pseudonyms and identifiers. In the following tables, a summary that is composed of brief descriptions of each group is presented for ease of reference as well as to give clear picture regarding the general context from which each respondent based their views. For starters, table 4.3. (below) presents a brief background for semi-structured interview respondents as well as their pseudonyms/identifiers.

Table 4-3. Semi-Structured Interview identifiers for respondents and their brief context

Semi-structured interview respondent identifiers	General background/context
Respondent 1 ("R1") Respondent 2 ("R2") Respondent 3 ("R3") Respondent 4 ("R4")	In line with the research's purposive sampling strategy (see sections 1.4 & 4.4), a total of five (5) municipal officials were identified based on their level of involvement (i.e. as organisers) in the IDP process that is rolled out by Rustenburg Municipality. These are the men and women who are directly involved in the whole IDP process, including organising opportunities for

Respondent 5 (“R5”)	interactions/meetings with the community (i.e. community participation)
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Secondly, in table 4.4. (below), pseudonyms/identifiers for focus group discussants are also provided. It should be noted that, in the case of focus group respondents, not all views/extracts from the forty-six (46) respondents were included in the presentation of findings section, instead, a selection of some of their views was made in relation to the themes that were already identified. The table, therefore, does not represent all participants who were involved in the discussions. These are the views that, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge and observation, stood out in their conceptual relationship with the themes.

Table 4-4. Focus Group respondent identifiers/pseudonyms, groups in which they belong and their brief general context/background

Groups according to which each discussant belongs	Pseudonyms for each respondent according to their groups	Brief background/context for members with reference to their groups.
Group 1	Respondent “A” Respondent “B” Respondent “C” Respondent “D” Respondent “E”	This group composed of 8 members. Seven of the members can be estimated to being in the ages between 40-60 and one young person (estimated to be in the age of between 30-35). Three of the members in the group indicated that they are community organisers/leaders and they are self-employed (informal traders in Marikana). In terms of gender, the group composed of six males and two females.
Group 2	Respondent “F” Respondent “G” Respondent “H”	This group composed of 10 community members, who seemed to be affiliated to one of the political parties in South Africa. this observation was made because some of the respondents in attendance were wearing T-shirts of that specific party. Although political party affiliation was not a factor since the study’s aim is not to discuss any political issues, the fact that the respondents seemed to be belonging to a certain political party was kept in mind during the analysis process because it also

		had an impact on the views that they expressed about their experience of communication in the IDP process. The respondents were allowed to participate in the study based on their one defining characteristic: they are community members of Ward 31 (Marikana) and they are eligible to attend community meetings and contribute ideas surrounding integrated development planning. Demographically, members of this group can be estimated to be between the ages of 25 and 45 and they are community volunteers. As explained in step 5, the researcher requested the help of a local ward councillor as well as the community leader in Marikana for referrals to consenting adults who would want to participate in this study. Individual respondents were then approached and directly requested to participate.
Group 3	Respondent "C" Respondent "N"	This group composed of 14 members, with ages ranging from 19 to 47. Most of the members in this group were youth and they indicated that they are unemployed.
Group 4	Respondent "I" Respondent "J" Respondent "K" Respondent "L" Respondent "M" Respondent "O"	This group is composed of 8 members between the ages of 18 and 55. They are members of a committee set up to represent one of the informal settlements in ward 31 (Marikana). They are unemployed community organisers who explained that their role is to fight to secure access to service delivery for community members living informally in a piece of land owned by a private individual. Rustenburg Local Municipality has a policy around the eradication of informal settlements, primarily because people living in such conductions are not formally recognised and earmarked to receive any formal basic services, such as, water, housing and sanitation.
Group 5	Respondent "P" Respondent "Q"	This group consisted of 6 members, five of whom were young men who are estimated to be in the ages of between 19 and 35; as well as one elder who might be in his late fifties. All of them are unemployed.

- **Step 3: Data collection, starting with development of interview guides/questions formed from above constructs**

Data collected in the present study is by means of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The data collection techniques are presented in the sequence that they were procedurally carried out. Interactions by means of semi-structured interviews with the officials in Rustenburg Municipality served the purpose of determining the communication platforms and policies they employed during public consultations in the IDP process. Additionally, Focus Group discussions were carried out with the objective of determining the perceptions of participants in the community forums regarding the policies employed by the municipality in Ward 31 (Marikana) during the IDP process.

In addition, theoretical statements formulated from the literature on key concepts in participatory communication (see sections 3.2 to 3.5), namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment, and culture, were included in all interview guides to gain insights and perspectives from all interview respondents on whether the academic interpretations of these concepts are feasible and achievable in practice or are idealistic and impossible to achieve.

Moreover, the constructs were aligned with specific questions in the data collection methods in order to know the extent to which the current processes adhere to participation, empowerment, culture and dialogue. It was also essential to use these constructs so that the data obtained can easily spell out instances where, for example, specific platforms are used to enable participation, empowerment, culture and dialogue in the municipality or instances where the participants attribute their perceptions/impressions pertaining to the same concepts. This process of constructing alignment and synchronisation with specific questions in the data collection protocols (i.e. lists of questions asked in interview and focus group guides), served the purpose of “triangulation”, where the same constructs were “explored” through two different methods of data collection, and with two different groups of respondents (see Table 4.3 and 4.4). This is an essential exercise toward ensuring that the proposed conceptual framework has some practical relevance in negotiating and addressing the theory versus practice gap experienced in participatory communication (cf. Dervin & Huesca, 1997; Muturi & Mwengi, 2009).

- **Semi-Structured Interviews: Officials within the municipality involved in the IDP process**

According to Nieuwenhuis (2010b:87) an interview is:

“a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours of the participants”

Accordingly, in qualitative research methodology, there are three kinds of interviews, namely, open-ended/unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews; and structured interviews. There are two extremes worth considering when scrutinising these types of interviews. On one hand, structured interviews are rigid, formal and do not allow flexibility for both the researcher and interviewee to deviate from the interview guide used to carry out the interview process. While on the other hand, unstructured interviews do not follow any structure and allow both the researcher and participant to broadly engage in discussions that may enable them to unearth as much issues, views, perspectives, and beliefs about a specific phenomenon, as possible (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2010b). Semi-structured interviews fall somewhere in the middle of these two extremes.

Upon observing this continuum, Brinkmann (2018) argues that though it is impossible for human encounters to avoid following a particular structure when using interviews for data collection purposes, it is possible, however, to ensure that the structure provided is relatively flexible and non-restrictive so as to ensure that those being interviewed can be free enough to communicate as well as raise issues from their own point of view. This kind of perspective provides justification for the purpose that semi-structured interviews are well positioned to fulfil.

A semi-structured interview is a “hybrid type of interview which offers the merit of using a list of predetermined themes and questions as in a structured interview, while keeping enough flexibility to enable the interviewee to talk freely about any topic raised during the interview” (Dina, 2012:74). For qualitative research methodology, semi-structured interviews can be conducted in a number of ways, be it face-to-face, by telephone, email or even in the form of Q and A’s via Social Networking sites (SNS) such as WhatsApp or Facebook messenger. Face-to-face semi-structured interviewing, as part of the data collection methods for the present study, was used with the objective of gaining insights from the participants’ lived experiences when it comes to participatory process of IDP in ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality.

What is essential about qualitative semi-structured interviews, as Creswell and Creswell (2018:187) postulate, is the structure of few open-ended questions aimed at allowing research participants ample time to give full and detailed responses. This is unlike with structured interviews, where questions are rather rigid and do not allow deviation from the interview schedule, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to pose follow-ups during the process of interviewing so that the respondents can share as much detail as possible on their experience and background with the phenomenon under study (cf. Flick, 2009; Kothari, 2004).

Furthermore, face-to-face semi-structured interviews are advantageous because they allow the researcher to record gestures conveyed by research participants during the interview process- which is something that enhances understanding and improves the interpretation of meaning that research participants ascribe to the phenomenon under investigation (Flick, 2009). Table 4.5 below, illustrates a connection between constructs that stemmed from the theoretical statements as well as the questions that were posed to semi-structured interview respondents, in line with an explanation given in the introductory remarks (in step 3 above):

Table 4-5: The same constructs used in the development of semi-structured interview questions

Questions for semi-structured interviews	Constructs measured in Semi-Structured Questions.
How is participation facilitated during the IDP process?	- Social process - People/Community Involvement - Communicative spaces (space for interaction)
In what ways do you think those involved in the participatory process benefit from it?	- Intersubjectivity - Mutual tolerance and respect - The nature of interaction, feedback and input
How do you think, looking at the current IDP process, participation can be improved?	Sharing of power (i.e. collective power and equality)
What kind of communication platforms are used during public consultations on IDP?	The nature of interaction, feedback and input
- What is, then, the role of communication in participation? - How do you see the nature of communication during the IDP process?	- Groups interaction - Collective decision-making and inclusivity. - Language use and negotiation

• How can the communication process be improved?	• The nature of interaction, feedback and input
• How do you think decision-making is achieved during the IDP process?	• Collective decision-making and inclusivity.
• How in your view, do you think culture is linked to the IDP process? • Why is culture important when it comes to the issues of IDP involving local citizens?	• Cultural sensitivity • Values and norms • Identity and language

In summary, semi-structured interviews have the advantage, unlike structured ones, to give more room for the interviewer to make follow-ups in an attempt to obtain clearer understanding and yield knowledge-producing potentials of dialogue, as put forward by Brinkmann (2018:579).

- **Focus Group Discussion: Community members in Ward 31 as important role players in the IDP process**

The literature on focus groups spans over seven decades from as far back as 1946 as Robert Merton and Patricia Kendall first coined the term “focused interview” as positivist-oriented data extraction technique in a, then, post-World War II era, rooted in objectivism- where the interviewer “excavates specific, targeted responses from the interviewees” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014:317). Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2014) as well as Kamberelis *et al.* (2018) provide a detailed historical background to focus group discussions, which has over the years evolved across philosophical assumptions and worldviews: from positivism to post-structuralism; and methodological approaches, from quantitative, to qualitative, to post-qualitative research.

For the purpose of the present study the use of focus group discussions, as a strategy for data collection, is based on its qualitative and social constructionist orientation which emerged in the 1980s following David Morley’s ground-breaking study aimed at positioning the constitutive power of a ‘group’ as “a collective having its own particular autonomies and dynamic potentials (Kemberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014:318). To this end, a focus group discussion is rooted in dialogic collective discussions of a group, where the researcher can be able to gain “insights into how meanings are constructed collectively in situ” (Kemberelis & Dimitriadis, *ibid.*).

Against this background, focus group discussions are a qualitative data collection strategy based on the need to allow unrestricted interaction between research participants, with the researcher

as moderator, aiming to unearth views and perspectives from respondents that may otherwise (perhaps in the case of a questionnaire or structured interview) would have remained unknown (cf. Ho, 2006; McLafferty, 2004). This point is emphasised by Nieuwenhuis (2010b) when stating that it is a data collection strategy “based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information” (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:90).

One of the most important considerations that should be made when adopting a focus group discussion as a preferred data collection instrument, apart from ensuring that the researcher does not introduce their own views, experience or background in relations to the phenomenon under study, is in making sure that research participants are comfortable, and share a similar characteristic with one another so that none of them feels intimidated or feels as if they do not belong (Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Ho, 2006).

There is no universal agreement on the prescribed number of respondents that focus groups ought to have. For instance, Ho (2006:5.2) states that typically, a focus group discussion is held with about five to ten respondents, while Dilshad and Latif (2013) make the point that as a general rule of thumb, a focus group ranges from about six to twelve respondents. Nieuwenhuis (2010b), however, states that a focus group generally should comprise of about five to twelve respondents. A caveat to be mindful of concerning focus group size is that the respondents should not be too few not to give diverse opinions on a particular phenomenon, and they should not be too many to the extent that group discussions are unmanageable.

In furtherance, one may ask how many focus group discussions are ‘enough’ to have a complete data set? As a way of answering this question, Boddy (2016) makes the argument that when it comes to size, composition and sufficient data, it all boils down to the idea of data saturation. As in the point in which no more new information or perspectives stem out from the interaction with research respondents (Boddy, 2016:427; Morse, 2015). For the present study, five focus group discussions were held with respondents sharing only one similar characteristic: they are all ordinary community members in Ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality (see table 4.1). The aim was to generate public perceptions regarding platforms and policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations in ward 31 within the context of IDP meetings. In the table below (table 4.6), a summary that outlines how focus group discussion questions are related to the identified constructs, is provided.

Table 4-6: The same constructs used in the development of Focus Group Discussion Questions

Questions for focus group discussions	Constructs measured in Focus Group Discussion Questions.
What happens during the IDP process? How does it flow?	- Social process - People/Community Involvement - Communicative spaces (space for interaction)
What do you think about the nature of interactions you have during the IDP process?	- Intersubjectivity - Mutual tolerance and respect - The nature of interaction, feedback and input
In what ways are IDP issues communicated to you? By who?	The nature of interaction, feedback and input, role-players
How is communication employed during the IDP process? How does it flow?	Fair and equal engagement, public sphere/gathering, Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, Collective decision-making, facilitation of feedback.
What do you understand by what IDP is?	Facilitation of feedback, centrality of language use
How are you involved in the communication process?	People/Community Involvement
What do you think should be improved in the communication process based on its implementation?	- Groups interaction - Collective decision-making and inclusivity. - Language use and negotiation - The nature of interaction, feedback and input
What objective would you want to see the IDP process achieving for you?	- Intersubjectivity - Mutual tolerance and respect - The nature of interaction, feedback and input
What cultural issues do you have when engaged in the IDP process?	- Cultural sensitivity - Values and norms - Identity and language

• **Step 4: Ethics clearance application, Gatekeeper's consent and Ethical Considerations**

As part of North-West University's ethical regulations, an application for the study to be sanctioned by the university, through ethical clearance, was approved in November 2018 (see Appendix A: Ethical clearance/approval letter from NWU). As part of the ethical clearance conditions, permission was needed from the gatekeepers in the study, who were identified as the Municipal

Mayor and Municipal Manager of Rustenburg Local Municipality. Approval from the gatekeepers was received in April 2019 (see appendix B: letter of approval from Rustenburg Local Municipality). These approvals paved the way for arrangements to be made for data collection, which took place in November 2019.

During the data collection process, no ethical risks were experienced given that there were no serious issues to deal with. One challenge, though, was the “suitability” of one focus group, which seemed to be affiliated to one political party and its members seemed to be attending the meeting already knowing what the researcher was going to ask. This problem was as a result of a request, by the researcher, to one of the respondents who attended the first focus group session after realising that it’s recorded data was lost. This request was so that the respondent can help organise another group, who upon attending the subsequent meeting, seemed to already know the purpose of the interview hence it would seem they were attending the meetings to subjectively support one prominent political leader in Ward 31, who is also involved in the IDP process (see table 4.4. for a description of, and the researcher’s observations about, this group). Notwithstanding, and since interview discussions were exclusively focused on the communication process, the respondents were allowed to participate and they were informed/assured that no contentions political issues of any kind were to be the subject of the interaction.

However, upon realising this issue, the researcher posed questions that may warrant individual objectivity, instead of paying lip-service to anyone. These questions included how they would want the communication and participation processes to improve given their present experience as community members. The researcher observed that it was difficult for respondents to take sides on this matter because they all have desires to see the IDP process working for them and improving the quality of their lives. This observation was noted when some of the respondents, in response to some questions related to the above-mentioned example, made inputs such as “there used to be imbizos...and I think they will help...”.

These kinds of sentiments resemble some degree of objectivism from the respondents, instead of wholly prejudicing the group based on the fact that they all seemed to be biased to specific politicians. Notwithstanding, there were instances where respondents in the above-mentioned group accused specific individuals affiliated to other political parties during the discussions, the research advised the respondents not to reveal anyone’s identity when presenting their opinions about their personal experience of IDP meetings; instead, they were asked to use generic terms like “politicians from another party”, or “a person affiliated to a certain party was responsible for...”, etc.

- **Step 5: Logistics relating to the data collection procedure and challenges experienced**

In order to gain access to the respondents, various emails and telephone exchanges took place between April-November 2019 between the researcher and various individuals within the Rustenburg Local Municipality. These include interactions with secretaries and colleagues of the five purposively selected municipal officials, who are directly involved in the IDP process (see appendix C: Email exchanges with various officials for the purpose of setting up meetings for data collection). Ultimately, meetings with municipal officials were scheduled and were held in the week of 18-24 November 2019. In order to gain access to the study's setting (Ward 31 in Marikana), permission was sought from the ward councillor (who is one of the five municipal officials interviewed) and it was granted. While semi-structured interviews were held from 18-22 November 2019 (one official per day based on the agreed-upon meeting dates and time slots), six focus group discussions were held over a period of two days, from 23-24 November 2019 with a total of 46 community members. In order to access and identify focus group discussants, the researcher requested the help of a local ward councillor as well as a community leader in Marikana for referrals. Individual respondents were then approached and directly requested to participate in this study, for purpose of consent.

Given that all discussions were recorded, a total of eleven (11) recordings were supposed to be used in the data analysis phase. However, a recording of one of the six focus-group interview discussions was lost immediately after the recording device malfunctioned at the end of the session while the researcher tried to save the audio file. The session was about 1h:18 minutes long, but the researcher had to improvise and begin writing down notes from what was said in the session, by who and on what basis (e.g. who responded to which question and what was the nature of the interaction). A debriefing with the research assistant also helped record some of the details that were shared during the session in questions. Although, only ten (10) recordings, in total, were recovered and used in the data analysis phase, the information narrated from memory as well as from a debriefing session with the research assistant, about the first focus group discussion, was also used in the analysis, especially on the theme around a lack of youth participation.

- **Step 6: Data transcription and preparation.**

After the data was collected. Transcription began on 13 December 2019. It was a time-consuming process that took approximately two months to complete. For semi-structured interviews, the researcher applied partial to full transcription and it was completed on 10 January 2020. Only partial transcription was conducted for focus-group interview discussions and all transcription was completed on 25 January 2020. Notwithstanding, the data transcription and preparation allowed

the researcher to be immersed in the data and thereby creating room for the extraction of some themes (deductively) from the data set.

- **Step 7: Data Analysis process, including thematic analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is an enduring and laborious process of transcribing, translating, categorising, and reducing chunks of data into simple, coherent and understandable information through the aid of coding and establishing themes (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b; Stuckey, 2015). For De Vos (2005:333), data analysis refers to “the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process” which cannot be dissociated from data collection (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016:169). In this study, the ‘artistic’ nature of qualitative data analysis is preferred because it complements the goal of the study.

This artistic nature, according to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011:205), refers to the “interpretive nature of analysis, whereby researchers need to understand, explain, and interpret human experience, which requires uncovering personal, social and cultural meanings that underlie people’s behaviour”. This process involved extrapolating and making sense of the different meanings that people ascribed to phenomena, and understanding what led them to express opposing views.

For Mondal (2018: 23-24), qualitative data analysis is hinged on subjective interpretation, which is a process aimed at reviewing the data with the aim of drawing inferences from it so as to search for broader meanings ascribed to the phenomenon under investigations and find some conception or understanding of theory as a way of guiding further research studies.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that qualitative data analysis should be conceived as “a process that requires sequential steps to be followed, from the specific to the general, and involving multiple levels of analysis....” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:193). In line with accepted norms of data analysis, the present study followed a series of laborious steps in the preparation, transcription and categorisation of the data, including going through all the recordings and exploring all that was said by participants, forming initial interpretations from the data; generating themes aimed at reducing chunks of data into representative categories for specific details. In this way, the present study adopted thematic analysis as its preferred data analysis technique, which is discussed in detail in the following section.

(a) Thematic Analysis: Development of Codes and Themes

The thirteen constructs were further used as a reference point for cataloguing the key themes that emerged from theory, and after the researcher spent time collecting, organising, preparing, and

transcribing the data. From the collected data, a series of codes were drafted as a way of summarising what certain elements of the data suggested, meanings that respondents gave for specific phenomena, as well as impressions formed by research respondents about the whole participatory process they are involved in. these codes, when matched against the constructs enabled the researcher to form a pattern of interpretation of which themes could emanate from them. This process was followed given the need to address any redundancy or duplication of ideas and meanings as a result of, for instance, two codes referring to the same idea or ascribe the same meaning to a phenomenon. A total of five themes were developed and grouped together based on similarity as well as their exclusive relationship with each of the four key concepts underpinning participatory communication.

As detailed in the table below (see table 4.7), themes that emerged for participation were grouped based on the fact that they all focused on the role that local citizens have in the institutionalised participation process (e.g. community involvement). For dialogue, emerging themes that were grouped together focused on the facilitative nature communication with a view of explaining how communication is applied during the process (e.g. the role of communication in the participatory process). For empowerment, themes that were grouped together were based on the relational aspect of power and what it means for role-players to be empowered in the IDP process (e.g. power dynamics); and lastly, themes that were grouped together in relation to culture, were cherished norms, standards and values as well as cultural sensitivity:

Table 4-7: Themes that emerged from theory and are grouped based on similarity and in synchronisation with constructs as well as the key concepts underpinning participatory communication

Concepts	Constructs	Emerging Themes
Participation	• Social process • People/Community Involvement • Communicative spaces (space for interaction)	• Community involvement (i.e. egalitarianism)
Dialogue	• Intersubjectivity • Mutual tolerance and respect • Language use and negotiation • Communicative nature of interactions	• The nature of interaction, feedback and input (the role of communication in the participatory process)
Empowerment	• Sharing of power (i.e. collective power and equality) • Groups interaction • Collective decision-making and inclusivity.	• Power dynamics • Role-players and language.
Culture	• Cultural sensitivity • Values and norms • Accommodation • Identity	• Cherished values, cultural sensitivity and language

(b) Explanation of the steps followed in Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2012) define thematic analysis as a method of “systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2012:57). It allows the researcher to understand and interpret shared meanings and experiences in relation to a phenomenon, in a holistic manner; and to provide answers to research questions by exploring the entire data set and making sense of meanings stemming from idiosyncratic behaviour that groups of respondents convey in reaction to the phenomenon under study. For the present study, the following approach in thematic analysis (in table 4.8 below), as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012: 60-69), was adopted:

Table 4-8: The thematic analysis process followed in the study, adapted from (Braun & Clarke, 2012: 63-69; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Thematic analysis steps	Interpretation of the process from literature	Explanation of how the process was followed in the study
Familiarising yourself with the data	This is the step where researchers immerse themselves in the data by reading, reviewing and going through the entire data set, including transcripts of interviews as well as journal entries and audio recordings of all sessions conducted during the data collection process. In addition, this process also entails making notes in order to highlight points that stand out from this initial phase of thematic analysis.	This process was completed in the months between December 2019 and February 2020. The process was tedious in that the researcher read, transcribed and listened to 11 hours' worth of audio recordings to identify general codes which led to the generation of themes.
Generating initial codes	This is the coding process, where chunks of data are segmented, organised and categorised under words or concepts representing each interpretation made by the researcher, explanation given or 'feeling' gathered from the data collection process (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).	In order to make this step of the analysis process easier, the constructs that were extracted from theoretical statements were used as codes to identify keywords from data, which might resonate with them as themes. What was essential in doing this was the need to catalogue each of the key themes emanating from the data according to the four broad concepts underpinning

		participatory communication (see table 4.6).
Searching for, reviewing and naming of themes	This is the step where themes are specifically chosen and put according to broader topics that represent meanings around a particular issue based on their common trait or characteristic and that they share “some unifying feature together, so that they reflect and describe a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012:63). This process is about inspecting, doing quality checks, and reviewing whether the themes gathered are representative of the entire data set. This can be achieved by asking a series of questions aimed at getting an overall perspective on the suitability of the generated themes: if they qualify as themes, if they correlate with each other, if there is enough data to support them, and if they relate with the research questions and theory (Braun & Clarke, 2012:65).	After identifying general codes that emerged from the literature (i.e. from key theoretical statements that defined the key concepts), the following five themes identified from the analysis and named as follows: Community involvement (i.e. egalitarianism); the nature of interaction, feedback and input (the role of communication in the participatory process); power dynamics; role-players; as well as cherished values, cultural sensitivity and language. The process of inspecting and quality-checking the themes was followed. They were found to be consistent with the key concepts and the constructs derived from them (i.e. codes) and were defined.
Producing the report	In this process, a report of analysis is compiled with the objective of feeding into the study's section on ‘presentation and analysis of research findings’. This is where a descriptive account or a “story” is written, forming the researcher's general interpretation of the entire data collected. This process, together with the preceding one (defining and naming themes), leads to a section on ‘discussion of findings’- which will help the researcher to answer the study's questions (Braun & Clarke, 2012: 69).	The process of formatting the researcher's general interpretation of the whole data set is presented in chapter 5, as part of presentation and analysis of data (see section 5.2 to 5.5).

Against the foregoing, thematic analysis was deemed suitable for the present study given its thoroughness and how it may link the data analysis process with research questions, aims and objectives. It allows the researcher to draw a connection between data analysis and the theoretical section of the study as well as to establish a 'golden thread of argumentation' as a way of setting the foundation for a presentation of the study's findings and recommendations. The following section deals with the idea of 'quality' in qualitative research as a way of justifying how the chosen methodology and research design are suitable for what the present study aims to achieve.

4.5 Rigor, Reliability, and Validity

Against the positivist notions of guaranteeing objectivity, reliability (i.e. on the basis of replicability) and generalisability (i.e. on the basis of transferability of the research findings) in the data collection, analysis and reporting processes of a research study (based on the dominance of the paradigm as a having 'scientific measure' and non-biased, empirical approach to knowledge), the qualitative research approach (especially when rooted in the constructivist worldview) often comes under scrutiny and attracts 'controversy' for failing to make such guarantees in the way data is treated, from collection right through to reporting on findings, recommendations and conclusion of a study (cf. Tracy, 2013:228-232).

These aspects, which are rooted in quantitative research, are however faulty when considered within the qualitative research point of view. For example, Tracy (2013: 229) correctly argues that it is impossible to achieve a completely unbiased and objective account of reality and knowledge. Against the criticism labelled against qualitative research, that it fails to guarantee reliability and replicability, she provides the following counter:

Because the socially constructed understandings are always in process and necessarily partial, even if the study were repeated (by the same researcher, in the same manner, in the same context, and with the same participants), the context and participants would have necessarily transformed over time - through aging, learning or moving on (Tracy, 2013: 229).

This is an important counter, which also justifies why the present study chose a qualitative research approach. the implication drawn from this position is that for a qualitative research inquiry, the criteria for quality is always based on how you guarantee credibility and rich rigour, among other key hallmarks of quality checks in your research, as summarised in Tracy's (2013:230-248) "big tent" approach.

Credibility refers to dependability and trustworthiness of research findings based on the rich rigour applied in the treatment of the data. In this fashion, rich rigour "refers to the care and effort taken

to ensure that the research is carried out in an appropriate manner” (Tracy, 2013: 231). Credibility and rigour are the hallmarks of quality for qualitative research because they can be used to inspect if a research study meets the bare minimum standards for trustworthiness as well as ethical care or treatment (either of research participants or the data collected) during the entire research process. The present study’s research design (see sections 4.4 to 4.9), including the stipulated ways in which the entire collection and analysis procedure were followed, is appropriate for quality checks on credibility and rigour. It is also sufficient for answering the set research questions and objectives of the study.

4.6 Reflexivity in qualitative research

Reflexivity is an important element to the qualitative research approach because, as Creswell and Creswell (2018) point out, it serves the function of identifying the researcher’s “biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status that shape their interpretations formed during the study” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:183) (cf. Nieuwenhuis, 2010b; Tracy, 2013). Against the foregoing, the following is a reflexive statement by the researcher, which seeks to explicate the extent of influence that a personal bias and background informed various considerations in the study, such as, choice of study setting, as well as all judgment calls in carrying out the data collection and analysis processes:

Nine years ago I set out to understand the extent to which participatory communication is used in local government to facilitate citizen participation in integrated development planning processes of local government. By the time I was conducting that study, as part of my Master’s research programme at North-West University, I was working as a radio news journalist for the South African Broadcasting Service (SABC). This was at the height of service delivery protests and my primary concern was why, given all legislative regulations and provisions of citizen participation, were municipalities experiencing what seems to be a lack of trust and rapport between themselves and citizens?

It was not uncommon to find news reports where citizens, in various areas across the North-West Province, were accusing municipal authorities for not involving them in integrated development planning processes as well as for being corrupt. What I discovered was that although participation is used to describe the degree of involvement of local citizens in municipal integrated development planning, it is not rooted in participatory communication and thus, citizens do not understand the value of being part of decision-making when it comes to development endeavours aimed at improving the quality of their lives. With this background, I was intrigued about the fluidity of the concept, “participation”, and after reading more on it, I concluded that one cannot simply put the blame on the door-step of municipal officials if they are unable to use participatory communication

as a facilitator of public participation in local development planning. This is because even the Municipal Systems Act – which guides how municipal officials ought to operate within the IDP space, does not necessarily link participation (as a concept) to participatory communication. Additionally, literature is awash with various attempts to ‘rescue’ participation from its utopian-driven connotations as well as its fluidity (see section 2.3). As pointed out in chapter 1 (section 1.2), literature on South African local government also proved to be challenging: only one study could be found (in the period between 2000 and 2013) where participatory communication is explored, and used within a multidisciplinary context, as a facilitator of public participation in local government (cf. Molale, 2019).

Another problem I found challenging, when reviewing the literature on participatory communication, was that facilitating participatory communication in multicultural societies received scant scholarly attention. The foregoing laid the foundation, and justification, to identify a culturally diverse setting like Marikana and probe, further, how participatory communication can be used to facilitate participation in municipal IDP processes. Furthermore, Marikana was also selected because of another bias that I have: I am one of the radio news reporters who have reported on the challenges experienced by community members in that area following the aftermath of the 2012 violent clashes and the horrific massacre of 34 mineworkers by the police, while protesting for better wages from their then-employer, Lonmin Platinum Mine.

The above considerations, led me to opt for a study that is qualitative in nature and one that would work both inductively and deductively, that is, seeking to deeply explore a complex issue and at the same time, seeking to provide explanations and guidelines (in the form of a framework) for how the issue can be solved. A qualitative research approach was therefore necessary for carrying out this kind of a study and my personal bias helped in shaping how the study spelled out. The research was insightful and my academic experience has grown after confronting several challenges and useful detours in the knowledge production process. It is my hope that the framework I propose in the final chapter of the study, will ignite research interest in this nascent and underexplored multidisciplinary territory of participatory communication in public institutional participation processes.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed how the chosen philosophical approach, methodology and research design are suitable for the present study. In addition, a strategy of data collection and analysis was detailed in addition to the researcher’s reflective experience as well as ethical issues encountered. The next chapter deals with presentation and analysis from empirically collected data, given that the present chapter serves as its foundation.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, a review of literature linked to the three theoretical lines of critique (i.e. communicative action, dialogical praxis, and intercultural communication) was conducted to extract key concepts that were used to formulate the theoretical statements that underpin the definition of participatory communication in the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture. A careful review of literature identified the research trends in the field of development communication in order to create a link between the theoretical appraisal and the data collected in the empirical aspect of the study. Doing this was essential to chart a clear focus for the present chapter, which is to flash out any contradictions, similarities and nuances when it comes to the complex relationship between theory and practice relating to the field of development communication. Moreover, the concepts together with their newly-developed theoretical statements were presented to semi-structured interviewees with the aim of obtaining their perceptions as a way of revising and fortifying the conceptual framework in chapter 3 (see figure 3.3 in section 3.4).

In section 2.5, the answer to the present study's first research question (see section 1.4) was provided in the form of a summary of leading points found in the literature, which ultimately led to the conclusion that a theory-driven interpretation of participatory communication espouses four key concepts, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and in some contexts, culture. In chapter 3 (see sections 3.2 to 3.5) these concepts were further explored for explicit and implicit meanings with the objective of formulating a theoretical statement for each one of them against the context of the municipal IDP process. These statements, as outlined in chapter 4 (see table 4.2) were presented to semi-structured interview respondents to establish whether their theoretical interpretations are feasible in practice or inconsistent with the context within which they ought to be applied (see sections 5.2.1; 5.3.1; 5.4.1; 5.5.1) and they are further critically reviewed and redefined at the end of each subsection (see sections 5.2.4; 5.3.3; 5.4.5; 5.5.3).

Furthermore, the following presentation and analysis of data is aimed at answering the study's two remaining research questions in line with the hallmarks of qualitative research methodology (see sections 4.1 to 4.4), namely:

- What are the perceptions of municipal officials regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies they employ during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) within municipal IDP frameworks?

- What are the perceptions of participants in Ward 31 community forums (Marikana) regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations within municipal IDP frameworks?

In the present chapter, these questions are answered in an integrated manner, where data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with purposively selected municipal officials of Rustenburg Local Municipality and community members of Ward 31 in Marikana. As outlined in chapter 4 (see section 4.4), five semi-structured interviews were conducted with Rustenburg Municipal officials while six focus group were conducted with 46 residents. Focus group respondents were all residents (community members) of Ward 31 in Marikana. The responses provided by all respondents are holistically used in revising the conceptual framework (offered in chapter 3) as a build up to a final framework discussed in chapter 6 (see section 6.4).

As part of a data collection and analysis strategy (i.e. research methodology) followed In the previous chapter, various themes were identified for analysis of data as well as presentation of the study's research findings. What was essential to this process of analysis and theme identification was the need to glean (from the data) key interpretations of the concepts identified in chapter 3 (see sections 3.2 to 3.5) with a view of identifying the nuances and points of convergence as well as the divergence both in theory and practice. Five broad themes were identified and discussed under each of the concepts [for a detailed explanation of how themes were identified see section 4.4 (step 7)], these are:

- Community involvement (i.e. community participation in the IDP process);
- Role-players (that is key individuals who have a role to play in the participatory process);
- The nature of interactions, feedback and inputs (i.e. the role of communication in the participatory process);
- Power dynamics (all issues related to power balance and/or imbalance, control and authority), and lastly;
- Cultural sensitivity, accommodation and cherished values (i.e. how cultural diversity affect the participatory IDP process).

With this in mind, the following section is a presentation of the study's research findings based on the key concepts as well as a presentation of themes that are indexed according to each of the four concepts as well as the constructs that emanated from the concepts themselves.

5.2 Findings on participation

5.2.1 Findings based on the theoretical statement on Participation

In light of the theoretical statement forged in section 3.2.1 within the context of municipal IDP processes, participation is defined as,

“...a social process that is continuous and intersubjective, which involves people who constantly reflect on whether actions and statements are truthful or fair, sincere, socially acceptable, and comprehensible so as to avoid constricting or repressing others. The choice of language use is essential for participation and has to be made by those involved in the process so that their social interaction (i.e. dialogue) is an open negotiation and an all-inclusive debate. Over and above reaching consensus regarding solutions about common development problems without manipulation and coercion of any individual, the goal of participation is to provide those involved in it, with relevant life-long skillsets, including upskilling with political consciousness, dialogue and professional etiquette (e.g. project management skills, financial administration and accounting)” (see section 3.2.1.).

However, as argued in section 3.3 & 3.4, there are conceptual difficulties associated with how participation is understood and interpreted in the practice of the institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. Consequently (and as outlined in step 2 of the data collection and analysis strategy in section 4.4), the above definition was read out to municipal officials to probe their insights from a practical perspective. This action helped to obtain input from semi-structured interviewees, leading to the process of redefining the definition to address the theory-practice gap, as informed by real-life accounts of those involved in the Rustenburg Local Municipality’s IDP process.

Having read to them, municipal officials agreed to the above definition, however they gave interestingly different (and at times, nuanced) understandings of how participation can be practically applied or interpreted. For instance, one of the officials indicated that in order to contextualise participation within the scope of the municipal IDP process, it has to be aligned to legislation:

R1: “You have got to link it to the objects of local government because this is where it all leads to. You have got to link it to the objects of local government and you must also link it to...uhm... Chapter 4 of the Systems Act...the objectives of community participation, which [scoffs] ehm...draws inspiration from that chapter, I think its chapter 7 of the constitution because it is the one that deals with the objects of local government. You have got to... everything must link back to that”

The above sentiment by respondent R1 emphasizes that a definition for participation should be linked with the objects of local government. This, as the respondent argues, is because

participation within the context of local government should be understood as “community participation” in all municipal affairs. In light of this sentiment, it was observed that during all discussions with interview respondents equated participation with the degree to which community members are involved in municipal IDP processes (i.e. community participation). Moreover, the above statement seemingly implies that the municipal official views participation as a process that should adhere to specific legislative requirements. It would seem that in order for participation to be contextually relevant and fit for its purpose, it should be linked with the objects of local government as outlined in the constitution of the Republic (see South Africa, 1996), as well as guidelines around community participation in the Municipal Systems Act (see South Africa, 2000).

The above sentiment is understandable especially because the above referenced pieces of legislation provide some prescription for all municipal officials to follow when applying participation, especially within the context of public engagement in IDP affairs. To this end, section 152 (1) (a) and (e) of the constitution identifies the following objects of local government that are directly linked with the concept of participation: *“to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities”* and *“to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government”*.

Arguably, the same interpretation of participation can be located in chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (South Africa, 2000), starting with the chapter’s title (i.e. *“community participation”*). Judging, by the use of words such as “encourage”, the constitution softly approaches the idea of community participation; the Municipal Systems Act seems to be more direct and instructional given that it sets out consequences that may be suffered if the dictates in its Chapter 4 are not followed to the latter.

This chapter prescribes how community participation should be facilitated, including how community members should be invited to IDP meetings, the platforms they should use, how their participation should be recorded, as well as specific processes and procedures that should be applied to ensure that input from community members is captured or transcribed. An implication drawn from this process, as well as from the perception of respondent “R1”, is that community participation is not a wilful or voluntary exercise, but a legislated process that municipal officials should follow and fulfil by all costs. This further implies that participation is regarded or implemented as a means to achieve certain desired ends (and not as an end in itself).

Supporting the observation above, are the different explanations given by semi-structured interviewees when asked about their impression of what constitutes community participation. Most, if not all, indicated that as they carry out their duties related to the IDP process, they target to fulfill relevant pieces of legislation, particularly chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act as well

and chapter 7 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This point of view is demonstrated in the remarks below by respondents “R1” and “R3” who said that,

R1: “Councillors will be expected, on the basis of the draft IDP and draft budget, to take that to community meetings, right, and when you publicise those community, you must comply with the section 21(a) and (b) of the Systems Act... so we will go out at these meetings. This is the most intense period for public participation where you now have some draft...draft that you present and then you present it out in the Wards, with other stakeholders and allow them to make submissions. We will also publicise a notice for people to make written submissions also in the period of end of March and the end of May. So it is done through community meetings, sectoral engagements and through written submissions...”.

R3: “...remember initially I said this process is legislated? Even legislation gives an indication that you must publish on the local newspapers and maybe local radio stations. So legislation guides you, you can use more, but we must meet the minimum requirement, so we do that, we publish on the local newspapers and, you know, we even...because over time you obviously have a list of stakeholders that you engage with, so we send... We have a separate stakeholder engagement forum on IDP before we go to the general community... and with the general community, obviously we communicate through the ward councillor...”

In support of the two remarks above, seemingly the fear of adverse consequences of not facilitating community participation in the expected way, is an indirect motivation why officials ensure that participation is implemented as a means to achieve certain ends. This view is corroborated by the remarks from respondents “R1” and “R2” below:

R1: “...If you don’t comply with the requirements of community engagement, then your entire IDP and your entire budget is not valid, its null and void. In fact, if it is proven that you have not complied with legislation, the constitution and the municipal Systems act, you did not embark on meaningful public participation, the municipality can ultimately be dissolved....”.

R2: “...The IDP office and that of the municipal manager, as the sessions start before we get into the nitty-gritties of the exercise, do the baseline explanations to say community, this is what an IDP is, this is how the process legislatively goes, this is where you come in and us as a municipality, we cannot corner. We can’t because

legislatively, we are here to hear what you want and we have to see how we deliver on what you want...”

How officials communicate with community members becomes the focal point of community participation. This is predicated by the fear of possible repercussions that may follow if it is found that public participation did not take place. What is worrying, however, is the fact that participation is understood from the perspective of only one group of role-players; the community members who are supposed to be beneficiaries of the process. Thus, the role of other stakeholders such as municipal officials, is seemingly not included in this interpretation of participation. Contrary to what is captured in the theoretical statement on participation (see section 3.2.1), these stakeholders do not see participation as an intersubjective process, given their inability to recognise how their own involvement might affect or even influence the outcomes of the IDP process.

Two other respondents added that, when defining participation, there must be a focus on the purpose it should serve, that is, the desired results (either tangible or intangible) that participation should yield. In this way, the respondents' versions are directly linked to the suggested goals offered in the context-specific definition of participation, which relates to the participation-as-end versus participation-as-means argument. Thus, slightly implying that it should be revised:

R2: “The goal of participation should be to impart communities with baseline understanding of government processes... I think if you understand government, its procedures and systems, you are in a better position to engage it on a wide array of issues...But if you don't have the baseline understanding of how government functions, I think you are going to have a struggle in trying to engage government in a number of issues. So you just need to understand procedures, processes and procedures (sic) first...”

The goal of participation above, is seemingly linked to observations made by some of the semi-structured interviewees about what seems to be a short-coming on the part of citizens as they lack the knowledge and understanding of the IDP process. This is something that the officials are concerned about:

R3: “...one thing that municipalities are expected to do is empower communities with knowledge, you know? To educate communities about the municipality's business... because we do community engagements, I mean for various reasons the main one obviously being the IDP and budget, so that when you go to communities, for example, to report back to communities...when you get there they

want to raise issues that should be raised during IDP engagements, that shouldn't be raised in that platform and that happens quiet often and maybe that says that's an area that needs improvement..."

As a secondary goal, one of the two respondents highlighted the idea of using the IDP process to financially empower local citizens through Local Economic Development (LED) opportunities:

R3: "...If you say IDP, the IDP remember, the purpose is to ensure that you get the community's needs (sic), err, and then your plan is informed by what the communities on the ground require so that when you provide resources, you are addressing the community's needs... I mean the municipality does business with communities through, like I have just given an example but it's not, I think the definition will be out... because again, if business comes with interest of identifying opportunities, it doesn't serve the purpose of having public participation for IDP."

The secondary goal of participation as suggested above, seems to be consistent with the Assets-Based Community Development (ABCD) model (see section 2.3.3.1). In this model, participation can be used to identify community needs, and henceforth, spot local entrepreneurs with specific skillsets that can be used to address the development and social change issues required by the community. In the process alleviating poverty and creating jobs for communities.

Based on the above sentiments surrounding the purpose of participation, the following three points were noted:

- Semi-structured interviewees believe that the goal of participation should be to provide community members with knowledge of how the government functions as well as what role they should play therein;
- They also believe that participation is purely about generating and identifying community needs; and,
- Lastly, semi-structured interviewees are of the view that participation should not be about fulfilling business interests as a result of tenders from identified IDP project ideas (e.g. building of clinics or construction of roads, etc.).

Notwithstanding the valuable contributions made by semi-structured interviewees towards a contextual definition of the participation concept, their one-sided interpretation of the concept leaves much to be desired. Arguably, the problem emanates from their fixation with fulfilling legislative requirements (i.e. which translates participation into an involuntary process: a means

to an end) to the extent that they zero-in on what is prescribed in chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (i.e. the whole legislative requirement on community participation) while ignoring other factors at play. These factors include the conflict that comes with competing interests in group forums, the political nature of the participatory process (i.e. democratic nature of participation as outlined in the constitution), the notion of power and the influence that municipal officials have on the participatory process (see section 5.4 for a detailed discussion of these power dynamics as part of a treatment of empowerment); as well as the vulnerabilities that community members may display in view of the aforementioned factors.

In addition to the contribution made on the theoretical statement, community involvement (i.e. community participation) emerged as a theme that is directly related to participation. In the section below, the theme is contextualised and findings from the interaction with semi-structured as well as focus group discussants are provided.

5.2.2 Community involvement: Community participation

What is central to the idea of community “involvement” is the manner in which communication and all interactions are facilitated during IDP meetings with citizens. This speaks to how participation is interpreted as a process as well as how officials and citizens interpret the way in which they interact during meetings (i.e. whether their interaction reflects the kind of participation that is meaningful, genuine active or otherwise).

Furthermore, it would also seem that municipal officials regard participation (in their case, community participation) as a process that takes place through a series of meetings with community members and civic organisations/interest groups. In light of this observation, a conceptual relationship between participation and dialogue is noted: where it would seem that community participation cannot be undertaken without any form of interaction, communication and engagement. However, it seems this kind of participation does not translate to citizens having any form of decision-making power, especially because an IDP community meeting is not the forum where final decisions are made on which development projects will be rolled out in a given financial year. Such decision-making ratification takes place during a municipal council session where only municipal councillors debate and approve the IDP and budget documents for each ward. The following extract can be used as an example, it reflects how one of the semi-structured interviewees understand how (community) participation is facilitated, in terms of process:

*R4: “...Actually IDP is to take ideas and change them to projects. It must start as an idea. People must come up with those ideas **gore re batla one, two, three [that we want 1,2,3]**. It is a shopping list to say now if you could just fix our road it*

would be better, it would connect our communities for better economic development. It can ensure that we get investments and so on...”

It seems community involvement is an integral part of a municipality's existence because it is the community members who have to provide municipal officials with a local development agenda. However, equating a community participation process to the idea of giving “shopping-lists”, shows that the process does not empower them. The sentiments of *R4* raise two critical questions; if community members attend these meetings to give municipal officials, a “shopping list of Top-Ten Priority needs” concerning a local development agenda,

- Is the process inclusive of all role-players? (meaning when a reduction process of the ‘shopping list’ is followed, leading to a total of ten prioritised needs, doesn’t this process exclude contributions made by other community members?); and,
- How is collective agreement and consent (from community members, in particular) reached when this kind of process “shopping list” development is followed? (meaning is there a recording mechanism taken into account to ensure that there is collective agreement and consent from all role-players, perhaps, in the form of voting processes?)

5.2.3 Lack of Youth Participation and a general sense of community apathy towards participation in municipal IDP processes

What also emerged in another focus group interview discussion is that, most young people in Ward 31 (Marikana) have a sense of discontent when it comes to attending IDP meetings. One of the reasons for their lack of participation in IDP meetings is that, they have grown impatient with the municipality's failures, based on the assumption that officials are dishonest. The following are responses of two young people from separate focus group discussions held by the researcher:

E: *“The municipality is failing us because it doesn’t want to listen to us as residents. One thing that I can tell you is that us, as the youth in Marikana, we tried writing letters and went to the municipality in buses but they have since said they will come back to us, however they only take what the ward councillor is saying to them, not us. He is the boss in Marikana and things will not change. Maybe they will change after he has left”.*

I: *“These meetings, honestly speaking, I never attend them, you see. So I never attend and most of the time the ones I used to attend at the RDP’s section, most of the time the communication was not proper because you would find that when you are there, most of us community members never had any say, you know. Like*

how do you feel about the things that they are saying. They just come in there and address that which they wanted to say and then the meeting is adjourned and we disperse. Once the councillor and the top people, you see, when they are done the meeting is over and we all go home, you are the ones who are going to ask each other questions and you will have to answer yourselves...”

The researcher further observed that members of the two groups (from which the above two discussants raised the issue of non-attendance of meetings called by municipal officials, including the ward councillor), embraced the choices made by these young people because they too, did not benefit much from attending meetings held by the municipality with the community. For example, in the same group involving discussant “I”, another elderly member (who is one of the community leaders in ward 31) shared similar sentiments, arguing that he has even stopped attending all meetings that are organised by the municipality, because of accusations that have been levelled against him in previous meetings:

A: *“So we are still far from fixing Marikana because we think mayors are the ones that are failing our leaders so in meetings, when you raise your points, even now there are about two meetings that I have decided not to attend because when I get there I am branded as somebody who goes there to fight against the councillor so I am afraid because when I get there I contribute based on the agenda, seeking to fix certain items, I am taken as someone who is fighting against the councillor”*

Furthermore, another elder in a group involving discussant “N” also conveyed discontent with the lack of communication on the part of municipal representatives, including the ward councillor:

J: *“We have no communication, this man has just spoken the honest truth, it is like that, lack of communication. The councillor never comes to us, we are the ones who always go to him and make requests. He doesn’t come and I can even say this looking at him in the eye and say [the respondent then called the ward councillor by name] you are not serving us because you only come to us seeking votes, after that you leave us and what you do is that you are only considering those people in the RDP section only, it doesn’t need to be underlined, he does not consider us. The next thing he is always postponing meetings...”*

In support of the issues above, other members of the same group shared the following bone of contention against the municipal ward councillor:

K: *“There are monthly meetings that, as my colleague has just indicated, which we are not told about, we always find them in process and this is where communication*

fits in. According to the speaker's office, they have to inform us of a meeting seven days prior, but when it comes to this point, shame, they don't care about it... they don't care, rather what he would do is that let's say today is Sunday, on Monday he makes copies and on Tuesday, a meeting ensues. Or whenever he feels like calling a meeting, he does so. But the law forces him to ensure that he holds a meeting every month. That meeting is important because it addresses issues such as IDP projects, and a host of other things".

The above sentiments suggest a lack of rapport between the community members and the municipality, in particular, the ward councillor. They further contradict the sentiment held by semi-structured interviewees, regarding the ward councillor being instrumental in educating and 'preparing' the community about the IDP process. Seemingly, the fact that a ward councillor is a Politician representing a specific political party, is a concern to community members because they do not see the ward councillor prioritising community needs over party political interests.

Over and above those who have decided not to attend meetings, there are some members of the community who indicated that they are being excluded from attending public meetings due to lack of communication from the municipality and the ward councillor.

L: *"Most of the time when there is a meeting, first thing... like now, you can walk around the neighbourhood and as you pass, you might find about 8 people converged in an open area and you ask yourself what is going on, you find that they are addressing those ones that are in attendance [about community IDP projects], whereas the community doesn't know anything about this meeting. It is only the people who will go there who will receive the information. Like they are doing it in a way of those who are close to me are the ones who will receive the information, while you, who is far from me, the only way for you to get information is when you happen to pass by and you find them there... or maybe you happened to eavesdrop when someone, who was invited to the meeting, was telling another".*

The above sentiment is linked to various constructs, such as the accommodation of diverse inputs, fair and equal engagement, collective agreement and consent over development projects as well as inclusivity of all role-players. Stemming from the above sentiment is the perspective that, not all community members are treated equally by municipal representatives, in particular the ward councillor. This notion implied that not all role-players are included in the IDP interaction process, which raises questions around the 'participatory' nature of the community participation process. In addition, another community member revealed the frustrations they are subjected to when communicating with their ward committee members:

M: *“There are ward committees, where we come to receive information from a ward committee. But now we are in the dark because we no longer have one. We asked the ward committee member to come here and bring municipal officials here because we used to have one, but then he found work elsewhere and we have since waited for the municipality to come with an election process for a replacement, till today. We do follow-up and make calls, we write letters and they say tomorrow...no, Thursday...its November now and we are still waiting”.*

Deduced from the above extract is a feeling of neglect that some community members have, because when they try to interact with their elected representatives, their pleas are not addressed. The discontent concerning how communication is employed, or the lack thereof, symbolises power imbalances between the community members and their representatives, exposes the lack of feedback facilitation and follow-up on issues that some community members raise.

During interactions with members of another focus group discussion, the discussants raised an issue that ward 31 is a multilingual society that is composed of people who speak IsiXhosa, SeSotho, SeTswana, XiTsonga, Shangaan, Venda, IsiSwati and IsiZulu. As a result, language barriers are seriously affecting the community members and one of the respondents even expressed a concern that translation is only limited to one of these languages during municipality meetings, thus inhibiting the participation of others during the meetings. Given that the group raised the dual issue of a lack of youth participation and language barriers, one of the discussants proffered a solution that would enable the municipality to maximise the participation of youth in the IDP process, while alleviating the bottlenecks related to language barriers:

N: *“Look, we are young and some of us have finished matric. But it’s hard and we are not working. Why doesn’t the municipality take us, the youth in Marikana and give us training on IDP. Let’s say we have a group of young people from different cultures, Batswana, Basotho, VhaVhenda, the Zulu’s, Xhosa’s, and Swati’s, then they employ us to go into our community and teach our parents about IDP and what is expected of them, then we can be able to attend the IDP meetings because it would be our job also”.*

The above sentiment shows that over and above the problems listed by both municipal officials and community members, there are possible solutions that are offered on both sides. However, it seems there is a disconnect between the municipal officials and community members on how meetings are structured and how all role-players participate in them. Two opposite constructions of reality are expressed by the respondents on both sides. On one hand, municipal officials (excluding one of the semi-structured interviewees who said dialogue is not applied properly) are

of the view that there is active citizen participation, however community members (focus group discussants) disagree and are of the view that some people are given preferential treatment by the ward councillor, adding that meetings are shrouded by coercion and manipulation when it comes to the identification of local needs. Furthermore, municipal officials have all the power over constitution of community meetings to discuss IDP projects and there is no reciprocity if for the purpose of follow-up and feedback facilitation, community members request meetings with officials. This shows a one-sided approach and a unidirectional flow of interaction.

5.2.4 Redefining Participation: A critical Reflection.

In light of the findings on participation, key observations were made. Firstly, although semi-structured interviewees argued that they try to go beyond the call of duty when implementing community participation in municipal IDP processes (i.e. not merely ‘ticking boxes’), their seeming devotion and fixation with fulfilling the legislative requirements, paints an opposite picture. This implies that in their case, participation is a means to achieve certain desired ends and thus, it is not a voluntary process. Secondly, it might as well be that, this participation-as-a-means approach adopted by the municipal officials, is a result of the fear of penalties in the Municipal Systems Act, if it is found that community participation was not followed accordingly.

Thirdly, it is concerning that from a practical perspective, participation is understood from the vantage point of citizens (i.e. community participation) ONLY, that is the degree to which the community members are involved in municipal affairs (including IDP). This concern may as well be a theoretical problem given that participation, within the participatory approach, is approached as a methodology that advocates for the voice of the downtrodden and marginalised role-players and empowers them to have a say in decision-making processes about their development and social change (see sections 2.2.3, 2.3, & 3.2.1). This view has been the substantial focus of the participatory approach since it was canvassed as an “alternative paradigm” in the early 1970s. It is dangerous when operationalised within some contexts (such as the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP process in communities), and it becomes a one-way communicative process (i.e. “bottom-up” as opposed to “top-down”).

Although this kind of emancipatory operationalisation may be acceptable in small-scale, single unit communities (that might as well be homogenous), when it comes to complex, culturally diverse (and, at times, politically-vulnerable) communities, the operationalisation seems one-sided. Furthermore, the role played by municipal officials and other important factors such as the political nature of participation in the IDP process, the power dynamics (i.e. influence that municipal officials, including ward councillors have in IDP meetings), and the vulnerability of community members (i.e. marginalisation), are ignored.

Fourthly, the kind of interpretation of participation in line with what is in literature, is not adequately positioned to fit the real-life experiences of those involved in integrated development planning. For instance, instead of being conceived as “a planned activity”- as though it is used to achieve pre-defined objectives and ends; participation should be regarded as an end-in-itself (see section 2.2.3.). However, it is unrealistic and practically impossible not to regard institutionalised participation as a planned activity, especially given the precursor that the legislations that guide municipal practice, require participation to be a non-negotiable process, and thus, spell out all the actions that must be implemented to ensure that participation takes place. Consequently, the idea of “invited” spaces for participation cannot be ignored or overturned given the constitutionally-protected guarantees for participatory democracy in the South African local government’s context. Thus, when conceived within the context of the municipal IDP process, institutionalised participation should reflect participation-as-means and participation-as-end approaches for the purpose of the effective and meaningful participation (see section 3.4) of citizens in local development planning.

However, it has been indicated both in the literature (see sections 1.4, 1.5, 1.6) as well as in the present study (5.2 & 5.3) that institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes in South Africa is characterised by experiences of a lack of rapport, trust and opposing constructions of reality (i.e. disconnect) between municipal officials and citizens in terms of how the participatory process is (or should be) followed. As a way of finding common ground between theory and practice and in light of the foregoing, one of the seven factors presented in section 3 as part of the opportunities for an enhanced institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes (see section 3.4), namely, plurality of participation (i.e. the proposal for participation to be a two-fold process), can be useful in the process of redefining participation.

This is where participation can be considered as a continuous dialogic process where citizens can be afforded the space to make input as well as to examine whether the process is satisfactory (i.e. from a participatory perspective) by means of reflection. Importantly, reflection remains an essential aspect of participation, especially given that the IDP process requires participation to be a planned activity based on the notion of the creation of invited spaces for citizens to make input on IDP matters. Thus, reflection can be used as part of a compromise between theory and practice in that it fulfils the requirement of participation from a theoretical standpoint (see the Habermasian validity claims argument in section 2.3.7) and also the practical need for realistically enhancing the participatory experiences as well as building rapport and trust between municipal officials and community members.

As part of revision of the conceptual framework offered in chapter 3, (see section 3.4) reflection is presented as a solution-based add-on process to institutionalised participation, which can be

followed as a blind review/anonymous process allowing community members to reflect, by way of completing questionnaires (built around the ideal speech situation and validity claims reflection), on the participatory nature of the IDP process and submitting these reviews to a third-party. The third party responsibly measures the extent to which local citizens are satisfied or dissatisfied with the participatory process. This way, local citizens can be afforded some degree of citizen power (i.e. empowerment) in a process that has been structurally designed to make municipal officials the default custodians (i.e. guardians) of the public participation process and the municipal integrated development planning.

Against the foregoing, a revised definition of participation based on the suggestions made by the respondents is as follows:

A social process that is continuous and intersubjective characterised by the establishment of platforms (i.e. invited spaces) where open negotiation and all-inclusive dialogue among equal subjects, are facilitated by universally agreed-upon language choices with the aim of reaching consensus regarding solutions about common development problems. Active and meaningful participation can only be achieved if all who are involved in the process are given the space to reflect on validity claims of truthfulness or fairness, sincerity, social acceptability, and comprehensibility of one another's utterances so as to avoid perceptions manipulation and coercion of any individual and build rapport for long-term development and social change.

In its present form, the revised definition attempts to find common ground between theory and practice by conceiving participation as a process that cannot be understood from the vantage point of any one group of role-players, hence its intersubjective nature. Moreover, it is centered around reflection – which is a process that can allow those involved in the IDP process to examine their experiences with a view of ascertaining whether there is meaningful participation, in line with the Habermasian Communicative Action theory (see section 2.3.7). However, the revised definition on participation omits the second part of the definition about reaching consensus, finding solutions to common problems and describing participation as a process aimed at providing long-term and life-long skillsets for role players (i.e. “...upskilling with political consciousness, dialogue and professional etiquette...”). Since from practice, it is believed that a more immediate goal of participation should be to provide communities with capacity to know government processes and systems, therefore, it cannot be questioned that this goal is warranted, necessary and achievable in practice.

Akin to participation, dialogue is an essential concept in the participatory processes, thus the following section discusses the findings related to dialogue and the themes that emerged from data collection, starting with the concept's theoretical statement.

5.3 Findings on Dialogue

5.3.1 Findings based on the theoretical statement on Dialogue

Like participation, the following context-specific theoretical statement (i.e. definition) of dialogue, drawn from accounts in literature as well as from theory, was read out to semi-structured interviewees with a view of seeking their input on how it can be interpreted in the real-world:

Dialogue can be defined as an intersubjective process, characterised by mutual tolerance and respect, whose members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) are first prepared to listen to one another and accommodate all views, even those that are 'subaltern' to allow for negotiation and the joint contribution of ideas so that consensus about solutions related to development problems is reached. Through dialogue, all interactions should be aimed at affording interlocutors to contribute ideas aimed at achieving praxis (i.e. transformation, development and social change)" (see section 3.2.2).

The respondents were seemingly in agreement that the definition of dialogue is acceptable and applicable in the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, especially when it comes to how public IDP meetings are facilitated (i.e. with respect to the nature of interactions, input and facilitation of feedback). This impression stems from their commonly shared perspective which suggests that they believe a participatory process can never be achievable without the facilitation of dialogue through communicative interaction and engagement among all role-players. However, it would seem the semi-structured interviewees had differing views when contextually interpreting what dialogue is and the role it should play when considering the nature of their interactions with community members.

For example, one of the semi-structured interviewees suggested that the definition could be enhanced and given more focus especially because, in their view, the goal of dialogue in the context of institutionalised participation is to manage conflicts given the hotly contested political environment within which they find themselves in:

R1: "you have to be quiet astute in terms of conflict management because in many instances you have to manage competing interests and how do you merge these together so that it's a win-win situation... because if you don't do that, that is why you find yourself in many instances where there is disruption, chaos, disruption (sic). So you've got to be able to be very clear on how you approach conflict management..."

The above input corresponds with one of the conclusions drawn in the present study (see section 2.5) regarding conflict as one of the unavoidable factors present in any participatory process. The respondent's proposal that dialogue be used to manage conflict, could imply that its theoretical

statement should be revised and feature the idea of conflict management as one of its goals and a sense of 'responsibility' that municipal officials have in terms of ensuring that they anticipate the possible eventuality of conflict and they proactively address it. In light of this, it can be further observed that in order to manage conflict, dialogue has to be interpreted in a prescriptive sense (see section 3.2.2), just as Ganesh and Zoller (2012) maintained.

Thus, dialogue should be regarded as a form of 'genuine discourse' - where it is used to create and facilitate a communicative environment in which social actors have due regard and respect for each other's views (i.e. intersubjectively speaking). This fosters relationships while safeguarding opportunities for continuous interfaces due to established feelings of trust, mutual reliance and rapport (see section 2.5; cf. Jenlink & Banathy, 2005:6). To determine whether dialogue has been successful in facilitating this communicative environment, it is essential for all role-players to be allowed to use communicative rationality, in the form of reflection sessions where a validity-claims analysis is used (see sections 1.4 & 2.3.8).

Furthermore, one of the semi-structured interviewees viewed the suggested interpretation of dialogue as utopian and idealistic, thus making it difficult to achieve in practice:

R5: "... I don't think there are dialogues that's done, probably in this province or in this city. But I think that's the correct statement...(brief pause) if we are having dialogues and we want to achieve a common goal, we need to always listen to each other because if we are having dialogue but...(brief pause) you know, I'm talking, you are talking and we really do not understand what... (brief pause) you know. You are negative, I am positive and then we are trying to achieve a certain goal but we are clashing and...(brief pause) you know. You want to show me that you can...(brief pause) so we won't reach consensus. If we don't listen to each other we won't reach consensus, we might as well forget about the dialogues."

The above sentiment is crucial because, as observed in chapter 3 (see section 3.2.2), it might be challenging to achieve dialogue in the form of genuine discourse between municipal officials and citizens when considering how they interact (i.e. in the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP meetings). What is common in the two sentiments by the above respondents, conflict seems to be a prevalent feature of communicative spaces when municipal officials meet with community members and hold IDP meetings, which seems to be an impediment to constructive deliberation, engagement and interaction.

Seeing the lack of trust and rapport between municipal officials and citizens, one of the contributing factors towards dialogue being impeded by conflict during communicative

engagements is the fact that municipal officials' motives, intent and interests are questioned by community members. This perspective emanated from the latter respondent, who suggested that perhaps dialogue does not really materialise in the municipal IDP processes because those in charge of facilitating participation can at times be coercive in their attempts to manipulate community members to identify certain infrastructure projects as prioritised needs over others:

R5: "...for argument sake, we have your demographics like, for example, in your ward 20% of young people are HIV positive. You need to assist us as a municipality to do profiling, going down that if we have that 20%, do they get ARV's and health services? It goes back to the issue that when you do your needs priorities, you don't look at those things, and those are social issues... but you are looking at the infrastructure part of it, you are not addressing the back-to-basics issues, the social issues... I mean if you look at the top-ten priority needs, it's your infrastructure, it's your clinics, your sports ground but somebody else next door doesn't have food, they sleep on an empty stomach..."

This concerning view questions the motives and intentions of municipal officials when they hold community participation meetings and/or facilitate public engagement on integrated development planning. It also suggests that to some extent, the concerns that are raised in the literature about the participatory process not being effective (see section 1.5) could also be a result of these kind of self-serving behaviour, thus making dialogue an impossible thing to achieve. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the legislation that guides the involvement of citizens in the IDP process (among other key municipal affairs) has singled out participation from the vantage point of local citizens (i.e. "community participation") as the one activity that should be guaranteed by municipal officials and is thus, silent on other key concepts such as dialogue which has been proven to be an essential facilitator of communicative interaction (i.e. genuine discourse) which can enable effective and active participation (see section 2.5).

Furthermore, dialogue is a problem in this study, showing how it can be complicated and have nuanced interpretations (i.e. descriptive versus prescriptive interpretations of dialogue) (see section 3.2.2) as well as how its use cannot be taken for granted to imply the mundane, everyday use of the term to imply "discussion". Interestingly, another semi-structured interview respondent seemed to be affirming the above sentiment when indicating that they do not engage with local citizens during meetings, thus leaving an impression that they might be manipulating the process during IDP meetings:

R2: "In the process, we really don't tell them what we think, although we do exchange ideas, to a very much lesser extent I don't think it's much of an

engagement because it's a people-driven process. Our responses to each other, or the manner in which we communicate to each other doesn't directly find a situation where there is conflict. We don't disagree with them. When they say they want toilets, we explain to them that we can maybe give mobile toilets but prioritise housing, if for example, you live in shelters made out of plastic bags. You cannot live in plastic bags like people in Yizo Yizo..."

Although this perspective pictures a municipal IDP process without any problems or conflicts, it is suspicious, as it contradicts the position held by the first respondent (respondent "R1"), who identified conflict management as an important aspect of dialogue given the propensity of disruptions and chaos that prevails during the integrated development planning deliberations. Moreover, it may also be argued that when saying "...we explain to them that we can maybe give (sic) mobile toilets but prioritise housing...", if for example the response demonstrates some degree of manipulation on the part of municipal officials who seem to curtail some community inputs to reflect their own desired interests. This kind of perspective suggests that even if community members are given a platform to give opinions about what they want, municipal officials can influence those inputs to link with their own impression of what kind of development is needed in a particular area.

The above sentiment affirms the view held by the preceding respondent R5 who argued that based on project identification and needs priorities, dialogue does not exist during deliberations and, in fact, local citizens might be coerced into prioritising certain needs over others, for the purpose of rolling out specified infrastructure-related IDP projects. Seemingly, for municipal officials, facilitating a series of meetings and engagements with community members and their representatives is an important aspect of institutionalised participation in the IDP process. This indicates their reliance on facilitating such "talk sessions" that can otherwise be regarded as dialogue. However, as evidenced above, it seems that they view dialogue in a descriptive sense and not from a prescriptive orientation (see section 3.2.2). In light of this, it was interesting to note that one of the five semi-structured interview respondents seemed critical of the way in which they, as a municipality, facilitate all interactions with community members when it comes to the integrated development planning. The respondent voluntarily suggested that the municipality should adopt the use of 'dialogues', as a way of facilitating engagement with all citizens- which presupposes that the kind of 'dialogue' that is suggested is not presently practiced:

R5: "what I think can help, dialogues are very important, if you do dialogues on the ground as a municipality, I think it would help because if we do dialogues on a particular subject like domestic violence...like, you know? As young people to say 'how can we make local government work'. I think it would help. So I feel that those

platforms that we have as municipalities are limited. One question I would pose as well to you or when you go back to reflect is that what can be done to expand the platforms so that what we are trying to achieve...it's like we are doing compliance issues..."

Emanating from the above sentiment is an interesting idea that dialogue is a process or action that can be "done". However, this is inconsistent with theoretical interpretations of dialogue, as outlined in chapters 2 & 3 (see sections 2.5.2 & 3.2.2). To fully understand what the respondent meant by "dialogue", the researcher followed-up with a request for clarity and this is what the interviewee added:

R5: "I think in my understanding in terms of dialogue, you would have two separate people: other ones they are negative (sic) and others ones are positive. But I think their main goal is to arrive at one, you know? To arrive at having consensus or something like that, you know?... Their main goal is to arrive at one decision but they've got different views, they've got different understanding of things..."

Based on the above remarks by the interviewee, it would seem that when institutionalised participation is implemented within the context of municipal IDP, interaction with community members is not 'dialogic' because, according to the respondent, such 'talk sessions' are implemented for compliance purposes (i.e. for the sake of fulfilling the legislative requirements) over and above having the kind of interactions that are characterised by negotiation, debate and the expression of different perspectives with a view of seeking common ground and ultimately leading to the attainment of consensus.

As to how interactions with community members are held, it came out during semi-structured interviews and preliminary meetings held by the ward councillor (to 'conscientize' community members about the upcoming IDP process), revealed that the municipality (through the office of the communication manager) sends notices/invites to the public (so they can attend of IDP meetings) through local community radio stations and newspapers. The notices/invites are also published in bulletin boards located in Regional Community Centres (RCCs) that are located across the various wards in Rustenburg Local Municipality. Word of mouth is also adopted where the ward councillor informs ward committee members to share such invites with all community members who are supposed to attend the IDP meetings and make their inputs. In terms of how the talk sessions are structured and how interaction is held, it would ideally seem that municipal officials who act as facilitators of the IDP meetings, open the discussions to allow all citizens to make input on local needs:

*R4: "...Actually IDP, is to take ideas and change them to projects. It must start as an idea. People must come up with those ideas **gore re batla one, two, three [that we want 1,2,3]**. It is a shopping list to say now if you could just fix our road it would be better, it would connect our communities for better economic development. It can ensure that we get investments and so on..."*

In terms of dialogue, the meetings serve as platform where the invited community members give ideas on what kind of development and change in their surroundings can be undertaken, and they are afforded the space to further advance reasons why they need that kind of development. This line of thinking supports the above-mentioned view by respondent ("R2"), who indicated that they hardly experience any conflicts with community members during IDP meetings. However, what is conspicuous in the above extract is the way citizens are regarded when they are invited to participate in these meetings. It is also essential to note that municipal officials downplay their involvement during such "talk sessions", although they are keenly aware of the power that they wield as custodians of the institutionalised participation process. For instance, when trying to explain how they relate with citizens during the IDP process interactions, one of the respondents made the following interesting remarks:

R2: "...I think the space on the ground has shifted so much to a point where it's more of an integrated process: You may be in a position of power but there is an obligation on you to go down, if down is the right word. Even those who are down, there's an obligation on them to take a step-up to meet you half-way..."

These sentiments are in contrast to a 'Buberist' notion of dialogue as genuine discourse between equal subjects (see section 2.5). However, to credit the latter respondent on the remarks about power, it would seem that the implication from their statement is that there is a degree of intersubjectivity that is applied by municipal officials in their interactions with citizens.

Additionally, municipal officials further explained that their role during IDP meetings is to record what is shared by community members so as to collect those "shopping-list" ideas and develop IDP projects out of them. Recording what community members are saying, is a process that all respondents emphasised, that is an essential activity for them during the discussions. As an example of the foregoing, one of the respondents made the following statements:

R3: "...remember the purpose of having community engagements is to gather information from the communities that will go into the IDP finally..."

According to the respondents, what is key about communication during IDP meetings is the need for an information-exchange process where citizens express their views while municipal officials

record these views (i.e. the facilitation of communication, interaction and engagement). It would seem that there is a high regard, from the part of municipal officials, for the views expressed by citizens during IDP meetings. Another impression here is that community members fully understand what their role in IDP meetings is and how to engage with municipal officials so that local needs can be identified. It would seem that this kind of engagement and information exchange is preferred by the respondents, which they believe are an essential platforms for achieving policy implementation. This point is substantiated in the following utterance by another respondent:

R2: "...so the process of IDP is very important because we emphasise this to communities, it's your platform, ours is to come there with our pens and papers and we listen to what you say you want."

From the above assertion, it would seem that the community is invited to share their views with respect to what they need locally, after having been prepped by the local councillor during a preliminary meeting. In essence, a picture painted by the municipal representatives is that of a smooth and cordial relationship with community members, characterised by interaction and discussions especially on the part of community members who are supposed to give input on integrated development planning. Moreover, it would seem that according to the respondents, residents need to be taught about their involvement in the IDP process because, *"...you cannot provide a service to communities when they don't need that particular service so I think it should be a point of departure that, uhm, it goes back to the issue of public participation to say you can't give somebody water while they want electricity, you know?"*. This kind of rational thinking implies that IDP meetings are facilitated, and characterised, by a two-way communication process between municipal officials and residents, which can (to some extent) be viewed as *"dialogue"*.

In essence, the above sentiments by municipal officials resemble an acute understanding of the legislation that governs community participation at municipal level (i.e. Municipal Systems Act). An important theme that resonates with the above perspective is the "fulfilment of legislative requirements". In sum, and judging by the above sentiments from semi-structured interviewees, it would further seem that there is some degree of fair and equal engagement between municipal officials and community members when IDP meetings are facilitated.

However, most of the views from focus group discussants seems to contradict the above sentiments shared by semi-structured interviewees on the communication process followed and what it means for them. This can be shown in the following extracts from some of the discussants, who raised their dissatisfaction with how the communication process is followed by the municipality:

A: *“Firstly I would ask that the criteria for calling meetings should change, secondly, he shouldn’t use his family and friends or the people who he works with so that he can manipulate them to always be in power even though there are those who are against most things that he does. Sharing different ideas is in our best interest. So we request that if it’s the councillor [who is supposed to do this] and no one else who comes from the municipality’s IDP office, we request that councillor be corrected, we don’t know who is it that can hold him accountable because many fights have taken place and now people are tired so we don’t know who can hold him accountable.”*

B: *“If you go to those meetings, many meetings, when the councillor calls these meetings, they descend into chaos and people fight. So my question is this, why can’t the ward councillor be transparent as a way of avoiding chaos in our meetings? So we don’t have a way forward, we don’t know what should be done for Marikana to ultimately be fixed. In other words, it means we don’t have the right leaders because if they were there, these things would come to an end. Even now, if we were to go to a meeting, you will see that they will fight, groups of women and other people here and there, they will fight and these are the people who used to work together with the previous councillor and now they fight and we don’t know what the problem is...”*

The above insights from discussants challenge and contradict the picture painted by some semi-structured interviewees about the positive nature of engagements and interactions during IDP meetings with community members. More specifically, the views raised by focus-group interview discussants seem to support observations made in various studies (see section 1.1 & 1.2). Mainly, the dissent and dissatisfaction that citizens have when perceiving the way in which communication (all interactions and engagement) is facilitated by officials during IDP process (e.g. how notices of meetings are communicated/shared, how the discussions are structured/facilitated during the meetings, etc.).

In addition to the above insights recorded in relation to the theoretical statements, a couple of themes emerged from interaction with community members (focus group discussions) and municipal officials (semi-structured interviews) when speaking about the nature of interaction during the IDP process as well as in the communication platforms used. Indexed under a theme entitled the role of communication in the IDP process, these views speak directly to dialogue since it is based on “how” communication and interaction takes place. The theme is outlined in the following section.

5.3.2 The role of Communication in the IDP process (including communication platforms)

Municipal officials explained that they use a host of different communication platforms to reach communities. These range from using monthly meetings between ward councillors, their local ward committees and the public, to communicate and 'prepare' community members for IDP meetings. For example, one of the semi-structured interviewees indicated that an important tool used to reach community members is word-of-mouth (through ward councillors and committee members) traditional and social media platforms:

R2 "...you see in this WhatsApp group, I have 90 participants, and each one of them has ten committee members, so just using this platform, I have reached 900 people. So we do that, we inform them that we have an upcoming IDP process and they inform their constituents...Over and above this, in making sure that your communication is effective, you do it in a way that even a person who is not techno-savvy is able to get the messages. We get them through radio, through newspapers or if we can't reach them there, the ward councillors and committee members should help us..."

In addition to relying on ward councillors, ward committee members as well as traditional media to share information with the community, the semi-structured interviewee further mentioned other efforts they exhaust to reach all citizens:

R2: "... because others, in most instances, we reach them on WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook, so those who are not on these platforms, we further make use of our regional community centres (RCCs). Here we request ward councillors to make use of RCCs and paste our notices there because those are our point of contact with our communities..."

In principle, municipal officials indicated that the value they place on community participation is founded on their efforts in reaching out to community members as much as they can, in order to have them participating in community IDP meetings. They indicated that this is in line with the dictates of the Municipal Systems Act. Additionally, platforms such as meetings with community representatives (i.e. IDP Representatives Forum and Multi-stakeholder Forum) are also held as a way of maximising community participation, in the words of one of the officials interviewed:

R5: "We have IDP multi-stakeholder forum, we have the Imbizo, Mayoral Imbizo is broad so they have clustered them according to the elderly, youth, your NGO's and

NPO's, and all that, so it's not only your mining houses, you see? Because we also have business forums and all that. And we have IDP representatives forum, where we call in ward councillors and ward committee members and the multi-stakeholder forum, like the one we held yesterday..."

However, although focus group discussants acknowledge the existence of some of the platforms mentioned above by semi-structured interviewees, they expressed discontent with regards to the platforms used as well as the way in which the municipality facilitates its communication with them in the IDP process. They indicated that some of the platforms relied on by municipal officials are ineffective, chaotic and do not accommodate all community members given that they rarely receive communication from municipal authorities about meetings in their ward:

A: *"if it is the ward councillor who brings the IDP process in the community as he is deployed by the municipality, I am requesting that the criteria used to call people should be open because you find that we are being called to meetings when there's only one day left, and its only people in that area who are being called while in other areas, most people don't know about these meetings. So you find that in meetings, we don't reach a number of 40 people in attendance just because most people don't know".*

B: *"what I can add is that if the ward councillor is not capable, let those who are in charge come. Isn't it that the ward councillor reports to other people, for example we have a mayor, the mayor never comes and avail himself to his people, the mayor is sitting there while the people are fighting with the ward councillor. He too as the mayor, he should come and not only remain in Rustenburg, you understand?"*

F: *"during meetings, it is not easy, people fight. It doesn't mean every time there is money that comes out and is used for identified projects like houses or something else, those projects are fought for..."*

Judging by the foregoing, it seems there is a sharp disconnect relating to how the two groups of respondents perceive the platforms used during public consultations. On one hand, the municipal officials indicate that theirs is an enhanced process of communication where they use various platforms to link with community members, including, local newspapers and Radio Stations (i.e. Community Media); WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter (i.e. Social Media); noticeboards at Regional Community Centres (publication of text Notices); and, ward councillors and their ward committee members (word of mouth).

However on the other hand, community members only mentioned two platforms used by the municipality (word of mouth as well as the publication of Notice boards), and further expressed discontent concerning both these platforms on the basis that notices are published late (on the eve of the meeting date, at night) and they end up missing IDP meeting dates. In reference to word of mouth, community members argued that the ward councillor and his committee members are factional and only invite certain community members to meetings based on political affiliation. No reference was made, from the side of focus group discussants, to receiving communication, concerning upcoming IDP meetings, through local community media or through social media platforms. In the case of social media, it might as well be that based on their age-group composition (some aged between 35 and 60 years) and socioeconomic background (some are unemployed while others are informal traders), the following possibilities exist: either they do not have access to the social media platforms; or they do not use social media at all; or they are unaware of the social media platforms (and accounts) used by the municipality. The researcher could not find any reasons why the discussants did not acknowledge receiving any information about upcoming meetings through local media.

As detailed in section 4.4, the researcher was able to detect that out of the six groups that participated in focus group discussions, one of them was a group that seemed to be affiliated with a certain political party. The following extract is an example of what one of the members in this group had to say about how the IDP process is communicated with them as citizens:

G: *“uhm, this is how it works. Er, there are pamphlets that we use to invite community members to an IDP participation program whereby every community member comes and the IDP book is opened, so that, let me say, in the last budget of the previous year we said we will do this, this and that. So out of all things that we had said we will do, which of those do you see as a priority? So the community will come in and they will have to say, as my colleague has said, they will say, for example, we wanted roads, but now there are other sections that are without water, so now let us prioritise water”.*

The extract below reveals that not all members in this group were happy with the way the municipal officials, including the ward councillor, communicate with the community during the IDP process:

H: *“communication, as we speak about IDP first of all, is no longer much especially in the section where I reside. The Imbizo... Imbizo was the best thing especially when an Imbizo is arranged so that we can come to speak about development. Imbizo is whereby the mayor and all the directorates come and then they also call*

the community. So the mayor would explain the IDP process, that we have a x number of wards in Marikana, and then the community gets a chance to speak and say we need a clinic, and our clinic now operates for 8 hours and we need a one that will operate for 24 hours and all those stuff. It is when they would say by 2020 we would have built 15 clinics and all those stuff so the best and simple way to engage the community was Imbizo because some people can't read pamphlets, you would find that it is pasted there but people are just passing by without noticing them and the area in which I reside, most people are more concerned with employment so when you paste notices there and they are not about employment issues, they don't care..."

The above view gave the researcher an impression that though all the discussants in the group are affiliated to a certain political party, some of them are 'ordinary' community members and are not necessarily leading in any community structures. Furthermore, judging by the sentiments from discussants, some communication platforms used by the municipality, need revision. For instance some community members argue that pamphlets being posted to notify them of upcoming IDP meetings are not published around the community in time, leading to a situation where not all community members are able to attend IDP meetings due to lack of awareness, which disadvantages them from attending. The foregoing presupposes that the manner in which the communication process is employed by the municipality is not desirable as far as focus group discussants are concerned, thus raising concerns on the degree of power 'afforded' to community members to make decisions about a local development agenda.

5.3.3 Redefining dialogue: A critical reflection

When noting all of the above sentiments around the idea of dialogue, the role that communication plays in the context of institutionalised participation in the IDP process, as well as the communication platforms used by Rustenburg Local Municipality; it can be argued that a revised definition of dialogue requires some critical interrogation especially when looking at a real-life situations where it will be implemented. From data collection, it emerged that dialogue requires the following conditions:

- To have conflict management to be regarded as one of its goals;
- To have reflection, in the form of communication rationality, as one of the methods used by role-players to determine if all interlocutors are truthful, sincere, genuine and coercion-free in their speech-acts

- To be understood not as a once off process, but one that requires multiple ‘talk’ sessions to give all role-players the confidence in scrutinising all deliberations so as to foster trust and rapport among municipal officials and community members.

In light of the above notes, the following revised definition of dialogue can be offered:

A communicative and interactive process, whose goal is to facilitate conflict, foster mutual tolerance and respect where members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) listen to one another, accommodate each other’s views as equal subjects, allow for negotiation and joint contribution of ideas with a view of achieving effective, meaning and active participation of all parties involved, with a view of achieving praxis (i.e. transformation of the world through the word), development and social change) over a sustained period of time.

The above revised definition of dialogue provides a simple, understandable and acceptable way of viewing how interaction between role players within the context of municipal IDP processes should be approached. Like participation, it is also consistent with what is described in theory. The contradictions between semi-structured interviewees as well as the disconnect between them and focus group discussants, were not surprising. However, the focus of the present study was not to evaluate whether there are disagreements between the respondents and what it means to have such disconnect, but their inputs were essential in providing real-life communication-related experiences relating to the IDP processes so that the proposed conceptual framework can be evaluated for practical relevance. From this point of view, it can be argued that the theoretical statement revised above on dialogue has some practical relevance and operationalisation.

5.4 Findings on Empowerment

5.4.1 Findings with respect to the theoretical statement on empowerment

As was the case with participation and dialogue, the following context-specific theoretical statement (see section 3.2.3) of empowerment, drawn from accounts in literature as well as from theory shared with semi-structured interviewees for their inputs:

Empowerment is a relational process that is characterised by intersubjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collective power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development they wish to see in their immediate surroundings. To be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect on whether the participatory process is not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure. Any development projects undertaken without following, and does not reflect, the ideas contributed and decisions made during, this process should be regarded as illegitimate.

Although some semi-structured interviewees seemed to agree with the definition on empowerment, one of them expressed sentiments that reflect their understanding of

empowerment from a top-down perspective. Among those who agreed with the definition, one went as far as providing an explanation why they support how empowerment is described within the context of municipal IDP processes. The respondent essentially believes that the community participation process is supposed to empower local citizens as they are afforded a platform to discuss local development planning:

R2: “if you don’t have community participation in IDP, you might as well not have the process at all because the needs are from the people on the ground and if the people on the ground are absent, who then are you representing? Whose needs are you communicating? So without the people, you don’t have a process...I mean pitch up a tent, if people don’t come,. It’s a wasted day”.

Based on the above sentiment, the respondent was of the view that there cannot be community empowerment if citizens are not provided with ‘invited spaces’ to make input and share their needs with municipal authorities. In this instance, there cannot be meaningful community participation if space is not provided for the community to express their views and interests, which is empowering because citizens can voice their views. This argument also finds expression in literature and aligns with Servaes and Malikhao’s (2005) views that the citizen’s voice can only be heard if access and invited spaces are created for them (see section 3.2). The implication of these views, especially the above interviewee’s sentiments implies that municipal officials, to some degree have the controlling power to facilitate the participatory process. Thus, empowerment is at the epicentre of both participation and dialogue given that all efforts geared toward facilitating the IDP process, are aimed at empowering communities to make contributions on what kind of development they wish for, in their local areas.

As far as empowerment is concerned, the above sentiment may be deconstructed to effectively imply that municipal officials have the controlling power over local citizens’ participation in the IDP process. This view contradicts the kind of empowerment envisaged in literature, where it is believed as a process that is characterised by collective action and equal latitude (see section 3.2.3). Instead, the perspective exposes a power imbalance between municipal officials as well as the vulnerability of local citizens who are dependants in the process. Additionally, the above observation may be supported by sentiments shared by one of the respondent who seemed to disagree with the definition of empowerment read out to them, as shown in the following extract:

R5: “is it sustainable? When you give a young person funding to start a business, are you checking their progress or you gave him R10 000 and then they can see what they want to do with that money. Did you really empower that young person? Is he empowering others? Or is it just that I can report to council that I have

empowered 20 young people to start their own businesses? Is it an issue of compliance?”

What is interesting is that, the perception (about empowerment) held by the above interviewee (respondent “R5”) stems from the position that power is “given” by a particular role-player (in this case, one with the power and resources and is from the side of the municipality) to another (i.e. power given from a top-down perspective and the recipient being an ordinary community member - a young person). These kind of interpretations (from both respondents) are inconsistent with the definition offered on empowerment – that it is relational and is determinant on how it is exercised, by who and for what purpose (see section 3.2.3). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the above sentiment on empowerment shows that the respondent also regards empowerment from a rather ‘modernist’ perspective where it is understood as a vehicle for top-down development, instead of representing balance and compromise between key role-players in terms of who has latitude over which part or stage of the participatory process.

However, despite their preference of a top-down approach to empowerment, the respondents showed an open mind to the suitability of the theoretical statement read out to them, which can contextually define empowerment in a real-world setting. To this end, there is one semi-structured interviewee who went as far as expressing some concerns with some parts of the definition. The respondent’s argument was based on the following assertion made in the definition: *“Any development projects undertaken without following, and does not reflect the ideas contributed and decisions made during, this process should be regarded as illegitimate”*. Their main claim was that, there are instances where the municipality has latitude to come up with urgent development interventions that could not form part of community consultations, therefore were not agreed upon by the community, but are necessary, and thus, implying that community participation is not always possible to achieve:

R3: “...maybe illegitimate is a strong word and remember in our IDP we would say, in our IDP or finally in our SDBIP, we would say we will only do 50 kilometres of road because we have R150 million on the budget for this type of project but then during the year, you are able to raise funding... maybe you have not provided for any other project in the ward and that may not necessarily have been in the IDP or maybe have not been budgeted in the current cycle but you are able to deliver that project now, so if it is not on the IDP it cannot necessarily be illegitimate because that will still be contributing to service delivery...”

The above extract shows how, in some instances, municipal officials can have the power to unilaterally decide what development to bring in local communities, provided they believe that

those actions will contribute to the provision of services for all. This kind of perspective further advances the view that in a real-life setting, a more nuanced view of empowerment should be opted for, where the idea of citizens having collective power and latitude over decision-making is accommodated equally with the idea of municipal officials, where possible, also having the exclusive control over decision-making during the planning and ratification stages that are subsequent to community consultations (see section 3.4). However, there must be clearly defined limits for all role-players during the participatory process, so that they do not abuse the power they have. In light of this view, power dynamics are one of the emerging themes from both semi-structured and focus group discussions. This theme relates to the issue of power imbalances looking at the perceived roles of different individuals in the participatory process, which is the main focus in the following section.

5.4.2 Power Dynamics

Municipal officials believe they have an explicit lead-role or control of the whole IDP process. This view stems from the impression that it is their responsibility to determine the nature of community participation in the IDP process, plan all meetings, invite communities to specific interactions at ward level, etc. This observation is supported by the fact that municipal officials are the ones who draft what they call an IDP process plan, and in that plan, they allocate only opportunities where community members can express their views regarding local development. These being the community IDP meetings and IDP representative forums.

In light of the above observations, a municipal officials seems to have a sense of ‘guardianship’ over the IDP process. This observation stems from the fact that the legislation, unconsciously, empowers municipal officials to have all constitutive authority and dominance over the IDP process, in particular, community participation. In this way, municipal officials have the authority on how to structure IDP process plans and this further means they have the power over ‘invited spaces’ and platforms used for community involvement. Moreover, they also have control over the process such that even after community members have made their inputs at community meetings, officials have the latitude to go back to municipal chambers and hold a marathon of internal meetings, where they decide on which IDP projects will be rolled out, in which areas, budgets and final IDP projects ratified. To exemplify the above observation, the following sentiment expressed by one of the semi-structured interviewees corroborates the above observation:

R5: “...yesterday we had a meeting where we presented the needs of communities so the need is just a wish-list. But then if you have a wish-list and somebody who

is willing to fund the project within those top-ten priority needs, it benefits us as a municipality...”

The internal meetings, as seen in the above extract, serve the purpose of interacting with various government and private institutions where “wish-lists” from community members are scrutinised and weighed. It is at these meetings, that decision-making takes place and municipal officials have a final say over what project will be embarked upon, without the involvement of community members.

Considering the above process, two theoretical problems surface. Firstly, participation, from a participatory communication perspective, is about empowering those who are marginalised with decision-making power, but it is evident that the above description of institutionalised participation in IDP (in terms of practice) is inconsistent with the requirements from theory. This is because community members have no material power over decision-making since community meetings do not constitute final decision-making over identified IDP projects.

Secondly, in line with Mefalopulos’s (2008) typology of participation, it would seem that community members are passively participating in the process, given that they are limited to only give “wish-lists” in public meetings (see section 3.2.1). As detailed in the above discussion of findings related to collective decision-making, although municipal officials perceive this as active involvement of citizens, their interpretation is contradicted by the fact that community members are not satisfied with the way community participation is facilitated. Consequently, the views from focus-group discussants discredit the sentiments shared by semi-structured interviewees, thereby questioning what seems to be an understanding held by officials that participation is a process where community members present “wish-lists” that do not necessarily constitute the final decision-making and approval of development projects and initiatives in their area. This shows that participation serves the intended (i.e. real) desires and interests of municipal officials, which is fulfilling a legislative mandate so that they are perceived to be doing the minimum in accordance with the law, as opposed to making the desires and interests of community members supreme.

In their defence, however, municipal officials argued that they are required to ensure that they plan around the needs of the community given the scarcity of resources at their disposal. In order to achieve this, they explained that they even go to the extent of asking residents to shrink their ‘wish-lists’ to a maximum of ten needs per municipal ward, which should ideally be addressed periodically over a five-year term. In fact, one of the semi-structured interviewees, acknowledged that in some cases, even if they are guided by the legislation to coordinate community participation, there is nothing that says they cannot do more, given the latitude and control they have over the process:

R3: "...remember Initially I said this process is legislated? Even legislation gives an indication so you must publish on the local newspapers and maybe local radio stations. So legislation guides you, but you can use more but we must meet the minimum requirement, so we do that, we publish on the local newspapers and, you know, we even...because over time you obviously have a list of stakeholders that you engage with..."

In light of the above statement, participation does not become an end in itself, instead, municipal authorities employ participation-as-a-means to achieve legislative ends (see section 2.2.3). This way, it would seem that participation is limited to public meetings where citizens are allowed to make input, even during those meetings, they are informed to give out 'wish-lists'. Municipal officials assume the role of 'donors' who are in a position to decide, resources permitting, whether the wish-lists presented by community members will be provided for. In this kind of hierarchical and adversarial participation (cf. Laquinto, 2016), local citizens are not empowered with the latitude of decision-making but municipal officials have all the authority to pick and choose which items in the wishlists provided by citizens they will approve and upcoming development projects.

Although there are instances, in the participatory process, where municipal officials can assume a domineering role, for example the power to call and arrange municipal meetings is vested on them and they are also empowered, subsequent to public meetings with the community, to exclusively make the final decisions during the ratification of IDP projects at council level. However, this control and dominance should not extend to instances where even during public meetings, community members are influenced or marginalised; manipulated or coerced (see section 5.4.1).

Furthermore, it seems the position of "guardianship" that is assumed by municipal officials as overseers of the IDP process, as well as how they interpret participation from the perspective of community members alone, shows that they view empowerment as unidirectional. This is because officials hold the power to come up with development projects to improve the lives of citizens. On the other side of the debate, community members seem to be dependent on the municipal ward councillor, who they perceive as having the power to change and transform their lives. This kind of dependency shows that they also interpret power as being top-down and from the perspective of dominance of the ward councillor.

Seemingly, they do not understand other interpretations of power, such as collective power, which is one of the foundational building blocks of empowerment (see section 3.2.3). To further support this observation, it seems that at the heart of the complaints levelled by community members, the municipal ward councillor is perceived as someone who uses the power that he has to only serve

personal interests and not those of the community. This gives an impression that if the ward councillor were to address the issues that citizens are complaining about, such as holding meetings where all people are present (and informed in time), asking all present to make input on development projects (even if they are pre-planned), then he would be accepted as empowering the community.

At the heart of these power dynamics, is the need to deconstruct and clearly define who the key role-players involved in the participatory process are. As a theme, role-players emerged following an identification process of opportunities for meaningful participation through participatory communication as a facilitator, in section 3.4, as well as during interactions with all respondents centered around their perception of how communication takes place, which platforms are used and who is behind them.

5.4.3 Key role-players in the participatory process

Situating the people who are behind the participatory process is helpful to clearly define their roles, because the success of the proposed conceptual framework in section 3.4 is reliant on the involvement of different players and how they interact on an intersubjective level. To this end, key role-players who were identified during discussions are the community members, including those excluded and are in the periphery (i.e. those dwelling in informal settlements), ward councillors including other municipal officials who are involved in the IDP process and the municipality's communication office, as discussed in the section below.

5.4.3.1 Community members as role-players

Community members are regarded as key role-players in the IDP process mainly because they are required, by law, to have a central role in it. As one of the themes, community members as key role-players, focuses on the extent to which the community is involved in the participatory process so that their insights can help inform the framework's core interpretations. Consequently, when asked about their involvement, some focus-group discussants argued that they do not even understand what their role in the IDP process is, hence their lack of participation:

C: "Let me tell you one thing my brother, I never attend these meetings. They are not important to me because... what's the use? They end up fighting anyway and nothing progresses at the end of the day"

D: "err, me myself, I don't understand. I hear about it, I see it on TV, they speak about it but totally here in Marikana, I have never, not even once, heard a person

coming to us to say people we have a process called IDP and this is what it entails and things like that. It is only today that I am learning about it here..."

E: *"If I may add, when it comes to the issue of IDP, err, I still remember an IDP program that once came in Marikana Ward 31. Our problem is that always when it comes to IDP, when the people from the municipality come, the ward councillor's wife always disturbs the process, and people end up fighting and the process descends into chaos. So my point is that we, the community members in Marikana, don't know what IDP is as a result of ward councillor's wife who always interrupts and intervenes where it is not necessary..."*

Linked to the communication process, it emerged that there is a disconnect in terms of understanding of how communication should be employed during the communication process, especially on the side of focus group respondents. What stood out is that, seemingly, citizens' lack the knowledge and understanding of the IDP process. Moreover, the following sentiment expressed by another focus group discussant gives further corroboration to observations above:

B: *"You know, I would say to you that you have a right to ask that question just because most things end up there, and those who are in power are unable to come to the community to describe these properly so that we can understand. You may find that there a person is old but they don't understand it well, calling it community development but not knowing what is it based on. So I cannot explain it at all because I don't understand it".*

These sentiments confirm an existing observation made a decade ago when Head (2007) used the idea of social capital to advocate the need to educate citizens, maximise the nature, and extent, of their participation in government programs. It should be noted that as backdated as Head's (2007) study may be, it holds valuable insights that are still relevant today. Given that it was based on the extent to which the global political economy and liberal democratic theory have been affected by the notion of 'community engagement' to challenge what seemed to be the dominant managerial control of governments in development at the time. This narrative is further buttressed by various recent studies, as detailed in the section 2.4.

The foregoing shows that all respondents seem to have little understanding of what dialogue means, as it relates to the facilitation of all communications, interactions and engagements related to integrated development planning.

It is concerning that one of the semi-structured interviewees as well as a majority of the focus group respondents believe that there is some degree of tokenism, manipulation and coercion

when IDP meetings are held, in an aim to influence citizens to prioritise certain infrastructure development projects over other non-lucrative projects. Moreover, this is inconsistent with the notion of dialogue and it effectively implies that municipal officials employ “antidialogical action” in line with Paulo Freire’s exploration of the idea of dialogue or its lack thereof (see section 2.4.2). In addition, the forgoing further suggests a power imbalance between the role-players, where municipal officials assume a higher authority and community members regard themselves as being marginal. These power issues, based on the relationship between officials and citizens are also critiqued in the literature in section 2.3.

The disconnect in the data collection phase between respondents from both sides reflected in the data is worrying, given that their social construction of reality differs vastly. Be that as it may, the contradictions reaffirm observations and findings made in other research studies on the gap caused by a lack of trust and rapport between municipal officials and local citizens (cf. Bauer, 2009; Hofisi, 2014; Williams, 2006; Tau, 2013; Molale, 2019).

5.4.3.2 Ward councillor and municipal officials as role-players

For semi-structured interviewees, the communication process that is followed is aimed at reaching the community in various ways in order to compile the municipality’s IDP. For starters, they all indicated that their first point of contact with the community is through the ward councillor, who is responsible for holding preliminary meetings in their respective wards and preparing the community for the upcoming IDP meetings. It is at these ward meetings, in the words of one of the respondents, that ward councillors ‘teach’ their constituents about the importance of the community’s role in the IDP process and how to ensure that they all benefit therein:

R2: “the moment we say we do IDP public meetings, at ward level, the ward councillor conscientises the community to say: you know your needs, come here and see how we can put them... when we get to the ground, the ward councillor has had a community meeting in his ward to tell his constituents the municipality is coming with an IDP process, this is what it entails, this is what it requires of you. By the time we get there, already, those people know what the process needs to be like...”

The above statement shows that communication between the ward councillor and the community becomes an essential platform where citizens are given a platform to negotiate and discuss their needs before the actual IDP process is rolled out. What stands out in the above quotation is the fact that the ward councillor is the one person charged with facilitating preliminary community meetings so that community members can come, be ‘conscientised’ and ‘ready’ for IDP meetings

that will be held by municipal officials. It would seem that from this point of departure, municipal officials (including ward councillors) have a key role in the whole IDP process, as if they are the 'guardians' who assume responsibility of mobilising the community and leading them in discussions about what the local needs are.

However, most of the views from community members seem to be contradicting the above sentiments shared by semi-structured interviewees on the communication process, especially as it relates to the role played by the ward councillor in the community participation process. For starters some discussants expressed a level of dissatisfaction regarding how the communication process is followed by the municipality:

A: "...we request that councillor be corrected, we don't know who is it that can hold him accountable because many fights have taken place and now people are tired so we don't know who can hold him accountable."

E: "...our problem is that always when it comes to IDP, when the people from the municipality come, the ward councillor's wife always disturbs the process, and people end up fighting and the process descends into chaos...."

Judging by the above insights from discussants, it would seem that the picture painted by semi-structured interviewees about the positive nature of the IDP process, is challenged and contradicted at best. The respondents are critical of the role that is played by the ward councillor and it would seem that they do not perceive the participatory process to be fair and equal, based on their perception of the domineering position that the ward councillor and his spouse have in IDP meetings. The disconnecting views in the form of conflicting responses between both the semi-structured interviewees as well as focus group discussants led to the identification of an emergent theme on participation entitled: '*tokenism, chaos and disruption of meetings*'. This emerging theme describes the dark side of participation, that is, the negative eventualities that are brought up by the participatory process.

Although focus group discussants acknowledge the existence of some of the platforms mentioned above by semi-structured interviewees, they expressed discontent with regards to the platforms used as well as the way in which the municipality facilitates its communication with them in the IDP process. They indicated that some of the platforms relied on by municipal officials are ineffective, chaotic and do not accommodate all community members given that they rarely receive communication from municipal authorities about meetings in their ward:

A: "if it is the ward councillor who brings the IDP process in the community as he is deployed by the municipality, I am requesting that the criteria used to call people

should be open because you find that we are being called to meetings when there's only one day left, and its only people in that area who are being called while in other areas, most people don't know about these meetings. So you find that in meetings, we don't reach a number of 40 people in attendance just because most people don't know".

B: *"what I can add is that if the ward councillor is not capable, let those who are in charge come. Isn't it that the ward councillor reports to other people, for example we have a mayor, the mayor never comes and avail himself to his people, the mayor is sitting there while the people are fighting with the ward councillor. He too as the mayor, he should come and not only remain in Rustenburg, you understand?"*

F: *"during meetings, it is not easy, people fight. It doesn't mean every time there is money that comes out and is used for identified projects like houses or something else, those projects are fought for..."*

The theme on 'tokenism, chaos and disruption of meetings' emerged in light of the implications drawn from the above sentiments. Additionally, three of the semi-structured interviewees also confirmed that chaos and disruptions sometimes occur during IDP meetings:

R4: *"in those meetings, you would find them...they would fight again, they would say this one, since it was stuck here, you said it is a priority but nothing is happening..."*

R2: *"...in certain instances, you have got those that really come, er, to complain even when you explain to them processes, procedures, facilities and everything. They still find something to complain about, you see? They don't appreciate the fact that every year, the legislation says we must do this and that... Over and above the issue of misunderstandings, what I have deduced is that some of the comments that come from our resident, for me (sic), are politically inclined... err, for me, are perception-based (sic)"*

R5: *"At times there are instances where political squabbles negatively affect the IDP process, some parties feeling like they have the power to stop processes..."*

Based on the above sentiments, it can be argued that conflict is an inevitable factor in participation, given that the IDP process in local government is an inherent political affair. This theme confirms some arguments found in the literature, that the participatory approach has value

when practical factors in the participatory process are not ignored, but instead, are embraced as 'enablers' of a realistic participation (see section 2.8 & 3.2.1) that is 'fit for purpose'. From the above insightful treatment of the themes on participation, the following critical reflection on the concept is made with a view of redefining it for the purpose of finding common ground between theory and practice.

5.4.3.3 The role of the municipality's communication office in the IDP process

Granted that each municipality has a communications directorate, it is advantageous to explore the role that this office plays in the institutionalised participation process. As one of the key role-players in the municipality, the communications division is responsible for external communication, media relations and public awareness. Direct interaction or contact with the public can also be regarded as one of the functions of this unit and although chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act does not expressly provide this guideline, it does however, make provision for the municipality to afford local community members a platform to, in some instances make written submissions, and in other cases, come and be assisted by the municipality to transcribe oral submissions. It is therefore reasonable that this can be one of the functions of a unit, within the municipality, that is tasked with employing different communication channels and platforms with communities.

Given this background, most semi-structured interviewees acknowledged the role played by communication in the municipal IDP processes (institutionalised participation) and linked it to the functions of the communication office. Additionally, all they gave was a similar view of how they perceive the communication office's role in the IDP process as demonstrated in the extracts below:

R1: *"The communications office plays a very very important role, uh, firstly in coordinating the entire communications program. so they coordniate it, they make sure that once the program is finalised, er, the media is properly informed, notices are sent to local, and in certain instances, to national media houses... Er, At times we buy advertising space to publise the notices, in many instances where we talk about which type of legislated public participation, then we buy space, uhm, so they would then coordniate that and ensure that local media is on board... uhm, so they have to coordinate it and give regular updates throughout the entire IDP and budget process".*

R3: *"...their role, really is to communicate, you know like I said with the IDP we communicate the process itself before, you know, we even get into the engagement themselves. So communication takes the message to communities, so obviously,*

internally, there would be some admin done and then ultimately, they must ensure that the message reaches the targeted audience in this case which is the the broader community and use the relevant platforms that we know they will reach the targeted audience”.

R5: “...I think their role is to make sure that they coordinate the process plan, they facilitate those type of meetings, they can do it through your local newspapers, they can do it through your local radio stations. Like in Moses Kotane, I once heard, in their local...i think it was in Motswedding FM, actually they advertised their IDP rep forum which was supposed to be on a certain date but do we really do that? I think we are limited, we only advertise in the local newspaper...”

What the above extracts show is that the communication office of the municipality employs a public relations function in its coordination of communication platforms and messages to the public. Media relations seems like an essential aspect of this unit's functions, since there is a legislated expectation for municipalities to use local media to inform the public about upcoming meetings or other salient messages related to the IDP process. In spite of these essential functions, community members are still not satisfied with the way the municipality communicates (see section 5.3.2). Additionally, a conceptual proposition in section 3.3 provides an opportunity for the communication office, beyond its present public relations functions, to adopt a more grassroots and direct communication approach which emphasises on dialogue, direct communication and engagement with citizens with the objective of strengthening relationships between citizens and the municipality (see section 6.6 for a detailed explanation of this proposed role).

5.4.3.4 Excluded role-players: Participation from the periphery and language barriers

One of the observations made by the researcher is that, one of the groups that participated in the focus group discussions was composed of members of a committee formed by community members who reside in an informal settlement in a private piece of land in Ward 31. One interesting discovery made during interaction with this group was that, there is a committee that was set up to liaise with the ward councillor and the municipality on matters such as the provision of services. Their contention, as one of the group members argues, is that they are neglected based on the fact that the area in which they live is not recognised by the municipality as public land.

O: “Speaking about communication with our leaders in ward 31, if there is something important or support that our leaders want, they can come to us but

when they got that which they want, they disappear. For instance, we stay in [name of an informal settlement] and where we reside, you would never see the ward councillor bring any development and when we ask him about this, he then says we reside in private land owned by a white person. Now one question is, why is it that when they campaign they can include us but when the time comes for us to receive help, we are outsiders. This is the problem, mostly when there are meetings, you find that only five people attend and you know it is a meeting because you saw the ward councillor passing by. So maybe he goes there because he knows that he has the support of those people, in actual fact, our ward councillor only serves those people in the RDP section, he doesn't serve the whole of ward 31".

What is ironic, in light of the above sentiment, is that the 2019/2020 IDP review document of Rustenburg Local Municipality, with reference to the eradication of human settlements, emphasises "community engagement...community capacity building...[and] development partnerships" as key guiding pillars of its informal settlement policy. It is also worth noting that the IDP document does not expressly indicate any plans that the municipality has regarding the eradication of informal settlements, specifically those in Marikana, or what are the interim measures, if any, that can be tailored to help community members who seemingly have attempted to request access to basic services. Essentially though, the IDP document (see South Africa, 2019:177) does indicate that as part of its implementation strategy on housing, Rustenburg Local Municipality intends to conduct and "finalize a credible housing sector plan based on...in-depth understanding of informal settlements and evidence on the upgrading approach/programme".

In light of the above sentiment, the researcher observed in terms of the geographic make-up of ward 31 (Marikana), the various informal settlements (such as Nkaneng, Group Five and Brampies) around the area where many residents live in squalid conditions, without electricity and access to basic services such as proper sanitation, decent ablution facilities and water. As the researcher drove around one of the informal settlements following interaction with the focus group discussants, there were some corrugated zinc iron houses destroyed by rough winds as well as destroyed properties of some community members.

Despite the plans the municipality may have to eradicate informal settlements, especially in Marikana, it seems that more and more community members, especially those living in such settlements do not believe in their elected officials. In another focus group discussion (i.e. composed of one elderly man and a group of young men) with members of another informal settlement in ward 31 (i.e. the fifth group), discussants further questioned the intentions that the ward councillor has about developing their area. Thus further contradicting earlier statements by

municipal officials that the ward councillor is responsible for educating community members about the role that they should be playing in IDP meetings:

P: *“There is a lot of corruption, our councillor is very corrupt. He employs his people and his meetings are attended by his people. The municipality should assign someone from the municipal offices to come and address the community, instead of that councillor”.*

Judging by the views expressed in the above extract, community members feel marginalised, and regard the ward councillor as a key role-player with a higher sense of authority in the IDP process. Moreover it would also seem that this issue is the subject of discomfort for them especially because they seem to be in the periphery and that the IDP process does not include them or their needs. Against the foregoing, the two themes, namely, power dynamics and key role-players in the IDP process have provided valuable insights for evaluating the conceptual framework. Additionally, the insights have also provided grounds for revising the theoretical statement on empowerment. This revised theoretical statement is offered in the following section.

5.4.4 Redefining empowerment: A critical reflection

In light of the inputs made by respondents relating to empowerment, what is worth noting is the fact that, unlike what is required in theory, empowerment, when approached from the perspective of institutionalised participation, is nuanced and therefore requires that we look at how it is applied in practice to find common ground between theory and practice. For example, if we are to consider the notion of citizen power and how it is exercised in the practical setting of institutionalised participation, collective action over decision-making can be limited to dialogic spaces provided for community input, but since the IDP process has timeframes, municipal officials can also exercise their power in the parts of the IDP process where local citizens are not present. In this way, empowerment, like with dialogue, can be regarded as a relational concept which is clearly defined against how it is used, meaning the community can still be empowered when municipal officials are acting on their behalf during final decision-making at council level, provided that the actions of the latter are not coercive and manipulative in any way.

Given the foregoing, a somewhat compromise between which stakeholder group has power over the IDP process needs to be struck, to enable the successful rollout of IDP process and project implementation can take place. To be more clear, it is impractical for all role-players to share power over the IDP process because there are instances in the participatory process, where for example, exclusive authority over decision-making is vested on one group of role-players (i.e. municipal officials during multi-stakeholder meetings or those of council) and this does not mean

that the process marginalises the other (i.e. community members). In order for trust to be forged between municipal officials and citizens, the latter group should be afforded some latitude, after all decisions have been made and all projects ratified, to reflect and evaluate if all decisions and ratifications of projects are reflective of their inputs or if specific interests other than theirs, were served. This idea stems from the opportunities in section 3.4.3, where transparent evaluation is proposed as one of the opportunities for enhancing the participatory process. Based on these perspectives, the following revised definition can be offered:

A relational process that is characterised by intersubjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collective power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development they all wish to see in their immediate surroundings. Given that the power of project identification rests with citizens as a result of bottom-up consultation during IDP meetings, municipal officials have the power over decision-making at council level, where the projects are further planned for and ratified without community members making any input. However, to be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect whether the decision-making at council level was reflective of their input, and that the participatory process was not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure.

The above revised definition of empowerment is an attempt to represent a realistic compromise between what is required in theory as well as what is pragmatic in practice. In the next section, the theoretical statement on culture is dealt with, alongside its related emerging themes based on interactions with semi-structured as well as focus group discussants.

5.5 Findings on culture

5.5.1 The theoretical statement on culture as well as an emerging theme: Cherished values, language and cultural sensitivity

In chapter 2 (see 2.4.3), intercultural communication was offered as a theoretical construct to locate culture within the participatory approach and as outlined in section 3.2.4, culture is one of the concepts essential to the participatory approach. It is premised on the idea that any group of people coming together, especially in a community, is culturally diverse based on the fact that they cherish different values, norms, beliefs and attitudes. Against this backdrop, cultural diversity has a bearing on how people interact and use their sociocultural symbolic exchanges during the participatory process. Like with participation, dialogue and empowerment, the following theoretical statement (i.e. context specific definition) of culture was coined in line with how it can be conceived within the context of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, provided below:

Culture can be defined as the collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity,

including indigenous language. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members should guard against any attitude or decision-making process that may erode their sacred norms and standards and the adoption of ideas that are incomprehensible and unfavourable to all.

Noting this conceptual relationship between culture and the participatory approach, at least from a theoretical perspective, all respondents were engaged on how, in practice, culture or even cultural diversity, plays a role in the IDP process and the influence that culture has in the participatory process in line with the perspectives in the literature, especially the culture-centred approach argument postulated by Dutta (2015) (see section 3.2.4). In light of this view, there are two sides of the spectrum within which the semi-structured interview responses can be indexed. On one side, culture is perceived as an enabler of the development and social change process while on the other hand it is perceived as an inhibitor or barrier. For those who see culture as an enabler, their views were centred around the perspective that when defining culture, it is essential to factor in the cultural backgrounds that all role-players have and how they can positively contribute to development and social change within the context of municipal IDP processes. For example, one of the respondents explained that there should be an overhaul of the IDP process and special planning mechanisms because it does not allow community members to freely practice their cultures:

R4: "...when you consider our geography in Africa, our planning must be different so there must be changes of laws. For example if you say this is my stand [i.e. a piece of land that you own], I should be allowed to do everything I want there, obviously you know when we grew up we used to have cattle kraals in our own yards and we also had designated areas for our rituals but now we are no longer doing this and it is coming back to haunt us because we are not providing them [i.e. community members] with areas where they can practice their own cultures in our planning for land use".

Linked to an emerging theme, namely, cherished values, language and cultural sensitivity, the above sentiment implies that cultural practices that are cherished by community members do not find expression during IDP processes and thus, the way in which planning is done should be overhauled so as to allow community members to practice their cultures. In another interview, one of the respondents indicated that in carrying out their duties, they have to espouse some traits of cultural sensitivity:

R2: "...we need to conclude the process knowing that in us trying to extract the information key to the implementation of the IDP, we did not discriminate, disrespect, chastise in any fashion, those people because in less than a year again

we have to go there and the last thing that can compromise the process like IDP is having strained relations between the municipality and the community it services because like I keep saying, if you don't have a constituency there is no need for you to exist so if one community feels that we have disrespected them so much that they see us and consider us to be illegitimate, it's tough..."

In light of the above sentiments, it is evident that there are semi-structured interviewees who believe there is a need to have due regard for the different cultural backgrounds, beliefs and norms cherished by different community members in Marikana (Ward 31). This notion is linked to the understanding that role-players should have some degree of intercultural communication competency as well as some degree of professionalism and due regard for other people's emotions and feelings when involved in all forms of IDP deliberations. On the contrary, there are interviewees who perceive culture as a barrier, based on their views that there are instances where culture can be used as a weapon to exclude some people on the basis of gender; as well as on the basis that the legislation on culture is not recognised or factored in the legislation that guides community participation (in the context of the IDP process). In light of the latter idea, one of the respondents in question expressed a view that theirs is a business of service delivery provision and that culture should not affect them in their work:

R3: "... I think, from what my observation is and what I understand having been in this space so far, the culture should not have effect on the IDP process, I wouldn't have any reason why it should be, yah, and obviously culture comes with dynamics and there could be issues which are negative which are brought about by different cultures of which the IDP's purpose really is not to focus on that... so for me, it shouldn't be cultural issues affecting what the IDP should be".

While with respect to the former perspective around culture, language and gender, one of the two semi-structured interviewees contended that culture can negatively dominate some gender and language roles and this leads to discrimination:

R5: "...I remember we went to Nkaneng and there was an issue of tribalism and then we were unable to communicate with communities there, firstly, because we don't understand their language, they speak Xhosa. They were like "No...No! we don't understand", even if there were those who understand but they had that thing of saying "No, we want somebody who can speak Xhosa". So we had to call somebody from the office of the speaker who can speak or relate to them but because I am a woman, who am I? you know? Who am I to address these elderly people, Xhosa-speaking people, you know? So it's very hard as we. From our side

to say we are still living in a ... I don't know how to say it. People are struggling to come out of their comfort zones, especially people of different cultures..."

Thus, it is concerning that there are misunderstandings and opposing viewpoints among municipal officials when it comes to what the role of culture is, (or may not be) in the IDP process. It should be noted that this kind of misunderstanding between the officials (who are all involved and are central in the implementation of policy as it relates to the IDP process) requires attention so that the municipality can communicate with one voice and officials are in one accord in terms of culture. Another important observation, as outlined by respondent "R3", culture is not factored in the legislative guidelines that prescribes how the IDP process, as well as community participation, should be followed. Therefore, it might as well be that the misunderstandings among the semi-structured interviewees may be as a result of the fact that there is no indication, in policies, on how to approach culture during community participation opportunities.

Language, as a symbolic exchange has a bearing on how communication, in particular dialogue, is applied in the participatory process. In fact, sentiments shared by focus-group interview discussants with respect to the use of language during the IDP process, are insightful. They show how some community members generally feel less regarded during IDP meetings based on the fact that they belong to certain ethnic groups in the community. In light of this, one of the focus group discussants revealed that during IDP meetings not all community members are treated the same and that there seemed to be favouritism along ethnic lines. His view was based on the idea that some community members residing in certain sections of Ward 31 seem prioritised especially when an identification process for IDP projects takes place:

Q: *"What happens in those meetings is that, they tell us that a certain company is coming and they need about 50 people. Community members then complain that you cannot just choose 50 when the whole community is unemployed. Debates emerge and they ask them if they want to pick 50 people, what should happen to the rest? This happened recently when there was a meeting about the pavement project, only group 5 community members were chosen to be part of the project and they are Xhosa speakers."*

What surprised the researcher was the fact that the discussant who made the above comment is of Xhosa origin – which is one of the dominant ethnic groups in the community. An impression that the researcher received based on this remark was that the respondent was being honest, instead of withholding any information that they felt was not right on the basis of ethnic loyalty. Furthermore and judging by the above sentiment, that there were some people who are given preferential treatment based on their cultural background. This point seems to be a source of

great concern among community members judging by how it was frequently raised in several focus group sessions like in focus group 4, which included members who reside in one of the informal settlements in ward 31. When asked about any cultural issues experienced during IDP meetings, two members of this group, with one speaking after the other as a sign of agreement, gave the following responses:

J: "Most of the time, they speak Setswana and when it comes to those who can't hear, you're left like that. If you don't understand the language that is being spoken there, you are left to fend for yourself...[pause]"

L: "Yes, that is why I say they prioritise Setswana-Speaking people (those coming from a Tswana ethnic group), then mostly people who are close to the ward councillor are Setswana speaking, so when you come as Xhosa (those coming from a Xhosa ethnic group) and join the meetings, they don't care about you, they leave you like that. But then when a Motswana comes into the picture after you, they quickly prioritise that person based on their cultural background".

Additionally, the same point was addressed by one of the members in focus group 3 (who was from a Shangaan ethnic group). His contention was the reason why he stopped attending IDP meetings because translation/interpretation was only offered in IsiXhosa (in addition to the Setswana language that is being spoken by municipal officials), thereby making it difficult for anyone who is not of Nguni origin (including IsiZulu & IsiXhosa) or from a Setswana ethnic group (including Sesotho & Sepedi) to comprehensively hear what is being said and make meaningful contribution.

These sentiments are insightful insofar as enhancing the conceptual framework and they also relate with a theme linked to the language-related issues, which is cultural sensitivity. In accordance with this theme, language needs of community members should be accommodated when the institutionalised participation is being implemented and in line with the participatory approach, if indigenous community members feel excluded on the basis of prioritisation of other languages, there is a likelihood that they will not perceive the participatory process as legitimate. By cultural sensitivity, we are looking at the precondition that cultural and lingual differences should be accommodated so that community members can be assured that their inputs are heeded and they can equally contribute to the development and social change process.

In light of the above point made by the discussant, members of the group spent some time debating possible alternatives for how these meetings can be more inclusive. Their debate boiled down to the following two extreme points of discussion that took place:

- Whether to increase the number of meetings that the municipality can hold as a way of allowing community members who could not hear what was discussed in the first meeting to obtain feedback from their neighbours; or,
- Whether to have meetings span for prolonged times in a given day given that the municipality should bring interpreters/translators in all the languages spoken in Marikana, to allow for all people to fully hear what is being discussed and also make meaningful contribution.

Although both are extreme sides of the debate, when viewed individually, they have positive characteristics that may be touted as positive solutions to enhance or maximise community participation. They each have weaknesses that might prove to be self-defeating when considering the nature of the IDP process itself. For example, hosting multiple community IDP meetings might delay the whole IDP program, given the tight schedule of the process (i.e. all logistics should be geared toward ensuring that a Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan is approved by the municipality each financial year). On the other hand, the idea that community meetings take longer so that each item of discussion is interpreted/translated in all languages in Marikana, would discourage people from attending meetings due to other priorities.

The above discussion notes provide sufficient grounds for redefining the theoretical statement on culture given that they flush out the key essential considerations for linking culture to the participatory approach and for pragmatic operationalisation. The revised theoretical statement on culture is provided in the following section.

5.5.2 Redefining culture: A critical reflection

Having explored the sentiments of all respondents in both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the following redefined perspective on culture can be offered:

The collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members of the group constantly have to reflect on whether the processes of negotiation, contribution of ideas and decision-making about local development and social change do not erode these sacred norms and standards.

In sum, the sentiments shared by respondents on the four concepts were insightful and valuable. They also presented an opportunity for the four key concepts that are central to the participatory approach, to be redefined and become more 'fit for purpose' both within the context of municipal IDP processes as well as in theory. In the following section, the findings in relation to the various themes identified in the study, are presented.

5.6 Conclusion

Two research questions were the subject of this chapter's exploration of collected data, namely:

- What are the perceptions of municipal officials regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies they employ during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) within municipal IDP frameworks? (the study's third research question, see section 1.4)
- What are the perceptions of participants in community forums in ward 31 (Marikana) regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations within municipal IDP frameworks? (the present study's fourth research question, see section 1.4)

In light of these two questions above, five broad themes emerged from data analysis and were linked to the four key concepts underpinning participatory communication. As part of the study's data collection and analysis procedure, the themes (listed below) served the purpose of establishing guidelines essential in the revision of a conceptual framework for participatory communication in the facilitation of institutionalised participation during Rustenburg Local Municipality's IDP process:

- Community involvement (i.e. community participation in the IDP process);
- Role-players (that is key individuals who have a role to play in the participatory process);
- The nature of interactions, feedback and inputs (i.e. the role of communication in the participatory process);
- Power dynamics (all issues related to power balance and/or imbalance, control and authority), and lastly;
- Cultural sensitivity, accommodation and cherished values (i.e. how cultural diversity affect the participatory IDP process).

With respect to the present study's third research question, which entails exploring perceptions held by municipal officials regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies they employ during public consultations (see section 1.4), the following findings were made:

Perhaps one of the most significant findings is that municipal officials interpret participation from a one-sided angle (i.e. from the perspective of the community members) thereby confining their understanding of the process as community participation. This kind of understanding might be drawn from chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (see South Africa, 2000)- which guides how community participation should be followed and does not specify how municipal officials should participate in the process.

Additionally, interaction with the semi-structure interviewees further revealed the following three factors about purpose and goal of participation. Firstly, it emerged that participation should guide the process that is aimed at providing the community with capacity-building opportunities, secondly, the semi-structured interviewees believe that it should be about purely generating ideas from community members and translating them into development projects, and lastly, it was revealed that the goal of participation should not be about satisfying business interests over genuine needs of the community.

Seemingly, based on the submissions by semi-structured interviewees (i.e. municipal officials), there is a sense that community participation is facilitated with the objective of fulfilling legislative requirements. Contrary to sentiments expressed by some of the respondents when saying that they do not implement the community participation process only “to tick boxes”, evidence suggests that since they are fully aware of the repercussions they will face in the event that legislative requirements are not met, they believe that they are compelled to ensure that they follow due processes set out in the legislation.

It also emerged that municipal officials, given their one-sided interpretation of participation, regard the involvement of community members in the IDP process as being to give their wish-lists concerning desired development projects in their areas. Their interpretation is flawed because limiting people to make “wish-lists” does not guarantee them a right over decision-making, instead, you are only fulfilling a legislative mandate so that you are perceived to be doing the simplest minimum in accordance with the law.

It emerged in one of the semi-structured interviews that the facilitation of conflict should be regarded as one of the goals that all dialogic situations, within the context of the IDP process, should seek to achieve. This is because of the highly contentious and political nature of public participation in municipal IDP processes. In addition, traces of manipulation and coercion were identified when one of the semi-structured interviewees questioned what seemed to be a focus, by the municipality, on big infrastructure projects in IDP (e.g. clinics, stadiums, recreational halls), suggesting that local citizens are influenced into prioritising such projects instead of other social issues, such as for example, support programs for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Another sentiment that emerged from the semi-structured interviewees was that the theoretical statement on dialogue is idealistic, unrealistic and cannot effectively materialise in practice. To this effect, motives and intentions of municipal officials were being questioned, which implies that they espouse “antidialogic action” in their interaction with community members (i.e. being manipulative and coercive), in line with the Freire’s (1970:167) dialogic praxis theory (see section 2.4.2).

Perhaps one of the most pertinent findings concerning empowerment is that a common interpretation on the concept that is shared by semi-structured interviewees is approached from a top-down perspective. The implication here is that they perceive themselves as having the controlling power over the participation of citizens in the IDP process. even though the semi-structured interviewees support the theoretical statement read out to them (on empowerment), it cannot be ignored that theirs is rather a modernist view of empowerment, where a specific group has power over the involvement of another in the development process.

Arguably, it is contradictory for the semi-structured interviewees to say that they support a theoretical statement read out to them, while they seem to have interpreted empowerment from a perspective that is opposed in the statement (i.e. the theoretical statement emphasises the participatory communication approach, which is in opposition to modernisation).

Another important finding was that there are circumstances in which municipal officials can independently and unilaterally decide on development projects and aid for a particular area without needing community participation, just as long as they can justify it. The idea that they are empowered (even if it is in some exceptional circumstances) to independently plan for community members without their involvement, signifies the amount of power and authority that the municipal officials have over the development process, which may imply loopholes in the policies that guide community participation and the participation of municipal officials in the IDP process.

In addition, Municipal officials (the interviewees) seemed to be astute when it comes to fulfilling legislative requirements for community participation, as prescribed in the Municipal Systems Act (see South Africa, 2000). Therefore, it can be argued that if such policy loopholes are addressed, where, for example empowerment is reinterpreted to include collective power as part of the prescription on how to allow community participation; and, the participation of municipal officials in the process is clearly defined, it is possible that they may follow the legislative guidelines especially given consequences that they may suffer in the event that such guidelines are not followed.

Culture is arguably the most contentious of the four concepts on the participatory approach, when viewed within the context of municipal IDP processes. Semi-structured interviewees were divided in their interpretation on the role (or lack thereof) of culture in the IDP process. While some respondents believe that cultural predispositions of community members should be allowed space in the IDP process, there were those who were not convinced that this should be the case. Additionally, language, as a form of symbolic exchange, plays a vital role in facilitating the participation of community members especially in a culturally diverse society. To this end, cultural sensitivity in the form of accommodation of cultural difference in the community should be applied, especially by municipal officials given their authority as custodians of the participatory process. This can be applied by taking stock of different language needs in the community and allowing them to reach consensus on which languages are mostly accommodative to all, thereby leading feelings of empowerment amongst community members knowing they will be able to communicate their needs, interests and concerns in a preferred language that enables them to contribute solutions for local development issues and challenges.

Moreover, two extreme positions on both sides of the debate were also recorded with one semi-structured interviewee indicating that modern ways of approaching the IDP process should be overhauled and allow local citizens to be allocated, for instance, geographic locations that enable them to engage their cultural practices without fear of victimisation or humiliation. On the other hand, another semi-structured interviewee said there is no legislation that supports the inclusion of any cultural considerations when they carry out their responsibilities as far as community participation is concerned, and as a result culture should not play any role in the processes.

The latter extreme point of the debate exposes what may, perhaps, be a loophole in terms of policy. It is therefore arguable that these kind of opposing perspectives on culture can be alleviated if policy directions are given and the matter is settled once and for all, for municipal officials who are supposed to have clear direction when facilitating an IDP process with community members.

With respect to the present study's fourth and final research question (see section 1.4) which entails establishing the preceptions of community members regarding community participation as well as platforms and/or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality in Wards 31 (Marikana) during public consultations within municipal IDP frameworks; the following findings were made:

A general sense of apathy among community members with respect to attending community meetings was observed when most focus group discussants, especially the youth, maintained

that the reason why they do not attend such meetings is the lack of confidence and trust in municipal officials, in particular the ward councillor.

The main role-players central to the IDP process, namely, community members (including those living in informal settlements), municipal officials (including the ward councillor), the municipality's communication unit (in particular the manager), all have an equal role to play in the institutionalised participation process related to municipal IDP.

The power imbalances that exist in municipal IDP processes, where municipal officials have some authority as organisers and custodians of the process, are necessary given that their role seeks to facilitate "invited spaces" where community members will come and express their concerns, views and interests. Subsequent to this facilitation of community needs, there is a need for municipal officials, whose roles are clearly recognised in South Africa's legislative framework that guides integrated development planning, to act on behalf of local citizens and represent their interests in a further planning processes and budget proposals that will be made to various government and private entities whose function is to fund community development projects. In this instance, the actions by municipal officials as custodians of the participatory process, which aimed at representing community interests should not be conceived as disempowering to the citizens.

On the side of the focus-group interview discussants, there were sentiments that certain cultures are given preferential treatment while others are overlooked, especially during IDP meetings. Language was also seen as a barrier that, unfortunately discourages the participation of minority ethnic groups in Marikana from attending IDP meetings.

In light of the above findings, implications for the framework on participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes with respect to participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture as follows:

- Inasmuch as participation can be viewed as an end-in-itself, in line with what is required in theory, the real-world context within which the participatory communication framework will be applied requires that there should be instances where municipal officials are able to adopt participation-as-a-means approach. This finding is founded on the notion that the officials are tasked with the role of planning for the participatory process involving community members and they are empowered by law to take inputs made during these public community consultations and after seeking agreements with various government and private institutions, develop an IDP and Budget plan which will be ratified at council level.

- Notwithstanding the above viewpoint, and in line with an opportunity for participation advocated for in section 3.4, there is a need to add another community participation meeting process which will help in facilitating the participation-as-an-end approach. The purpose of this process is to help address issues such as a lack of feedback on past development project failures and pressing community issues that need immediate attention, etc. In view of this point, this kind of participation should be guided by egalitarianism where community members are not restricted or curtailed to prioritise any development projects over others. Through this plurality of the IDP process, the framework can pragmatically position participation as a continuous process that represents a compromise between what is required in theory as well as what is realistic in practice. In the process, it is hoped that through this plurality, municipal officials who are custodians of the IDP process can use the platforms to provide capacity-building opportunities for community members, especially as it relates to understanding the functions of integrated development planning, as well as the role played by all who are involved in the participatory process, including themselves, municipal officials as well as any other interest groups. In light of the general sense of apathy among community members as well as the lack of youth participation in IDP processes, these views on participation can help build trust and rapport between municipal officials and community members.
- Conflict is an unavoidable eventuality and through dialogue, which would be viewed as genuine discourse, role-players involved in the participatory process can have the ability to raise opinions, negotiate and debate opposing views and express concerns without any fear of repression. In this way, dialogue can help lead to the attainment of compromises and agreements when different people gather to forge a local development agenda, which in most instances cannot come about without contestation of ideas and disagreements.
- Through the inclusion of an additional meeting process as a way of enhancing participation, dialogue should guide the nature of communication between municipal officials, ward councillors and community members during all the participatory processes.
- There are two nuanced ways within which empowerment can be construed as part of the participatory approach in municipal IDP processes. In the first instance, empowerment can be conceived as a top-down skills transfer process where community members are provided with knowledge on how government information flows as well as all processes involved in integrated development planning. This kind of interpretation seeks to satisfy the concerned from both sides (semi-structured interviewees, municipal officials and focus group discussants - community members) about citizens not understanding how government procedures work and what their role in the IDP process is. On the other hand, empowerment can be conceived as a process where communicative spaces are widened for the sake of affording marginal

role-players an opportunity to raise their voice about the kind of development and social change they wish to see taking shape in their immediate communities.

The above findings were insightful and led to the revision of the four theoretical statements coined for participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture, based on their practical operationalisation if we are to conceive a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator for institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes (see sections 5.2.4, 5.3.3, 5.4.4, 5.5.2). In light of the key findings made in the present chapter, these redefined theoretical statements are revisited in the next chapter, where the process of redefining and revising the framework for participatory communication is outlined and conclusions as well as recommendations made by the study are offered.

CHAPTER 6: ON THE PRAGMATICS OF A FRAMEWORK FOR PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION AS A FACILITATOR OF INSTITUTIONALISED PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL IDP PROCESSES

6.1 Introduction

The present study proposes a framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes with Ward 31 (i.e. Marikana) of Rustenburg Local Municipality as its chosen context. It is informed by a review of studies that have found challenges related to the lack of communication, poor feedback facilitation and reports of passive participation of communities in integrated development planning processes across various municipalities in South Africa (see section 1.1 & 1.2).

Given that the participatory approach requires theoretical and conceptual reconfiguration, as informed by a critical review of the literature, the exploration of research trends (see section 2.4) as well as the summary of critical studies that have identified concerning elements of normativity and utopia on the approach, led to the process of theoretically anchoring the approach in three broad theoretical predilections, namely, communicative action, dialogical praxis and intercultural communication (see sections 1.3 & 2.4). This process was aimed at identifying conceptual difficulties and the need to reconceptualise key concepts inherent in the participatory approach: participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture. This process further led to the formulation of a theory-based conceptual framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes (see section 3.4). Findings from semi-structured interviews with five municipal officials and focus-group interview discussions with 46 community members gave insight on how institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes is conceived, with a particular focus on the role of community members in all communicative processes involved. In this concluding chapter, an overarching summary is provided with a view of addressing the main research question underpinning the present study as outlined in chapter 1 (see section 1.3):

- **What are the principles of participatory communication suitable for a framework that can facilitate institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes aimed at creating ‘meaning’ and ‘active’ participation in ward 31 (Marikana) in Rustenburg Local Municipality?**

Structurally, the present chapter aims to answer the general research question by means of a narrative reflection (i.e. expositions), each narrative relating to each of the four specific research questions underpinning the present study. Additionally, and as the main answer to the study's general research question, the present chapter provides a revised framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes (i.e. A Pragmatic framework). This revised framework, is pragmatic in a sense that it is rooted in theory yet realistic in a sense that it has practical operationalisation and relevance as a result of its underlying concepts (i.e. participation, dialogue, culture and empowerment) being revised following a critical interrogation of the literature versus what is achievable in practice.

6.2 The theoretical foundations of participatory communication with the focus on Jürgen Habermas's communicative action, Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis, and intercultural communication in relation to the creation meaningful and active participation in local government in South Africa

In this section, the study's first research question is restated with the intention of providing a general summary of how it was answered by the study, namely:

What, according to literature, are the theoretical foundations of participatory communication with the focus on Jürgen Habermas's communicative action, Paulo Freire's dialogical praxis, and culture in relation to the creation of meaningful and active participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa?

Given that participatory communication is commonly criticised for being, among other things, normative or utopian and for lacking practical (and real-life) operationalisation, the present study responded to this criticism by recasting the participatory approach within three theoretical lines of critique, namely communicative action, dialogical praxis and intercultural communication. This was to ensure that the participatory approach has sufficient theoretical rigour that can be applied in the chosen real-life context for further evaluation of practical applicability. Moreover, recasting the participatory approach with the three theoretical lines of critiques helped identify key common traits that the participatory approach shares with the theories.

- **With Communicative Action Theory**

When approached from the perspective of communicative action theory, one of the hallmarks of participatory communication is that it is an approach that is rooted in strengthening the participatory process of local citizens by focusing on the creation of speech act situations that are evaluated and thoroughly inspected to ensure intersubjectivity and to guard against any impression of manipulative or coercive behaviour among interlocutors. As outlined in section 2.5.1, the foregoing implies that spaces should be created, during IDP meetings between

municipal officials and local citizens (including locally elected politicians), for all participants to be afforded the opportunity to reflect on whether each submission (by any interlocutor in their deliberation about IDP projects) is:

- (i) Truthful (i.e. does each individual's utterances during IDP meetings about a project contain a true reflection of the factual *status quo*? Or are they indicative of any mischief?).
- (ii) Sincere and truthful (i.e. is each individual honest with their intentions, are they truthful, and can what they say be backed up by supporting facts?)
- (iii) Normatively right (i.e. is there a fair process being followed in a public IDP meeting and are all facts presented without any display of selfishness, coercion, manipulation or ill-intention?)
- (iv) Compressible (i.e. are the statements of each individual in a public meeting sense making? And can we, as a collective, sensibly agree with what is being charted as a way-forward in terms of project implementation and decision-making?)

What stands out from the above submission is that from the lens of a communicative action approach, a framework for participatory communication can help in reimagining the IDP process by introducing steps in the process, where reflection in the form of a validity claims analysis is applied by role-players to help in fostering trust as well as rapport between municipal officials and local citizens.

- **With Freire's Dialogical Praxis**

When approached from the perceptive of Freire's dialogical praxis approach, participatory communication has a transformative potential of facilitating an environment where citizens and municipal officials can be involved in on-going dialogue as genuine discourses- which is rooted in mutual tolerance and the need to have multiple opportunities for interaction for the purpose of also enhancing feedback facilitation. Linked to the idea of praxis, this kind of on-going dialogue can also be empowering for marginalised role-players because they can be afforded the space to contribute ideas towards a local development agenda, thus creating an opportunity for them to use collective power to change the world in which they live (see section 2.5.2 & 3.2.2).

- **With Intercultural Communication**

When approached from the perspective of intercultural communication, participatory communication shares the fundamental belief that communities do not always share the same cultural belief systems or norms and in those instances of multiplicity, it is the responsibility of all

role-players to ensure that the cherished values, norms and standards held by others are not trampled upon and are thus accommodated through the application of cultural sensitivity. At the heart of these fundamental traits that the participatory approach shares with the theoretical leanings lies the four key concepts that are contextually defined according to their place and purpose in any practical setting, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture.

As explained in sections 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5, the benefit of aligning participatory communication within the present study's chosen context lies in its positionality as a widely desired approach or paradigm of the field of development communication or communication for development and social change as opposed to its predecessor, the dominant paradigm. This is because the focus of participatory communication is on fostering the active involvement of local citizens in communicative spaces aimed at fostering negotiations with other role-players, leading to the attainment of consensus and key decision-making about locally and collectively desired development and social change. In this way, agency (i.e. from the bottom-up), collective action, empowerment and active participation become key takeaways of any participatory process when conceived in light of participatory communication. These line of thought are placing emphasis on participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture.

6.3 Theoretical issues that participatory communication has in relation to its applicability for the facilitation of meaningful and active participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa.

In this section, second research question, will be answered:

What theoretical complications does participatory communication have in relation to its applicability for the facilitation of meaningful and active participation in South African municipal IDP processes?

As outlined in section 2.5, the present study consulted literature to glean key concepts used to redefine participatory communication fittingly for purposes when conceptualised as a facilitator of institutionalised participation within the context of municipal integrated development planning. However participatory communication, as correctly highlighted in critical literature, is not without conceptual problems or difficulties of its own (see sections 1.5.3, 2.2.3, & 2.3). By extracting core definitional propositions (i.e. theoretical statements) of the four concepts gleaned from the literature (i.e. participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture) in relation to the three theories (i.e. communicative action, dialogical praxis and intercultural communication), ground was prepared for a contextual redefinition of participatory communication to address its conceptual difficulties fittingly for application in the study's chosen empirical setting (see sections 3.2. to 3.4).

In response to the specific research question linked to chapter 3 (see section 1.4 & 3.1), focus was placed on contextually redefining the four concepts to align them with how participatory communication should be defined in accordance with institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. The theoretical statements (see sections 3.2 to 3.5) were used to conceptualise the practical setting of a theory-based framework that was developed to conceive how participatory communication can be conceived in the study's chosen context. The theoretical statements are listed below:

- **For Participation**

Participation can be defined as an inclusive and social process which involves people, irrespective of their social status or power, who are afforded the space to interact and outline problems affecting them, and contribute ideas leading to decisions on how they can be addressed.

The above revised theoretical statement on participation is equally grounded in theory. It augers well with the notion of egalitarianism, underpinned by the demand of horizontal two-way flow of communication- which is genuine and sincere and is aimed at achieving sustainable development and change that will benefit those involved in the process. It can be indexed alongside concepts such as participatory governance, right-based and participatory democracy, dialogue, as well as empowerment (c.f. Melkote & Steeves, 2015a; Mwakisya, Cyprian & Rugeiyamu, 2020; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2020).

- **For Dialogue**

Dialogue can be defined as an intersubjective process, characterised by mutual tolerance and respect, whose members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) are first prepared to listen to one another and accommodate all views, even those that are 'subaltern' to allow for negotiation and the joint contribution of ideas so that consensus about solutions related to development problems is reached. Through dialogue, all interactions should be aimed at affording interlocutors to contribute ideas aimed at achieving praxis (i.e. transformation, development and social change).

- **For Empowerment**

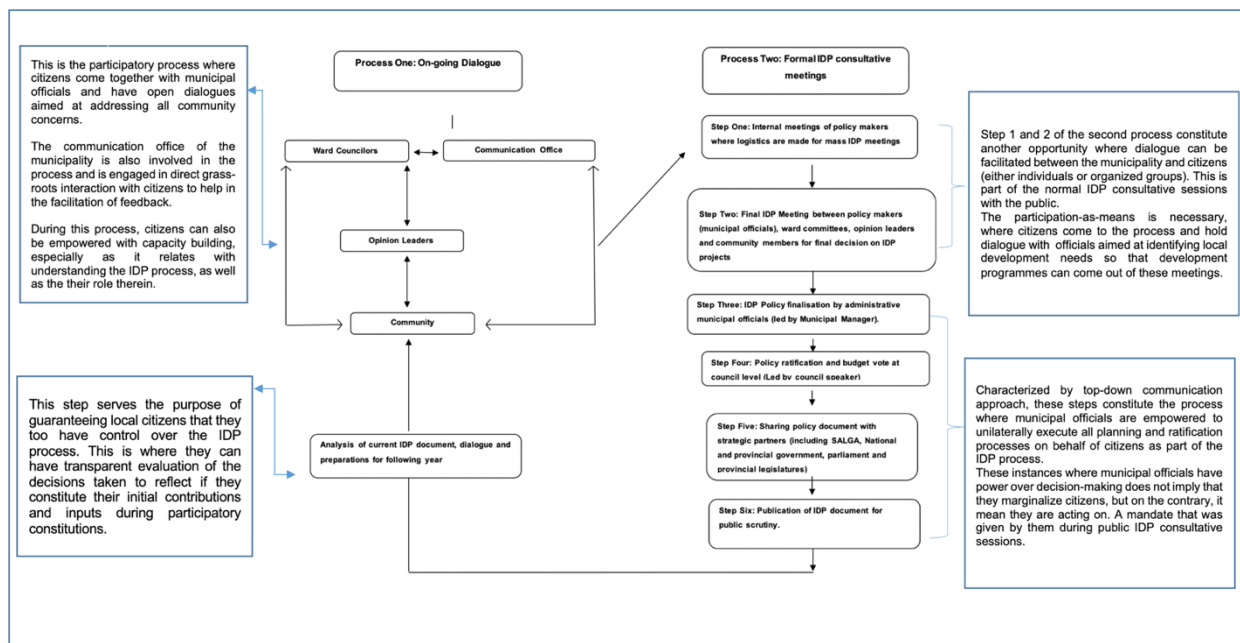
Empowerment is a relational process characterised by inter-subjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collective power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development, they wish to see in their immediate surroundings. To be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect on whether the participatory process is not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure. Any development projects undertaken without following this process, do not reflect the ideas contributed and decisions made during this process should be regarded as illegitimate.

- **For Culture**

Culture can be defined as the collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity, including indigenous language. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members should guard against any attitude or decision-making process that may erode their sacred norms and standards and the adoption of ideas that are incomprehensible and unfavourable to all.

The above theoretical statement around culture is linked to the idea of diversity, multiplicity as well as a culture-centered approach. These are some of the central themes in development communication scholarship and research (cf. Dutta, 2011), especially when looking who the beneficiaries of development efforts are and what kind of knowledge do they bring. This is essential in that it provides the conditions for accommodating unconventional knowledge-sharing and ownership of development projects.

Following the arguments in Chapter 2 and 3, a conceptual framework was offered based on the author's interpretation of how participatory communication, informed by how its key concepts are understood from the literature, can be implemented in a framework for facilitating institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes, as presented below (see section 3.4):



The above-mentioned conceptual framework was empirically evaluated in order to find pragmatic middle ground between theory and practice. This was part of a process aimed at exploring how participatory communication can feature in IDP processes of a local municipal council in South Africa. The conceptual model is different from other models in communication for social change

literature in that it is context-specific and it focuses on the participation of local citizens in municipal ID processes in South Africa (see section 3.5).

Consequently, following inputs from the empirical evaluation process (i.e. data collection), the framework was revised as demonstrated in section 6.6 below.

6.4 Perceptions of municipal officials on the kind of communication process that Rustenburg Local Municipality applies in ward 31 (Marikana), which links community consultations and policy implementation.

The third research question sought to determine the perceptions of municipal officials regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies they employed during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) within municipal IDP frameworks (see section 1.4). This question was answered by means of semi-structured interviews with five municipal officials who are directly involved in the Rustenburg Local Municipality's IDP process.

Perceptions of municipal officials about platforms that they apply in the study's chosen context which link community consultations and policy implementation were indexed according to key concepts underpinned in participatory communication, namely, participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture (see sections 5.2 to 5.5). This was so that they can be easily located based on their conceptual association, thus can be summarised in the following points:

- **Participation:** Perhaps as one of the study's interesting findings, it emerged during semi-structured interviews that officials perceive participation as referring to meetings that involve community members where discussions around integrated development planning are held, as in "community participation". In this way, municipal officials fail to account for the role that they play in the process and only, in a "guardianship" way, focus on describing the participation from the perspective of one group of role-players- who seemingly are inferior in the process and are its beneficiaries (see section 5.6.1).
- **Dialogue:** While some municipal officials understood dialogue as something that can be done, others perceived it as a process understood as top-down information transfer. There was one instance where a municipal official argued that dialogue is non-existent and is effectively replaced by self-serving tactics by other officials who ensure that all discussions with community members lead to them choosing development projects that serve specific interests. Deductively, manipulation and coercion are implied as being adopted by municipal officials and this can mean that the espouse 'anti-dialogical action' where municipal officials seem to influence the community into prioritising infrastructure-related projects when putting forward their "wish-lists" as part of the integrated development planning process. Furthermore,

it was observed that when it comes to communication platforms used for interaction with communities, municipal officials rely on a media-centric approach that is unidirectional and modernist in nature (see section 5.3.2 & 5.6). This observation stemmed from the insights that through the use of community newspapers, community radio, social media (Facebook, in particular) and placards, municipal officials believed that they are able to put their messages across to community members, especially those messages that are about inviting community members to public IDP meetings. Lastly, it was also observed that semi-structured interviewees have conflicting views regarding how dialogue should be used to facilitate all interactions with community members as part of the IDP process. On one hand, sentiments of a lack of dialogue as genuine discourse were ventilated by some, while on the other hand, other semi-structured interviewees believed that their media-centric approach towards directing messages to community members as well as the communicative spaces where community members are merely restricted to put forward “wish-lists” across to municipal officials, were sufficient indicators of dialogue (see section 5.3.2 & 5.6).

- **Empowerment:** Municipal officials, as role-players in the IDP process, regard themselves as having the controlling power over the community participation process, where they invite community members to come suggest their wish-lists so that they can exclusively and unilaterally plan and decide on development interventions they deem appropriate for community members in a given period. Deductively, this ‘guardianship’ perception by municipal officials suggests that municipal officials do not view themselves as being on equal footing with citizens, thus indicating a power imbalance between them. The implication is that collective power and authority over decision-making cannot be applied. Additionally, it was discovered that this indirect interpretation that municipal officials have about their role in the participatory process stems from the belief that they are embarking on the process to fulfil legislative imperatives, thereby instituting participation as a means to achieve desired ends (see section 5.6.3).
- **Culture:** Municipal officials had differing viewpoints / perceptions regarding culture, on one hand, some believed that culture plays an important role in facilitating interactions and engagements between citizens and officials, and as such, cultural sensitivity should be applied to the extent that integrated development planning should be amenable to, accommodative of, the cherished cultural values held by the diverse community. However, on the other hand, other municipal officials raised a perspective that culture should not have any role in the IDP process, especially given that the legislative framework that guides integrated development planning does not even provide for the accommodation of culture and its associated customs (see section 5.6.4).

- In sum, since the present study was not conducted with the sole purpose of evaluating whether municipal officials are doing right, or wrong, in their facilitation of institutionalised participation, key observations and findings recorded with respect to their perceptions on the theoretical statements are critical in helping to reinforce the conceptual framework so that a pragmatic, middle ground can be found as it would be practically operationalisation but at the same time, rooted in theory. In summary, the officials' perceptions regarding the theoretical statements include revising participation to include a section that it is described, also, as a means-to-an-end. Specifically, they argued that participation should be described as a process whose aim is, also, to achieve legislative requirements as well as the objects of local government. Additionally, a contribution was made that when describing participation, due regard should be given to the fact that its goal should be to also provide knowledge-sharing opportunities for community members, where they will be skilled in understanding government processes and ways of doing things as well as what their role in the IDP process entails. Moreover, municipal officials were of the view that participation should be a continuous process, especially because by law, they are required to hold community IDP meetings on an annual basis until their 5-year term in the municipality expires.

With respect to the theoretical statement on culture the municipal officials gave two extreme positions, on the one hand, some officials agreed with the statement and argued that it should be considered during the IDP process and their planning (including special planning programmes such as housing and development of township establishments) should be accommodative of traditional ways of life that African indigenous community members cherish and would like to freely practice. On the other hand, some indicated that culture shouldn't have any bearing at all in the IDP process since their role is in fulfilling the legislative requirements of facilitating community participation.

With respect to dialogue, an important contribution from municipal officials was that it should be described as a process whose purpose is to facilitate conflict- which is an unavoidable during IDP meetings where different people make differing contributions and may contest for what they think is in their best interest when it comes to defining a local development agenda. In addition, it also emerged that for some officials, dialogue should be a mutually inclusive process between them and citizens in such a way that they can help in influencing community member to prioritise certain development initiatives if they deem them to be in the interest of the community.

Regarding empowerment, municipal officials agreed with the theoretical statement and further pointed out that by holding IDP meetings, they are empowering local citizens by facilitating their voice- which otherwise wouldn't be heard if such invited spaces are not created and by

educating them in understanding their role in the IDP process as well in understanding how government works, they actually would be empowering community members to make better input in defining a local development and social change agenda. In sum, it could be concluded that a perception held by municipal officials, generally speaking, is that the kind communication process they follow during IDP meetings should be geared towards fulfilling legislative requirements regarding community participation. Thus suggesting that, for them, participation-as-a-means to achieving desired ends is realistic and necessary to ensure that the IDP process achieves said objectives. Having established the perceptions held by municipal officials, let us now turn to the views held by community members in the following section.

6.5 Perceptions of participants in community forums regarding platforms or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) within municipal IDP frameworks

The study's fourth research question is offered below and is followed by a concluding summary of how it was answered:

What are the perceptions of participants in community forums in ward 31 (Marikana) regarding the community participation process as well as platforms and/or policies employed by Rustenburg Local Municipality during public consultations within municipal IDP frameworks?

Perceptions of community members on the platforms used by the municipality during the public consultations, were also indexed according to the key concepts so as to easily locate them and their relationship with themes that emerged (see sections 5.2. to 5.5).

- **On participation:** while in some cases some focus-group interview discussants displayed a limited understanding of the participatory process and their role therein, others showed a sense of apathy towards participating in IDP engagement sessions given their perception that municipal officials, in particular the ward councillor dominate the meetings and does not provide a fair platform for community members to raise their concerns. Additionally, those who express their disinterest in attending and participating in IDP forums, in particular young people, reasoned that the meetings are chaotic and disruptive due to fierce contestation over who should benefit from development projects, hence their deliberate resolution of not attending meetings and their general sense of apathy. Additionally, community members from informal settlements lamented that they are peripheral and are the forgotten ones, given that their voice is not heard as a result of them not residing in formally recognised municipal land (i.e. a township establishment).

- **On Dialogue:** Based on the views expressed by community members regarding the way in which municipal officials communicate with them during the IDP process, it would generally seem that dialogue for them is a two-way process through which they can be given a space to raise their concerns and be heard. The general sense of apathy that community members have, including the youth, with respect to attending IDP meetings suggests that they are unhappy with the unidirectional method of communication (i.e. top-down) applied by municipal officials- which signifies that dialogue as a genuine discourse among equal partners does not take place. In addition, there was a general sense of discontent among focus group discussants with regards to the kinds of platforms used by the municipality to communicate with them further shows that they would want municipal officials to opt for communication methods that are dialogic in nature- where they can be treated as equal subject in the communication process. For example, some discussants raised concerns with the use of placards and public notices which serve as invites to IDP meetings, stating that they are not published timeously and thus, not all community members are able to attend the meetings as they often discover later that they were supposed to attend a public meeting aimed at discussing integrated development planning. It was rather odd that community members only mentioned word of mouth as well as the use of placards as the communication platforms used by municipal officials in relation to the IDP process. At all focus group discussions, there was no mention of other media platforms that municipal officials said they use to reach communities, namely, community mass media (radio and newspapers) as well as social media.
- **On Empowerment:** Linked to discoveries made in relation to participation, there is a general sense of inferiority among community members, who perceive municipal officials, including ward councillors as having a dominant role (i.e. having more power) over decision-making in the IDP process. This was in particular, a sentiment expressed by discussants who live in one of the informal settlements, who lamented the fact that they are marginalised since they do not play any role in the IDP process and that municipal officials consider their views or inputs during election season where empty promises are made about improving the quality of their lives. Additionally, some community members indicated that they do not understand what their role in the IDP process is, thus confirming the stance by some semi-structured interviewees that there is a need to conduct capacity-building programmes for community members to have an advanced knowledge-base of what the IDP process entails including sound knowledge of government processes and systems as well as what it means to participate in IDP community consultations.

- **On Culture:** Although there was not much said by community members on culture and its influence on the community participation process, as a general sentiment during focus-group discussions, community members were concerned about the lack of accommodation of multiple ethnic groups and the subsequent prioritisation of specific ones during community participation processes. According to the community members, language is used as a symbol of excluding others, thus leading to a lack of active involvement of the excluded members of society in IDP deliberations. Given that language is part of culture and it is a symbolic sociocultural exchange feature, it was understandable that the concerns raised by these community members since accommodation in the form of the adoption of socio-cultural and intercultural behaviour, are essential focal points when looking at the nature of participation involving a multicultural society.
- With respect to culture, and language in particular, one striking contribution that was made in one of the focus group discussions, that involves mostly young people, was that the municipality should embark in a process of gathering young people of different culture, provide them with training on the IDP process, the role of the community and then send them into the community so that they can become IDP ambassadors who will share the skill with their immediate families and in their neighbourhoods. This was a suggested solution that might address the problems of a lack of youth participation, the general sense of apathy in attending IDP meetings in the community as well as the problem of community members not understanding what the IDP process is and how they should play a role therein. Conclusively, community members generally perceive the platforms employed by the municipality during public consultations in ward 31 (Marikana) as non-inclusive and generally non-participatory. A general sense of apathy from the community members regarding attending IDP meetings is one of the indications that they perceived themselves as being marginalised in a process where municipal officials are domineering and have the final say in all deliberations.

The above insights from community members are equally critical in helping to shape the process of revising the conceptual framework presented in chapter 3 (see section 3.5, 6.2.1 & 6.3).

6.6 Towards a contextual definition for Participatory Communication within the context of institutionalised Participation in Municipal IDP processes

Before a contextual theoretical statement for participatory communication is offered, the four concepts underpinning the study were theoretically redefined based on the real-life experiences of research respondents who are involved in the Rustenburg Local Municipality's IDP process in Ward 31 (Marikana) during the data collection in chapter 5 (see sections 5.2.4, 5.3.3, 5.4.4 and 5.5.2). The theoretical statements were revised as a result of a need to find realistic and pragmatic

middle-ground between, how they are interpreted in theory and how they are applicable in practice. The revised theoretical statements are as follows:

- **On Participation:**

“A social process that is continuous and intersubjective, characterised by the establishment of platforms (i.e. invited spaces) where open negotiation and all-inclusive dialogue among equal subjects, are facilitated by universally agreed-upon language choice with the aim of reaching consensus regarding solutions about common development problems. Active and meaningful participation can only be achieved if all who are involved in the process are given the space to reflect on validity claims of truthfulness or fairness, sincerity, social acceptability, and comprehensibility of one another’s utterances so as to avoid perceptions manipulation and coercion of any individual and build rapport for long-term development and social change” (see section 5.2.4).

- **On Dialogue:**

“A communicative and interactive process, whose goal is to facilitate conflict, foster mutual tolerance and respect where members (i.e. local citizens and municipal officials) listen to one another, accommodate each other’s views as equal subjects, allow for negotiation and joint contribution of ideas with a view of achieving effective, meaning and active participation of all parties involved, with a view of achieving praxis (i.e. transformation of the world through the word), development and social change) over a sustained period of time” (see section 5.3.3).

- **On Empowerment:**

“A relational process that is characterised by intersubjectivity and mutual empathy, where local citizens use collective power over decision-making as well as equal latitude to contribute ideas about the change and development they all wish to see in their immediate surroundings. Given that the power of project identification rests with citizens as a result of bottom-up consultation during IDP meetings, municipal officials have the power over decision-making at council level, where the projects are further planned for and ratified without community members making any input. However, to be truly empowered, citizens should be afforded the space to reflect whether the decision-making at council level was reflective of their input, and that the participatory process was not coercive or manipulative through a validity claims analysis procedure” (see section 5.4.4).

- **On Culture:**

“The collective set of agreed-upon norms and standards that can be embraced and relied upon by a group of people as part of their identity. During interaction with others in a larger group (i.e. meetings between local citizens and municipal officials), members of the group constantly have to reflect on whether the processes of negotiation, contribution of ideas and decision-making about local development and social change do not erode these sacred norms and standards” (see section 5.5.2).

With respect to how the above theoretical statements can be practically operationalised, the steps followed in the IDP process offered in section 3.4 were revised and re-imagined as outlined in the following subsection.

6.6.1 Re-imagined steps in the IDP process and practical operationalisation of the four concepts underpinning participatory communication

Following the data analysis process in chapter 5, the initial six factors that the conceptual model was hinged upon, have been collapsed into the four concepts (i.e. participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture) underpinning the participatory approach based on their similarities. The initial factors were: role-players, the plurality of (public) participation, transparent evaluation of the participatory process, the role of the municipal communication office, the nature of participation, dialogue and empowerment, and culture. Discussed in the sections below, the revised framework is reflective of the four concepts and it comprises of a series of steps within which the concepts can find expression.

6.7 Theoretical concepts underpinning the revised framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.

6.7.1 Participation

Featuring in the framework on figure 6-1, it is necessary to increase opportunities for citizen engagement and dialogue in an on-going basis, thereby achieving the theoretical or normative requirement of participation-as-end; while at the same time, outcomes of the discussions during these increased opportunities for participation should be used as the subject of internal meetings process at municipal level for the finalisation and ratification of the IDP and budget plans in line with relevant legislative requirements (i.e. in line with the participation-as-a-means approach).

It is at these subsequent (internal) meetings, that the community can be passive participators, but their role is to observe if their inputs are reflected in the deliberations, finalisation and ratification of the IDP and budget documents. What is essential to the revised framework is the opportunity for the public to participate in dialogue and the transparent evaluation of the final (and approved) IDP and budget plans with a view of anonymously raising objections, descending views and dissatisfaction in the event they perceive other role-players to have been manipulative and coercive in any of the stages of the IDP process.

In this way, the participatory process is not realistic and represents a 'compromise' between what is dictated in theory and what is practically achievable. For example, although theory demands

that participation to be an end-in-itself which is demonstrated by not ascribing to timeframes on development-related engagements and meetings; it is an impossible and unrealistic expectation in practice because local government's integrated development planning requires detailed plans and timelines ascribed to specific projects. This implies that IDP meetings with community members should be allocated a specific timeframe so that the development planning can ensue. Hence a compromise is fostered through the multiple opportunities for citizen engagement with municipal officials, as demonstrated in step one, two, three, and seven (see figure 6-1). In terms of practical operationalisation, participation in the IDP process is characterised by:

- Instances where the kind of interaction between municipal officials and citizens (i.e. role-players) is less restrictive but accommodative of inputs by everyone;
- A space where there is a joint-contribution of ideas and solutions towards a local development and social change agenda.
- A space where citizens can have transparent evaluation of the IDP process and make input/report instances where they perceive the process to be manipulative or coercive.

6.7.2 Dialogue

Dialogue features extensively in almost all the steps in the framework especially because institutionalised participation cannot take place in the absence of a communicative space created to foster interaction between role-players. As illustrated in step one and two, dialogue indicates that all role-players involved in any communicative process related to integrated development planning should view one another with mutual respect and tolerance, thereby creating a platform for the collective contribution of ideas aimed at identifying needs and possible solutions in light of a local development and social change agenda.

Additionally, it is the prerogative of those involved in the dialogic processes not to be coercive or manipulative or seek to fulfil self-serving interests during all interactions because there will be an evaluation process to determine such eventualities. In step one, dialogue is essential to the facilitation of conflict during interactions between citizens, ward councillor and the committee as well as the municipality's communication office. Conceptualised as 'genuine' discourse, a platform should be created where all role-players are free to express their opinions and all concerns leading to the provision of feedback and redress over all concerns raised.

In step two and three, the same conceptualisation of dialogue is critical towards creating an environment where citizens, either individuals or organised groups are not restricted from expressing views or opinions aimed at contributing ideas towards a local development and social

change agenda. Lastly, in step seven, dialogue features as a facilitator of the critical reflection that citizens should apply when evaluating the participatory approach to determine whether it was reflective of truthfulness, honesty and sincerity or it was plagued by instances of coercion and manipulation.

6.7.3 Empowerment

Empowerment, since it is a relational concept, requires that we look at role-players involved in the IDP process in order to determine the extent to which power dynamics are at play. The essence behind focusing on role-players is so that we can identify the power dynamics peculiar to the context of institutionalised participation and clearly define which of the role-players have power over which parts of the participatory process. In this way, three sets of role-players were found to be essential to the participatory process, namely, ward councillors and their committee members (including other municipal officials involved in the process like the Mayor and the municipality's IDP office), community members (either organised groups or individuals, including those residing in informal settlements), and the municipality's communication office.

Empowerment can be construed in two ways, first, it relates to instances where community members, from a top-down perspective, are provided with skills and training to understand government processes, information flows in the integrated development planning, their role and the role of all other role-players in the IDP process. In this way, a concern relating to citizens misunderstanding the IDP process is addressed with the hope of improving the quality of communication, rapport and trust between citizens and municipal officials.

Secondly, empowerment relates to communicative spaces where there is a deliberate accommodation of voice, from the bottom-up; where citizens are given collective latitude over local decision-making, not only to express needs but also to proffer solutions to local development problems. In this way indigenous knowledge is accommodated and citizens are given the power as equal partners in the development and social change process. When looking at the two approaches to empowerment, they are both complementary and they constitute a realistic compromise between top-down (i.e. 'empowerment over') and bottom-up empowerment (i.e. 'empowerment within').

Additionally, the two approaches to empowerment are mostly apparent in step one, two, three, four and seven. These are the steps in which all role-players, especially, community members are part of dialogic interactions aimed at joint contribution of ideas as part of the IDP process. From this sense, it is notable that empowerment is restricted to those instances in the IDP process that involve direct participation or involvement of local citizens in the communicative part of the

IDP. In step seven, community members are empowered when they reflect and evaluate the IDP process to determine whether it was reflective of their initial input, ideas and indigenous knowledge.

6.7.4 Culture

Throughout the accommodation of local knowledge in communicative spaces, especially in steps one, two, three, four and seven, all interactions between role-players in the IDP process should have due regard for cultural sensitivity. This implies that when broad discussions over local development and social change are held in a participatory manner, citizens should be allowed to express cherished values, norms and beliefs, thereby allowing the space for these values to be uplifted rather than trampled upon. This means all role-players should apply cultural sensitivity, respect and accommodation of all 'cultures' and the IDP process should not seek to erode any cultural belief and/or practice of any role-player. For instance, in all of the steps in the framework, when development projects are decided upon, planned for and ratified, they should be consistent with local ways of life, indigenous knowledge and beliefs.

6.7.5 Re-imagined steps in the revised framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes

As demonstrated in the revised framework (see figure 6-1), a compromise is struck between what is required in theory as well as what is achievable in practice. The re-imagined steps outlined below are part of a process of redefining the participatory process followed during IDP consultative meetings, thus satisfying the theoretical requirements for how key concepts underpinning the participatory approach are defined as well as the practical operationalisation of these concepts in practice.

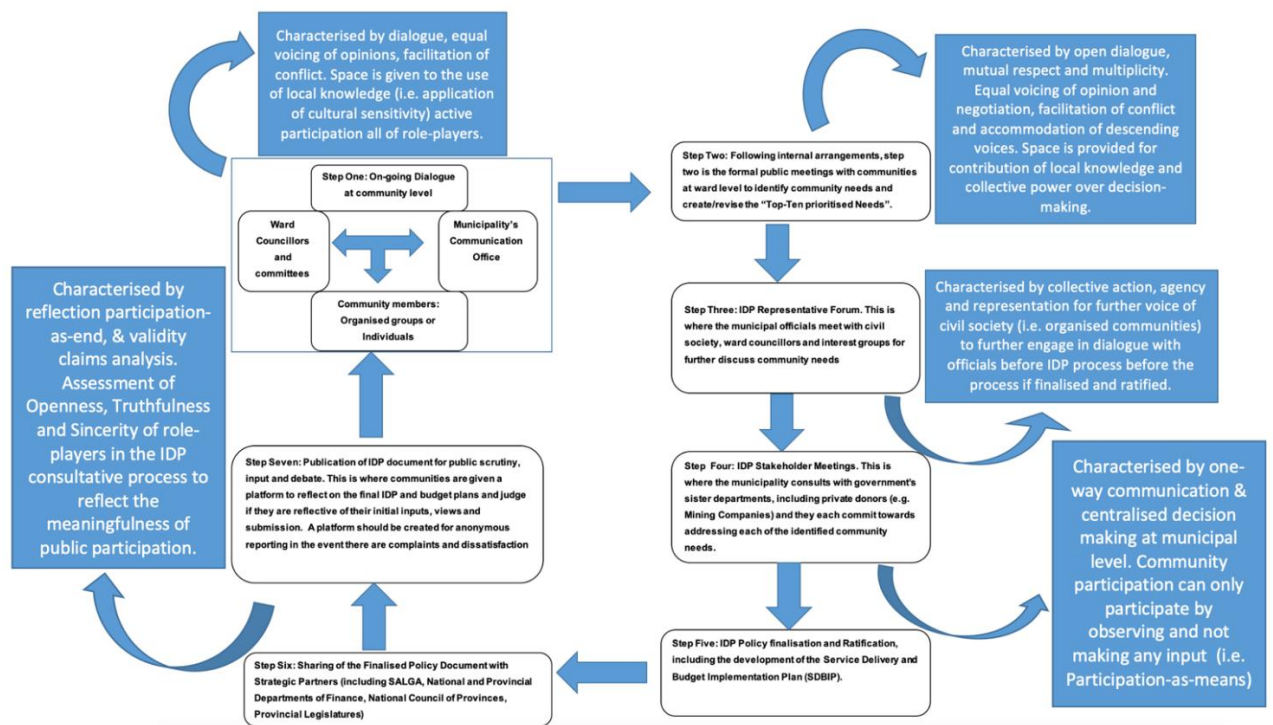


Figure 6-1: The Revised Framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes.

As a way of further answering the present study's main research question (see section 1.3), the following re-imagined steps in the IDP process are outlined as a way of illustrating how participation, dialogue, empowerment and culture (in light of their newly revised theoretical statements) can be practically operationalised. The re-imagined steps are a revision of the main steps that were outlined in section 3.4.

Step 1: On-Going Dialogue

Step one constitutes the researcher's identified opportunity for enhanced community participation (characterised by on-going dialogue and engagement) own inclusion of a participatory process that is rooted in dialogue and interaction between key and equal, role-players (i.e. the community members, the ward councillor and committee, and the municipality's communication office). This is where preliminary community issues and needs can be preliminarily identified through equal voicing of opinions and conflict is facilitated. Parallel to this process is the involvement of young people from different cultural backgrounds or ethnic groups in the community, who are recruited in a municipality's IDP ambassadors programme to offer a skills development programme aimed at preparing community members to have knowledge about government processes as well as to understand their role in the IDP process.

Step 2: Formal Public Consultations

In step two, formal IDP consultations (i.e. community participation meetings) at ward level takes place with a view of providing formal spaces for community members to make joint contribution of ideas aimed at identifying a local development agenda. This is where the municipality makes all arrangements for Public IDP consultations with the community. During this process, municipal officials come together with community members to jointly take stock of the development needed and challenges faced in the community so as to collaborate ideas towards collective solutions (i.e. the facilitation of feedback is key). Additionally, through mutual respect and the accommodation of all views, all role-players apply intersubjectivity in the way in which they communicate with one another so that all parties should not perceive the process to be restrictive, coercive or manipulative in any way. Furthermore, this is the step that is characterised by multiplicity (including cultural diversity), thus cherished values and norms should be accommodated and not infringed. Cultural sensitivity should be adopted as an essential feature of this process, where all ethnic groups are afforded the space to express their needs without having their views denigrated or undermined in any way. What is advantageous during this process is that, following the rollout of a youth IDP ambassadors programme, the whole community can attend public consultations already knowing and understanding what is expected of them and what the IDP entails.

Step 3: IDP Representative Forum Meetings

In step three, a further opportunity for dialogue and the facilitation of the citizen voice is also identified in the form of IDP representatives' forum. This is a pre-existing platform in the municipality's IDP programme and serves to accommodate organised civil society to further make input on the IDP and budget before they are ratified at municipal level. This step is characterised by collective action, agency and representation. Dialogue, participation and empowerment are essential features of the process given that a voice is given to some members of society who otherwise would not have the platform or opportunity to speak up (e.g. the disabled groups, marginalised genders subgroups, youth, organised community interest groups, etc.). As an opportunity for youth participation, during these representative forum meetings, young people can be afforded the space to participate in these meetings, thus, empowering them with decision-making ability to drive social change in their immediate communities.

Step 4 & 5: IDP Stakeholder Meetings as well as IDP Policy Finalisation and Ratification

In step four, five and six; the necessary internal meetings at municipal levels should ensue with a view of bringing finality and ratification to the IDP and budget plans. In these steps, participation

of community members is minimal and passive. The extensive participation of community members in steps one, two and three (including their ideas, views and opinions contributed to the IDP process) is the subject of scrutiny and these views are taken into account (i.e. a participation-as-means approach) when the IDP and budget plans are finalised and ratified.

Step 6: Publication and sharing of finalised IDP documents with strategic partners (including SALGA, National and Provincial Departments of Finance, National Council of Provinces, as well as Provincial Legislatures)

This step entails the publication and sharing of the ratified IDP document with strategic government entities and departments, including the legislative arm of government (for the process of oversight), the National Assembly, the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) as well as the Provincial Legislatures; provincial and national government (including National Treasury), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) as well as private donors (e.g. local mining companies). Community members are not involved in any meetings during this process since the sharing of these IDP documents and policies serves as a means for unlocking financial resources aimed at rolling out the ratified development projects that were initially agreed upon during public consultations.

Step 7: Reflection on the IDP documents for public scrutiny

Lastly in step seven, another platform is established for community members to reflect the whole participatory process with a view of auditing the community participation experience, thereby determining if any of the role-players was manipulative and coercive or truthful, sincere and honest. This kind of transparent evaluation should be anonymous and it should be facilitated by a more authoritative figure in the process (i.e. the national department of cooperative governance) so that community members can have faith in the reflection process. This step feeds into step one, thus completing the cycle and paving way for on-going dialogue at community level to ensue (see figure 6-1).

In sum, the above framework's purpose is to bridge a gap between theory as well as a practice with the intention of accommodating complex socio-economic realities experienced by citizens in a communicative-participative way. This framework is a realistic account of how institutionalised participation can have meaningful operationalisation in a real-life society that is also culturally diverse. Perhaps one defining feature about this framework, which is distinguishing it from other models or frameworks in the literature on communication for development and social change is that it is context-specific and there is hardly ever been any framework of its kind- one that is centred in featuring participatory communication in municipal IDP processes with the intention of

facilitating active and meaningful participation of local citizens in this legislated process. It is different from Lennie & Tacchi's (2013) model in that it cannot be used as if it is an evaluative framework for specific C4D project. The present study's framework is specific about its focus on local government context and the concepts that it uses are already contextually applicable in municipal IDP processes- which is a legislated requirement. Against Kincaid and Figueroa's (2009) model, the study's proposed framework is different in terms of its focus-which is to unite two sides of role players within the context of institutionalised participation and create a pathway for collaboration and co-creation of meanings.

6.8 Contributions of the study

The main contribution of this study is that it is a proposed framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes given that it also espouses four of its key concepts that are essential to the participatory process involving local citizens and municipal officials in pursuit of local development and social change in a culturally diverse context, these concepts are: participation, dialogue, empowerment, and culture.

Although the study assumes a critical position of current 'utopian' participatory communication approaches which lack theoretical coherence, the aim is not to critique for criticism's sake. By using an empirical institutional setting (i.e. Public participation in a multi-cultural municipal setting) or institutionalised participation, the study aimed to go beyond the simple critique that has been regurgitated in academia concerning the lack of participation in local government.

By exploring and recording the nature of the communication between Rustenburg Local Municipality and the community in ward 31 during municipal IDP processes, the study exposed the underlying power struggles and imbalances. These imbalances came with having 'authorities' using their institutional power to dominate IDP decision-making processes instead of accommodating 'multiplicity of knowledge-creation and understanding' (Wald, 2014: 624) from the ground-up. Moreover, this study is an attempt at theory building within the participatory paradigm to contribute in giving 'theoretical vigour', orientation and foundation to the development communication discourse, as well as in the area of local government administration and development.

6.9 Limitations

Based on the fact that the present study is qualitative in nature and its findings (and framework) are based on a single case study (i.e. one municipality), it did not apply a quantitative approach across similar municipalities in South Africa, where there could have been a contribution towards a complete and representative picture of the entire population, thereby allowing for the provision

of more generalised findings. Thus, comparative studies that may phenomenologically unearth the different experiences at multiple municipalities, can also enhance the inquiry into institutionalised participation and also provide deeper insights into the phenomenon.

6.10 Recommendations

As an overarching recommendation made by the present study, the revised framework for participatory communication is offered as part of a solution that may lead to the alleviation of communication-related challenges outlined in chapter 1 (see sections 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3), in relation to institutionalised participation in municipal IDP process. The framework is on offer for practical implementation and review across the different contexts across the South African local government sphere, and beyond, as a way of reconfiguring participatory communication and institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes. In addition, the study also makes a theoretical contribution in that its framework looks at anchoring the participatory approach in three theoretical lines of critique as a way of addressing issues related to its perceived utopian nature.

6.10.1 For policymakers

Noting that community participation is a legislated process and is instrumental in advancing South Africa's developmental agenda that is rooted in participatory democracy, the findings suggest a need for legislation that guides community participation to be amended so as to allow the participatory process to be characterised by continuous dialogue at community level with a view of enhancing the participatory experiences of community members and to also enable them to have a space for reflection on whether ratified development plans at municipal level are based on their inputs, views and contributions during earlier opportunities for consultation. In doing so, the constitutional objective for local government to ensure community involvement in local development planning will be enhanced, thus leading to the strengthening of mutual trust and rapport between municipal officials and community members.

6.10.2 For Rustenburg Local Municipality and Local government sphere in South Africa relating to Institutional Participation in IDP

Given that municipal officials are charged with facilitating community participation in integrated development planning, among other activities; it is recommended that they should expand their communication planforms for communities to have more opportunities for dialogue around what is a local development agenda. Through the implementation of the above framework (see figure 6-1), it is recommended that changes to the present participatory processes be made with a view of allowing participatory communication as a facilitator to foster on-going dialogue, reflection by community members, cultural sensitivity as well as feedback. In this way, challenges related to

poor communication, and the perceived lack of active participation by citizens in municipal integrated development planning processes may be alleviated.

As suggested in one of the focus group discussions, it is recommended that the municipality should establish a youth development programme aimed at educating young people about the IDP process and the role of the community therein and then employ them as IDP ambassadors, so as to educate their communities about the process. In doing so, the municipality and the community will benefit in a sense that increased and substantive youth as well as community participation in the IDP process, will take place and the quality of interactions between the municipal officials and citizens during such IDP meetings will improve as a result of the work done by the youth towards an informed and skilled citizenry.

6.11 Final Conclusion

This chapter gave a broad summary of the study's findings as well as conclusions based on its research questions. Furthermore, and arguably as its important contribution, the chapter offered a revised framework for participatory communication as a facilitator of institutionalised participation in municipal IDP processes as informed by the study's findings in chapter 5. Lastly, it concludes by offering recommendations (i.e. for policymakers, municipalities and for further research) and a statement of limitations based on the experiences from data collection and analysis.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE/APPROVAL LETTER FROM NWU



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Ethics Regulatory Committee
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

22 October 2018

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Arts Research Ethics Committee (AREC)** on 22/10/2018, the Arts Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: A Framework for Participatory Communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality																														
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof L.M. Fourie																														
Student: Mr. T.B. Molale																														
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>7</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>8</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td colspan="3">Study Number</td><td colspan="3">Year</td><td colspan="3">Status</td></tr></table>			N	W	U	-	0	0	7	6	7	-	1	8	-	A	7	Institution			Study Number			Year			Status		
N	W	U	-	0	0	7	6	7	-	1	8	-	A	7																
Institution			Study Number			Year			Status																					
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation																														
Application Type: Single Study	Risk Category: <table border="1"><tr><td>Low</td></tr></table>			Low																										
Low																														
Commencement date: 22/10/2018																														
Expiry date: 23/10/2021																														
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																														

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the AREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the AREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

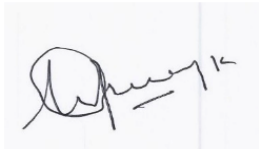
While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the AREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the AREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-RERC and AREC reserves the right to:

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the AREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- AREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via 13128388@nwu.ac.za or 018 285 2301.

The AREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the AREC or the NWU-RERC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof W.J. van Wyk
Chairperson NWU Arts Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM RUSTENBURG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
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School of Communication Studies
Tel: 0182991647
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For Attention:
The Municipal Mayor
Cllr. Mpho Khunou
Rustenburg Local Municipality

23 April 2019

Dear Cllr. Mpho Khunou

DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDY: COMMUNICATION STUDIES (ETHICAL CLEARANCE NUMBER: NWU-00767-18-A7)

This letter serves to inform you that Mr. Tshepang Molale is currently registered as a PhD student at the North West University. I am Mr. Molale's promotor for his thesis. The title of Mr Molale's study is "A framework for participatory communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality".

He aims to qualitatively explore communication-related issues regarding the Integrated Development Plan processes in ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality. Specifically, he aims to propose a conceptual framework that infuses Habermas's communicative action, principles of intercultural communication, and Freire's dialogical praxis within participatory communication as a guide towards achieving 'meaningful' and 'active' participation in the IDP processes. In short, he wants to study the nature of communication during the IDP development process to get a better understanding of the community participatory process.

Mr. Molale's study will offer valuable insights into the dynamics of communication at a community level. The importance and contribution of the study lie in the development of a framework aimed at exploring theoretical predilections for grounding participatory communication and ensure its effectiveness in eliciting meaningful and active community participation and engagement during IDP processes. It is a study that aims to contribute constructively to both theory and practice.

In addition to public documents analysed (e.g. IDP document), representatives of the Rustenburg Local Municipality (Municipal Speaker, Mayor, Municipal Manager, Communication Manager, IDP Manager), community members and a ward councillor residing within the municipal area, will be approached to participate in this study. Interviews will be conducted with the Municipal Mayor/speaker, IDP Manager and Communication Manager. Members of the community will be approached to participate in the focus groups. Participation in focus groups will be completely voluntary. It should be noted that the focus of the study is on communication and not politics. The questions and discussion during the interviews and focus groups will focus on the participants' perceptions of communication regarding the IDP process. There will be no questions regarding their political affiliation or viewpoints.

Mr. Molale aims to complete the collection of his data by the end of September 2019

I kindly request that you assist Mr. Molale where possible. Should you have any queries, feel free to contact me, or contact Mr. Molale directly. We appreciated your help and willingness to accommodate the study.

Yours sincerely,



.....
Prof Lynnette Fourie
Program leader: Communication in Changing Contexts

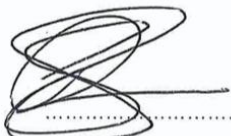


.....
Mr Tshepang Molale
PhD candidate

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and send back to bright.molale@nwu.ac.za and cc to Lynnette.fourie@nwu.ac.za:


.....
The Municipal Mayor
Cllr. Mpho Khunou
Rustenburg Local Municipality

30/04/2019
.....
Date

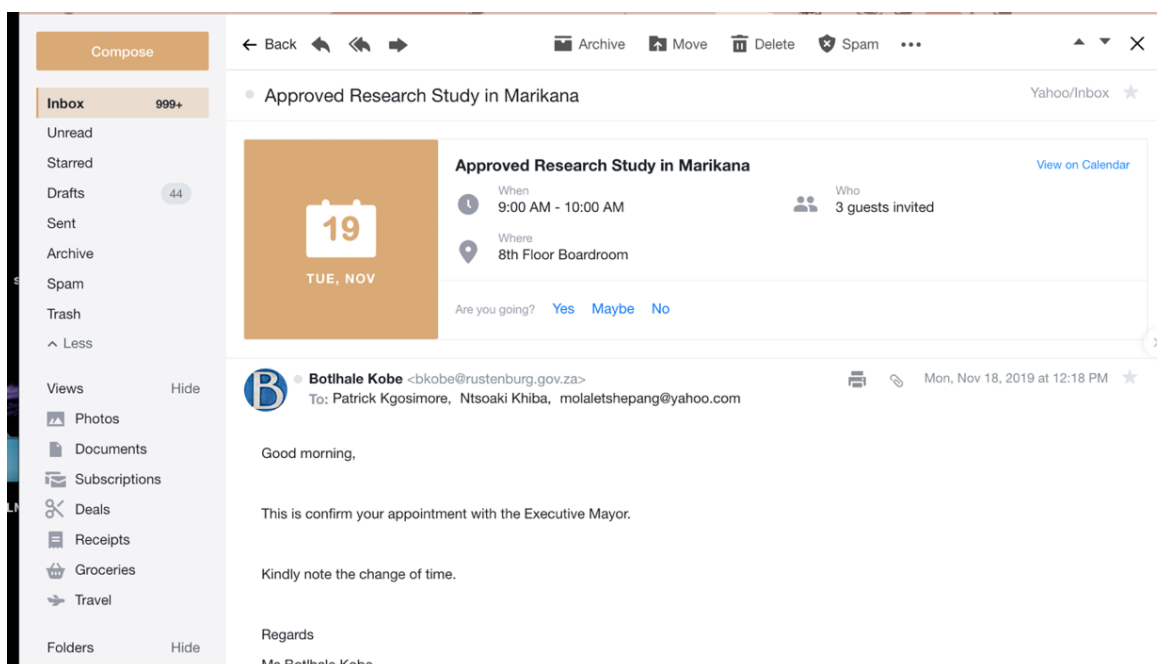
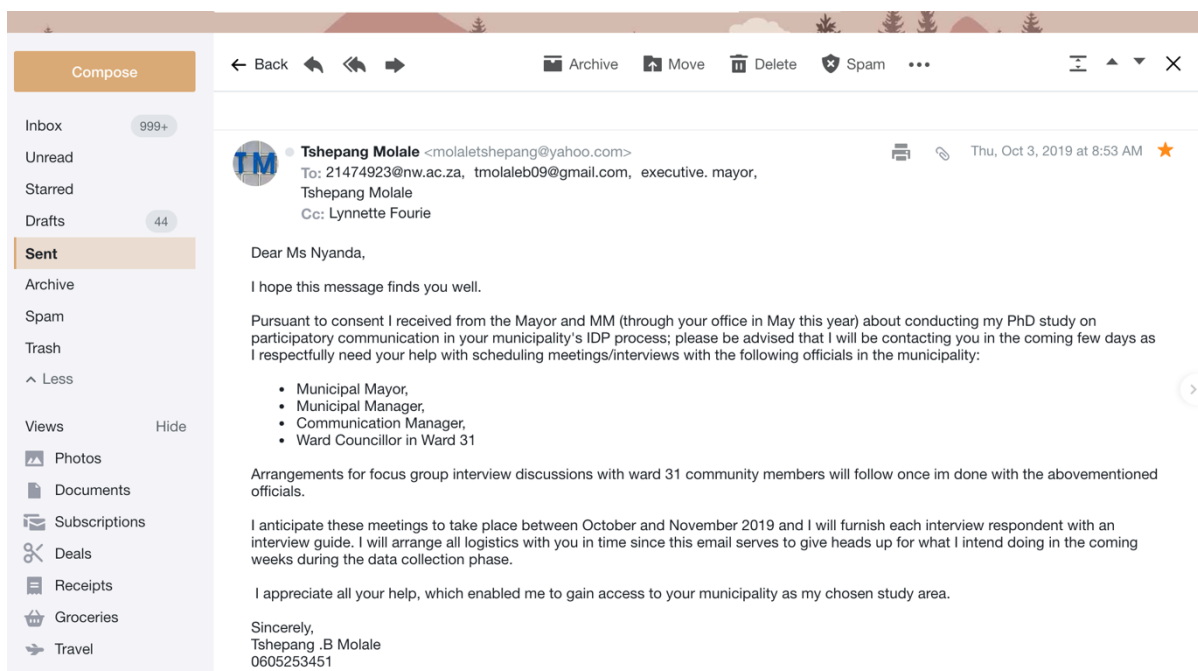

.....
The Municipal Manager
Ms S. Sithole
Rustenburg Local Municipality

30/04/2019
.....
Date

Original details: (10071474) C:\Users\21474923\Desktop\2019 PhD documents\Consent Letter for PhD Study.docm
23 April 2019

File reference: TB Molale Consent Letter

APPENDIX C: SOME EMAIL EXCHANGES WITH VARIOUS OFFICIALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SETTING UP MEETINGS FOR DATA COLLECTION





Meeting with AMM (Komane)

[View on Calendar](#)

When
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Where
Missionary Mpheni House, 7th Floo...

Who
3 guests invited

Are you going? [Yes](#) [Maybe](#) [No](#)

 **Municipality** <munman@rustenburg.gov.za> Tue, Nov 19, 2019 at 10:22 AM ★
 To: molaletshepang@yahoo.com, Edward Komane
 Cc: Violet Pilane

Meeting with Molale on the PHD Research.



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 **Nomsa Nyanda** <nnyanda@rustenburg.gov.za> Thu, Nov 7, 2019 at 8:56 AM ★
 To: Botlhale Kobe, executive. mayor, Patrick Kgosimore
 Cc: Tshepang Molale

Good Morning Mrs Kobe,

As requested below and the consent from the Executive Mayor (EM) this morning, kindly assist with securing appointment for Mr Molale with EM between the 18th - 22nd November 2019.

Mr Molale humbly communicate with Mrs Kobe going forward regarding the availability of the EM. Her contact details are Tel No: 014 590 3004/3628, email address Botlhale Kobe bkobe@rustenburg.gov.za .

After Mrs Kobe has given you the date, we will further assist to extend the request to other directorates for the appointment, this will help you to have dates on the same week as per your request.

I hope this will assist.

Warm Regards,
 Nomsa Nyanda

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Nomsa Nyanda <nnyanda@rustenburg.gov.za>

To: Cisco Matlanaga, Lebogang Makete, molubijohn@gmail.com, Cllr Molubi

Cc: Patrick Kgosiore, executive. mayor, molaletshepang@yahoo.com

Tue, Nov 12, 2019 at 9:45 AM

Good Morning aus Lebo,

Early this year Mr Molale had applied to do his Research Study on Public Participation Communication, the Executive Mayor and AMM had shown a great interest hence approved his study which is based in Marikana ward 31.

You are humbly requested to schedule a meeting with him and MMC as the ward councillor of ward 31. He will be meeting with the Executive Mayor on Tuesday the 19th Nov 2019 at 80;30, may you kindly secure an appointment with him on Monday in the afternoon or Tuesday after 11am, or check with him on his requested time slots for meeting during the week of the 18th – 22nd November 2019, also for your ease of reference, see below the slots he has recommended.

Your co-operation/assistance in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Nomsa Nyanda

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Tshepang Molale <molaletshepang@yahoo.com>

To: BRIGHT MOLALE, 21474923@nwu.ac.za

Cc: Lynette Fourie

Bcc: Boitumelo Magae, Nomsa Nyanda, Executive. Mayor, Botlhale Kobe, Daphne Mafisa and 9 more...

Fri, Nov 29, 2019 at 6:48 AM

Dear Research Participant, respondent and facilitator,

This email serves to appreciate all the efforts you took: setting aside time to accommodate my research study. I have learnt a lot from your views during the interview process and I have been able to see the world (in this case, the phenomenon under investigation) through your eyes.

I appreciate your sincerity and honesty. Most notably, to the Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mpho Khunou, thank you for giving your consent and for allowing me, in the beginning, to enter this study area and come to engage with different individuals on their understanding of communication (and their involvement) during the IDP process.

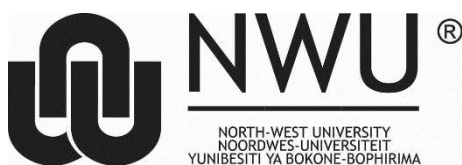
To those who facilitated and organised my interviews, I am humbled by the kind gestures, the phone calls you made, the emails you sent and all that you did. It is these kinds of actions help shape an external person/stakeholder/entity's positive perception about the image of your organisation. Continue to shine in all that you do and give other people the same treatment that you gave me.

Two other people who did not receive this e-mail because I don't have their contacts, deserve this note of gratitude, kindly share this with them: Thabo Molwane and Sis Ineeleng. These two, also, were hospitable during my stay and they, like all of you, went out of their way to see to it that my many requests are accommodated. Thanks to all of you, including those I may have mistakenly excluded in this appreciation note.

Sincerely
Tshepang Molale
PhD student: NWU (Potchefstroom Campus)
060 525 3451.

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APPENDIX D:SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222

Fax: +2718 299-4910

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW DISCUSSIONS

**Title of study: A Framework for Participatory Communication in the IDP context of Ward
31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality**

Researcher: Molale, Tshepang Bright

Student Number: 21474923

Contact Number: 0605253451

Study Leader: Prof Fourie, Lynnette.

E-mail: Lynnette.Fourie@nwu.ac.za

Dear Participant,

You are invited to voluntarily participate in a PhD research investigating communication-related issues regarding the Integrated Development Plan processes in ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality. The study aims to explore the nature of communication during the IDP development process to get a better understanding of the community participatory process. In doing this, the goal is to propose a conceptual framework that infuses Habermas's communicative action, principles of intercultural communication, and Freire's dialogical praxis within participatory communication as a guide towards achieving 'meaningful' and 'active' participation in the IDP processes. Therefore, the intention is to understand how you, as a person involved in the IDP process, understand the nature of participatory communication in all stages of the process. You shall not be asked any question outside the scope of communication(including its nature, participation, culture, etc.) during the IDP process. If you decide to participate in the study, the actual interview will take place at a location of your choice which must be within Rustenburg. The study shall be conducted by the researcher who has undertaken research interviews in the past, with the aid of his research assistant.

You are been invited to participate in this study because of your involvement in the IDP process of Rustenburg Local Municipality as only individuals (including municipal officials, ward councillors and community members of ward 31) can be a part of this study. The importance and contribution of the study lie in the development of a framework aimed at exploring theoretical predilections for grounding participatory communication and ensure its effectiveness in eliciting meaningful and active community participation and engagement during IDP processes. It is a study that aims to contribute constructively to both theory and practice. Your participation in this study shall pose no risk or danger to you, either physically or in any other form. In addition, neither will you will find the questions sensitive or controversial.

Procedure of interview and type of questions

Our interaction shall be inform of a short interview that is not expected to last more than 40 minutes. During the interview, you shall only be required to provide answers and nothing more. Please expect follow-up questions since the purpose of the interview is to gain as much insights as possible from you. The questions you shall be asked will cover only the following aspects:

1. What does participation involve during the IDP process?
 - a. How is participation facilitated during IDP engagements?
 - i. In what ways do you think those involved in the participatory process can benefit from it?
 - ii. What is, then, the role of communication in participation?
2. How do you see the nature of communication during the IDP process?
3. What kind of communication platforms are used during public consultations on IDP?
4. What role do you think the communications office of the municipality plays in the IDP process?
5. How is decision-making achieved during the IDP process?
6. How, in your own view, is culture linked to the IDP process?
7. Why is culture important when it comes to issues of IDP involving local citizens?
8. How do you think the current communication process should be improved if we are to factor in culture as an important aspect in the IDP process?
9. How do you think, when looking at the current IDP process, participation can be improved?
 - a. How can the communication process be improved?
 - i. Follow-up: How can the process be improved, when it comes to issues of decision-making?
10. What kind of attitude do you think as role-players you ought to convey when communicating with one another during the IDP process?

Your rights

Your participation in this study must be entirely voluntary and at your choice. You are free to decline participation from the very beginning or withdraw at any point during the interview without fear of any consequences. I shall need to record our interview, you are free to raise your discomfort at any stage of the interview process.

For further information, clarification or concern regarding the study and your participation kindly call:

Role: Supervisor

Name: Professor Lynnette Fourie

Contact Number: 018 299 1647

Confidentiality and anonymity

All information you give shall be kept confidential and used only for the academic purpose stated. On the part of the researcher, recording of the interview shall be password protected on a computer and deleted immediately it is transcribed. Also, the researcher and his assistant shall not reveal your identity to any other person. Your identity shall also remain anonymous as labels shall be substituted for yourself (**e.g. Respondent A, B, or C, etc.**) in the research report. This study is entirely academic and the researcher has not entered any agreement with a third party to use findings for other interests. You are free to indicate any other conditions you want me to abide with during and after the interview.

Declaration by respondent

I have read the information provided and understand the purpose of the investigation including my role and rights. I give my full consent to:

- a) Be a voluntary participant.

Signature of participant and date

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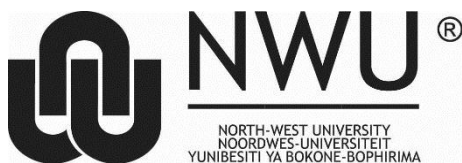
Signature of researcher and date

.....

Signature of research assistant

.....

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222

Fax: +2718 299-4910

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Title of study: A Framework for Participatory Communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality

Researcher: Molale, Tshepang Bright

Student Number: 21474923

Contact Number: 0605253451

Study Leader: Prof Fourie, Lynnette.

E-mail: Lynnette.Fourie@nwu.ac.za

Dear Participant,

You are invited to voluntarily participate in a PhD research investigating communication-related issues regarding the Integrated Development Plan processes in ward 31 of Rustenburg Local Municipality. The study aims to explore the nature of communication during the IDP development process to get a better understanding of the community participatory process. In doing this, the goal is to propose a conceptual framework that infuses Habermas's communicative action, principles of intercultural communication, and Freire's dialogical praxis within participatory communication as a guide towards achieving 'meaningful' and 'active' participation in the IDP processes. Therefore, the intention is to understand how you, as a person involved in the IDP process, understand the nature of participatory communication in all stages of the process. You shall not be asked any question outside the scope of communication(including its nature, participation, culture, etc.) during the IDP process. If you decide to participate in the study, the actual interview will take place at a location of your choice which must be within Rustenburg. The study shall be conducted by the researcher who has undertaken research interviews in the past, with the aid of his research assistant.

You are been invited to participate in this study because of your involvement in the IDP process of Rustenburg Local Municipality as only individuals (including municipal officials, ward councilors and community members of ward 31) can be a part of this study. The importance and contribution of the study lie in the development of a framework aimed at exploring theoretical predilections for grounding participatory communication and ensure its effectiveness in eliciting meaningful and active community participation and engagement during IDP processes. It is a study that aims to contribute constructively to both theory and practice. Your participation in this study shall pose no risk or danger to you, either physically or in any other form. In addition, neither will you will find the questions sensitive or controversial.

Procedure of interview and type of questions

Our interaction shall be inform of a short interview that is not expected to last more than 40 minutes. During the interview, you shall only be required to provide answers and nothing more. Please expect follow-up questions since the purpose of the interview is to gain as much insights as possible from you. The questions you shall be asked will cover only the following aspects:

1. What do you understand by what IDP is?
 - a. What happens during the IDP process? How does the IDP process unfold?
2. How is communication employed during the IDP process? How does it flow?
 - a. In what ways are IDP issues communicated to you? By who?
3. How are you involved in the communication process?
 - a. What do you think about the nature of interactions you have during the IDP process?
4. What do you think should be improved in the communication process based on its implementation?
 - a. What cultural issues do you have when engaged in the IDP process?
5. What objective would you want to see the IDP process achieving for you?

Your rights

Your participation in this study must be entirely voluntary and at your choice. You are free to decline participation from the very beginning or withdraw at any point during the interview without fear of any consequences. I shall need to record our interview; you are free to raise your discomfort at any stage of the interview process.

For further information, clarification or concern regarding the study and your participation kindly call:

Role: Supervisor

Name: Professor Lynnette Fourie

Contact Number: 018 299 1647

Confidentiality and anonymity

All information you give shall be kept confidential and used only for the academic purpose stated. On the part of the researcher, recording of the interview shall be password protected on a computer and deleted immediately it is transcribed. Also, the researcher and his assistant shall not reveal your identity to any other person. Your identity shall also remain anonymous as labels shall be substituted for yourself (**e.g. Respondent A, B, or C, etc.**) in the research report. This study is entirely academic and the researcher has not entered any agreement with a third party to use findings for other interests. You are free to indicate any other conditions you want me to abide with during and after the interview.

Declaration by respondent

I have read the information provided and understand the purpose of the investigation including my role and rights. I give my full consent to:

- b) Be a voluntary participant.

Signature of participant and date

.....

Signature of researcher and date

.....

Signature of research assistant

.....

APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING



Editorial Certificate

A framework for participatory communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality

T. B Molale	26 November 2020
CLIENT	ISSUE DATE

This document certifies that the above manuscript was proofread and edited by Imzamo Yami Consultancy. The document was edited for proper English language | Grammar | Punctuation | Spelling and Style by one of our highly qualified Professional Academic Editors. The editor endeavoured to ensure that the author's intended meaning was not altered during the review. All amendments were tracked with the Microsoft Word "Track changes" feature. Therefore, the authors had the option to reject or accept each change individually

Kind regards,
Imzamo Yami Consultancy.

 Dr Nomzamo Dube (PhD) DIRECTOR	 Noel Neville Nyathi (MA) MANAGING DIRECTOR
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Imzamo Yami is a Consultancy that offers corporate and academic services amongst which include conducting Social Science research, Data analysis, Copy writing, Documentation, Proof reading and Editing services to organisations, municipalities, institutions of higher learning and researchers. We envision to be a leading social science and humanities research organisation providing expert and practical solutions to organisations, municipalities, institutions of higher learning and communities across Africa. Our mission is to assist Corporates, Governments, Municipalities, Institutions of Higher Learning and Researchers in conducting research, analysing existing data, documentation, copywriting, proof reading and editing services to enhance their performance.