The Forgotten Ones: A Case Study of the Obstacles that Prevent Meaningful Participation in Democratic Governance of Farm Women in the Greater Stellenbosch Area, Ceres & Rawsonville

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

This research examines the extent of participatory democracy, as outlined in government policy, with particular relevance to the experiences of women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch Area, Ceres and Rawsonville.

The study is based on the notion that effective and meaningful political participation in South Africa has happened at the exclusion of many of its poor and marginalised citizens, in particular poor women living on farms. The research hypothesis holds that various factors relating to the socioeconomic conditions and political orientations of farm women contribute to their low levels of participation in democratic governance. The research question therefore is: what are the obstacles that prevent women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch Area, Ceres and Rawsonville from effective and meaningful participation in participatory democracy?

In answering the research question, mixed methods of data gathering were employed. Qualitative methods were used, with data-gathering techniques that included modified participant observation, non-scheduled structured interviews, and a focus group discussion. As relatively little is known of the experiences of farm women, these techniques were all geared towards better informing the researcher about relevant questions for the quantitative component of the research in the form of a survey.

From the findings, the hypothesis that farm women do not participate in a meaningful process of participation was confirmed. The main findings in terms of the obstacles that prevent meaningful participation can be discussed in three categories. Firstly, the research indicates that farm women feel that since their opinions are not considered by politicians there is no reason for them to participate in governance. Secondly, because of a lack of capacity and resources critical for optimal participation, the women are also disempowered to not participate in politics. Finally, farm women are tired of empty promises and the abuse of power by corrupt officials. Hence they have become very cynical of processes that are supposed to be participatory, but in effect are not authentic at all.

In conclusion, although participation is advanced on the basis of the principle of enhancing democracy, the lived realities of farm women cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is vital that participation in politics be seen from a holistic perspective, relying on both democratic principles and the socioeconomic development of farm women. Through political

participation, farm women must be empowered to become not only democratic citizens, as envisioned by theorists of participatory democracy, but also capacitated people who live a dignified life.

Opsomming

Hierdie navorsingsprojek bestudeer die omvang van deelnemende demokrasie, soos uiteengesit in regeringsbeleid, spesifiek met betrekking tot die ervaringe van vroue wat op plase in die Groter Stellenbosch Area, Ceres en Rawsonville woon.

Die studie is gebaseer op die argument dat effektiewe en betekenisvolle politieke deelname in Suid Afrika die meerderheid arm en gemarginaliseerde burgers, en spesifiek arm vroue op plase, uitsluit. Die navorsingshipotese is dat verskeie faktore wat verband hou met die sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede en politieke oriëntasies van plaasvroue bydra tot hulle lae vlakke van politieke deelname. Vervolgens is die navorsingsvraag: Wat is die faktore wat vroue op plase in die Groter Stellenbosch Area, Ceres en Rawsonville daarvan weerhou om effektief en betekenisvol deel te neem aan die politiek?

Gemengde metodes van data-insameling is gebruik om die navorsingsvraag te beantwoord. Kwalitatiewe data-insamelingstegnieke sluit in aangepaste deelnemende observasie, nie-geskeduleerde gestruktureerde onderhoude en ’n fokusgroepbespreking. Aangesien relatief min inligting oor plaasvroue bestaan, is die doel met die tegnieke om die navorser beter in te lig om vrae vir die kwantitatiewe komponent, ’n opname, te skep.

Deur die bevindinge is die hipotese dat plaasvroue nie gereeld aan effektiewe en betekenisvolle deelnemende prosesse deelneem nie bevestig. Wat die faktore wat deelname beïnvloed betref, is daar drie verskillende temas. Eerstens dui die navorsing daarop dat plaasvroue voel dat aangesien hulle opinies nie deur politici in ag geneem word nie, daar geen rede vir hulle is om aan die politiek deel te neem nie. Tweedens is plaasvroue as gevolg van ‘n gebrek aan die kapasiteit en hulpbronne noodsaaklik vir optimale deelname ook geneig om minder aan die politiek deel te neem. Laastens is die vroue moeg van leë beloftes en die misbruik van mag deur korrupte amptenare. Gevolglik is hul nou meer sinies, spesifiek oor prosesse wat veronderstel is om deelnemend te wees maar in werklikheid glad nie is nie.

Ten slotte, alhoewel deelname aan die politiek bevorder word op grond van die beginsel dat dit demokrasie verbeter, kan die lewensomstandighede van plaasvroue nie geïgnoreer word nie. Hiervolgens is dit noodsaaklik dat deelname in die politiek vanuit ‘n holistiese oogpunt beskou word, gegrond op beide demokratiese beginsels en die sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling van plaasvroue. Deur politieke deelname moet plaasvroue bemagtig word om

nie net demokratiese burgers te word nie, maar ook gekapasiteerde mense wat ’n waardige lewe lei.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Considering the exclusion from political life of the masses during the past, the imperative that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the governance of the country is of particular importance. In fact, the South African government envisioned participation as one of the first of many steps towards establishing democracy and governance that is more efficient. In support of this it has ensured that this ideal is pursued vigorously at all levels and through various legislation and policy measures (Deegan, 2002; Davids, 2005; February, 2006; Pretorius, 2006; Ballard, Bonnin, Robinson & Xaba, 2007, Hicks, 2009a).

As early as in 1994, government invited citizens to engage with and participate in the policy process. At this point, calls were made for people to engage directly with the formulation of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP), a document claiming that democracy did not only relate to the "delivery of goods to a passive citizenry" but also implied the "active involvement and growing empowerment of the population" (Deegan, 2002: 46). In addition, according to the constitution it is every South African's right to participate in the governance of the country. In fact, Chapter 10 Section 195 (1) e, states that the "People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making".

However, for participatory democracy to yield the presumed result of mature democracies, participation must be meaningful. As Davids (2005: 13) puts it so succinctly: "Pure formalism – responding to the letter of the law... – is of course not participatory at all". Therefore, this research argues that a central problem with South African participatory democracy is not that government does not support the notion of public participation, but rather that it is unable to manage this effectively and so engage citizens, particularly the poor and marginalised, in meaningful participation. Thus, the poor and marginalised that the ideal of participation is envisioned to empower are, more often than not, left out in the cold, unable to effectively engage in public participatory processes.

Poor women, particularly those living in rural areas, tend to be further marginalised in the process of public participation. Unfortunately, women and their children tend to be the most vulnerable on farms, as they are considered secondary occupiers, permitted to stay only

because of their link with a male household member. This study therefore focuses on the participation of women in governance issues that would lead to the enhancement of their socioeconomic well-being. As the Africa Institute of South Africa (2002: 299) states:

> In view of the vital and central role played by women in family well-being and maintenance, their special commitment to the survival, protection and development of children, as well as survival of society and their important role in the process of African recovery and reconstruction, special emphasis should be put by (sic) all the people in terms of eliminating biases particularly with respect to the reduction of the burden on women and taking positive action to ensure their full equality and effective participation in the development process.

An important factor to highlight is the relationship between effective participation and the development of the people. A principal argument of this study is that meaningful participation by citizens is vital to ensure the improvement of their living conditions. Thus, the crux of the argument is that people should play a vital role in their own upliftment, and that the process through which this can be accomplished is participation. It is therefore necessary that the conditions within which farm women find themselves be elucidated.

1.2 Background to the study

Government policy on agriculture

Before one considers the conditions in which women living on farms find themselves today, it is necessary to look at the agricultural sector from a historical perspective. In 1652, the first European settlers, the Dutch, arrived at the Cape Colony, and their arrival would have a dramatic impact on the possession of land and the position of workers in the Western Cape. The Dutch, who were in competition with other European countries, needed raw materials, land, and the sea route to the East. This sparked the dispossession of land from its original inhabitants, the Khoi and San. In addition, the Khoi and San were decimated by smallpox and in this way also lost their access to land, cattle and water resources (Atkinson, 2007: 23-27; Van Dongen, 2003: 304). This resulted in the original owners of land becoming the labourers, specifically in the Western Cape. The servile position of slaves imported from Madagascar, Indonesia and Malaya cemented the role that the Khoikhoi, as well as today's so-called coloured people, would fulfil on farms (Van Dongen, 2003: 305).

In 1806, the British imperialists arrived and this marked another important period in the dispossession of land in South Africa (SA). From 1899 to 1902, the two colonisers, the Dutch and British, continued to fight each other for land, until 1910, when the British finally were victorious and established the Union of South Africa. Significantly, the Union government enacted the Natives Land Act in 1913, banishing black people to the native reserves in the homeland areas. Coloured people were to reside in designated areas in the Western Cape, most of them having to provide labour for farmers in the area. However, because of the fluctuating nature of labour in the Western Cape at this time, wealthier farmers established a system of "tied-rent"[1] as a means to secure the supply of labour (Scully, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1996). Although this practice was declared illegal by the democratic government, it persists today (Sunde & Kleinbooi, 1999; Nkuzi, 2006; Atkinson, 2007).

The year 1948 led to another important milestone in SA, the Apartheid government. The government enacted various other laws that had an effect on the landscape of the agricultural sector. Specifically, the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, introduced in the 1960s, stated that African workers could only be employed in the Western Cape when no coloureds were available (Kritzinger & Vorster, 1996: 341). The influx control laws further prohibited black people from working on farms in the Western Cape. Thus, the core of permanent farm workers today is still mostly coloured, while they are also employed as seasonal labourers alongside Africans.

However, when Apartheid was abolished in 1994 in favour of democracy, a new era for the agriculture sector commenced. During the Apartheid regime, farmers were heavily subsidised by government. According to Kirsten and Van Zyl (cited in the Nkuzi report, 2005), farmers received substantial financial assistance from the state in the 1980s. The authors note that around 27 000 white farmers received R1.7 billion and benefited from other subsidies to a total of R2.35 billion. Regrettably, the subsidies received by farmers did not seem to benefit the farm workers, as job losses continued to rise, resulting in reduced numbers of people living on farms. At this point, the government also started to deregulate the agricultural sector, with all government subsidies and tariffs being removed. This led to a great loss in smaller and marginal commercial farms and a move to more capital-intensive production.

[1] A system whereby the residence of a farm worker, on the farm, is tied or linked to his/ her employment contract (explained in more detail later).

In addition, the South African economy was liberalised and farmers were now exposed to a very competitive international market, in which they compete with European and North American producers who are still heavily subsidised by their governments. The farmers' response to the changing conditions was to decrease the amount of permanent jobs they offer and to increase seasonal and contractual labour (Moseley, 2006: 2). As housing on the farm is reserved mainly for permanent workers, many farm workers also lost their homes, and were evicted from farms in the process. According to the Nkuzi (2005) study, 942 303 farm workers, mostly women and children, were evicted between 1994 and 2004. Only 1% of these evictions involved a legal process. The study also found that, although farmers cited economic factors as a reason for the increase in evictions, the actual motivating forces were political. This is evidenced by the fact that, in the years in which the eviction rate increased above the 7% mark, it was because of shifts in the political landscape of the country and legislation in the agricultural sector.

As the eviction trends (refer to Table 1) show, the first important landmark was in 1994, with 7.4% of evictions (from 0.4% in 1993), primarily due to political uncertainty and trade liberalisation of the agricultural sector. Although still high, this number decreased in subsequent years, but it increased to 7.7% in 1997, when the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA), no 62 of 1997, and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), no 75 of 1997, were enacted. From 1998, the numbers fluctuated below 5.5%, until in 2003, the year in which the minimum wage for farm workers came into being. At this time, the number of evictions rose to a staggering 8.2%. A critical concern is that farm owners seem to view farm labour as a cost input, and as it is one of the few inputs they can manipulate, it is the first to suffer during difficult periods. All of these factors have led to the gradual casualisation and feminisation of labour in this sector. Not only have farmers turned to casual labour, but they now also employ more women, as their labour comes at a cheaper price.

Table 1.1 Eviction trends

Year	% of evictees	No of evictees	Context
1994	**7.4%**	122 626	Political uncertainty and trade liberalisation
1995	5.0%	83 575	Land Reform Act (LRA)
1996	6.8%	111 651	Labour Tenants Act (LTA)
1997	**7.7%**	126 196	ESTA & BCEA
1998	3.8%	63 771	
1999	5.4%	87 503	
2000	3.4%	57 030	
2001	1.5%	22 924	
2002	3.6%	59 878	
2003	**8.2%**	138 308	Minimum wage
2004	3.4%	56 813	

(Source: Nkuzi report, 2005)

Significantly, during the negotiations prior to democracy, one of the three sunset clauses included the protection of private property. This has had far-reaching consequences for the agricultural sector and the redistribution of land post-1994. In terms of the agricultural sector, for instance, the government is very limited in the execution of policy on farms. Before an official can inspect the condition of housing or water provision on a farm, he or she needs to contact the farmer to gain permission to enter the farm. Added to this, it is very difficult to gain access to farm workers, if not through the farmer, as they rarely come into towns due to a lack of transport. Concerning land, the reluctance of white farmers to sell land to the government for redistributive purposes has been cited as a huge obstacle to the success of land reform policies. As their rights are protected by the constitution, the government cannot expropriate land from white farm owners. In a way, this factor contributes to the perennial role of farm workers as labourers, as opposed to becoming the owners of the land.

These problems are exacerbated by the ambiguity of government policy in the agricultural sector. Atkinson (2007: 72-73) argues that very little in terms of policy has been initiated by government, and even that which is in place is executed in a piecemeal fashion, with no

general guiding policy for local governments. Thus, at present, there seems to be an impasse in government policy in the agricultural sector. In this regard, the author highlights five dilemmas that contribute to the current policy situation. Firstly, one must consider the transformation dilemma, which relates to the position of both farm workers and farmers in the new dispensation. Farm workers, particularly permanent workers, live on the farm and are dependent on the goodwill of the farmer for employment and housing. In a country with unemployment figures as high as those in SA, farm workers are not yet in a position to challenge discriminatory laws on the farm. This is aggravated by the fact that white farmers are still very conservative and not open to being challenged. They also tend to feel alienated from government, while some have literally withdrawn themselves from government and public life, ruling on their farms by their own laws.

The second dilemma in the policy stalemate relates to the government's Growth, Equity, and Redistribution (GEAR) export-led conundrum. After the liberalisation of the agricultural markets, the industry became primarily export orientated, with great success. The revenue received from exports from the farming sector therefore makes a substantial contribution to gross domestic product (GDP). In addition, the sector is also a major employer, especially in the Western Cape and, in a sense, its global success serves as proof that GEAR does work. When all these factors are considered, the government cannot afford to be too critical of the sector, which is probably why it has refrained from drafting radical policy changes for the industry. In the third instance, the globalisation of SA's agriculture took place, while job losses occurred at a rapid pace. In this way it became clear that the commercial success of farmers did not necessarily lead to higher employment for farm workers. Hence, one may conclude that, in the global economy, farm workers and their agricultural skills have become redundant.

The fourth dilemma rests on the changing nature of the racial make-up of the agricultural sector. As a result of land reform policies, more black people now have access to land, thus there is an increase in the number of black farmers. These farmers also have to compete in an merciless economy and should the government therefore become too strict about minimum wages and tenure security, these farmers would also find it onerous and more difficult to cope. Finally, the agricultural sector is not homogeneous, and farmers respond to government policy differently. In addition, many farmers are rather negative towards government policy, which means that even agricultural organisations struggle to get farmers to commit to policy endeavours.

Sadly, the ones who suffer most from the policy stalemate are the farm workers. The conditions of most farm workers tend to be characterised by a lack of service delivery, including poor housing, poor access to social services and also being unprotected by occupational health and safety measures (policing) (Van Dongen, 2003; Sunde & Kleinbooi, 1999).

Service delivery and farm workers

Because of large differences between farms and also between farms across different regions, it is almost impossible to generalise about the conditions in which farm people live (Atkinson, 2007; Nkuzi, 2005). The variance can be ascribed to the fact that the government has never set out a general guiding industrial policy in terms of service delivery in agriculture. Farmers arbitrate solely on how and which services farm workers have access to. Therefore, on some farms one may find housing conditions to be adequate, with farm workers having access to clean water, electricity, sanitation and transport. However, such conditions tend to be the exception to the rule. As mentioned, on many farms farm workers live in appalling conditions. Housing is often cited as a particular problem, specifically on wine farms. This is despite the R 16 000 subsidy provided by government to farmers to build houses for their workers on the farms (Van Dongen, 2003: 308).

The responsibility of delivering services to farms, and including them in democratic processes of participation, resides with the local government (Municipal Structures Act, 119 of 1998). However, what one finds is a distinct urban bias as far as service delivery is concerned (Atkinson, 2007; Sunde & Gerntholz, 1999). Local government tends to prioritise delivering services to towns and cities, leaving farmers to see to the service needs of farm workers, without adequate financial support. In part, this is based on the notion that farms are private property and, due to their protection enshrined in the constitution, the government cannot include farms in their development planning strategies, as it may be in conflict with the farmer's wishes. This has had the result that farm worker development is often only marginally, if at all, included in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) documents of local government (Atkinson, 2007: 191-202). The bulk of service provision to people who live on farms is therefore done through the farmer. In the case of electricity, for instance, farm workers are provided with pre-paid electricity, which they have to buy from the farmer. Thus, should the farmer feel that he/she does not want to provide this service on the farm, farm workers would most likely not have access to electricity.

Women living on farms

Women tend to be particularly adversely affected and are especially vulnerable in the agricultural sector. One of the major challenges concerning gender equality relates to poverty. In a speech made by the Commissioner on Gender Equality (Kgasi, 2009), he notes that the systematic and socially engineered location of women in rural areas, and the underdeveloped nature of infrastructure in these areas, has been directly responsible for the poor conditions under which the majority of South Africa's rural women live. Added to that is the interconnectedness of gender, poverty and HIV/AIDS, by which women are mostly affected.

Despite the enactment of the ESTA law, which has the purpose of ensuring security of tenure for farm workers, the agricultural sector is still plagued by illegal evictions. In this regard it is vital to consider the historical link between farm workers' employment and their complete livelihoods. This is because, when a farm worker is offered a job on a farm, housing on the farm is linked to his employment contract. Thus, should the farm worker lose his job he also loses his home. Women are particularly vulnerable in this regard, as their employment contract is typically tied to that of their male counterpart. This means that, should the man be retrenched or pass away, the whole family will be evicted, regardless of the women's work status on the farm. Furthermore, farmers also tend to set limitations on women, as they are sometimes prohibited from seeking employment elsewhere if they are not permanently employed on the farm of residence. If they may seek work elsewhere it is often based on the condition that they must be available for work on the farm whenever the farmer needs their services.

In addition, there still is a clear division of labour on farms. Men and women on farms typically do work based on gender considerations, and amongst most farm workers this is considered an acceptable principle. This is in spite of women being paid less for working the same number of hours as men. Sunde and Kleinbooi (1999) conclude from their research on the conditions of farm workers in the Western Cape that most farmers view women's work as "cheap labour". They therefore tend to pay women less than they do men for work of an equal value. In addition, women on farms are also less likely to be provided with training opportunities, which has an effect on their ability to do work meant for higher skilled persons on the farm. Women also carry a double burden because, after a full day's work on the farm they still have to see to the family's needs at home. Work such as cooking, cleaning and

tending to the children are seen as women's work and therefore they receive no help or very little at best from their male partners.

Another factor that contributes to the vulnerability of women living on farms is the pervasive existence of violence. The violence complex on farms is in many respects a legacy of the "tot system"[2] previously used on farms. According to Van Dongen (2008), the process starts with the farmer displaying violent behaviour towards all workers on the farm. Because of the paternalistic system on farms, the workers, who are obviously dependent on the farmer for employment, accept the violence from him/her. The very same violent behaviour is then carried over into the private homes of the workers, where women tend to be the victims. The owners (farmer), managers and male workers therefore subject women to physical and sometimes sexual violence. In addition, Sunde and Kleinbooi's (1999) research shows that many farmers tend to see violence in the home as a private matter, as commonplace, and as being a natural result of alcohol abuse (by both partners). Hence, they conclude that there is no need for intervention when a woman is being abused, as the relevant parties will eventually sort it out amongst themselves. Other problems that women experience include a lack of access to reproductive and occupational services, mostly due to large distances from access points and long working hours; alcohol abuse by both male partners and teenage children; difficulties with raising children; and tension amongst women workers (Sunde & Kleinbooi, 1999). When all these factors are considered, it becomes vital that women living on farms be included in processes that relate to their social development.

1.3 Problem statement

Tapscott (2006: 3) contends that, despite various improvements having been made in the socioeconomic development of many South Africans after 1994, a large proportion of our society remains poor and marginalised. Much of this improvement seems to have happened in the metropolitan and urban areas, rather than in the rural areas, where most poor people live (Khosa, 2005: 144). More than that, it is evident that the macroeconomic inability to overcome poverty in South Africa has and continues to affect women severely. Women lack access to, and control over, fundamental economic resources such as land (Kgasi, 2009: 7). In

[2] In the past, farmers used to give farm workers wine instead of their full pay. It created a dependency on alcohol amongst the farm workers, the legacy of which persists today.

addition, studies have shown that the poor are disadvantaged in competitive politics, which typically manifest in a distinct elite bias, and that they consciously withdraw from systems that offer no tangible rewards (Tapscott, 2006: 3). Thus, this study maintains that political participation in South Africa has happened to the exclusion of many of its poor and marginalised citizens, particularly poor women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch area.

There probably also is no other group more marginalised than farm workers, specifically women, who post-1994 were effectively excluded by the neo-liberal policy of the government (Sunde & Kleinbooi, 1999: 47). The lack of clear government policy to effectively protect farm workers, particularly farm women, from unfair labour practices, which arguably is the biggest challenge they face, serves as proof of this (Atkinson, 2007: 3). There therefore is a definite need to consider the experiences of these women in the very important process of participation to enhance their own development.

1.4 Goals of the research

Although much research has been done on participatory democracy in SA (refer to literature review, Chapter 2), relatively little research has been done on the participation of farm workers, and farm women in particular. Most of what has been done has focused on labour practices and housing policy on farms (Atkinson, 2007; Ndinda, 2007; Hartwig & Marais, 2005).

Thus, the choice of doing this research, with a specific focus on farm workers' participation in the ideal of participatory democracy, is not arbitrary. The primary goal this research project aimed to achieve were: to test the hypothesis that farm women are being excluded from effective and meaningful participation in the ideal of participatory democracy in SA and to thereby gain an understanding of the lived experiences of farm women, as a marginalised group, with regard to political participation.

Secondary to the primary goal, the research project also aimed to achieve the following goals:

- To suggest a niche or role for farm women:
    - from the perspective of citizens, as informed citizens actively involved in democratic governance;

    - from the perspective of civil society, as providing a counterbalance, thus the checks and balances, to the abuse of the power of government;
- To make recommendations in terms of adjusting policy relating to participatory democracy, and specifically in terms of opening up the process to this marginalised sector of society;
- To present a typology of the possible obstacles that prevent effective and meaningful participation, should the researcher find any;
- And finally, to add to the broader body of knowledge on the experiences of farmwomen in SA.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the research lies in the fact that, in order to consolidate democracy, participation is vital. Firstly, legitimacy can be enhanced when civil society is permitted to participate in governance. Civil society has the obligation of holding government officials accountable. Scholars even contend that a robust civil society is a clear indicator of a strong democracy. Secondly**,** the argument is made that there are considerable educative benefits to participation. This notion is based on the premise that, with increased participation, citizens encounter others whose opinions may differ from theirs and that they will learn from each other by engaging in constructive conversation. Furthermore, citizen involvement in governance in the country yields external benefits, as it provides opportunities for self-actualisation and self-control.

Davids (2005: 27), who did extensive research on participation at local government level in the Western Province, also lists a few of the possible advantages of participatory democracy. According to him, participation can:

- Promote ownership of governance and development initiatives, which, in turn, can help deepen democracy and bring about sustainable development;
- Give women, the youth and other groups of people who are often marginalised the opportunity to influence the outputs and outcomes of local governance and developmental processes. Participation is therefore a way of ensuring equity (Gran, 1983: 2);
- Lead to capacity building, especially at a community organisational level (Bryant & White, 1982: 15);

- Create a basis for understanding affordability issues, which, in turn, can create the necessary conditions for municipal cost recovery.

This has important consequences for rural women living on farms, because the act of participation may significantly improve their circumstances. Firstly, by drawing this marginalised sector of the community into political participation, thus ensuring equitable participation across gender, empowering women on farms to actively work towards their development and, finally, educating these women by informing them of the sometimes very limited abilities of local government and how their multiple needs can be reconciled with this problem. The focus on women in particular is justified because "some issues and constraints related to participation are gender-specific and stem from the fact that men and women play different roles, have different needs, and face different constraints on a number of different levels" (World Bank, 1996: 148). This research is also significant as it is a form of participatory action research. For instance, informing respondents of the purpose of studying their political participation would entail having to explain why their participation is at all necessary. It may also be that the respondents are not fully aware of the participatory mechanisms available to them. As the purpose of the research is specifically to enquire about their levels of participation in such mechanisms, informing and educating the respondents about such processes presents one way in which respondents can be empowered. In this respect, the respondents in the research project become active participants, involved in a process in which the researcher not only learns of their experiences, but in which they are also able to become better informed.

Taylor and Fransman (2004: 1) note that participation has the potential to "reduce poverty and social injustice by strengthening citizen rights and voice, influencing policy-making, enhancing local governance, and improving the accountability and responsiveness of institutions". By providing a typology of the factors that prevent optimal participation by women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch area, this study can guide local government in addressing these matters and so ensure that it is possible for this excluded group to effectively and meaningfully participate in the governance of issues that directly affect their lives. Finally, this study is significant because the participation of the people, as a building block of development, is a necessity if the goal of sustainable development and consequently empowerment of farm women is to be achieved (Theron, 2005: 130).

1.6 Structure of the study

In order to achieve the abovementioned objectives, the research is organised according to various themes in different chapters. Chapter One provides a general outline of the study, firstly by setting the background to the study. Subsequently, the problem statement, goals and significance of the study are provided. Chapter Two encompasses the literature review for this study. In this respect, the issue of participatory democracy is discussed at length, as well as how it relates to the poor and marginalised sectors of society. Having set the theoretical background for the study, it is then prudent to conceptualise participatory democracy. This is done in Chapter Three. For the purposes of this study, the issue is conceptualised within a developmental perspective, meaning that participation should be used as a mechanism through which poor and marginalised people can enhance their socioeconomic conditions. In Chapter Four, the methodology applied throughout the study is explained. The results and findings of the research are provided in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six provides any conclusions derived from the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Over the years, the notion of citizen participation in political governance has gained increasing importance. The general argument concerning participation holds that the need for more meaningful participation arose because of the failure of liberal and representative systems of governance to link citizens with the institutions and processes of the state. This failure negatively influences the quality and vibrancy of the country's democracy and leads to reduced levels of accountability (Buccus, Hemson, Hicks, & Piper, 2007: 7; Buccus, 2008: 48-49; Hicks, 2009(b): 3-7). Furthermore, public scepticism of and distrust in governments have grown and this has led to a decrease in popular participation in political life. Thus, proponents of participatory democracy offer increased participation by ordinary citizens in the governance of political issues as a means to solve this problem (Bekker, 1996: 39; Gaventa, 2006: 12; Southall, 2003: 266-267). For this purpose, the South African government has set as its goal the inclusion of every single citizen, especially the poor and marginalised, as an essential goal of democratic governance (AfriMAP, 2006: 1-29).

In this chapter a discussion of the existing literature on participatory democracy is provided. In subsection one I discuss the general development of theories of participation. Firstly, the issue of the democratic deficit and its implications for participation is explored. Secondly, I discuss the deepening of democracy, offered by theorists, as a solution to the democratic deficit. Finally, flowing from this discussion, the next part necessitates reflecting on the tyranny of participation as a critique. As a counterargument to this critique, the transformative potential of participation is discussed.

Having laid the basis for the rationale of participation, I reflect on the implementation of the concept in South Africa. This is the theme of subsection two. Amongst theorists of participatory democracy, the consensus is that participatory policies today, specifically in their implementation, fail to include the masses of poor and marginalised people in society. In South Africa, this is definitely the case, particularly when one looks at the exclusion of farm women in the drafting of government policy pertaining to their lives.

Much research has been done on the reasons for the general disappointment with the participatory agenda, with various scholars concluding that government's commitment cannot be doubted, but rather that it is not able to manage this process effectively. The literature highlights three broad explanations for this phenomenon and these explanations are discussed in section three, with the relevant empirical evidence.

2.2 Participatory theories

2.2.1 The democratic deficit

Much of the literature concludes that modern governments find themselves in a crisis of governance (Buccus, 2008; Gaventa, 2006; Hicks, 2009b; Human Development Report, 2002; Tandon, 2008). The crisis results from a number of democratic flaws, which present themselves in different democracies to varying degrees. This situation has led to very low levels of citizen participation in governance. According to Hicks (2009b: 3), the democratic deficit refers to the inability of established liberal notions of representative democracy to link citizens with the institutions and processes of the state. This negatively influences the quality and vibrancy of democracy and results in reduced accountability.

Moreover, growing levels of poverty and deepening inequality cause many citizens to become cynical and distrustful of government institutions and political parties. Naturally, these citizens participate less in governance and state institutions, leading to an ever-growing distance between governing representatives and the citizens that they are supposed to represent. The result is a form of "diminished democracy" (Gaventa, 2006: 9; Buccus, 2008: 48). Not only that, but because of the exclusion of the many poor and marginalised, participation ends up being dominated by small groups of elites, organised civil society and business, and other interest groups that have the necessary resources to participate. This is referred to by Crenson and Ginsberg (cited in Buccus, 2008: 49) as "downsized democracy".

In fact, Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor (2000: 22-23) distinguish four types of democratic deficits:

- hollow citizenship – in which citizens do not enjoy equal rights and entitlements.
- lack of vertical accountability – "the inability of citizens to hold governments and political elites accountable for their use of power";

- weak horizontal accountability – in which "potentially tyrannical" executives manipulate checks and balances through patronage, corruption and the stifling of dissent, and
- international accountability dilemmas – involving the shrinking policy space of national governments and their citizens due to the decision-making power of global markets, multinational firms and international bodies.

The democratic deficit is most aptly illuminated by Benjamin Barber's (1984) "thin democracy" in modern liberal societies. According to him, liberal institutions have led to an erosion of democracy through the triumph of thin democracy. He argues that a central problem with modern liberal democracy is that it leads to a form of thin democracy – a process that marginalises citizens from active decision making. In addition, it tends to shift power to distant representative institutions, far from the communities where citizens live (Powell & Geoghegan, 2005: 140). Barber also equates liberal democracy to "politics as zoo keeping", where citizens are reduced to passive animals in a zoo, waiting on their zookeepers to make decisions about their lives. Regrettably, Barber's argument is still relevant in modern neo-liberal economies, where the power in politics often resides with those who have access to the means to participate. The overall result, argue theorists, is weak democracies characterised by poor representation (Buccus, 2008; Hicks, 2009b; Gaventa, 2006).

According to Dewey, (cited in Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009: 209), "the only cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy". The most appropriate manner of deepening democracy, the participatory democrats argue, is through increased levels of popular participation. Thus, government institutions must be organised so that they open up to allow those always excluded from the decision-making process to do so through active political participation.

2.2.2 Deepening democracy

The general argument is that it is through direct participation by all citizens that democracy can be revived. In this manner, democracy becomes relevant to people's aspirations, needs and priorities. In the words of Gaventa (2006: 12):

> In this view, then, the way to deal with the crisis of democracy, or the democratic deficit, is to extend democracy itself – i.e. to go beyond the traditional understandings of representative democracy, through creating and supporting more participatory mechanisms of citizen engagement, which in

> turn are built upon, and support, more robust views of the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

In accordance, Barber (1984: 117) makes a case for strong democracy as a modern form of participatory democracy. Strong democracy is based on the notion of a self-governing community of citizens, bound less by homogenous interests than by civic education. They have a common purpose, not by their altruism or good nature, but by their civic attitude and participatory institutions. Regarding civic education, Barber argues that there is only one route to democracy, which is education. This implies that a government that is sincere about effecting greater public participation should have some sort of political education programme for citizens in place. Most governments do in fact have such a system in place, but a critique against this form of civic education is that it does not necessarily influence the critical capabilities of citizens (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009: 209).

Hence, critics of direct democracy often ask whether citizens are competent enough to make political decisions. They argue that citizens are often ill informed about political issues, and therefore are unable to make sound judgement based on the little information that they have. Governance is thus left best to those elected to represent the citizens and who have access to information. Lupia and Matsusaka (2004), who did a recent study to answer this question, contend that citizens are more competent than most critics suggest. They conclude that, even with limited information, citizens employ information shortcuts to reach decisions they would have were they as informed as the best-informed persons. Moreover, Barber (1984) argues that strong democracy endorses the "politics of amateurs in the sense that herein politics is its own university, citizenship its own training ground, and participation its own tutor". It is therefore through the process of participation that citizens become better educated politically and better able to make a viable contribution in future political processes.

Participation is therefore seen as the sine qua non of democracy and as being essential for its continued existence (Buccus, 2008; Bekker, 1996). In fact, for any democracy to be considered as legitimate, ordinary citizens need to be actively involved in the process of making decisions on matters directly affecting their lives. Supporting this notion, Dalton (2002: 32) contends that "Democracy requires an active citizenry because it is through discussion, popular interest, and involvement in politics that societal goals can be defined and

carried out. Without public involvement in the process, democracy lacks both legitimacy and its guiding force".

In addition, more often than not it is the very masses of poor people who are excluded from participation (Buccus, 2008; Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; Davids, 2005; Hicks, 2009b; Tapsscott, 2006). Instead of contributing to the improvement of their circumstances, the system has a bias against those who need its assistance the most. In this regard, Powell and Geoghegan (2005: 133) note that of great concern is the ability of oligarchies of power and wealth in manufacturing consensus to monopolise the media and purchase political influence. Clearly, within such a system there is very little space for authentic participation by those who lack the means to buy political influence.

On the other hand, critics argue that the expectations of participation are too high and its failure therefore almost inevitable. In this respect, Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009: 208) contend that the only solution to the democratic deficit may be to lower expectations of democracy and to retreat to a minimalist form of democracy. In its minimalist form, there is at least some chance that the electorate will overthrow a particularly bad government. Once we lower our expectations, there is less room for disappointment. However, this is hardly a solution to the problem. The poor and marginalised in particular may be disappointed less, but they will still suffer the consequences of bad decisions made by a small group of elite. Such a view therefore excludes the prospect of the development of the poor, as people learn to accept bad situations because their response to bad governance is to lower their expectations.

Nevertheless, the literature does highlight two other forms of governance in which the aim is also to increase citizen participation, but with less enthusiasm than participatory democracy. These are civic republicanism and deliberative democracy. Civic republicanism dates back to Ancient Athens and is based on mixed government, the rule of law, and significantly public-spirited citizens. The hallmark of this system rests on the idea that politics ought to be a commitment to the common good, rather than the personal and material interest of citizens. Moreover, republicans support a constitutional framework in favour of open debate and discussion amongst citizens, but are opposed to a system that promotes lawmaking as deals or bargains among self-interested private groups (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009: 214). Deliberative democracy, on the other hand, involves a communicative process. It is based on the assumption that citizens are able to reflect upon personal preferences, values, and judgments

taking into account their participation in political dialogue with other individuals. However, both these theories limit citizen participation to discussion, rather than active decision making in politics. The fact that an issue is discussed amongst citizens is no guarantee that government officials will implement it. Therefore, irrespective of how uncompromised spaces for public deliberation is, and how willing citizens are to submit personal preference to the common good, the decision making power still rests in the hands of the government. Hence, citizens are still only "passive animals" whose lives depend on decisions made by their zookeepers.

Radcliff and Wingenbach (2000: 988) argue that a possible reason for the problems experienced with modern liberal democracy could be that only titular, as opposed to actual, spaces for participation in decision making often existing. The authors cite Verba's "pseudo-participation", whereby officials only use spaces for participation to legitimate previously determined decisions, as an example. Thus, there is a distinct lack of meaningful participation and one cannot realistically expect to see veritable improvements in the material circumstances of the very poor in society.

Furthermore, for participation to be meaningful one needs to move beyond the actual procedural elements and deeply consider the effectiveness of participation. Here an important distinction between participation and consultation is necessary. It is not effective participation when government hosts an Imbizo at which it merely informs citizens of actions to be taken. For the purposes of this research, participation is taken to include the active involvement of citizens in the process in order to have some kind of effect on policy outcomes, whether it is decided that the status quo must be maintained or altered.

In this respect, Davids (2005: 29) maintains that authentic public participation is a mechanism that would provide the public with a voice and a choice in development and governance. Thus, it absolutely must not be confused with consultation or involvement practices. Although these aspects are forms of participation, there is very little actual participation involved and it thus cannot be seen as authentic participation (see Conceptualisation, Chapter 3). Not only should participation be authentic, but participation that enhances the dignity of participants must be both real – it should be meaningful to people's everyday existence – as well as being serious and challenging (Buhler, 2009: 12). It should also be effective in terms of its (projected) capacity to fulfil its declared functions.

Accordingly, Cornwall (2002: 7) notes, "spaces that currently exist for public involvement become sites for genuine citizen participation when those who participate gain meaningful opportunities to exercise voice and hold those who invite them to take part to account". Summarising the argument, Dalton (2002: 48) argues that "political efficacy", feeling that one's political action can affect the political process, can stimulate individuals to participate. However, the opposite, "political cynicism", may very well lead to political apathy and withdrawal.

In the light of this discussion, this study maintains that the inclusion of the poor and marginalised, in this case farm women, in decision making is imperative to ensure the ultimate success of a democratic system. As Norris (cited in Malena & Heinrich, 2007: 340) so succinctly puts it:

> Today a vibrant civil society is usually regarded as essential for good governance and effective democratic consolidation. Political participation through the ballot box, through collective organizations such as unions and local community groups, and through street demonstrations and protest activities, are seen as providing a barrier to tyranny, a channel of public voice and accountability, and a way of challenging and checking the unbridled power of authoritarian regimes.

The "tyranny" the author refers to is of course that of leaders chosen through electoral politics. So often, especially in African governments, one finds that the leaders become tyrants governing their countries without any regard for the interests of the very citizens that voted them into power, and despite being elected through representative democratic processes (Cawthra, Du Pisani, & Omari, 2007; Joseph, 2003). It is then that it becomes necessary for civil society to provide the checks and balances necessary to prevent these tyrants from abusing their power. It therefore is not surprising that many Africans have become disillusioned with mere representative democracy (Southall, 2003; Patel, 2000). Unfortunately, government has not reached the levels of success it envisioned when embarking on its participation agenda at the start of the new democracy, specifically because of the exclusion of the very poor and marginalised.

2.2.3 From the tyranny of participation to the transformative potential of participation

According to proponents of this argument, participation has become so widely supported that it has become a new sort of tyranny in itself. In the groundbreaking book, Participation: The

New Tyranny, various authors wrote a series of articles all challenging "the pervasive belief that participation is unequivocally good" (Christens & Speer, 2006: 2). In fact, Tandon (2008: 1-8) argues that participation is a mindless, universal conditionality that funders impose on unsuspecting governments desperate for donor funding. Furthermore, it is argued, participation in practice often does not function according to its rhetoric of liberation and equal power distribution (Chambers, cited in Williams, 2004: 559).

However, as a contradiction to this sentiment, Dewey (cited in Christens & Speer, 2006: 5) offers the argument that there is no gap between theory and practice, as thought is never separated very far from action. What one may find, however, is a distinction between your preferred theory and someone else's, thus a disparity between your theory and another person's. From this one may conclude that, since participation is widely accepted as a sound theory, one can trust that it may also be seen as such in practice. However, this is not to say that participation is without its challenges. As will be discussed later, various problems with the participatory agenda can be identified in South Africa. Nevertheless, in many respects this has more to do with the ineptitude of government officials in implementing popular participation and with constraints on the people who are intended to participate.

Cooke and Kothari (2006) highlight three types of the tyranny of participation. Firstly, there is the tyranny of the decision-making control of international agencies, as their power over the process lies just beneath the rhetoric of participation. African governments in particular are often bound by agreements made with such agencies that prevent them from implementing decisions made through grassroots participation. As a result, popular participation is used only as a mechanism to get political buy-in for decisions already reached at the top. In the second instance, there is the tyranny of the social-psychological issue of group functioning in participation. In this it is argued that existing power relations often persist within the agenda of participation, sometimes even being aggravated by it. This is a common critique against participation, with many of its opponents concluding that the proponents of participation mostly ignore the power dynamics at the local level and that they tend to see the community as a homogenous unit.

As a counterargument to this, Mohan and Hickey (2004) offer their arguments in Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation. The authors view the community as a number of co-institutional overlapping groups. Thus, the community is not a homogenous entity, but can be seen as consisting of a multitude of citizens who have taken up the right of

citizenship as opposed to it being conferred on them by the state. Finally, there is the tyranny of the dominance of participation in its acceptance of all and everyone, often at the exclusion of other methods for cultivating development. In many respects, the notion of the tyranny of participation thus represents the argument against participation. However, the research on participatory democracy offers a much more compelling argument to support its prevalence. It is through keeping in mind the critique levelled against participatory theory that one can be better equipped to reach its intended goals.

The arguments above compel one to consider the usefulness of the concept of participation, specifically in the South African context, and its practical implications. It therefore is necessary to illuminate the domain within which this participation has taken place, which is the theme of the next section.

2.3 Participatory democracy in South Africa

Much research has been done on the reasons for the failure of the participatory agenda with many scholars in the field concluding that government's commitment cannot be doubted, but rather that it is not able to manage this process effectively (Ballard *et al*., 2000; Deegan, 2002; Pretorius, 2006; Robinson & Friedman, 2007; Hicks, 2009a). The literature highlights three broad explanations for this phenomenon (Ballard *et al*., 2007; Hicks, 2009a; Mattes, 2002; Tapscott, 2006). Firstly, there seems to be a general tendency towards the centralisation of policy formulation within government, with the result that opportunities for the ordinary masses to participate become severely limited. Secondly, as participation requires access to the means to participate, ordinary citizens who lack the necessary capacities and resources to do so are almost always excluded from participation in governance issues. Finally, because of both the first and second issues, many citizens have become very cynical of participatory processes, feeling that they lack political efficacy, and this has led them to take part even less in the governance of matters that directly affect their lives. In the following sections, these issues are under discussion, drawing on empirical evidence to support the arguments.

2.3.1 Central policy formulation

There seems to be a general tendency towards the centralisation of policy formulation within government, with the result that opportunities for the ordinary masses to participate become

severely limited (Cherry, 2000; Matshediso, 2008; Mattes, 2002; Southall, 2003; Tapscott, 2006; Buccus *et al*., 2007). This tendency towards centralism, most scholars conclude, can be seen in various processes put into place by government to exert its dominance. These processes include, firstly, the strengthening of the machinery of the presidency relative to other higher-ranking state branches. Secondly, the ability of the ANC party to "deploy" and "redeploy" parliamentarians as the party sees fit, without the expense of a by-election. Thirdly, it is also clear in the erosion of parliamentary independence via the subordination of parliamentary committees to party discipline. Fourthly, there is the national government's central control over the provinces and, finally, the imposition of party discipline to blur internal party debate and criticism (Southall, 2003: 258-262; Mattes, 2002: 26; Trotter, 2005: 3).

Furthermore, Hicks (2009a), drawing on research at the national level, notes that the legislature can play a crucial role in closing avenues for public participation. This is evident given that, regarding community consultation processes, member of Parliament (MPs), committees and the secretariat are not given adequate time to consult the relevant communities. Finally, in terms of local government, AfriMAP (2006: 13) reports that, as early as in the 2000 local elections, there were complaints about citizens not knowing who their council representatives were. They also note that, regarding the functioning of ward committees, they are often inactive and lack inclusive representation, as they are established at very poorly attended meetings.

Another form of centralisation relates to the ANC government's attempt to foster a dominant ideology and so claim the role of that entity, in society, that knows best what people's preferences, interests and needs are. For instance, the party notes that its aim is to achieve hegemony of ideas and to ensure that its ideas are the dominant ideas in society as a whole. From this perspective, it is not difficult to understand why the party is not very open to criticism. However, Pretorius (2006: 750-755) vigorously criticises this notion. He argues that one needs to be very critical when a party claims itself the "confirmed diviner and mobilizer of the true interests of diverse social groups, declares the interests of other organizations to be 'narrow', claims to possess a 'special understanding' of the security and comfort of society as a whole and expressly favours hegemony".

In addition, the party also has the telling penchant for playing the "race card" when it is criticised by others. According to Matshediso (2008: 16), depending on one's race, the party categorises its critics in one of four groupings (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 ANC government response to criticism

	Black (African, 'Coloured' & Indian)	**White**
Agree with ANC government	*Comrade*	*Progressive*
Criticising ANC government	*Counter-revolutionary and afro-pessimist*	*Counter-revolutionary and racist*

(Matshediso, 2008)

It is therefore very clear that government has grown increasingly intolerant of criticism, whether it is from outside or inside the ANC (Buccus *et al*., 2007; Matshediso, 2008; Mabelebele, 2006; Mafunisa, 2004). According to Cherry (2000: 242), the ANC showed open dissent to criticism from anyone outside of the political party machinery as early as 1995. At this time, the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) organised a march in Port Elizabeth to protest against poor service delivery in the city. The then ANC leadership maintained that there was a significant role for civil society to play in checking the powers of the new government. In addition, it also stated that it recognised the importance of the people to exert pressure on government for delivery. Government objected heavily to the march, however, even appealing to SANCO to call it off. It argued that the march was against the Masakhane campaign, which appealed to township residents to pay for services.

In another example of how the ANC government tends to disregard popular dissent, one can cite its supposed proposal of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy (Mattes, 2002: 26; Trotter, 2005: 3). Regarding the matter, the Coalition of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has said, "Consultations over economic policy have amounted to little more than the ANC dictating what the policy will be" (Mattes, 2002: 6). In general, the feeling was that the ANC did not offer civil society an authentic opportunity to voice its opposition to the policy. By ostensibly consulting people, the main goal was to gain political buy-in for a policy they had already decided upon. In addition, not only does it not tolerate criticism from ordinary citizens, but criticism is also prohibited within its own ranks. Mattes (2002: 25) quotes the 2001 Secretary-General of the ANC, Kgalema Motlanthe, as having said that "the principles of democratic centralism still guide(d) party structures" and

that new party members must promise to combat "any tendency toward disruption or factionalism".

Besides that, the ANC government also tends to outsource policy formulation to technocrats and policy experts, which further limits the spaces of participation for ordinary citizens (Mohan & Stokke, 2000; Mangcu, 2005; Pretorius, 2006). More often than not, government would rather call on technocrats and policy experts than to consult the people about issues that directly affect their lives. Trotter (2005: 2) asserts that, at present, policy formulation functions almost exclusively within the domain of technocrats and policy experts. It is therefore not surprising that government policy often fails to yield its supposed results, as these technocrats fail to create community-specific policies and so address the particular problems of the community in question.

Ballard *et al*. (2007) did research on the development of an Integral Development Planning (IDP) document in the eThekwini metro and conclude that the document failed to generate substantial political support, partly because it was a technical and official-driven process. Furthermore, Thompson (2007: 95-112), who did groundbreaking work on the impact of participatory strategies and processes and their impact on the environmental policies leading to the building of the Berg River Dam in the Franschoek area of the Western Cape, also illustrates this phenomenon. Through her research she showed how the two spaces for participation in building the dam were dominated by government interests, severely limiting the ability of communities to exert influence over the process. According to her, the government never really offered a feasible alternative to the Berg River Dam, which was a clear indication of its purpose to get as much agreement as possible.

Finally, another possible limitation to the success of participatory governance relates to the understanding of the concept. In terms of this, it would seem that the general understanding and meaning of participation is varied and confused (Tapscott, 2006: 5, 13). A core reason for this is the fact that participation is largely advanced in a top-down manner, rather than being permitted to develop organically. Williams (2006: 198) argues that, due to the dominance of bureaucratic experts in policy formulation, the notion of participation has been reduced to a "cumbersome ritual – a necessary appendix required by the various laws and policies operating at the local government level". Within this perspective, Smith and Vawda (2003: 33) argue that one of the central problems with the IDPs, for instance, is that the process is mainly driven by officials as opposed to councillors, thus enlarging the distance

between those elected to govern (councillors) and the electorate whom they are supposed to represent even more. The resultant failure of such technocratic development policies has made it clear that, irrespective of how accommodating a state might be, the success of participatory democracy cannot simply be determined from above and then transmitted to the masses.

Khumalo (2007), who did research on how the development of the Inanda Dam affected rural communities along the Umgeni River in Kwazulu-Natal, illustrates how participatory policies driven from the top down failed to produce meaningful participation and thus positive development in the lives of the people. According to her, the only communication that took place was top-down consultation by a chief who called an Imbizo, only inviting the men of the community. No real consultation took place at this Imbizo, and its main objective was to garner support from the *indunas* (headman) and to inform the community. The result of this process was that the communities lost the open access they had to the river and now have insufficient water supply for their livestock and subsistence farming. Added to this, families living near the space where the dam was built were removed without any compensation, leaving them destitute. Khumalo concludes, "[I]nitiatives are planned at the top, on municipal level and implemented without giving community members the opportunity to voice their opinions and input into planning". If the community had been provided with meaningful opportunities to participate prior to the building of the dam, while the process was still under discussion, many of the problems that occurred later could have been prevented.

2.3.2 Lack of capacity and resources

In any discussion of participatory democracy, it is imperative to include the structural exclusion of the poor and marginalised due to a lack of capacity to exert influence and a lack of resources. Cornwall and Coelho (2007: 3) rightly argue that, despite the institutional arrangements meant to establish participatory democracy, the gap persists between the legal and technical apparatus on the one hand and the reality of the exclusion of the poor and marginalised on the other hand. Various authors, such as February (2006: 136), Khosa (2005: 131, 144), Tapscott (2006: 25), Trotter (2005: 6), and Buccus (2008: 49), echo this sentiment. The authors all conclude that the most salient factors prohibiting the poor and marginalised sector of society to participate meaningfully in political issues pertinent to their livelihoods are access to the necessary knowledge, finances, transport, etc. Booysen (2001)

sets out the factors that "disempower" the poor's participation in governance issues. These factors are set out in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Factors in participatory disempowerment of the poor

Factor	**Elaboration**
Time for organisation, politics	The poor are preoccupied with maintaining their livelihood, threshold levels apply below which the poor are highly unlikely to organise politically.
Communication, media access	The poor are the people most in need of information on constitutional rights, access to resources, democratic processes, etc. The poor might also have difficulty in communicating opinions and preferences.
Transport	Transport is essential to mobilisation, research, gathering resources and communication. The poor either walk or use taxis or public transport, all of which require financial inputs.
Education	Literacy and general education affect the ability and willingness to communicate in the public domain. With low levels of education, citizens could lack the confidence to challenge and engage politicians and processes.

(Booysen, 2001: 20)

Regarding participation by organised groups, specifically NGOs and other such institutions, one often finds that they lack the institutional capacity to engage effectively with the state in altering public policies. Robinson and Friedman (2007: 648), drawing conclusions from extensive research on participation by civil society organisations in SA, find that most organisations acknowledge the significance of participating in public policy. However, few actually are directly involved in the process consistently and even fewer have an impact on policy outcomes. One very important reason for this is the co-optation of the leaders of these organisations by the ANC after the 1994 elections. During the Apartheid years, social organisations used to be extremely involved in the politics of the country, but with the shift to a democratic system their relevance declined and most of them did not have any reason to oppose the government any more. The ANC, acting as an "umbrella party", presented these organisations with the opportunity of working with them, arguing that it would be more beneficial for all to work together in trying to establish democratic practices in the country. Cherry (2000: 241) argues that many previously independent organisations, for instance youth and women's groups, were for the most part absorbed into the ANC party machinery. This is problematic, as it narrows the space for citizen participation in the political process.

Furthermore, within its conception of the citizen as a participant in governance, government maintains that citizens must participate as both consumers and voters. This is made clear in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, which provides for four levels of citizen participation (see Table 2.3). As this definition of the citizen further limits the space for participation by the very poor it warrants critical reflection.

Table 2.3 Four levels of citizen participation

Municipalities require active participation by citizens at four levels:

- As voters – to ensure maximum democratic accountability[3] of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote.
- As citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure policies reflect community preferences as far as possible.
- As consumers and end-users, who expect value-for-money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service.
- As organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via for-profit business, nongovernmental organiszations and community-based institutions.

(Source: White Paper on Local Government. Section 3.3 Ministry for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, March 1998).

As voters, citizens expect certain public services from government, and failure to render these services will have implications for democratic stability. In this regard, Smith and Vawda (2003: 34) maintain that there has been a move away from the "collective orientation of building citizenship towards the individuating exercise of engaging with customers". This shift undeniably undermines meaningful participation. Accordingly, Mohan and Stokke (2000: 251) argue that, by reducing citizens to consumers, factors like the notion of participation in state decision making is ignored, and participation is seen to be involvement in market transactions, putting the poor and marginalised at a further disposition. In addition, the focus on such market-related concepts puts a strong emphasis on the issue of class in a characteristically unequal society.

[3] However, the national electoral system is that of proportional representation, based on party lists. Political leaders are therefore far more accountable to their parties then what they are to the electorate.

More often than not, it is the poor and marginalised who are unable to engage effectively in the neo-liberal market in pursuing their interests, which make demands on government in terms of service delivery. Unfortunately, the poor are often also the ones who lack the means to pay for services. Thus, as paying consumers, they are put at a disadvantage when the opportunity to engage with government on issues pertaining to service delivery and their socioeconomic development arise. Not only are the poor liable to suffer due to being unable to afford services, this relationship also assumes that the paying customer is aware of his or her contractual rights and responsibilities. Sadly, this policy does not consider that one can hardly expect of people still in the process of learning their rights as free citizens, to know their rights as consumers of public services.

Significantly, at the core of this transition from citizen to customer and from public service to private product is the symbolic relationship between the state and the individual (Smith & Vawda, 2003: 35). By reducing the citizen to a customer, the liberal notion of citizenship, within the context of a republican democracy, is denied the citizen. It also undermines notions of active public participation encapsulated in the ideology of a republican democracy. This raises the issue of the apparent tension between the government's vision of active citizenship on the one hand, and citizenship as access to opportunities and socioeconomic goods on the other. Marshall's (1950) classic typology of citizenship is relevant here (Enslin, 2003: 75; Mohamed, 2006: 37). Citizenship, Marshall asserts, rests on civil rights (freedom of speech and belief and access to justice), political rights (political participation) and social rights (to socioeconomic goods and the free exercise of one's heritage). In South Africa, everybody's civil rights are enshrined in the constitution and therefore no doubt exists about that. However, the problem arises with the importance South Africans tend to give to socioeconomic rights as opposed to political and civil rights. According to Mattes (2002), who conducted a survey of South African political culture, South Africans tend to rate socioeconomic goods more highly as constitutive features of democracy than procedural issues like the holding of regular elections, free speech, and competition between parties. Therefore, failure to render services to the poor could possibly lead to negative developments in the consolidation of democracy in the country.

One last factor worth mentioning in this respect is the government's use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Government's purpose with the ICTs is to foster a deliberative and participatory democracy on the one hand, and a service delivery democracy on the other hand. According to Pejout (2004: 185-186), ICTs refer to some extent to the

"political empowerment process: give more weight to people's voice by making easier their participation into the channels of communication, so that their opinion might be taken into prior consideration and may count as a decisive influence on the ruling of the country". However, South Africa has only about 9.4% of the world's internet users and, more importantly, this small minority is bound to be amongst the more well-off citizens. Therefore, government's argument that ICTs will facilitate increased participation by and empowerment of the poor is inherently flawed. This space of participation created by government is only to the benefit of a marginal proportion of the total population.

This factor is illustrated in a study done by Kwake, Ocholla and Odigun (2006) based on a survey relating to the use of ICTs amongst rural women in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Firstly, they define rural as "places with rural characterises such as: low levels of services (e.g. transport, water, and medical services), non-urban settlements (such as riparian villages), and high incidences of poverty" (Ikoja-Odongo cited in Kwake *et al*, 2006: 114). The authors further conclude that rural women mostly are unable to utilise the ICTs as intended by government policy. From the survey, the reasons for this include problems of access and exclusion, especially regarding computers and the internet, with only 6.5% of the respondents having access. Secondly, among the major obstacles to ICT development in rural areas are poor infrastructure, the unreliability of ICTs and high costs relating to its implementation and maintenance. In the third instance, lack of relevance and low provision of appropriate content in terms of language and subject matter were cited as problems the women experienced with ICTs. Fourthly, factors such as the availability, physical accessibility and affordability of ICTs have also played a role. Finally, these women are also likely to be educationally disadvantaged, specifically in terms of computer literacy, as 21% of the respondents identified this as a hindering factor in accessing ICTs. Clearly, there are many factors obstructing the use of ICTs, particularly by women, in rural areas. Therefore, the idea that ICTs will lead to increased levels of participation may be true, but not so much for poor women living in rural areas.

The domain in which the lack of resources and capacities of the poor plays itself out is that of the political power games operating during policy formulation. According to Hicks (2009b: 17), there are unequal power relationships between government officials, civil society representatives, business interest groups, bureaucrats, ordinary citizens, those with access to resources and information and those without, urban and rural residents, men and women, and people with different abilities. These unequal power relations then determine who puts what

on the policy agenda and which stakeholders are subsequently included or excluded from the very important stage of decision making (Buccus, 2008: 55; Trotter, 2005: 5-6; Ballard *et al*., 2000: 279-280; Booysen, 2001: 18). For any participatory process to be successful, therefore, due attention needs to be given the power relations in society and how these can be managed in such a manner that they do not affect the process negatively.

2.3.3 Growing political cynicism

Considering all the arguments made above, it is no surprise that many citizens have become cynical of participatory processes and feel that they lack political efficacy. As mentioned, South Africans do not show much commitment to the process, despite the ANC government's expressed commitment to participatory democracy (Ballard *et al*., 2000; Cherry, 2000; Davids, 2005; Deegan, 2002; Mattes, 2002; Robinson & Friedman, 2007; Trotter, 2002). In fact, based on research done by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) since 1995, Mattes (2002: 29-33) concludes that SA has one of the most passive citizenries in Southern Africa. According to him, as of mid-2000 only 11% of South Africans said they "frequently" engaged in political discussion, and 12% said they paid attention to government and public affairs "always" or "most of the time". His research further shows that South Africans are less likely to participate in community-level organisations and that there are extremely low levels of contact with government leaders. Further echoing this sentiment, Mangcu (2005: 77) goes so far as to call the voiceless masses "passive spectators" in the governance of the country.

The literature overwhelmingly supports the notion that South African citizens feel that, since government fails to meet their needs, they have no incentive to participate in the governance of the country (Davids, 2005; Tapscott, 2006; Thompson, 2007; Trotter, 2005). In fact, the recent wave of protests may very well be an indication that more and more citizens are growing tired of the rhetoric of participation and empowerment that does not yield any material gains (Matshediso, 2008; Tapscott, 2006; Thompson, 2007). Accordingly, Buccus (2008: 55) notes that groups at discussion forums on civil society experiences in public participation express feelings of being sidelined, marginalised and disempowered. The groups also mentioned concerns about not receiving feedback on inputs made, recommendations not being taken up by government officials, being co-opted into a process with a pre-determined outcome, and being excluded from an "inner circle" involved in actual decision making. Finally, Williams (2006: 204) ascribes the reasons for citizen's lack of

participation to negative perceptions or experiences, such as language barriers, lack of funding, fear of government and its agents, feelings of betrayal and the notion that participation will not produce any meaningful results.

The result of this has been a steady decline in government institutions and processes related to participatory democracy (Khosa, 2005; Mattes, 2002). Mattes (2002: 32) notes that, by 2000, only 54% of black people and 46% of all respondents felt that the president was interested in their opinions; 48% and 42% respectively felt similarly about Parliament; and only 33% and 31% felt the same about their local governments. Clearly, these results are worrying and therefore a participatory strategy that includes not only those who are well resourced, educated and able to articulate their needs, but one that also provides space for the poor and marginalised sector of society, is crucial.

2.4 Farm women and participatory democracy

Unfortunately, very little information is available on the participation of farm women in democratic structures. Most of the existing literature focuses on how gender relates to land reform, farm women's participation in housing delivery and, more relevant to this research, the gendered nature of work in the agricultural sector. However, some general trends can be highlighted to illuminate the position of farm women in this regard.

The most significant work done on farm women in the Western Cape is a study done by the Centre for Rural Legal Studies (CRLS) and the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE). In 1998, the two organisations embarked on a research project to monitor the compliance of the Western Cape Government with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Sunde & Gerntholz, 1999). The South African government became a signatory to CEDAW in 1995 and fully ratified the document in 1996. This document is of particular relevance, as it refers to the vulnerable nature of women in rural areas. Article 14 deals specifically with the position of women farm workers and the government's obligations toward these women.

The findings of this research project indicate that the Western Cape Government does not prioritise farm women's rights. The Department of Community Safety and Security, for instance, commented that it was not its responsibility to provide services to farm workers. This was the general response across most of the government departments studied, with the

exception of two. The study concluded that there is a general lack of commitment to rural areas, specifically women living on farms.

According the Fast (1998: 310), a primary strategy through which the meaningful participation of women in politics can be assured is to allow them greater access to public office. However, this does not seem to be a priority for the South African government. Although his figures are probably outdated now, Fast (1998: 310) comments that, in most rural areas, only 10 to 15% of councillors are women, and this number is about 25 to 30% in urban areas. Although the government has suggested a gender quota for different government departments, the significance of such a policy is doubtful. This is due to the voluntary nature of the policy. Walsh (2006: 93) traced the involvement of women in politics from 1994 to 1996 and mentions that if women in rural areas did manage to get into public office, they experienced various problems. Female councillors often found it difficult to attend meetings because they had to travel through dangerous areas to get there. Other factors, such as an underdeveloped infrastructure and pervasive sexism, also limit women's abilities to broaden policy content and affect change. Historically, arenas for decision making in rural communities are reserved for men. The result has been that in many rural areas there is no culture of women participating in politics. Hence, women's participation in politics tends to be trivialised and devalued, with gender politics often viewed as being disruptive and irrelevant.

2.5 Conclusion

This discussion propels one to ask whether participatory governance is at all relevant in South Africa. It is the argument of this research that it is indeed so. Democracy, albeit a somewhat alien concept, has freed many of Africa's people from colonialism and racial oppression, and should therefore not merely be discarded on the basis of the fact that it is an arguably Eurocentric concept. Whether it is indeed the best system of governance is a debate beyond the scope of this research. Suffice it to say that, without the institution of democracy, it is very likely that many Africans would still today suffer heavily under oppression from either colonial governments or from authoritarian African governments that gained independence through violent struggles.

Trotter (2005) maintains that, should citizens want to voice their concerns to government, they may be unsuccessful speaking as a single individual, as it is easier to ignore one person's view. The author further argues that if, on the other hand, they were to speak as one, in a narrative, citizens are more likely to influence policy issues:

> Perhaps if these "voices" were given structure, such as that offered by narratives, there would be a greater chance of them being "heard". The "voice", in general, lacks unity, making it easy to ignore. The "narrative", on the other hand offers structure to the "voice" and is more capable of being heard.

This argument underscores the importance of the poor mobilising to speak collectively on issues that affect them. However, a central problem concerning participation by the poor relates to their inability to mobilise sufficiently for effective participation. Thus it becomes necessary for government to arrange those spaces created for participation in such a manner that they allow room for the poor and marginalised, particularly women living on farms, to articulate their views. In this regard the notion of indigenous knowledge becomes central to participation, as the poor often do not have the educational and political savvy to engage effectively in the domain of power politics.

The aim of this chapter was to elucidate the domain within which theorists have tended to view participation over time. The first section dealt with the development of theories of participation and the main theoretical debates on the issue. In section two, the practical implications of participatory democracy were discussed within a South African context, noting specifically how problematic the concept is when considering participation by the poor and marginalised. The chapter was concluded by arguing that, despite all its challenges, participation is still relevant and even crucial to a sustainable democracy. However, what has also become clear is that, to ensure its continued relevance, participation needs to deliver real material benefits to those who engage in the process. As will become clear in the next chapter, participation cannot only relate to the political participation of citizens in ensuring a democratic society, but it must also see to the socioeconomic needs of people, thus a more holistic conception of participation becomes necessary.

Having provided the theoretical framework for notions of participatory democracy, the following chapter presents a conceptualisation of the issue. This is done by unpacking the concept, looking firstly at participation, and then at democracy, to reach a comprehensive definition of participatory democracy. Other concepts key to this study is also clarified.

Chapter 3

Conceptualising Participatory Democracy

3.1 Introduction

From the literature review it was concluded that participation can be advanced on the basis of the ideal of "deepening democracy". The premise of this argument resides in the fact that the only means through which modern problems with democracy can be resolved is through increased levels of participation. Thus, participation must not only be by a small elite with access to the means to participate, but participatory processes should be opened up and made more accessible to the masses of poor and marginalised people who are often excluded from the process. However, the argument holds that people, especially the poor, will only participate if they can see direct material benefits (Khosa, 2005: 131). Therefore, it is necessary that participation entail the actual development of people, through empowering them in the process.

In this chapter the purpose is to provide a conceptual framework for participatory democracy. Firstly, I define democracy, as this is where the issue of participation finds its premise. In this respect, it is clear that no system can rightfully be deemed democratic if all its citizens are not permitted to participate in its governance. In section three, participatory democracy is defined and significant consideration is given to the reasons why some people may not participate in politics. Having discussed the sources of inactivity, the issue of actual participation warrants further clarification. This issue is taken up in section four. Firstly, I define participation, and then the notion of participation as empowerment is elaborated on, before I discuss participation as a building block of development. Section five clarifies other important concepts relevant to the research project. Finally, I by provide a short summary of the chapter.

3.2 Democracy

Democracy has become somewhat of a catch phrase in modern politics, although it is a concept that has been defined and redefined by many theorists over time. In its original meaning in the Greek city state, the notion of democracy was set out as *kratia* (power, rule, mastery) by the *demos* (masses, people), in other words: majority rules (Joseph, 2003: 165).

In accordance with this, Heywood (2002: 422) sees democracy as "government of the people, by the people and for the people", implying both popular participation and government in the public interest. Starting with the latter, government for the people would allude to more authoritarian notions of governance. Government by the people can be perceived as a situation where the people elect representatives to govern. Finally, government by the people would imply that the people would govern themselves by participating actively in decision making on issues that directly affect their lives. Within this context, the people therefore become central to the notion of democracy.

Historically, democracy has been discussed in terms of two different strands. A distinction is made between direct democracy (participatory) and indirect democracy. According to Bobbio (cited in Offor, 2006: 268),

> From classical antiquity to the seventeenth century, democracy, when it was considered at all, was largely associated with the gathering of citizens in assemblies and public meeting places. By the early nineteenth century in contrast, it was beginning to be thought of as the right of citizens to participate in the determination of the collective will through the medium of elected representatives.

Thus, in its earliest conception, democracy concerned the direct participation of the Greek polity. However, this form of democracy only included those considered as (first-class) citizens of the state. Anyone under the age of twenty, the propertyless, slaves and all women were excluded from this process of public deliberation. On the other hand, indirect democracy, otherwise known as representative democracy, has elections as a minimal requirement. This means that, as long as a country has regular and free and fair elections, it is considered as democratic. This is consistent with more classical definitions of democracy, like that of Schmitter & Karl (1991: 76), who see it as "a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives". In line with this, Dahl (cited in Waghid, 2002: 184) offers eight criteria of democracy: (1) the right to vote, (2) the right to be elected, (3) the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, (4) elections that are free and fair, (5) freedom of association, (6) freedom of expression, (7) alternative sources of information, and (8) institutions for making public policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

However, this definition is problematic, as it limits the participation of citizens to a once-off activity, only every four or five years in most countries, when they have the opportunity to

vote for their preferred representatives. As this system leaves little space for holding representatives accountable, more often than not one of the results has been that leaders abuse the power entrusted to them through electoral processes. Many theorists now argue for a return to direct participatory democracy, albeit in a more inclusive form. This form of democracy, they note, requires more than just universal suffrage, political parties and elected legislatures (Deegan, 2002; Mafunisa, 2004; Offor, 2006; Southall, 2003). In fact, it has to do with the active participation of *all* citizens of a country in its governance, thus a modern form of participatory democracy. In accordance with this, the ANC defines democracy in the following terms:

> All citizens should be guaranteed the right to elect a government of their choice, freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination, and other rights entrenched in the constitution. They should have a government not only formally based on their will, but one that is open and transparent, and one that consults and continually involves the people in policy formulation and implementation. Consistent with these principles is the task of ensuring equality among the racial, ethnic, language, cultural and religious communities; and equality between woman and men: to build a united nation of free individuals with the right to associate with whomever they wish on the basis of equality (Pretorius, 2006: 748).

Clearly, the government also deems this form of democracy more appropriate to South African politics. However, it is important to note that the argument is not that indirect forms of democracy must be discarded in favour of direct democracy. Rather, a combination of the two forms is necessary. Before one moves on to a discussion of participatory democracy, another form of democracy is worth mentioning, namely deliberative democracy. This form of democracy is very relevant to participatory forms of governance, as it is based on the notion there will almost always be conflict in terms of political preferences during participation in governance, and a means to resolve such conflicts therefore is necessary. Deliberative democracy thus is a process whereby those with conflicting interests, who are involved in a political process, would engage in rational arguments over political preferences.

According to Waghid (2002: 190), this engagement is supposed to occur through "open and uncoerced discussion, taking into account the views and reasons of others in support of their preferences, with the aim to arrive at some agreed upon decision or compromise". Miller (cited in Waghid, 2002: 190) further argues that deliberation "relies on a person's capacity to be swayed by rational arguments and to lay aside particular interests and opinions in deference to overall fairness and the common interest of the collectivity". However, this sort

of democracy relies on people being articulate enough and having the confidence to stand up amongst a group of people and argue their point. Unfortunately, those who are poor are often not as informed and able to air their opinions as others who are well-resourced. Furthermore, being aware of this, the poor might also lack the confidence to stand up in a political setting and "rationally" argue a point of view. In addition, who decides what is rational and what is not? All of these arguments relate to the issue of power within politics. This aspect is dealt with in the section on participation as empowerment.

3.3 Participatory democracy

Defining the issue

Ballard *et al*. (2007: 273) note that "the participatory process, then, is not the pure communication of expectations by communities to officials, but entails the mediation and structuring of those expectations by the city officials". For the purposes of this research, participatory democracy therefore is actions pursued by *all* individuals or collectives that constitute the polity of a certain government in the form of the conventional and unconventional activities of political participation, which ultimately result in the alteration of a certain government policy. An important factor to consider here is that policy alteration may include not changing anything at all about the status quo. At times, the best solution to a policy issue may be to leave things exactly as they are, and this constitutes policy influence.

Furthermore, in pursuit of the ideal of participatory democracy, it is vital that citizens be engaged in "making decisions" as opposed to merely "making demands". In "making decisions", intensive, face-to-face participation in small settings allows for reflection and rational argument, whereas "making demands" constitutes the mere expression of political preferences, much the same as voting (Radcliff & Wingenbach, 2000: 981). In this regard, meaningful participation is therefore vital to ensure that actual sustainable development of the people becomes possible.

Having done research on the functioning of participatory democracy in South Africa, Williams (in Thompson, 2007: 54) highlights three spaces of participation operating in living community networks. Firstly, he notes *passive participation*, whereby people participate as information recipients in the sense that they are merely being informed of decisions already made. Secondly, people can engage in *participation by proxy*, whereby participation functions within a network, for instance the Stellenbosch Action Group. For all intents and purposes, this form of participation is self-mobilisation, through which people receive

resources from other agencies and apply this based on internally agreed activities. Finally, there is *participation for material incentives*, whereby participation exists through the donation of resources. Participation thus includes the active involvement of citizens in order to have some kind of effect on policy outcomes, whether it is decided that the status quo must be maintained or altered. One can thus rightly conclude that no democracy can be seen as such if all its people are not allowed to participate in its governance. Therefore, it is imperative that we study issues relating to participatory democracy and make it an essential part of the pursuit of good governance.

Non-participation in politics

Khosa (2005: 128), in contrast, defines participatory democracy as "voluntary activities through which members of the public, directly or indirectly, share in the legislative, policy-making and planning activities of democratic institutions". Significantly, the author speaks of voluntary participation, indicating that some people might simply not want to participate actively. On the other hand, others may not participate because they are unable to do so as a result of circumstances beyond their control. These factors are particularly important for this research project, as the research question relates to why farm women do not actively participate in political governance.

In this regard Manheim (1975: 112-116) provides three explanations for non-participation in politics. These factors relate to people's ability, opportunity, and preference for participation in politics. In terms of the ability, for instance, many people lack the time or skills required to participate in political activities. Their ability to participate could be limited by their occupation, as they may not have enough leisure time to engage in politics after work. Furthermore, a person who is fundamentally illiterate may suffer from an inability to comprehend and thus respond to political stimuli, a factor which would also limit their participation. Finally, someone who is geographically isolated from the hub of political activity may also be inactive, as participation requires greater effort than what is normal in a given circumstance. In such circumstance, inactivity in politics is therefore not so much due to an unwillingness to participate, but rather because the individual is handicapped by other factors.

In the second instance, an individual may be inactive or only minimally so because he or she is presented with few opportunities to participate, specifically because of a lack of access to politically relevant information. So, for instance, the less affluent, the less educated and the

young may have limited exposure to politically relevant information in their daily lives, and thus have very little to fall back on when confronted with a political issue. As Manheim so succinctly put it, "indeed, the paucity of informational stimuli results in a kind of psychopolitical inertia which tends to be reinforced to the extent that an individual's personality and preferences fail to push him into initiating political activity on his own" (Manheim: 1975: 113).

Finally, political inactivity may occur because of various affective and cognitive psychological factors. Thus, inactivity arises due to the purposeful avoidance or devaluation of political participation itself. These factors include apathy, anomie, and a low sense of one's political efficacy. Apathy relates to the absence of concern with political outcomes. Such an individual may assign little relevance to opportunities to participate in political issues. Anomie is a state of mind in terms of which such an individual feels that political life is passing him or her by and that they do not have a place in which to anchor themselves in the sphere of politics. Lastly, there is the issue of a lack of political efficacy (which was discussed at length in the literature review), whereby someone may feel that their participation will yield little if any result, and therefore that there is no need to do so in the first place.

It is thus clear that inactivity in politics can happen due to a variety of reasons. It could be due to the social or psychological orientation of the individual; it could be voluntary or result from de facto non-political conditions; and, finally, it could be a matter of choice or circumstance. Against this background, one can now conceptualise public participation so as to clearly elucidate how such a form of participatory democracy is to be achieved.

3.4 Public participation

3.4.1 Defining the issue

The literature provides various definitions of public participation and, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the concept, some of these are given here. In a broad sense, public participation can be defined as the direct participation (involvement) of ordinary citizens in public affairs, which means that citizen participation is the possession by the ordinary citizen of more direct control over decision making in matters that affect the community. According to the National Land Transport Transition Act (NLTTA), Act 22 of

2000, which provides guidelines on public participation, the concept refers to "a process whereby an individual, group, or body participates in the communication process. Often it also refers to the public participating actively in the actual planning process, including the identification of needs, the identification of solutions, and the prioritisation of projects".

In a broader context, it is "all means of involvement of the public, role players, stakeholders, ranging from dissemination of information to full involvement in the planning and decision-making process (NLTTA, Act 22)". Both these explanations of public participation exclude conventional modes of participation, however, such as voting in elections. In this respect, Goldsmith (1980, cited in Mentoor, 1995: 41) distinguishes between, on the one hand, direct participation, which includes participating in interest groups, political protest and violence, and on the other hand, indirect participation, which represents activities such as voting in elections and referendums, and also expressing views in newspapers. Various definitions, as will become clear later, make a distinction between these two forms of participation by applying different concepts.

According to Persons (1990, cited in Bekker, 1996: 42), "[E]ffective citizen participation is determined to exist when a decision-making effort aimed at planning, funding, advocacy, or delivery of services directly involves those whom the decisions affect, so the results reflect their concerns". A key issue here is that participation relates to decisions that have the potential to affect directly those who will participate in their formulation. It is fair to assume that people may not be willing to participate actively in issues that are of no relevance to them. It therefore is critical that there is a continuous flow of information in terms of the intended policies of government to the people whom those policies will affect. In this manner, governments can assure that the process of participation is that much more effective, as those who participate have a stake in the successful completion of the process.

On the other hand, public participation can also mean opening up greater access to the decision-making process to all people. It can be defined as the act of taking part, or sharing, in the planning process. It implies that members of the public or representatives of the affected community or the role players are actively involved in the planning process (NLTTA, 2001: 1). This definition assumes that routes to decision making were previously closed to people. In South Africa, this was definitely the case during the exclusive rule of the Apartheid government. The post-1994 government has certainly tried to open up this process

much more, but critical reflection is necessary on whether this ideal has persisted into successive governments, following the elections after the first democratic term (an analysis of current decision-making trends is done in the literature review).

Conge (1988) defines public participation as "…an individual or collective action at the national or local level that supports or opposes state structures, authorities, and/or decisions regarding allocation of public goods...". What becomes clear is that participation is not always necessarily an act against government policy, nor is it always for it. It can be both critical and supportive of the government.

Jae-on Kim (cited in Dalton, 2006) identifies four actions that constitute conventional political participation, namely voting, campaign activity, communal activity and the direct contact of officials. These can be termed the universally accepted and promoted forms of participation. Furthermore, according to Petersen *et al*. (cited in Bergstrom, 2006), a comprehensive list of these activities would include those that are more traditional, for instance voting and party membership, and also more unconstitutional forms of participation, like civil disobedience, riots, strikes and demonstrations.

In South Africa, a relatively mature democracy, the more traditional forms are obviously present. There also is evidence of the latter activities, specifically unlawful riots, strikes and demonstrations. Conge (1988), on the other hand, argues that most debates relating to discussions on participation within a political context can be identified as revolving around six major issues, namely active versus passive forms of participation; aggressive versus non-aggressive behaviour; structural versus non-structural objects; governmental versus non-governmental aims; and mobilised versus voluntary action.

Muller and Marsh (cited in Dalton, 2006) propose a model indicating the transition from conventional participation to more unconventional forms of activism. This model is characterised by several stages. The first stage reflects the transition from conventional to unconventional politics in the form of petitions, slogans and lawful demonstrations. Dalton notes that, although these activities are more extreme than conventional participation, they still constitute democratic activities. The second stage indicates the change from acceptable activities to unconventional and, in some instances, unlawful forms of participation. At this level, citizens turn to boycotts to convey their unhappiness. The third level marks the total changeover to illegal activities, but is still characterised by non-violence, such as unofficial and rent strikes. Lastly, at the extreme level of participation, citizens tend to turn to violence.

Here, activities such as occupations, damage and unlawful demonstrations will directly influence the sustainability of a democracy and cannot be seen as healthy participation, although there is some contestation of this argument, as will become clear later.

Finally, Kellerman's (1997, cited in Mouton, 2004: 15) definition is very relevant for this study. The author sees participation as

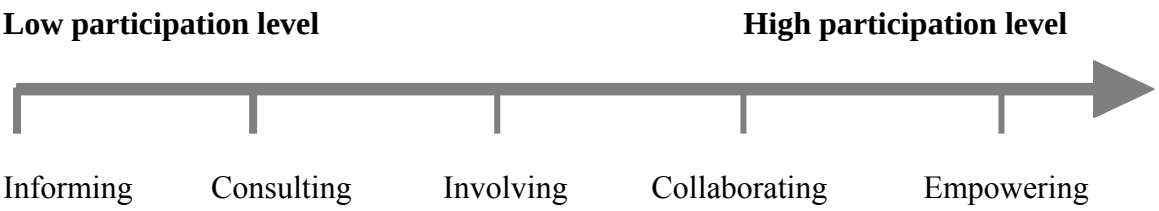
> [A] continuous process through which people are capacitated or enabled to exercise varying degrees of influence over development activities that affect their lives. Participation is an empowering process, enabling people to have an increasing measure of control over their own lives. Therefore, participation ought to be measured in terms of the degree of influence people exercise over development initiatives and activities.

Notably, the author draws a link between development and empowerment. From the perspective of participation is a building block of sustainable development and empowerment as the highest level of participation, and these issues are inextricably linked to each other. In the following sections, these factors are therefore reflected upon further, starting with the issue of empowerment.

3.4.2 Participation as empowerment

According to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), it is better to understand public participation as functioning on a continuum, whereby the participatory measures are moving from the lowest to the highest level of participation. As indicated in Figure 3.1, the level of participation would grow stronger as one moves from informing the people, consulting with them, involving the people, collaborating with them, to finally empowering the people.

Figure 3.1 Continuum of participation levels



Source: (DWAF: Generic Public Participation Guidelines (2001: 6)

For the purposes of conceptual clarification, the DWAF's (2005: 42) definitions of these concepts are very useful, as they relate specifically to the South African participatory environment. Furthermore, their guidelines on participation are used as a generic form by various government departments in the country, therefore they shed light on how participation is envisioned to occur from a governmental perspective. The concept "informing the people" relates to the flow of information between the participants during the process of participation. It refers to a process whereby the public is provided with balanced and objective information. Thus, it enables people to understand the problem and offer possible solutions and alternatives.

In terms of consulting with individuals, this refers to an attempt to "obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions. It involves acknowledging concerns and providing feedback on how stakeholder input has influenced the decision (DWAF, 2005: 42)". By involving participants, they are co-opted in monitoring, undertaking impact studies, and identifying viable alternatives to a specific development project. Lyons, Smuts and Stephens (2001: 1234) argue that this form of participation was present in South Africa, particularly just before the end of apartheid in 1994. According to them, it is perceived as the "co-optation of communities in the implementation of projects resulting from top-down decision-making".

Collaboration refers to a process in which the ultimate goal is to work together, as partners, on each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. Finally, empowerment is defined as a "process of capacitating the stakeholder(s) through involvement and collaboration so that they are able to make informed decisions and to take responsibility for final decision-making (DWAF, 2005: 42)". Clearly it involves a much a more intensive form of participation, and presumably is much more rewarding to those who participate in political issues. In the light of this, the notion of empowerment requires further investigation.

According to Somerville (1998, cited in Lyons *et al*., 2001: 1234), empowerment includes all processes through which people's control, whether it is collective or individual, over their lives is enhanced. The authors also cite the World Bank Group (1999), which sees empowerment as transferring control over decisions and resources to communities or organisations. This process involves action at the grassroots level, thus from the bottom up,

the creation of self-awareness and the transformation of communities, which would result in negotiated power sharing in issues. Finally, particularly as it is relevant for this research project can be seen as "the self-organisation of the poor (in a co-operative and not insurgent manner) as a means of surviving, preserving some dignity, and gaining control over the means to livelihood" (Lyons *et al*., 2001: 1235).

From these definitions, certain factors arise that need critical reflection. Firstly, the issue of power plays an important role during participation and, consequently, empowerment. According to Atkinson (cited in Lyons *et al*., 2001: 1234), empowerment is "assigned meaning resulting from the exercise of power". Therefore, the issue of with whom the ability to exercise power lies is vital. In this perspective, it is argued that the means by which empowerment can take place is to distribute such power, equally, amongst everyone in society. This can be done by everyone having an equal share in the making of decisions during processes of public deliberation. Again, it must be emphasised that relevance is crucial. People should be able to make decisions about issues that are of relevance to their well-being, therefore issues that will have a direct impact on their lives. Thus, devolving decision-making power in such a context is justified.

Secondly, when one speaks of empowering people the assumption is made that some individuals lack power relative to others in society. This issue relates to the unit of empowerment. It raises the question of who is supposed to be empowered. Does empowerment have to do with the individual, the community, or organisations within society? According to the World Bank Group's definition above, the aim is to empower communities and organisations. However, I would like to argue that the process starts with the individual. By enhancing the individual's ability to effect change or influence during participation, he or she is put in a much better position to share this capacity with the community. In such a manner, empowered individuals can carry the skills learned over to their communities and to the different organisations in which they are involved.

Finally, the IAP2's outline of what these mechanisms of participation ought to entail, in practice, is also useful. These mechanisms are set out in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Objectives and promises of stakeholder engagement

LEVEL OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	OBJECTIVE	PROMISE TO STAKEHOLDERS
INFORM	To provide balanced and objective information to improve understanding of the issues, alternatives, and/or solution.	"We will keep you informed."
CONSULT	To obtain feedback from stakeholders on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	"We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision."
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	"We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternative, developed, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision."
COLLABORATE	To partner with the stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	"We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible."
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholders	"We will implement what you decide."

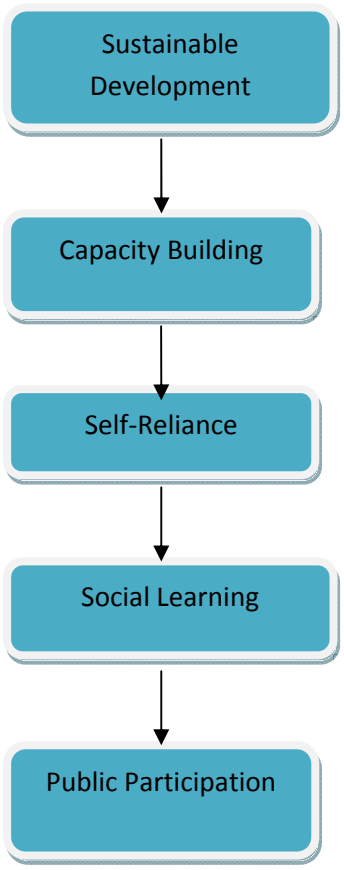
Source: Adapted from IAP2 (2000)

3.4.3 Participation as a building block of development

One of the central arguments for participation in democratic governance is that participation ideally would lead to the improvement of people's lives. Participation, it is argued, would lead to a positive change in or enhancement of people's socioeconomic circumstances. In accordance with this, Kotze (1997: ix) contends that participation is seen as the "sin qua non (sic) for successful and sustained development" within the context of a people-centred development approach. The underpinning concern is that, with the prevalence of gross inequalities and rising poverty levels, the only means through which the development aim of addressing the needs of the poorest in society can be reached is through their inclusion in

their own advancement. Accordingly, Meyer and Theron (2005: 5) propose five building blocks of development (refer to Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 The building blocks of development



Source: Adapted from Meyer & Theron (2005: 5)

Participation must therefore be seen from a holistic perspective, as both a means and an end. Participation as a means refer to a process whereby participation is used as a means to legitimate the predetermined actions or decisions which were already carried out by an external entity. According to Lyons *et al*. (2001: 1236) various costs may arise from this, including political costs, for instance exacerbation of local rivalries. It could also have developmental costs, for instance the imposition of unrealistic, inappropriate and unsustainable development projects. On the other hand, participation as an end in itself is based on the fundamental ethical principle that people should have some control over issues that directly affect them. In this respect, empowerment is seen as the true end of participation. This is in line with the previous definition of participation, according to which

empowerment is seen as the highest level of participation. What becomes clear is that, for long-term improvements in people's material welfare to take place, their active participation in the process is crucial, hence the importance of a people-centred approach to development.

People-centred development

The idea of a people-centred approach deals with the enhancement of people's capacity to participate in development processes. Kotze (1997: 1) defines development as "positive social, economic, and political change in a country or community". Within this context, positive change is inevitably associated with the idea of social, economic and political improvement or advancement. For the purposes of this study, and within the context of democracy, it is argued that development must occur in a people-centred manner. Development must therefore occur through "consultative practices, through identifying (as accurately as possible) and acting on what are good for people in a particular context, and through clear-headed identification of constraints and opportunities" (Kotze, 1997: 6). Thus, the people and their environment are the primary concerns. In this context, the creative initiative of the people is a primary resource in achieving the final objective of the development of both their mental and material welfare.

In confirmation of this sentiment, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1963:4) links public participation and development in the following manner:

> The process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. This complex of processes is, therefore, made up of two essential elements: The participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative, and the provision technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help, and mutual help and make these more effective.

One may therefore conclude that not only is participation of the people, particularly the poor and marginalised, crucial to sustaining democracy, it is also a vital component of development. As women living on farms are particularly vulnerable, their participation in their own advancement is to be recommended. Through participation in governance issues, these women may become empowered to initiate programmes through which entire communities can be developed sustainably.

3.5 Defining other key terms

3.5.1 Bottom-up participation

Bottom-up participation is initiated from the grassroots level, thus by individuals, local communities and organisations who are not necessarily in government institutions. According to Sabatier (cited in Howlett & Ramesh, 2003: 186), this approach focuses on "studying more carefully the actions of those affected by, and involved in the implementation of a policy".

3.5.2 Top-down decision making

Top-down decision making refers to a process whereby government officials and civil servants employed by government make decisions at the top, which are then carried over to the masses on the ground. Such decision-making processes do not allow for the involvement of ordinary citizens in the actual decision making. It is typically associated with technocratic and centralist forms of governance. Finally, it relates to the argument that effective policy implementation must be a top-down process; it is concerned with designing mechanisms to ensure that the implementing officials could be made to do their job more effectively (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003: 186).

3.5.3 Marginalised people

According to the DWAF (2005: 19 & 43), different stakeholders have different capacities for participation. Some may have inadequate means of contact, might be illiterate, or may need support to understand the participatory process and its implications. They therefore define marginalised people as "a group of people, usually a minority group, who are often impoverished community members and do not have the means to participate in decision-making processes…. [T]hey are usually the youth, women, and elderly people who lack regular information flow due to inadequate communication and transport facilities".

3.5.4 Local government

Of the three tiers of government (national, provincial and local), local government is often seen from the perspective as being that part of government closest to the people, hence its primary concern is seeing to the basic needs of people in the community. It also passes by-laws for a local area and is charged with the responsibility of maintaining infrastructure, e.g. refuse removal, water, housing and roads repair.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, a conceptual framework for participatory democracy was provided. The main argument was that a holistic perspective is vital when considering issues of participation. Such a perspective would take cognisance of participation as a building block of development. Not only that, it is also important that one considers how participation adds value to the process of democratisation. This is based on the notion that a focal point of democracy is for people to take part in decision making. However, what is more important is that participation must be meaningful. This means that the process must be conducted in such a manner that participatory democracy is not only an ideal, but also that it brings forth actual improvements to the lived realities of people. Therefore, the people must be empowered through their participation in the process. In conclusion, it must be emphasised that there is no clear recipe for participation. Participation depends on the people involved, their particular context, and how their indigenous knowledge is utilised in the process.

Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research is an empirical study, predominantly exploratory in nature. In answering the research question, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures will be employed to gather the data. It is vital that these methods are seen as together offering a unique snapshot of women living on farms, a research target group that is particularly difficult to access. In this context, textbook conceptualisations of the individual methods become somewhat compromised. Hence, combining the methods provides one with a much clearer picture of the experiences of farm women than would have been possible if I had applied methodical purity. In section two, a discussion of the purpose of this combination is provided, along with the relevant justification. In section three we look at the focus of the research, define the unit of analysis, and discuss the sample and sampling techniques employed and, finally, set the parameters in terms of time dimension, thus illuminating the research design. I will also outline the data-gathering methods, concluding with how the data will be analysed; this is done in section four. Considering the already vulnerable nature of women living on farms, it is also necessary to set out the ethical considerations, with the purpose of stringent compliance throughout the study. This is dealt with in section five. Finally, the chapter is concluded with a discussion of the possible limitations of the research.

4.2 Research question

Within the framework of the research problem, the research question therefore is: What are the factors that prevent women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch Area from effective and meaningful participation in the participatory democratic structure of the country? To answer this question one can ask a series of sub-questions that may further illuminate the spectrum within which women living on farms participate, should they do so:

- Do women living on farms participate? If so, how often and in what?
- If they do not participate, why not?
- How do they understand the concept of democracy?
- What are their expectations, if they have any, of the political system?

- Who do they think should be responsible for fulfilling these expectations, and why?
- What are they personally doing to ensure that these expectations are being met?
- What can be done to effectively incorporate farm workers in participatory democracy processes?

The research further contends that various factors relating to the situational lives – meaning the conditions in which farm women find themselves and their orientations toward the government and politics in general – contribute to their virtual lack of effective participation in democratic governance. Guided by data gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, I will be able to identify a certain number of possible obstacles and use the questionnaire to test whether these factors do indeed have an influence on the level of participation by the farm women.

4.3 Research methods

As mentioned, for the purposes of this study a mixed method of research will be employed. Thus, the research will include both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering and analysis. As a rule, depending on their ideological stance, researchers would choose to do either qualitative or quantitative research when embarking on a research project. Historically, those relying on a positivist paradigm – the belief that there is a social reality existing independent of the researcher, which can be explained in an objective value-free manner through the use of objective replicable methods – would apply quantitative methods (Hesse-Biber, 2006:13-14; Newman & Benz, 1998: 5). In this way, the qualitative research process started to gain prominence, employing an "interpretive approach" to social reality, with the objective of understanding and exploring the natural world (Maxwell, 2005: 36-37; Padgett, 2004: 4-7). Implicit in the paradigm shift one saw an analytical move of social scientists in deriving theory from evidence to deriving evidence from theory. Of late, however, theorists argue that it need not be an either-or issue, but that a combination of the methods could better aid the researcher in answering the research question (Hesse-Biber, 2006; Green, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Maxwell, 2005; Newman & Benz, 1998; Padget, 2004; Shulman, 1986).

As Newman and Benz (1998: 86) put it:

> Increasingly, researchers are using multiple methods to improve the quality of their research. Doing so is consistent with the qualitative-quantitative continuum, which is based upon the assumption that investigators should not

> be tied to any single methodology. The research question always should dictate the method.

Furthermore, in their book Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology: Exploring the Interactive Continuum, Newman and Benz (1998) argue for a combination of both methods, as, they argue, this will maximise the validity, reliability, and utility of this new phenomenon in research. Accordingly, their model places theory neither at the beginning nor at the end. On the contrary, what one finds is an overlap between qualitative and quantitative research, as neither qualitative nor quantitative research makes a complete whole. Thus, the researcher is left with a conceptualisation of "modern-day scientific method of inquiry which is both inductive and deductive, with feedback loops that affect the inductive and deductive procedures and that are self-correcting" (Newman & Benz, 1998: 111). The qualitative-quantitative dichotomy is schematically presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 The qualitative-quantitative dichotomy

>Theory testing	>Theory building	>Holistic
>Deductive	>Inductive	>Closes the gap
>Begins with theory	>Ends with theory	>Complete the cycle

Source: Adapted from Newman & Benz (1998: 21)

In this research project, therefore, the qualitative-------quantitative multi-method design will be utilised. The qualitative component of the research project will be done first, keeping it secondary to the project goals. Data drawn from quantitative procedures, undertaken after the qualitative process, will serve as the primary source informing the research (Morgan, 1998 cited in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 322). The purpose of employing qualitative methods first is to gain a broad understanding of the variety of issues that have an effect on the participation of farm women. Thus, asking whether farm women participate, and if so, in what, why and how. By following this up with quantitative research, it will be possible to test the hypothesis that they do in fact not engage in meaningful participation, thus checking how often they do so and in what, and what stands in the way of meaningful participation.

As relatively little information on the political participation of farm women is available, a prior qualitative research inquiry would also serve as an exploratory type of data gathering, better informing the full research project. Thus, data garnered from interviews, the focus group discussion and participant observation will then better inform the relevance of questions in the questionnaire. This form of mixed-method research in a single study is also referred to as a process of triangulation (Jick, 1979: 602- 609; Newman & Benz, 1998: 82-86; Maxwell, 2005: 93,112). According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: 318), this method is justified in that the researcher aims to find a "convergence" in the research findings, with the purpose of enhancing their credibility.

Green *et al*. (1989) also argue that, by employing triangulation in research, the legitimacy of the results can be strengthened. The authors offer the following aspects as advantages of triangulation. Firstly, there is the *complementarity* of the combined methods. This aids the researcher in that a wider spectrum of data becomes available from different sources as he/she seeks to gain a complete understanding of the research problem. A second reason is that of *development*, as it is very possible for results from one method to help develop or inform another method. In the third instance, one finds *initiation*, in that one study's results raise questions for further research, thus a new study is initiated focusing on the phenomena raised in the previous study. Finally, there is *expansion*, which the authors argue is initiated to "extend the breadth and range of the study", with the ultimate goal to expand the study to include a broader range of objectives (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 319).

However, Shulman (1986: 4) cautions that the use of mixed methods in research is not without its own problems:

> These "hybrid" designs, which mix experiment with ethnography, multiple regression with multiple case studies, process-product designs with analysis of student mediation, surveys with personal diaries, are exciting new developments in the study of teaching. But they present serious dangers as well. They can become utter chaos if not informed by an understanding of the types of knowledge produced by these different approaches.

In this respect, though, the argument holds that the importance of truthful and reliable research relies on precise and correct data-gathering procedures. The key to good research is thus "the accuracy of the data-collection procedures (which are the concepts of reliability and validity) regardless of the label given the analysis, qualitative or quantitative" (Newman &

Benz, 1998: 110). A possible challenge that could arise with employing multiple methods of data collection is that data gathered from the different methods give discrepant results, thus providing contradictory findings. Understandably, the legitimacy of the findings of such a study would be heavily contested. However, Padgett (2004) argues that even in the event of such an occurrence there still is value to the data generated, in that the outcome of the differing results could direct further inquiry into the matter. Thus, the "discrepancies point to interesting new paths of inquiry rather than problems of interpretation" (Padgett, 2004: 278). Finally, Green and Caracelli (quoted in Padgett, 2004: 276) comment that "[C]ompared with knowledge claims produced in a single-method study, this...mixed method set of knowledge claims is likely to be more pragmatically relevant and useful, and more dialectically insightful and generative, even if accompanied by unresolved tensions". Furthermore, the general principle holds that, should one of the components of the mixed method study be nested or subordinate to the other, it is more likely that a convergence (validation) of the data or complementary (different but non-conflicting) findings would result (Padgett, 2004: 274; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 322-323). As the qualitative method is subordinate to the quantitative method, this is the likely outcome of this research project.

4.4 Research design

4.4.1 *Focus*

When discussing the focus of the research the key is to tease out what the researcher aims to study. In terms of this, two different categories can be highlighted, that is the conditions and the actions of those being studied (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 64; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 90-92). In this project, the focus was on the conditions of the subjects based on the notion that it is the very fact that women living on farms are poor and their isolated state in society that creates a significant barrier to their meaningful participation. The research also focused on the orientations of the farm women, thus how their attitudes and feelings about democracy, government and even participation itself influenced or possibly placed a barrier on their participation. As will become clear in the literature review, should people feel that they lack political efficacy they are less inclined to be actively involved in political participation. One of the purposes of this research project was therefore to enquire whether this is indeed the case for the farm women. However, one should note that these factors are not mutually exclusive and that it is necessary throughout the research process for the researcher to be sensitised to all.

4.4.2 ***Unit of analysis***

Generally defined, the unit of analysis is the person or object from whom the data is collected (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 64). Although different data collection procedures will be utilised, the unit of analysis, in all cases, is individuals. The primary focus is on women living on farms in the Western Cape. In terms of the qualitative component, therefore, an interview schedule with open-ended questions was used. Throughout the data-gathering process, such informal interviews were held with women living on farms, particularly at their monthly meetings. More formally, interviews were held with four farm women. Scheduled open-ended interviews were also held with two members from the NGO, Women on Farms Project (WFP), and the trade union, Sikhula Sonke, respectively. Finally, a focus group discussion was held with a group of farm women. The overall purpose of conducting interviews with the different individuals was to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences of farm women's participation. Finally, in terms of the quantitative component, a validation of the findings particularly relating to farm women's experiences was sought by doing the survey (questionnaire). The unit of analysis in this instance was therefore also the individual.

4.4.3 ***Sample and sampling techniques***

Czaja and Blair (1996: 107) defines sampling as "the selection of elements, following prescribed rules, from a defined population". The population is the entire set of objects and events that is the object of the research and from which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. In this perspective, the sample is the subset of the total population whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 85-87).

The constitution of South Africa provides for the protection of property rights, therefore the fact that farms are private property was an important factor to consider. This is relevant because, due to their working hours, it is difficult to make contact with farm women outside of the farm. Most farm workers work from seven in the morning to six in the evening. It is also costly and difficult for them to travel to town. Therefore, research had to be conducted on the farms where those to be studied live. However, many farmers are reluctant to open up their farms to people who want to discuss political issues with their workers. In particular, Van Dongen (2003: 306, 330) notes that, when asking consent to conduct research on farms

in the Western Cape, she was allowed to do so under the condition that they would not discuss "politics". In addition, in their study on farm worker conditions, Sunde and Kleinbooi (1999) found that, because of safety concerns, farmers are hesitant to allow research on their farms. As the crux of this research question relates to the political participation of farm workers, it was expected that gaining consent from farm owners to conduct research on this particular topic on their farms would be very difficult. Thus, other means through which access to farm women could be gained had to be explored. In this context, links were formed with the NGO, Women on Farms Project (WFP), in order to gain access to women living on the farms.

The Women on Farms Project (WFP) is a non-governmental organisation that lobbies for women's rights. The organisation strives to strengthen the capacity of women who live and work on farms to claim their rights and fulfil their needs. The vision of WFP is an engendered society that treats women who live and work on farms with dignity and respect in accordance with the constitutional rights guaranteed to all South African citizens. In such a society, equality, respect and dignity are afforded to all women within the economic, social and political institutions, as well as in the community and home. Furthermore, the organisation envisions an alternative South African rural landscape in which women play active leadership roles in the family, community, labour, and economic and government structures. This is done through socioeconomic rights-based and gender education, advocacy and lobbying, casework and support for the building of social movements of farm women. The organisation also fulfils its functions through six different programmes. These include: (1) Health and Empowerment (2) Land and Housing, (3) Social Security, (4) Land Cooperatives, and (5) Labour Rights. Finally, all the above is based on the advancement of the self-reliance of farm women, as the organisation believes that this aspect counteracts the marginalisation, abuse and vulnerability experienced by women in the workplace, home and farming community, and ensures their leading role in accessing services and securing employment, land and housing. Based on the vision and goals of the organisation, it became clear that gaining their assistance in the research project would be ideal.

On all occasions when research was conducted with the farm women, I was accompanied (to the farms) by members of the NGO. Thus, they served as a gatekeeper by providing access to women living on farms. However, the members were not present when any of the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted, thus their presence did not directly influence the research. Nevertheless, one must take cognisance of the fact that the NGO most

likely has contact with certain types of farms where, because of their contact, women may be more aware of their rights than on other farms. Generally, people living on the farms which WFP has access to, tend to be poor, living conditions hard, and their housing very bad. However, there was the odd farm, were the farm people are better off than most of the others. The position of women, irrespective how of bad or good living conditions on the farm is, tends to be subversive to that of their male counterparts on the farm.

An important factor to consider when doing sampling for research purposes on farms is the huge variance on the different farms, a factor that makes a clear demarcation in terms of sampling difficult (Atkinson, 2007; Sunde & Kleinbooi, 1999: 4). As Roberts (quoted in Atkinson, 2007: 11) puts it: "Each farm is in a sense unique, so that an accurate system of sampling is virtually impossible to formulate." For the purposes of this study, research was conducted on five different farms in the areas near Ceres, Rawsonville, Wolseley, Paarl and Stellenbosch. The farms were chosen because of their links with WFP. The sample population was defined as women living on farms, in the Stellenbosch area, including Rawsonville and Ceres. This group of women are predominantly coloured. They are also likely to earn marginally more or less (before deductions, i.e. electricity) than the minimum wage for farm workers, set at R1 231, 70. Another inclusion criterion was the age of the women, as only women eighteen years old and above were included.

In both the qualitative and quantitative research processes, non-probability sampling was applied, as not all the women included in the population were included in the sample, since those whom WFP had no access to did not have an equal opportunity to be selected. This means that only those participating in the NGO's programmes, members of their cooperatives, and those who may not be members yet but have approached by the organisation during recruitment procedures, were included. Furthermore, it is important to note that this definition of farm women included both farm workers and farm dwellers. Farm workers include those people who live and work on the farm, and farm dwellers live on the farm but do not necessarily work on the farm. Seasonal workers who do not live on the farm were therefore excluded from the population. Through gathering data from women living on different farms near Ceres, Rawsonville, Wolseley, Paarl and Stellenbosch, the researcher was able to draw conclusions about women living on farms in the greater Stellenbosch area.

For the survey specifically, forty respondents were selected based upon convenience sampling. This included any women living on a farm who fitted the sampling parameters to

whom the researcher could gain access. The survey was conducted during a weeklong workshop hosted by WFP at Boontjiesrivier. This presented an excellent opportunity to reach women from different farms, thus eliminating the difficulty of gaining access to the women on their farms. Between eight and twelve women from four different farms were selected. About twenty to thirty women live on each of the four farms from which the sample was drawn.

Table 4.1 Outline of respondents for different research methods

Non-scheduled structured interview	4* respondents (farm workers , Land and Housing Cooperative monthly meeting, Ceres)
	2 respondents (Employees: Women on Farms Project, Stellenbosch)
	2 respondents (Employees: Farm worker trade union, Sikhula Sonke, Stellenbosch)
Two focus group discussions	5* respondents (Rawsonville) 30 respondents (Boontjiesrivier)
Survey (questionnaire)	40 respondents (Women on Farms Project: Training Workshop: Basic Political Education, Boontjiesrivier)

* At both meetings the intention was to have at least six participants, but some of the women who were meant to did not attended the meetings and therefore research could only be done with those who did attend.

4.4.4 ***Time dimension***

Because all the data for this research project was collected simultaneously, the research design is cross-sectional in nature. Unfortunately, a disadvantage of this type of design is that it does not allow for change over time. Thus, it was not possible to ascertain whether certain factors would obstruct meaningful participation over a long period. For instance, should farm workers' orientation toward their local government act as an obstacle, one would not be able to determine whether participation patterns will change should an alteration in their orientation occur. However, due to time constraints on the researcher, a longitudinal study was not possible, but it can be strongly advised for later research projects focusing on this issue.

4.5 Data-gathering methods

In any research project, the aim of using the different techniques is to convert information given directly by persons into data. In this respect, Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 109) contend that there are two types of information relevant to the research that can be generated in this direct manner. The first type relates to what a person thinks, meaning their attitudes and beliefs. The second type refers to what a person has experienced (in the past) and what happens at present. Therefore, in finding answers to the research question, the different techniques were specifically utilised to generate this kind of information. In the case of the qualitative research method, the data-gathering techniques were, firstly, *modified participant observation;* secondly, *non-scheduled structured interviews* and, finally, a *focus group discussion*, all geared towards better informing the researcher on relevant questions for the quantitative component of the research, a survey. First, we turn to the qualitative data-gathering techniques by giving an outline of each of the techniques, then proceed by showing their use and value for the purposes of this research, and finally conclude with a discussion of analysis and verification methods. In the second instance, the same process will be followed as for the quantitative data-gathering techniques.

4.5.1 Qualitative data-gathering techniques: secondary data

Modified participant observation

This type of research method stems from the traditional participant observation technique. In this sense, participant observation has as a limitation the requirement that the researcher reside with the subjects for an extended period. Thus, a modified version of this technique was better suited to this research project. This technique entailed the attendance of only major events, such as village meetings or ceremonies (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 105-106). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) present this type of research in a different way, describing it as the *observer-as-participant* role of the researcher. In this role, the researcher is obliged to make his or her identity in the setting known, but the extent of active engagement is limited. An advantage of this method is that it is not as intrusive as, for instance, (complete) participant observation would be. In addition, as the researcher is somewhat on the periphery of the natural setting, participants often forgot the researcher's presence, thus living and acting as they normally would. In this way, it provides the researcher with an opportunity to get at the "tacit understandings and 'theory-in-use', as well as aspects of the participants' perspective that they are reluctant to state directly in

interviews" (Maxwell, 2005: 94). This technique also has the advantage of disqualifying the criticism of complete participant observation as being costly and time-consuming.

The manner in which data was gathered, in terms of this technique, was by attending the monthly meetings of the women's cooperative on land and housing, a component of the Women on Farms Project. An issue relevant to this research, which was under discussion at these meetings, is the accessibility of their local government and its responsiveness when they addressed them on issues relating to access to land. Women living on the different farms who are also members of the Women on Farms Project's cooperative and the people in charge of the programme at the NGO attended these meetings. It therefore provided an excellent opportunity to gain insight into the experiences of the farm women when approaching government and other stakeholders concerning their own development. For the purposes of recording the data gathered at these meetings, field notes taken by the researcher were useful. A limitation of this is the subjective perception of the researcher in recording the data. In this respect it was necessary to reflect constantly upon my attitudes, behaviours and experiences and how it was possible to limit the influence of these factors on the research process.

Furthermore, some of the disadvantages included that the researcher could not directly observe attitudes and beliefs, and that the researcher could not easily observe phenomena related to the private spheres of the people's lives. To increase the validity of the findings it was therefore necessary to counteract these factors. Firstly, other techniques were implemented to observe attitudes and beliefs, for instance interviewing the women, and this also served as a way of verifying the data. The subjective interpretation of the researcher is an unavoidable obstacle in any kind of qualitative research. However, by applying the principle of reflexivity, particularly in terms of the power relations between the researcher and the respondents, this problem was counteracted. Other ways of increasing the validity of data generated by this technique included structuring the observation by focusing the observer's attention on specific characteristics and events. In focusing the research, the two types of information the researcher wants to gather (already mentioned) were borne in mind throughout the research project.

Non-scheduled structured interviews

Non-scheduled means that the interviewer is free to formulate other questions as the interview progresses and which he or she finds relevant in the context of the research project.

The respondents therefore were free to answer in any way, define an aspect from their own perspective, or fully describe a certain situation. Structured, on the other hand, means that the researcher makes a list of issues to be investigated prior to the interview (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995; Newman & Benz, 1998; Bradburn, Sudman & Wansink, 2004; Maxwell, 2005; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Interviews with the farm women were based on an interview schedule (list of questions) or interview guide in order to limit the interviewer bias, a major weakness of this technique (Newman & Benz, 1998: 67).

To this end, certain topics were outlined, as the schedule is only to serve as a guide. For the farm women these topics included: 1) their understanding of a democracy; 2) the role of government in improving the lives of farm women, 3) service delivery on farms; 4) local government and people living on farms, and 5) their involvement in any development process (initiated by government, NGOs or themselves). During this stage in the research process, interviews were held with four farm women living on different farms. For the purposes of data recording, on-the-spot field notes were taken. The researcher, using interpretive (inductive) reasoning, did an analysis of this data independently. To verify the data, it was juxtaposed with data gathered through the modified participant observation technique, comparing the different data sets with each other, thus triangulating the data. In addition, informal interviews later during the research project were also very useful in this regard. To enhance validity, the principle of triangulation was applied throughout the study. In this respect, structured questions were checked against the broader objectives and goals of the study (refer to Chapter 1). Secondly, by checking for consistency across different respondents it was possible to increase the reliability (Newman & Benz, 1998: 69).

A major advantage of using interviews in this research relates to the fact that farm women are such a marginalised group in society and that this provided a forum for them to share their experiences. The motivation for this stemmed from Hesse-Biber and Leavy's (2006: 123) contention that:

> In-depth interviews are also very useful for accessing subjugated voices and getting subjugated knowledge. Those who have been marginalized in a society, such as women, people of color, homosexuals, and the poor, may have hidden experiences and knowledge that have been excluded from our understandings of social reality.

Furthermore, the literature also indicates that using interview data to augment and confirm data gained through other methods, for instance survey questionnaires, significantly increases

its usefulness (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 125; Newman & Benz, 1998: 69). Finally, to better inform the researcher and because of the important role NGOs and trade unions play in facilitating action on farms, two workers from the NGO, Women on Farms Project, and the trade union, Sikhula Sonke, were interviewed. As these women work on farms on a daily basis and often provide the only way in which farm women can express themselves, conducting interviews with them is justified. The analysis of data gathered from these respondents was done in the same manner as that gathered from the farm women, using this technique.

Focus group discussions

Focus groups as a qualitative method of data gathering are unique in that they enable the researcher to acquire different sets of information from several people all at the same time. It also allows participants to share their thoughts and ideas, which might very well stir up ideas in others. It further provides a platform for members to share their experiences and reach consensus on a topic. Its use is therefore very practical, especially when utilised for exploratory purposes in the early stages of a research project, when little knowledge on a particular issue is available (Morgan, 1988; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 113-114; Padgett, 2004: 182-191).

During this technique of data gathering, a group of five farm women took part in the discussion. To make the discussion less unnatural it was held at the house of one of the participants. The participants were all from the same area, older than thirty years of age and living on farms. They were therefore a very homogeneous group; this is significant for the size of the group, as Morgan (1988: 42) contends that the more homogeneous the group is in background and role-based perspectives, the fewer participants are necessary. However, some challenges did arise due to the group being so small. For instance, there seemed to have been some sensitivity to group dynamics in the sense that the participants were aware that others were more knowledgeable on certain issues than they were. Consequently, those who feel they are less informed are more reluctant to speak on the particular issue. However, through making it clear, at the start of the discussion, that every one's opinion matters and that that there are no wrong or right answers, a sound basis was laid for sensitised prodding of those who felt reluctant to speak on certain issues. In addition, the fact that all the respondents were well known to each other may also have impacted on the answers they were likely to give.

The primary means of data recording was using a tape-recorder. Observations by the researcher served as a secondary source of data recording. To enhance the usefulness of this technique, Merton *et al*.'s (1956) four principles for effective focus groups were applied. These include, firstly, maximum the range of relevant topics in that issues discussed must encompass all information already known to their interviewer, but also new information unanticipated by the researcher; secondly, specificity in terms of directing the discussion at the unique and the personal experiences of the participants; thirdly, the authors cite depth, meaning the active involvement of participants in the issues they are discussing; and finally, personal context, whereby the researcher takes note of who said what and what personal characteristics would prompt that participant to make that particular remark. This was particularly important during this discussion, as some of the respondents' previous experiences served as a basis for statements that did not fully concur with those of the rest of the group. Increasingly, this technique of data gathering is offered as a means to direct a follow-up questionnaire, the main purpose that the focus group discussion served in this project (Morgan, 1988: 63; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: 199; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 114).

An often-unavoidable disadvantage of focus group discussions is that they do not always allow all the participants to express their views equally (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 113). However, in an attempt to minimise this factor, the researcher directed questions at those who were not as expressive as others. In addition, the small size of the group limited this problem significantly. Another possible limitation is the issue of providing answers perceived to be socially desirable. Conversely, this was not such a big issue in this group as they were all friends and therefore well enough acquainted with each other to share opinions that others might have frowned upon. In terms of analysis, the data obtained by audio-taping was transcribed by the researcher and then interpreted through inductive reasoning. For verification, an arrangement was made to contact the participants a few days after the discussion to clarify matters raised that were unclear and to check that the manner in which the data was interpreted by the researcher was indeed what was meant by the participant.

4.5.2 Quantitative data-gathering technique: primary data

Survey (Questionnaire)

Because surveys make it possible to study a population too large to observe directly, it presents an excellent mechanism to collect original data. According to Babbie and Mouton

(2001: 232), the careful selection of a probability sample will provide a group of respondents whose characteristics could mirror those of the larger population. The data gathered by studying the characteristics of the sample can then be generalised to the larger population. This data is then gathered by administering a questionnaire, otherwise known as a structured scheduled interview. Surveys are also very useful when measuring the attitudes and orientations of a large population. Bradburn *et al*. (2004: 360) define a questionnaire as "the complete data collection instrument used by and interviewer or respondent (or both) during a survey. It includes not only the questions and space for answers but also interviewer instructions, the introduction, and cards used by the respondent".

The research hypothesis is based on the notion that effective and meaningful political participation in South Africa has happened at the exclusion of many of its poor and marginalised citizens, in particular poor women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch Area. The research hypothesis therefore holds that various factors relating to social issues, particularly the socioeconomic conditions in which farm women find themselves, and their orientations toward the government and politics in general, contribute to their virtual lack of effective participation in democratic governance. The purpose of the survey therefore is to test this hypothesis, and so answer the research question that relates to what the possible obstacles are that prevent such effective and meaningful processes of participation.

Guided by data gathered through the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, the researcher was able to identify a certain number of possible obstacles and use the questionnaire to test whether these factors did indeed have an influence on the level of participation of the farm women. In terms of the administration of the questionnaire, the respondents were quite willing to participate in the survey. Most of the respondents seemed to think that the questions were relevant to the issue being studied. However, some respondents did seem uncomfortable with question V14. Poor people, like farm women, are not considered by politicians. This may be because, although they are not well-off, some of the farm women do not necessarily consider themselves as poor. This resulted in the women answering the question based on how they think other poor farm women are considered by politicians, and not on their own experiences. Data gathered from the questionnaire was analysed using the Statistical Packet for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The data was analysed independently by the researcher, who was able to produce certain findings based on the results of SPSS-generated analysis.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The literature is very clear on the importance of ethical concerns and how ethical dilemmas in the research process may be resolved (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 102-104; De Laine, 2000; Bradburn *et al*., 2004: 12-19; Padgett, 2004: 240-253; Mouton, 2008: 238-251). Mouton (2008) conveniently groups all ethical issues in research into three categories. These include, firstly, the relationship of the researcher to the practice of science (professional ethics), which relates to the objectivity and integrity of the research. Attempts by the researcher to enhance these elements have been discussed throughout this chapter. Secondly, there is the researcher's relationship with society, drawing on the obligation to disseminate the research findings. The findings of this research will be presented in a thesis, thus this requirement is fulfilled. Finally, he considers the relationship of the researcher to the subjects of science. As farm women are an already vulnerable segment of the South African society, exploring this aspect was critical to the successful completion of the study. Hence, factors pertaining to this issue are now under discussion (Padgett, 2004: 241; Atkinson, 2007: 1-9).

Generally, the literature highlight three basic guiding principles for any research study. These are:

- Privacy and voluntary participation (informed consent); care was taken to ensure that the participants were comfortable knowing that aspects of their private lives would be opened up to public viewing by their having participated in the research;
- Anonymity of respondents: not making any private and personal information shared between researcher and specific respondents known. In addition, none of the information given can be directly linked back to them.
- Confidentiality, especially in terms of interviews, whereby participants were assured that the data would only be used for the stated research purpose and that no other people would have access to the data.

In every stage of the research project and before administering all the different techniques, a concerted effort was made to gain the informed consent of the participants. Having done that, it was also necessary to assure the respondents of the anonymity and confidentiality of the research. Other general, albeit equally important, measures included being aware of certain power imbalances and not using this imbalance to influence the participants. Thus, the method of reflexivity was used throughout the study to ensure that this ethical principle

was always adhered to. Also, it was ensured that the interests of the researcher and that of participant coincided by clearing up any misconceptions relating to the roles and relationships of the different entities. In conclusion, the researcher was aware of the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the participants in the research project were not worse off for having allowed the researcher to study them, although there is no guarantee that their lives would be better after completion of the research.

4.7 Conclusion

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: 11), quantitative research generates a *quantity* of data-generalisability, as opposed to qualitative research, which brings forth *depth* in data. Qualitative research is also more reliable in terms of validity. During the research project, the researcher therefore attempted to minimise validity threats as far as possible for each of the different techniques to increase the overall validity of the research. The ability to gather data of which it is possible to generalise the findings as broadly as possible was also an ideal vigorously pursued by the researcher. However, despite these efforts, there are still some limitations of the study. To provide a comprehensive picture of the research project it is necessary that these limitations be reported on.

Firstly, because of significant differences in the lived experiences and differing contexts of farm workers, particularly women living on farms, the data cannot be generalised to farm women in other provinces. The research findings of this research can therefore only be extrapolated to women living on farms in the Western Cape. Secondly, the findings can also not be generalised to men living on farms in the Western Cape, despite the fact that their experiences may resemble those of their female counterparts in multiple ways. Thirdly, generalisability of the findings is also limited to those women, either working, non-working or seasonal workers, who live on the farm. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to female seasonal workers who live off the farm.

This chapter comprised an outline of the methods followed throughout the research process. In gathering the data, the process of triangulation was employed, making use of mixed methods of data gathering. This was based on the premise that the research question must always guide the methods. The next chapter consists of the results of and findings from this process.

Chapter 5

Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter four it was mentioned that the research hypothesis is that women living on farms in the Western Cape do not participate in a meaningful process of participation, as outlined in government policy. Furthermore, I hypothesised that various factors relating to the women's orientations toward government and politics in general, and their socioeconomic conditions, all contribute toward their relatively low levels of participation. Within this context, the research question then pertained to what the particular obstacles are that prevent such effective and meaningful processes of participation. In order to gather data to answer the research question, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the study.

In aid of this, I start by describing the demographics of the sample. As this was already done for the qualitative component of the research, it is now only necessary to do this for the quantitative component. This is done in the following section, subsection two. To guide the reader I describe the main findings of the research in subsection three. In subsection four, particular attention is given to the research findings by discussing it in different categories as provided by the literature review (Chapter two). In this respect, I first consider how the tendency to situate policy formulation in the hands of a few select government officials at different levels of government has an influence on the experiences of the farm women. Secondly, a factor that became very clear from the research is the effect the socioeconomic conditions have on the participation levels of the farm women. Finally, I look at the findings in terms of the women's cognitive political orientations; this is done within the theme of growing political cynicism as a factor that contributes to the reduced levels of participation of farm women. Having completed the presentation and discussion of the findings, I will conclude the chapter by summarising the main results.

5.2 Farm women in the Greater Stellenbosch Area, Ceres and Rawsonville

In conducting the interviews, it was decided that it would be best to do personal interviews. This is because of the low literacy levels of most women living on farms. Since the literature

also indicates that farm women tend to find themselves alienated from politics, it was better to administer the questionnaire in this manner. In addition, personal interviews allowed for the probing of concepts that may be difficult for them to understand. A benefit of this was that a hundred percent response rate was received for all the questions. Throughout the research project, the respondents were willing to participate, provided that the purpose of the research was explained thoroughly beforehand.

A factor that must be considered, however, is that I have no experience of life on a farm other than that gained during the qualitative research and my engagement with the respondents prior to conducting the quantitative research. Thus, it was a sometimes useful to ask someone who does live on a farm and understands the thinking of farm women to help with interpretation of the results. Finally, as mentioned in the methodology chapter (Chapter four), the data gathered from the questionnaire was analysed independently by myself using SPSS. In this respect, frequencies and cross tabulations were run to generate data useful for this chapter.

Of the forty respondents who completed the questionnaire, all with the exception of one were coloured. Most coloureds tend to be Afrikaans-speaking, and this was reflected in the frequency of home language, with 97.5% (n = 39) and 2.5% (n = 1) speaking Afrikaans and Sotho respectively. This is a reflection of the demographics of the Western Cape and therefore enhances the generalisability of the results.

Table 5.1 Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-28	13	32.5
29-39	7	17.5
40-50	14	35.0
51-61	4	10.0
Older than 61	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

In terms of age, the sample was distributed about evenly, with 50% between 18 and 39 and 40 and older. Table 5.1 indicates that a substantial percentage (32.5%; n = 13) are between 18 and 28. This is significant, as the experiences of the younger women would be very different from that of the older ones as a result of the shift in the governance system from apartheid to democracy in 1994. For instance, the older women mentioned that before 1994, farm workers could depend on the farmer to provide assistance when they were in need and

received certain benefits from the farmer. However, within this system they had very little access to (human) rights and, if the farmer discriminated against them, they did not have the option of seeking legal help. Since the young women grew up in the democratic system, the assumption is that their political culture would include more participatory notions.

Table 5.2 Respondents' highest grade passed

Grade	Frequency	Percent
1-4	3	7.5
5-8	20	50.0
9-12	17	42.5
Total	40	100.0

In addition, age also has implications for the level of education of the respondents. Prior to 1994 it would have been very likely that a farm worker would not have had any schooling at all. The younger respondents are therefore more likely to have higher levels of education than the older group. In this group, however, no one had no schooling at all, although it may very well be that should more women older than sixty years have been interviewed, this may have been the case. As is clear from Table 5.2, 57.5% (n = 20+3) of the sample's highest possible grade passed is grade eight. Clearly, the education levels of women living on farms are not very high.

Table 5.3 Years respondents lived on farm

Years on farm	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	1	2.5
1-5 years	7	17.5
6-10	1	2.5
11-15	1	2.5
16-20	11	27.5
More than 20 years	19	47.5
Total	40	100

The majority of the women interviewed have been living on a farm all their lives. In this sample, 75% (n = 19+11) have lived on a farm for more than sixteen years. An important factor to consider is the belief of some of the women that there are no opportunities for employment or furthering one's studies for children who grew up on a farm. Hence, it becomes a vicious cycle, with farm children returning to work on the farm, as their parents did, even after having completed grade twelve.

Graph 5.1

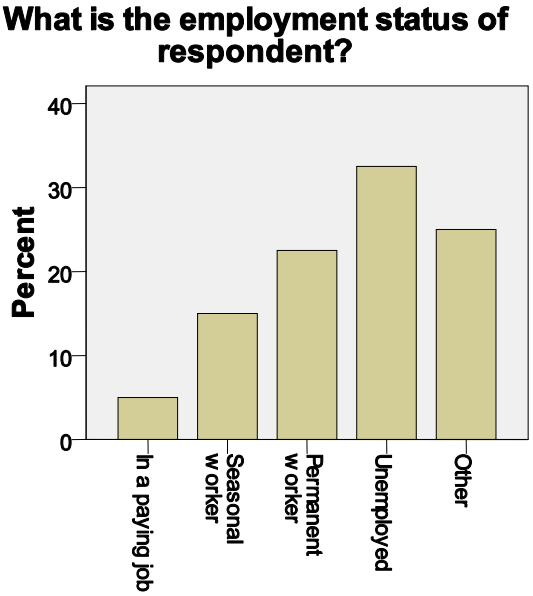
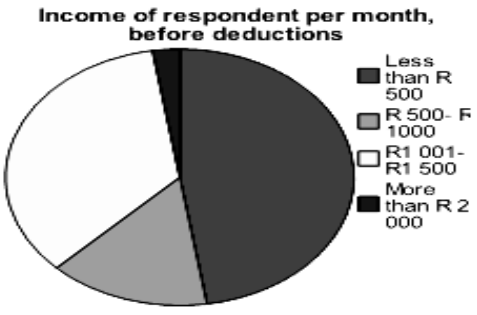


Table 5.4 Employment status of respondents		
	Frequency	Percent
In a paying job	2	5.0
Seasonal worker	6	15.0
Permanent worker	9	22.5
Unemployed	13	32.5
Other	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

However, this does not seem to be reflected in the employment status of the women. Although the matriculants may return to the farm, it would seem that they do not necessarily take up employment on the farm. The variable, "in a paying job" refers to employment outside of the farm, thus in town or on a neighbouring farm (Table 5.4). The variable, "other", includes those who are on pension, declared unfit to work due to their health, and women who do other work on the farm, for instance maintaining a crèche. Twenty-five percent (n = 10) of the sample is in this category. Significantly, 32.5% of the respondents are unemployed. This is surprising, as the general principle on farms is that those who live on the farm must work on the farm. However, as the women's residence on the farm is dependent on the employment contract of her male partner, one can assume that they have earned their right to stay on that basis.

Graph 5.2



The high unemployment numbers are also reflected in the income per month, before deductions, of the respondents. A matter of great concern is that 32.5% (n = 13) of the respondents are unemployed, yet 47.5% (n = 19) have an income of less than R500 per month. Add to that the 15% (n = 6) whose income is less than R1 000, then a depressing 62.5% (n = 19+6 = 25) have an income less than the minimum wage for farm workers, which is set at R 1 231,70, in itself not enough to survive on.

In summary, the sample is comprised of mainly coloured women, all of them Afrikaans-speaking, with 50% being younger then forty and the other 50% being forty years and older. The women have relatively low levels of education, with 57.5% (n = 23) having a highest grade passed as grade eight and the remaining 42.5% (n = 17) having completed their high school education. Of the respondents, 77.5% (n = 31) have lived on a farm for more than ten years. Thus, their ability to speak with authority about the experiences of people who live on farms cannot be doubted.

Significantly, only 22.5% (n = 9) of the sample is in permanent employment on the farm. This is in contradiction with previous studies, which indicate that many farm women are now employed as seasonal workers, particularly as only 15% (n = 6) of the respondents are seasonal workers. Finally, overall the majority of the farm women's income is barely enough to make ends meet. In this sample, 97.5% (n = 39) of the respondents have a monthly income of less than R2 000 per month, which in itself cannot be considered enough to maintain a decent living. One should also not forget that this is income before deductions, therefore the actual amount could be significantly less after the farmer has deducted water and electricity and other such essential services.

5.3 Results: Main findings

As mentioned in the literature review, there are different ways in which one can participate in politics. Generally, a distinction is made between direct and indirect forms of participation. Based on the principle of democracy, the government has put various mechanisms in place through which ordinary citizens can participate directly in governance. These include attending public meetings, Imbizos, the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, etcetera. However, as mentioned in the literature review, this study does not suggest that we must discard direct participation, like voting in elections, but rather that a combination of the two is more prudent. In addition, one must also consider the importance of alternative forms of participation, like protests, which the literature suggests are now becoming more widely

used. In this section these factors are therefore discussed as they relate to women living on farms.

Direct forms of participation

A factor that became very clear from this research project is that the assumption that women living on farms seldom engage in meaningful participatory processes is true. As a means to test the hypothesis, a series of questions was asked enquiring about the number of times the respondents had engaged in different ways one can participate in politics. In all cases the majority of the respondents had never engaged in the various forms of participation.

Table 5.5 Have you ever attended a meeting about a political or social issue?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	18	45.0
Once	9	22.5
Twice	4	10.0
3-5 Times	5	12.5
5-Plus	4	10.0
Total	40	100.0

When asked whether they had ever attended any meeting about a political or social issue, 45% (n = 18) of the sample said that they had never done so. Also, only 32.5% (n = 9+4) said they had done so once or twice (refer to Table 5.5). This is particularly worrying, as these meetings are often the first opportunity where issues that affect the community as a whole and where action to address common problems can be discussed. However, on a positive note, 22.5% (n = 5+4) have attended such a meeting more than three times. This is encouraging and shows that there is awareness among some of the women that they can and must be involved in broader issues that affect the community.

Table 5.6 Have you ever attended a ward meeting?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	22	55.0
Once	7	17.5
Twice	7	17.5
3-5 Times	2	5.0
5-Plus	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

The Municipal Structures Act, 119 of 1998, sanctions the ward system. Accordingly, all communities are divided into different wards, and every ward has its own ward councillor and ward committee. The ideal is that this ward committee acts as representative of everyone within the community. Furthermore, the committee is supposed to have regular meetings with all residents in the relevant ward, providing a platform where citizens can raise issues, receive feedback from the municipality, and hold government officials accountable for their successes and failures in terms of local governance.

When asked whether they had ever attended a ward meeting, more than half (that is 55% (n = 22) of the sample) said they had never done so. Only 35% (n = 14) claimed to have attended such a meeting once or twice, and a mere 10% (n = 4) had attended a ward meeting more than three times. Significantly, some of the women noted that they could not have attended a ward meeting because the local municipality did not have such a committee. Others noted that where there is a committee the tendency is that there is no representative of the farm workers on the committee, since it consists of people living in the towns. Hence, they did not see the need to attend such meetings as the voices of farm women tend to become muted in such an environment.

Graph 5.3

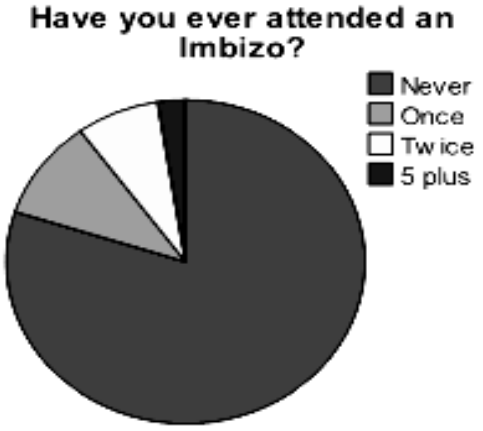


Table 5.7
Have you ever attended an Imbizo?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	32	80.0
Once	4	10.0
Twice	3	7.5
3-5 Times	1	2.5
5-Plus	0	0.0
Total	40	100.0

In terms of participation in Imbizos the same problem was observed. Most of the women had never heard the word and thus do not know what the purpose of such a meeting would be. The Presidential Imbizo programme was initiated by former president Mbeki. According to him (cited in Pretorius, 2006: 753), the

> Imbizo outreach programmes carried out by both the provincial and national Governments ...[have] enabled the ordinary masses of our people to interact directly with the Government they elected, giving further effect to our perspective of a participatory system of governance...The Imbizo programme helps us to address the concern that our movement has raised, of the development of what has been called social distance between our elected representatives and the masses that elected them.

Clearly, the "ordinary masses" in terms of rural/farm women, as in this sample, have not been enabled to "interact directly with the government they elected". Of the respondents, 80% (n = 32) have never attended an Imbizo. A mere 17.5% (n = 4+3) have attended an Imbizo once or twice, and only 2.5% (n = 1) have done so three or more times. During the focus group discussion, all the women concluded that the Imbizos are not a very effective form of participation for farm women in particular. A reason for this is that the meetings are often held in urban areas, for instance in Athlone, rather than in towns closer to the farming areas. When transport was provided and the women were able to attend the meetings, they felt that their concerns were overshadowed by the needs of the people living in the towns who also attended the meetings. According to one of the women, when they get to these meetings, the farm people are "totally in the background" (translated from Afrikaans).

Table 5.8 Have you ever contacted a politician or council member?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	36	90.0
Once	0	0.0
Twice	1	2.5
3-5 Times	2	5.0
5-Plus	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Finally, because most of the respondents do not engage in the mechanisms created by government specifically to enhance direct participation of the poor, one would assume that they would at least use traditional forms of direct participation. However, participation levels were very low, even in this. When asked whether they had ever initiated contact with a politician or council member, 90% (n = 36) said never. This leaves 10% (n = 4) of the sample who has done so at some point in time, although only 2.5% (n = 1) did so five times or more. A matter of concern is that some of the women mentioned that they would not address council members, as they felt that some councillors have the tendency to treat farm

people without dignity. They note that it sometimes feels as if they are being looked down on because they live and work on a farm. This is of course not the case for all the women, and some mentioned some successes when they approached the municipality directly.

Indirect forms of participation

What has become clear is that the women living on farms interviewed in this study do not take part in direct forms of participation, which ideally would lead to their socioeconomic development. This leads to the enquiry whether they participate in indirect forms of participation. In this regard, the women were asked whether they had ever voted in an election.

Graph 5.4

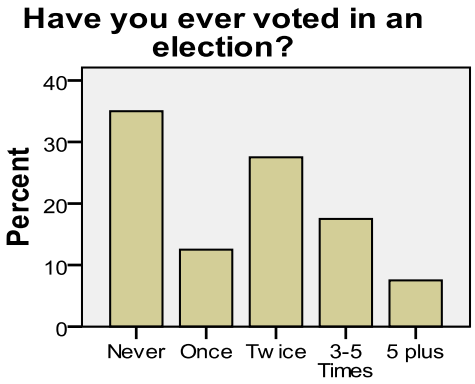


Table 5.9
Have you ever voted in an election?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	14	35.0
Once	5	12.5
Twice	11	27.5
3-5 Times	7	17.5
5-Plus	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Of the respondents, 35% (n = 14) have never voted in an election. As 50% of the sample is older than forty, one would assume that at least this percentage would have voted in all four elections since 1994. From Table 5.9, however, it is clear that this is not the case. Only 25% (n = 3+7) had voted three or more times. However, the results about voting in elections are not as grave as those of the more direct forms of participation. One can therefore conclude that women living on farms are more likely to participate in indirect forms of participation than in direct forms.

Alternative forms of participation

Having concluded that overall participation levels are very low, one must consider that the literature (refer to Chapter two) notes that, as the poor seem to experience no improvement in their immediate conditions from the mentioned forms of participation, they are now turning

to other, less conventional forms of participation, such as protests. However, regarding farm women, an important distinction must be made between spontaneous protests and NGO-assisted protests. Due to their inability to mobilize effectively, more often than not, farm workers tend to participate in NGO-assisted protests. Very rarely, will farm workers, particularly women, mobilize of their own accord to organise a protest. Only, when they have been in a position to acquire skills from their involvement in such NGO-activities, are they able to independently organise protests or related activities.

Graph 5.5

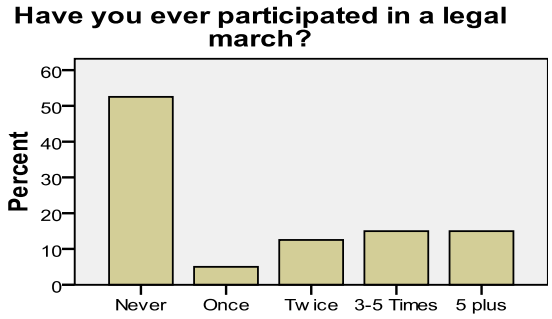


Table 5.10
Have you ever participated in a legal march?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	21	52.5
Once	2	5.0
Twice	5	12.5
3-5 Times	6	15.0
5-Plus	6	15.0
Total	40	100.0

In this respect, the respondents were asked whether they had ever participated in a legal march (used synonymously with protest). Surprisingly, 30% (n = 12) indicated that they had done so three times or more (refer to Table 10). Just under 50%, that is 47.5% (n = 19) of the sample indicated that they had participated in a legal march at least once. Thus it would seem that the poor, particularly women living on farms, are indeed choosing this form of participation to make their voices heard.

Graph 5.6

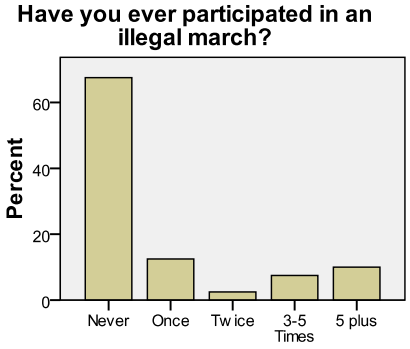


Table 5.11
Have you ever participated in an illegal march?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	27	67.5
Once	5	12.5
Twice	1	2.5
3-5 Times	3	7.5
5-Plus	4	10.
Total	40	100.0

In fact, when asked whether they had ever participated in an illegal march, the results further confirmed this conclusion. Ten percent (n = 4) of the sample had participated in an illegal march, and 22.5% (n = 9) had done so at least once. This is a telling factor, indicating that the women are becoming so desperate to have their needs addressed that they are turning to illegal means to do so. A particular example is an illegal sit-in that was held at the offices of Agri-Western Cape, an organisation representing the issues of farmers in the province. The reason for the sit-in was that the organisation had cancelled a meeting that was to deal with the discrimination of farm workers at the hands of farmers the day before it was due, without any explanation. The group of farm women, aided by the WFP-NGO, with whom the meeting was to be held, decided to arrive at the organisation's offices at the time at which the meeting was supposed to be and have the sit-in until they were met or given an alternative date to meet. It must be mentioned that it is doubtful whether this would have been the response if the NGO was not involved.

Perceptions of participation

All factors considered, the results indicate that, specifically regarding direct forms of participation, farm women participate very little. This is in stark contrast to their apparent belief that it is necessary for them to participate in governance. To enquire whether the women think there would be a purpose to their participation, they were asked the question: do you think it is necessary that farm women, like yourself, participate in our democracy? An overwhelming 92.5% (n = 37) said they did think it was necessary, while 7.5% (n = 3) said it was not necessary to participate. The respondents were also asked to provide a reason for their answer.

From the explanations, three themes can be highlighted. Firstly, most women related this issue to their rights, indicating that it was their right to participate, that they could acquire more rights through participation, and that they wanted to find out more about their rights. As one of the respondents noted, "Women must know what is going on around them. It is my democratic right to know".[4] Secondly, others related participation to their difficulties on the farm, arguing that they could get a better life through participation. In this respect, one of the respondents noted that participation was necessary because they suffered very much on the farm.[5] Finally, the women related the necessity of participation to the vulnerable position of

[4] "Vroue moet weet wat rondom hulle aangaan. Dis my demokratiese reg om te weet."

[5] "Omdat ons baie swaar kry op plase."

women living on farms. They mentioned that women must participate so that their voices could be heard and so that they could be treated on an equal footing with men. In particular, one respondent mentioned that women were oppressed on the farm and that they could have the right to speak and exercise this right by participating.

More interesting are the reasons cited by those who believe that it is not necessary for farm women to participate. One respondent argued that, since there were no rights for women, she did not have to participate.[6] Another respondent noted that she did not deem it necessary to participate because she did not associate herself with democracy. She also mentioned that she simply was not interested in such matters.[7] One can therefore conclude that some of the women do not participate because they feel alienated from the political process.

These statements are in stark contrast with the majority of farm women's beliefs that there will not be any improvement in their circumstances without participation in politics.[8] However, there seems to be great variation in terms of the rights of farm women. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that women have no reason to ask for more rights, 67.5% (n = 27) either disagreed or disagreed strongly. Conversely, 32.5% (n = 13) either agreed or agreed strongly. Thus, although the majority felt that they did not have enough rights, a fair percentage agreed that they did have enough rights. From informal interviews with the women it was evident that most of them felt that a central problem was that farm women do not know their rights.

Even within this sample, this fact was illustrated when one considers the response to the question whether people who live on farms have enough rights. A smaller number than expected, 55% (n = 22) of the sample either disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement. On the other hand, 27.5% either agreed or agreed strongly with this notion. The "don't know" responses deserve further attention here. When asked, 17.5% (n = 7) said that they did not know whether farm people had enough rights. This is in contrast with the assumption that, due to their affiliation with WFP, the women would be more informed about their rights than the average person who lives on a farm. Sadly, this is most likely the case,

[6] "Nee, want daar is geen regte vir vroue nie."

[7] "Nee, ek assosieer myself nie met demokrasie nie. Stel nie belang nie."

[8] "Ja, want geen diens word verskaf sonder politiek".

leaving one with the conclusion that, on average, a whole lot more people who live on farms than is the case in this sample do not know their rights.

The respondents were also asked about their interest in politics. Surprisingly, a number of respondents claimed to be either fairly or very interested in politics. Of the sample, 65% (n = 26) are in this category. Thirty percent (n = 12) had either little or no interest in politics. Added to that, a full 5% did not know how interested they were in politics. These numbers were supported by the results from the question relating to how often people followed political events in the news. The majority, that is 40% (n = 16) said that they followed the news a few times a week, 37.5% (n = 15) did so every day, and 22.5% (n = 9) did so less often. Thus, although not everyone is equally interested in politics, they all tried to stay informed, even if only minimally so, about what was going on in politics.

This compels one to ask what forms of media the women consult when they seek information about politics. Contrary to what one would expect, most of the women in this study did have access to some sort of media. When asked which source they used predominantly when they wanted information about a political event, 47.5% (n = 19) said that they used television, 25% (n = 10) read the newspapers, and 20% listened over the radio. Only 2.5% (n = 1) had no access, and the remaining 5% (n = 2) said they consulted other sources, like asking a friend, a local government official or a community leader.

5.4 Discussion: Obstacles to participation

Having clearly proven the hypothesis that women living on farms participate very little in meaningful (direct) processes of participatory democracy, I will now aim to answer the research question. The research question for this study relates to what the obstacles are that prevent optimal participation by farm women in making decisions that would directly affect their lives. I answer this question by drawing on the themes of the problems with the implementation of participatory democracy in South Africa, as set out in the literature review. Therefore, in the first subsection I look at factors in terms of the tendency to centralise policy formulation in a core of decision makers, thus excluding the poor and marginalised, here particularly farm women, from this critical point in the participatory process. In subsection two I consider how the lack of capacity and resources places farm women at a disadvantage when participating in politics. As will be indicated later, this issue is particularly relevant for farm women. Finally, I consider the orientation of the farm women to politics in general and how this influences their willingness to participate in governance.

5.4.1 Central policy formulation

In the literature review, the argument was made that there is a tendency to situate policy formulation in the centre. This means that the government has the propensity to take the ability to make critical decisions, which ultimately would directly affect their lives, out of the hands of the masses of poor people. This was clearly seen in the non-deliberative manner in which local government in particular governs at the exclusion of poor and marginalised people. Based on this, the argument was that, because of the centralisation of policy, the poor, in particular farm women, would feel alienated from the government and therefore be less prone to participate in the political process.

Table 5.12 Poor people, like farm women, are not considered by politicians.

	Frequency	Percent
Agree Strongly	18	45.0
Agree	15	37.5
Disagree	3	7.5
Disagree Strongly	4	10.0
Total	40	100.0

To this end, the respondents were asked whether they thought that politicians considered their needs during decision-making processes. Of the sample, 45% (n = 18) agreed strongly that their needs were not considered by politicians in decision making. In addition, 37.5% (n = 15), although not as strongly, also agreed with this notion. A mere 17.5% (n = 6) of the sample either disagreed or disagreed strongly. Hence, one may conclude that farm women feel that the policy process as it is functioning at present does not allow for their voices to be heard.

In terms of practical experience in this regard, the participants noted in the qualitative interviews that they felt that their participation in meetings bore little fruit and that this was why they did not participate any more. They mentioned that what tended to happen was that the people attend meetings where everybody brings their needs to the floor and discuss possible solutions to these problems. At some point, certain decisions are reached as to the way forward. However, what often happens is that the municipality has meetings amongst themselves concerning the very issues discussed at the public meetings. After their private meetings, the municipality changes decisions made and agreed upon at the public meetings. In addition, no one informs the public why the changes were made. Some respondents even noted that the municipality had meetings with the farm owners after the public meetings, and

that decisions agreed upon are changed again. Others also mentioned that the municipality had meetings with farmers every month about the needs of farm workers. One respondent specifically stated that the problem was that the municipality assumed that farm workers do not know what they want and what their problems are. At meetings, it is argued, the politicians "dance around the issue and do not address the problem directly". Finally, the respondents mentioned that they never received any feedback from the discussions and decisions reached at public meetings. All these factors are in line with the argument made in the literature review (Chapter 2) that the people are often only consulted about certain issues, but when it concerned the actual decision-making process they were excluded from a core circle of government officials who decide.

An important factor mentioned by the respondents was the issue of corruption. According to them, because government officials have the power to make executive decisions they often abuse this power to enrich themselves. This was mentioned relating to housing in particular. The respondents noted that some officials owned various RDP houses, which they rented to other people, while they also owned big houses where they resided. They also noted that municipalities were very reluctant to make funds available for workers to be transported to meetings, yet during elections they were more than willing to cart farm workers around to vote for them. Finally, the respondents mentioned that if one was fortunate enough to get to one of these public meetings, they found that the planning had already been done and the budget allocated, and that the actual purpose of the meeting was for the municipality to inform them of the plan. Considering these aspects, it becomes very clear why farm workers' attendance of the IDP meetings is so low.

Graph 5.7

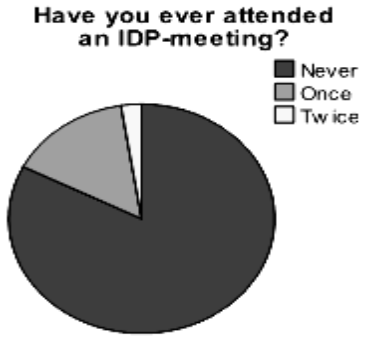


Table 5.13
Have you ever attended an IDP meeting?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	33	82.5
Once	6	15.0
Twice	1	2.5
3-5 Times	0	0.0
5-Plus	0	0.0
Total	40	100.0

Chapter 7, Section 152 of the Constitution (1996: 81) outlines the objectives of local government. Section 152 (1) c states that the objective is "to promote social and economic development". In addition, 152 (1) e states that a further objective is "to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government". The White Paper on Local Government is the government policy by which these objectives are to be reached. One of the cornerstones of the document is the IDP process (Fast, 1998: 308). The primary purpose of IDPs is to serve as a mechanism through which the needs of the poor, as well as targets to eliminate poverty, must be identified. It consists of a five-year plan, prioritising the relevant community's needs, and an outline of how they aim to address these needs, thus how they will use their resources in this process.

Considering the importance that the IDP process is envisioned to play in addressing the needs of the poor, one would expect that the rural poor in particular would be very much involved. However, looking at the figures in Table 5.13, this is not the case for the respondents in this sample. A staggering 82.5% (n = 33) have never attended an IDP meeting, and only 15% (n = 6) have attended such a meeting once, whereas 2.5% (n = 1) have done so twice. Surprisingly, the question had to be explained before an answer was provided, as many of the respondents interviewed did not even know what the IDPs are. Understandably, the women do not see where they are supposed to fit into this process.

When running a statistical analysis to check whether the perception that politicians do not consider farm women is related to their levels of participation, no statistically significant relationship was found. However, the results from the qualitative research methods clearly indicate that this factor affects the value that the respondents attach to participating in politics.

5.4.2 Lack of capacity and resources

Level of education

Various factors in terms of a person's capacity and access to the necessary resources have an affect on the ability to participate in politics. In Chapter two, it was pointed out that Booysen (2001: 20) highlights four factors that disempower the poor in participation. These include education, communication and media access, time for organisation in politics, and transport. In this study, all these factors seem to have an effect on the level of participation of farm

women. Henceforth I first discuss the effect of these aspects and other issues that emerged during the research project.

Table 5.14 How often do politics seem so complicated to you that you do not understand it?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	1	2.5
Seldom	6	15.0
Sometimes	15	37.5
Often	6	15.0
Always	12	30.0
Total	40	100.0

Firstly, in terms of education, it has already been stated that farm women in general have relatively low levels of schooling. However, due to the relative youth of women in this sample, the average level of education is a bit higher than one might expect among the broader population from which the sample is drawn. Having said that, one can now consider how well the respondents understand politics. In this respect the respondents were asked how often politics seemed so complicated that they do not understand it (refer to Table 5.14). Despite their high interest in politics, and the fact that most of the women have access to and consult some sort of media regularly to get information about political events, 30% (n = 12) of them said that they always found politics too complicated to understand. Furthermore, 15% (n = 6) and 37.5% (n = 15) of the sample said that they respectively often and sometimes do not understand politics.

This is a particularly worrying factor, as one cannot expect participants involved in a political participatory process to be articulate if they do not fully comprehend the issues being discussed. Only 17.5% (n = 7) said that this was either seldom or never the case for them. This leaves politicians with two options. On the one hand, the political process will have to be simplified, for instance by using simple language when engaging with people in the political process. On the other hand, a concerted effort will have to be made to better inform farm women about the political process, and this can only be done through a process in which they are actively involved in the development agenda, from start to finish, and not excluded at any point, such as actual decision making.

During the interviews the women also mentioned that politicians often use such complicated language that they do not understand, particularly at public meetings and Imbizos. They give PowerPoint presentations with complex graphs that are impossible for someone with little

schooling, let alone someone who is illiterate, to understand. The women also mentioned that they find it embarrassing to ask for an explanation of concepts that they do not understand. As meetings are held with farm people and people who live in towns, it is particularly difficult for someone who lives on a farm to ask for explanations. Some women noted that it sometimes seems as if politicians use complicated language specifically with the purpose of confusing one, thereby discouraging further enquiry about an issue. Another factor that is specifically relevant to this group is the use of English at meetings. They note that, despite knowing that they will be addressing a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking community, officials often prefer to speak English, while those who are unable to speak Afrikaans do not make use of interpreters. In this respect one finds that, instead of empowering farm women, politicians disempower them simply through the use of inappropriate language, thus also contributing to the lack of participation by farm women. All these factors contribute to farm women going to meetings with the intention to air the issues, but being unable to do so when they are at the meetings.

Table 5.15 Have you ever contacted a politician or council member? * How often does politics seem so complicated to you that you do not understand it?

		How often does politics seem so complicated to you that you do not understand it?					
		Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Always	Total
Have you ever contacted a politician or council member?	Never	0 0%	4 11.1%	15 41.7%	5 13.9%	12 33.3%	36 100.0%
	Twice	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 100.0%	0 0%	1 100.0%
	3-5 Times	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 100.0%
	5-Plus	0 0%	1 100.0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 100.0%
	Total	1 2.5%	6 15%	15 37.5%	6 15.0%	12 30.0%	40 100%
Pearson Chi-Square value: 34.359, p = .001, Kendells tau-c: -1.58; Phi = .925							

When checking whether the ability to understand politics is related to a respondent's propensity to contact a politician, statistical analysis proves that there is a significant relationship (refer to Table 5.15). From the cross tabulation it is clear that those for whom politics seems complicated more often are less likely to have contacted a politician or council

member. The Pearson Chi-Square value for this relationship is 34.259, with p = .001, thus a significant relationship.

Information, communication and media access

As mentioned, most of the respondents make use of television when they want information about a political event. However, this not a very effective means of gaining information that is both politically relevant and community specific. This factor is illustrated by the fact that the women often only hear of meetings after they have been held. Due to their isolated nature on the farm, the women are not readily in contact with the municipality and, according to them, the municipality does not come out to farms to spread information about political issues. The respondents also noted that municipalities more often than not do not have activities that specifically target informing people who live on farms. Some noted that the municipality calls the farmer and informs him about participatory processes, telling him to inform the farm workers.

However, on some farms the farmer often does not carry the information over to the farm workers. According to the women, this serves as a very effective way of ensuring that farm workers do not participate in politics. Some farmers are more open with their farm workers and do inform them. Thus, those who live on a farm where the farmer is less forthcoming use the workers on other farms as a source of information about political issues. Finally, it must be considered that, for those who use television to gain information, there also is the problem of the trustworthiness of reporting. It is a known fact that the authenticity of issues as presented on television is sometimes very doubtful. Thus, the fact that television is the primary source of political information for the majority of farm women makes it clear why they participate so little in community-specific events.

Besides the fact that information does not always reach farm women within a reasonable time for them to participate, one has also to consider the fact that farm women tend to be ill-informed, if informed at all, about their rights, and specifically their right to participate in governance. As mentioned, some of the women did not even know what an Imbizo is when asked whether they have participated in such an event. In addition, some of the women have heard of the acronym IDP, but they do not know that government policy requires that, for the process to be considered successful, it is essential that ordinary people participate in it. The women also noted that because they are not regularly able to attend political meetings where such issues and activities are discussed , when they do have the opportunity to participate

they lack the confidence to do so. This is because they feel that they have too little information to make a viable contribution.

Isolation of women living on farms: Time for political organisation and transport

The abovementioned factors all relate to the isolated state of women who live on farms. Farm women are far removed from municipal services. One of the farms near Rawsonville, for instance, is about ten kilometres from the nearest town. To access services the women often need to travel into town, making use of public transport. As public transport is costly, and given their low wages, the women argue that spending money on transport to town to attend a meeting that will have few positive results is a waste. They also note that municipalities do not make transport available for farm people to travel to the meetings. Furthermore, some of the women mentioned that they simply do not have the time to participate in politics.

Table 5.16 Have you ever participated in a legal march? * What is the employment status of the respondent?[9]

		What is the employment status of the respondent?					
		In a paying job	Seasonal worker	Permanent worker	Unem-ployed	Other	Total
Have you ever participated in a legal march?	Never	1 40.8%	3 14.3%	9 42.9%	5 23.8%	3 14.3%	21 100%
	Once	0 0%	1 50%	0 0%	1 50%	0 0%	2 100.0%
	Twice	0 0%	1 20.0%	0 0%	1 20.0%	3 60.0%	5 100.0%
	3-5 Times	0 0%	1 16.7%	0 0%	5 83.3%	0 0%	6 100.0%
	5-Plus	1 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	1 16.7%	4 66.7%	6 100.%
	Total	2 5.0%	6 15.0%	9 22.5%	13 32.5%	10 25%	40 100.0
Pearson Chi-Square value: 28.795; p = .025; Lambda = .217; Asymp. Std. Error = .122							

When one looks at the participation of permanent workers as opposed to seasonal workers and the unemployed, for instance, it becomes clear that one's occupation is related to your participation in politics. Through statistical analysis one finds that there is a significant

[9] It is important to acknowledge that this is a relatively small sample. Hence one should be cautious of ascribing to much importance to the significance of data generated, as cell numbers are very small.

relationship between the respondents' employment status and the likelihood that they would participate in a legal march. The analysis indicates that those who are in permanent employment are less likely to have participated in a legal march. This is due to the long hours farm women work, leaving them with little time to engage in other activities like participating in politics. The Pearson chi-square value for this analysis is 28.795, and p = .025. The strength of the association is relatively low (Lambda = .217).

During the interviews, the women also mentioned that the fact that meetings are held during the day is a big problem for them. They sometimes work until six in the evenings, and they are then not only too tired to drive to a meeting in town, provided they do have transport, but one also cannot expect them to function optimally after a hard day's labour in the fields. They therefore suggested that meetings should be held over weekends and, if possible, on the farm. Finally, as Booysen (2001: 20) notes, transport is essential to mobilisation, gathering resources and communication in the participation in governance. The respondents specifically mentioned this issue as a barrier to the participation of people living on farms. They argue that the main reason why the farmers are so successful in having their voices heard in agricultural policy is that they present a united front. However, as the mobilisation of people on different farms is so difficult, the farm workers are not united. In addition, they lack critical resources like phones, fax machines and computers – all factors that would make communication and interacting with each other possible.

5.4.3 Growing political cynicism

In the light of the various obstacles preventing farm workers from meaningful participation in governance, some of them understandably have become very cynical. In fact, the respondents argued that it seems to them as if the municipality could simply not be bothered with farm people. During the focus group session, the respondents concluded that the farm women's trust in the government is broken, and that nobody cares about people who live on farms. One of the women mentioned that "everyone, all the politicians, all political parties, none of them care, all they want is votes, and they are all in it together".[10] Many times the respondents also noted that politicians only want to interact with them during elections when

[10] "Al die politieke partye, hulle is almal kop-in-een mus. Hulle almal lieg."

they need votes.[11] Some also noted that, when they did initiate activities to address issues in their communities, they still did not see any positive results.

This, they argue, is because there is no way for the farm women to hold government officials accountable when they do not deliver on promises made. An example is the experiences of a group of women on a farm near Rawsonville. In 2007 they started a process to get access to land for subsistence farming. They applied to the government for land as a cooperative, but after three years have not been successful in acquiring land. In 2008, they, together with about 200 other farm women, symbolically occupied unused land on a nearby farm. As a result, the government declared the Rawsonville land issue a "priority". However, since then they have been declared a "non-priority" and, at this stage, they do not know what their current position is. This is despite continued efforts on the part of the women (in conjunction with WPF) to have the matter concluded. Considering this, the women are now very cynical about government, and more specifically about their local municipality.

Table 5.17 In terms of the government, how satisfied are you with the work it is doing?

	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	1	2.5
Satisfied	7	17.5
Unsatisfied	6	15.0
Very unsatisfied	20	50.0
Neither satisfied or unsatisfied	6	15.0
Total	40	100.0

These sentiments were illustrated when the respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the work that the government is doing (refer to Table 5.17). In this respect, exactly 50% (n = 20) was very unsatisfied, 15% (n = 6) was unsatisfied and another 15% (n = 6) was neither satisfied nor unsatisfied. Conversely, 20% (n = 8) of the sample was either very satisfied or satisfied. This contradicts the negative attitudes of most of the farm women during the qualitative interviews. Although about 65% say they are unsatisfied, one would have expected this number to be higher, given the negative comments made during the open-ended interviews.

11 "Hulle gee nie om vir plaaswerkers nie, hulle jag net stemme."

5.4.4 Additional factors influencing participation

Fear of losing one's job

During the research process, other factors unanticipated by the researcher, but which also have an effect on the participation of farm women in politics, became known. One such factor is the fear amongst farm women, particularly in this case study, that they could lose their jobs if they were too involved in politics. Furthermore, for those who live on the farm, housing is linked to their employment on the farm; usually, if the woman is not employed, then her male partner or father is. According to the women, most farmers do not want the workers to engage in political issues. Should the farmer hear that one was involved in such matters, it is quite possible that you could lose your job, and consequently your home. It is also very likely that one could lose certain benefits provided by the farmer should you become too informed about your rights. The women often mentioned that if the farmer was aware that you know your rights, he/she becomes very likely to refuse assistance should you be in need. According to the respondents, in such a situation the farmers often tell them to "go ask Jacob Zuma for help".[12]

Those farm women who are a little bit more informed are also very reluctant to share their knowledge with other farm women. This is because farmers tend to label those who attempt to inform others about their rights as a "troublemakers".[13] For this reason, the women argue, men are particularly fearful of engaging in political matters, as they are usually the breadwinners in the home. One respondent mentioned that when her husband was interviewed for employment on the farm, he was asked whether he is a member of a union. When he enquired as to why the question was asked, the farmer answered that he does not want a union on the farm, because "unions only create problems with their politics". In addition, the women note that one must always be careful of what you say and to whom you say it. This is because farmers typically have informants,[14] meaning other farm workers who inform them about the activities of people who could create problems for the farmer. Significantly, the women also mentioned that some farmers want their workers to stay

[12] "Gaan vra by Jacob Zuma."

[13] "oproermakers"

[14] "piempers"

uninformed. This, they note, is because farmers know that if a worker knows his/her rights, it would be impossible to exploit such a person.

Farms as private property

Another factor that seems to have a significant influence on the participation of farm women in politics is the fact that farms are private property. According to the women, farmers tend to exploit this fact by refusing access to their farms to government officials. This is in line with the argument, found in the literature, that most farmers are reluctant to allow people who come to speak about politics to the workers on their farms. It further confirms the argument that farmers tend to feel alienated from the political process, that they have withdrawn themselves from the political process and that they govern their farms by their own rules. The women note that, as the government has limited access to farm workers, effective service delivery to farm people is almost impossible.

An interesting factor mentioned during the focus group discussions relates to the perception that some officials in the local municipality have of people who live on farms. According to the respondents, these officials wrongly assume that all people who live on farms vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA) during elections. In this context, the DA is perceived as the "white farmer's" party, and therefore officials who are members of the ANC argue that farm workers must rely on their "white party" to deliver services to them. The women note that it seems to them that, by not delivering services to them, the ANC government is punishing farm workers for the fact that the DA tends to win elections in the Western Cape.

One may therefore argue that the farm women, in this study, fail to vote because, for them, none of the political parties prioritises the issues of farm people. They do not perceive voting for either of the two most prominent parties, the DA and the ANC, as a viable choice. This is because it seems as if the DA represents the interests of the white farmers, which are typically in opposition to the needs of farm workers, and the ANC does not want to improve the conditions of farm workers, because they assume that farm people vote for the DA. The irony is that farm workers, particularly the illiterate, probably do vote for the DA. According to the farm women, some farmers tell illiterate workers during elections to "make their mark where the sun comes up".[15] In other words, they manipulate the workers into voting for the

[15] "Hulle sê vir die plaaswerkers: Maak jou kruisie daar waar die son opkom." The logo of the DA party is that of a cloud with a sun rising in the background.

DA. This is of course only hearsay, and should be considered with caution. Moreover, many of those who are literate also vote for the DA because they argue that the ANC does nothing to improve the lives of farm people.

In all fairness, it must be stated that not all farmers are as conservative about the participation of farm workers in politics. On some farms union activity is very prominent, and many farm workers are members of the union. Some farmers also allow workers leave from work, although without pay, should they want to engage in the activities of an NGO, for instance.

Cultural aspects

Finally, a factor not so much unanticipated as undervalued is that of the effect of farm people's cultural orientations toward their participation in politics. This is related to the role of women in the family. During the qualitative interviews it was mentioned that a reason for some women not participating in politics is that it is not seen as the women's place to do so. The women mention that some men do not want their women to participate, arguing that it is men's issues and that "women must not be part of the process".[16]

According to some respondents, women are also too busy looking after the children, taking care of the sick and aged and making a home for the family to engage in politics. They note that, irrespective of whether they are employed or not, they receive very little assistance from men in this respect, as this is viewed as "women's work". This relates to the double burden on women and confirms the argument that this factor negatively influences women's ability to participate in politics.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the research were presented and discussed. Firstly, the hypothesis that farm women do not participate in any meaningful process of participation was confirmed. In terms of direct participation, judging by the very low attendance of political meetings and other mechanisms created specifically for the poor to engage in participatory governance, this factor was clearly illustrated. The majority of the women in this case study have never attended a meeting about a political issue, a ward meeting, or an Imbizo. Added

[16] "Vroue moet nie deel wees van die proses nie."

to that, very few of them have contacted a politician directly. They are likely to participate in indirect forms of participation, such as voting in elections, marginally more than in direct forms of participation. An interesting factor is their participation in both legal and illegal marches (protests). The results indicate that, in this case study, farm women's participation in these mechanisms is higher, confirming what the literature states about people turning to other forms, as opposed to conventional forms, of participation.

The main findings in terms of the obstacles that prevent the meaningful participation of farm women are supported by the findings of previous studies. Firstly, the research indicates that farm women feel that, since their opinions are not considered by politicians, there is no reason for them to participate in governance. Not only do they feel that their opinions are not valued, many of them also are not aware of the processes through which they can participate, for instance participating in IDPs. Secondly, because of a lack of capacity and the resources critical for optimal participation, the women are further also likely to not participate in political governance. Factors like the relatively low levels of education, access to relevant political information, and the isolation of farm women, which relate to transport and time for organisation, all play a role in preventing the women from participating in governance. Finally, farm women, in this study, are tired of promises from politicians and the misuse of power by corrupt officials. Hence, they have become very cynical of processes that are supposed to be participatory, but in effect are not authentic participation.

With this background, one is then able to make certain policy suggestions, which, if implemented, may open up and make the participation of farm women in governance easier. In the next chapter I therefore offer some policy suggestions.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Modern conceptions of democracy are based on the notion that, for any government to be considered as legitimate, the people must be actively involved in its governance. This implies a shift beyond notions of representative democracy, in terms of which citizens are periodically involved when choosing representatives during elections, to a process whereby they are actively involved on a continuous basis. However, such a conception of participation is only viable when the people are involved in decision-making processes that directly affect their lives, thus issues that are relevant to their standard of living. Conversely, one finds that, due to various constraints on people, they are unable to participate according to these principles.

As was mentioned earlier, a central argument in this study is that the South African government is not opposed to the notion of participatory democracy, but rather that there are various problems with the implementation of its participatory agenda. Furthermore, I argued that participation in SA functions with a distinct elite bias. This is because participation requires capacity, resources and, finally, an environment that is receptive of a participatory society. The result of this is that those who are systematically excluded tend to be the majority, who are the poor and marginalised sector of society. By doing a case study, this research focused on the experiences of women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch Area, Ceres and Rawsonville. These women are a particularly vulnerable and marginalised group of the South African society and therefore research that focuses specifically on their experiences is also practically relevant. This view is based on the notion that, for participation to be meaningful, people must be empowered through the process so as to be able to work actively towards the enhancement of their social and economic conditions. Not only must participation therefore add value to democracy, but it must also be socially relevant, leading to the enhancement of people's lives.

From the findings, the hypothesis that women living on farms do not engage in meaningful processes of participation was confirmed. In addition, the research question that relates to the obstacles that prevent meaningful participation in politics by farm women was addressed. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to provide a summary of the main issues in the study.

In subsection two, I consider how the main issues in the literature relate to the key findings. In subsection three, a summary of the main argument is provided, thus looking at the research question and the main response to it. Having done that, it is possible to offer some recommendations to empower farm women. This is done in subsection four.

6.2 Participatory democracy and farm women

In Chapter two a distinction was made between direct forms and indirect forms of democracy. I argued that an appropriate definition of democracy would not disregard the importance of representative democracy, but rather that a combination of the two would be more appropriate. Based on the research findings with regard to the participation of farm women in politics, this is a particularly relevant argument. From the findings it became clear that women living on farms are more likely to participate in representative forms of participation, such as voting, than in direct forms, such as attending meetings about political issues and Imbizos and directly contacting an official. Hence, any conception of participation must include both forms – direct and indirect.

However, the crux of this research relates to direct participation, thus how the women engage in such processes of participation. Unfortunately, the findings suggest that women living on farms participate very little in direct forms of participation. More than that, the argument that the poor and marginalised are now turning to other unconventional forms such as protests (marches) as a result of their exclusion from meaningful participation was confirmed by the research. Surprisingly, farm women tend to participate more in protests then they do in legitimate spaces for participation created by the government. In addition, they also tend to participate more in illegal activities, such as illegal marches. The findings suggest that a reason for this is because of a general lack of efficacy amongst the women.

Importantly, these factors will play a significant role in the process of consolidating the South African democracy. However, before consolidation can happen, democracy must be accepted by all citizens as the legitimate form of governance. Thus, it becomes vital that spaces that do exist for direct participation are directed in such a manner that they provide greater opportunities for the poor and marginalised, particularly farm women, to engage in effective and meaningful participation. As argued in the literature, due to increased levels of poverty and growing inequality the poor are becoming desperate and frustrated with a system that

brings little improvement to the lives of those who suffer the most. Indeed, the distance between those who govern and the governed is becoming larger. A factor of particular importance here is the inability of farm women to hold officials accountable for failing to deliver on their mandate. Considering these factors, this study concludes that democracy in South Africa also has its deficits in terms of levels of public participation. Furthermore, as the process is dominated by a minority of well-resourced, skilled elite, one can conclude that our democracy has been reduced to a form of "downsized democracy". The argument is not that farm women do not participate in politics at all, but rather, as shown by this case study, that they on average are less likely to do so.

In addition to this, the findings indicate that when farm women are engaged in participatory processes, the authenticity of the process often is doubtful. This is because of the tendency of government officials, sometimes in conjunction with farmers, to make critical decisions at the exclusion of farm women. They then use mechanisms that are supposed to be participatory to merely inform farm people of their decisions. This reminds one of Verba's (cited in Radcliff & Wingenbach, 2000: 988) "pseudo-participation", whereby spaces created for participation are used by officials as a means to legitimate previously made decisions. Based on the continuum of participation offered by the IAP2 and DEAT (refer to Chapter three), where informing the people is at the lowest end of the spectrum, farm women in this sample participate at a very low level. Not only do they lack a "choice", but also a "voice", in the important process of governance and their development.

In this respect, the ability of women living on farms to mobilise themselves and speak with one "voice", as the literature suggests, is relevant. This study found that it is almost impossible for farm women to mobilise sufficiently in addressing collective needs. As a result their "voice" lacks unity. This is because, like most poor people, they lack the necessary resources, specifically because of their geographic location, to do so. People who live on farms are not only far from services in town but, because of huge distances between different farms, they are also unable to mobilise. Hence, although the idea of farm women mobilising themselves and speaking out sounds like an ideal solution to the problem, the findings suggest that this is most likely not to happen, due to the lack of resources.

Therefore, meaningful participation of farm women must be a process through which they are capacitated and empowered and one which not only concerns the development of a more democratically orientated individual, but also sees to the socioeconomic circumstances of the

women. This confirms the argument that participation must be seen as a building block of development. One cannot reasonably expect a person to engage in intangible, abstract theories of democratic citizenry when he or she is struggling with the very real problem of a grumbling tummy. With this background, I now discuss the obstacles that prevent farm women from engaging in meaningful participation in politics.

6.3 Obstacles that prevent meaningful participation of farm women

The findings of this study support the research hypothesis that women living on farms in the Greater Stellenbosch Area, Ceres and Rawsonville do not readily engage in direct processes of participation. The purpose of the study was to find out what the factors are that prohibit these women from meaningful participation in politics. In Table 6.1, I offer a typology of these factors. In the methods chapter it was mentioned that, in doing the research, the focus will be on the conditions in which farm women find themselves and on their orientations toward democracy, the government and participation itself. Hence, we can look at the obstacles that prevent optimal participation from these perspectives. In terms of the conceptual framework, one can consider Manheim's three explanations for non-participation in politics. These include people's ability to participate, whether they have the opportunity to participate, and their preference for participation. As the research specifically considers why the women do not participate, these conceptual tools are useful.

Table 6.1 Typology of obstacles to participation

Focus	Explanations for non-participation	Obstacles
Orientations	**Preference**	**Centripetal policy formulation**
		Growing political cynicism
		Cultural aspects
Conditions	**Opportunity**	**Lack of capacity and resources** • **Level of education** • **Information, communication and media access** • **Isolation: time and transport**
	Ability	**Fear of losing one's job**
	(See Chapter 3)	**Farms as private property**

Orientations of farm women

From the research, three factors in relation to women's orientation have an effect on their level of participation. In the first instance, the women's perception that policy formulation lies exclusively in the hands of government officials plays a role. As farm women feel that their needs are not considered by politicians during decision making, they see little purpose to participation. Furthermore, when they are involved in consultation, officials tend to renege on decisions reached by the government, municipality and community collectively. Added to that, the actual planning for a programme often has already been done, and although an activity is cited as a participatory event, its actual purpose is to inform farm women and get political buy-in for decisions already reached. Thus, the women are merely co-opted in the process of participation, and not actively involved in governance issues.

As the women feel that they are not politically efficacious, they participate less in politics. This was illustrated by the fact that some women feel that it is not necessary for them to participate in politics, although the majority felt that their participation was necessary. However, this suggests that because farm women are so far removed from the political process and actual decision making, some have become apathetic.

In the second instance, farm women are also becoming increasingly cynical in terms of the supposedly participatory processes. During the research it became clear that farm women feel that they are only needed during elections when political parties need votes to win. There is a sense that the government does not care about women living on farms. People who live on farms have very limited access to resources and there is no sign that government is prioritising this issue. Even though there may be means through which farm women can hold officials accountable, many concluded that they find none. This could either be because farm women feel that they lack the capacity to have a real political impact, or because the mechanisms through which one can hold officials accountable really are inadequate.

Clearly, this also has an effect on one's preference for participation in politics, as someone who is cynical of the process is less likely to participate than someone who feels that they can add value to the process. Finally, the role that women occupy in the family and society also has an effect on their orientation towards politics. Women tend to be perceived as the homemakers and caretakers in the family and therefore the argument is that they must not concern themselves with politics. It is the man's place to participate in the political domain. Other than that, farm women tend to be so busy fulfilling their role in the family that they

have very little time left to engage in politics. As a result of these factors, farm women lack the ability to participate in politics because they lack the time and due to perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour for women.

Conditions of farm women

From the research it also was concluded that various factors related to the living conditions of farm women influence their participation in politics. These factors can be explained in terms of the ability and opportunity farm women have to participate. In this context, I first consider that most farm women lack the capacity and resources that would enable them to participate in governance issues. Firstly, women living on farms tend to have relatively low levels of education, and many of the older women are illiterate. One of the findings of this study was that, despite the above average level of education, many of them often find politics so complicated that they do not understand it. In addition, it also became clear that farm women tend to be ill-informed about their rights and politics in general. Therefore, because they do not have the necessary skills they are unable to participate in politics.

The fact that farm women tend to be ill-informed relates to the lack of access to politically relevant information. Most farm women in this study get their political information from television, some from newspapers and others from radio. Because they often do not understand politics, despite claiming to follow political events regularly, these sources are obviously not sufficient means of gaining political information. Furthermore, the strategy of some municipalities to inform farmers of activities through which farm women can participate is not very successful. Whether the farmer forgets or simply neglects to inform the farm workers, the information still does not reach them. Hence, the opportunity to participate passes them by. Finally, farm women are aware that they do not have the skills to engage effectively in politics. This makes them feel that they cannot make a valuable contribution through participation. Therefore, even though they know what their primary problems are, and can probably offer more viable solutions to them, they do not speak up when called to do so. The result of this is that the voices of farm women become muted and they are systematically disempowered during the very process of participation.

In addition, due to their relative isolation on farms, farm women are also not able to readily access resources and spaces created for participation. In this respect, the lack of availability of transport plays a big role and serves as a reason for not participating. Transport is costly

and, as the research indicated, given the low income levels of most farm women they are not likely to spend their meagre finances on travelling to town to engage in politics.

Furthermore, farm workers, specifically those who are permanently employed, work long hours. They generally are unable to participate in any activities held during the day, unless they take a day's leave without pay. Since activities through which people can participate are held during the day, this further excludes farm women from participation. Also, losing one day's pay is obviously not an option for the women; therefore they rather take the option of not participating in such activities. As the ability to participate is influenced by one's available time, education levels, skills and occupation, and if one is geographically isolated, these factors all serve as explanations for non-participation of farm women in politics.

A factor that relates specifically to women living on farms is the fear that participation could result in one losing your complete livelihood. In some way or another, residence on the farm depends on whether the woman or her male counterpart works on the farm. Should one lose your job on the farm you also lose the right to stay on the farm. Hence, maintaining employment or securing that of the male counterpart is of the utmost importance. One can therefore understand why the women would be reluctant to engage in activities that might lead to a them losing their job. As farmers typically perceive active involvement in politics as troublesome, farm women often choose to limit their participation in politics to the minimum.

Considering this, the fact that farm women participate more in illegal marches leaves one with a contradiction. This is based on the assumption that the farmer would be even more negative towards someone who participated in an illegal activity than a legal activity. However, participating in an illegal activity to bring change to ones living conditions is an act of desperation. Consequently, the very act of defying authority and its rules is the means by which the illegal activity is set to have an effect. As the farmer is also a figure of authority, it is exactly by defying his rules that farm women participating in an illegal activity, makes more of an impact.

This leads to the final point – the issue of farms being private property. The farm owner must approve any activity initiated on the farm. Therefore, it only makes sense that, should the farmer not want political activities on his/her farm; he/she can simply refuse permission for such activities to take place. In this regard, some farmers also disempower farm workers,

particularly farm women, from participating in political matters. Thus, their ability to engage in politics is further limited due to the conditions in which they find themselves.

6.4 Recommendations to empower farm women

One of the biggest debilitating factors in terms of farm women's participation is their lack of access to politically relevant information. Farm women do not know their rights and therefore they are vulnerable. When we create measures by which women who live on farms are informed and educated about their rights, and make it possible for them to access these means, the ability and opportunity to participate is already enhanced. One could suggest other means, like mobile information clinics and workshops focusing on political rights at libraries. In this respect, existing programmes like the national Adult Basic Education Training (ABET) can also be utilised, adding a component about basic political education to one of the subjects.

It seems that the process of educating the public about politics immediately after 1994 did not stretch far enough to include people living on farms. Thus, the government may want to consider initiating such a process, importantly with the support of farmers. Such a process must have a specific focus on basic political education for people who live on farms. When one is adequately informed of your rights, you do not fear that by exercising your democratic right to participate in politics you could lose your job; one learns that participation in politics is the right of everyone, not just men, and finally it places one in a position where you become skilled enough to confidently participate should the opportunity arise.

However, one also has to consider the current state of government policy in the agricultural sector. From Chapter one it is clear that government policy with regard to farm workers and specifically farm women is of very little substance. Hence, in the process of capacitating farm women it is vital that policy measures are put in place to strengthen the position of women (people) who live on farms. However, in order to ensure that policy is amended in such a manner that it empowers farm women, the government will have to involve them in policy formulation. As the research indicated, the reason for the failure of current policy to improve the conditions of farm workers is that they were not involved in the drafting of the policy. This relates to the broader political process, where the poor and marginalised are becoming increasingly cynical because the right to make government policy is situated in the

hands of an elite group of technocrats. In this process, government authorities will have to realise that spaces for participation must provide citizens with authentic opportunities to make their voices heard and have a meaningful influence on the outcomes of the process.

In addition, those farmers who complicate political participation for their farm workers do so because they themselves feel alienated from politics. Thus, a process through which farm women are empowered will also have to include drawing this group into the lifeblood of the political spectrum. A practical step in this direction would be to cease exposing them to the harsh economic international conditions within which they are already functioning. Moreover, within the neoliberal paradigm of open markets and no protection barriers, the fact is that when farmers experience difficulties, the people who suffer the most, due to their more vulnerable nature, are women who live on farms. In addition, where farm owners do participate in governance it is important that they do not do so to the detriment of farm women. Instead, political participation in the agricultural sector must be structured so that both the farm owner and farm workers, particularly women, can engage with their relevant municipality on an equal footing. Atkinson's (2007) research on farming bodies has indicated that interventions where farmers, farm workers and the municipality work together towards collective development can deliver successful results.

Now, various nongovernmental organisations, like the Women on Farms Project (WFP) and trade unions, seem to be filling the gap in enhancing the lives of farm women. Significantly, these organisations not only provide transport to access resources in town, but also bring services to the farm. This makes it possible for older people and the disabled to participate. However, these organisations receive very little help from the government, not only financially but also organisationally. Seeing that local municipalities do not always have the capacity to deliver services efficiently to people who live in towns and those who live on farms, there will always be a role for these organisations to fulfil. Hence it is only prudent that the government attempts to work together with these organisations and provide them with assistance where necessary.

All these measures will be impossible without increased financial assistance for municipalities. Not only do municipalities have to deliver services to people who live in towns, but they will now have to stretch their resources to include people who live on farms. Considering the bad track record of many municipalities this will be an impossible feat. Therefore, the government will have to make more finances available for rural development.

Although participation is advanced from the principle of enhancing democracy, the lived realities of farm women cannot be ignored. Participation that brings little difference to one's immediate concerns is pointless. Thus it is vital that participation in politics be seen from a holistic perspective, relying on both democratic principles and the social and economic conditions of farm women. Through political participation, farm women must be empowered to become not only democratic citizens, as envisioned by the theorists of participatory democracy, but also capacitated people who live dignified lives.

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Nr.

Appendix A

Introduction: I am currently busy doing research on the participation of women living on farms in the democracy of our country. I would very much like to get your opinion on this issue.

V1.What is your age? Draw an x in the appropriate box.

- ☐ 18-28
- ☐ 29-39
- ☐ 40-50
- ☐ 51-61
- ☐ Older than 61

V2. What is your home language?

_____

V3. How long have you been living on the farm? Draw an x in the appropriate box.

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11- 15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

V4.Which of the following describes your situation the best? Draw an x in the appropriate box. (Mark only one box please.)

- ☐ In a paying job
- ☐ A seasonal worker
- ☐ A permanent worker
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other Specify _____

V5. What is your income per month, before deductions? Draw an x in the appropriate box.

- ☐ Less than R 500
- ☐ Between R 500 and R 1 000
- ☐ Between R 1 001 and R 1 500
- ☐ Between R 1 501 and R 2 000
- ☐ More than R 2 000

V6. What is your highest grade/standard passed?

_____

V7. How interested are you in politics? Draw an x in the appropriate box.

Very interested	Fairly interested	Don't know	Little interest	Not interested

V8. How often do you follow political events in the news (radio/ newspapers/ television)?

Draw an x in the appropriate box.

Every day	A few times a week	Less often	Never	Don't know

V9. How often do you discuss political issues when you are with the following people?

Draw an x in the appropriate box.

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
a) Life Partner					
b)Brother or sister					
c)Friends					
d)Colleques					
e) Your children					

V10. There are various ways in which one can participate in politics.

A) Have you ever done any of the following?
B) If so, how often in the last few months?

	Never	Once	Twice	3-5 times	5 plus
a. Voted in an election	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
b. Did not vote in protest	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
c. Contacted a politician or council member	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
d. Attended a meeting about a political or social issue	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
e. Attended an Imbizo	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
f. Attended an IDP-meeting	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
g. Attended a Ward meeting	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
h. Made a political speech	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
i. Handed out pamphlets containing political content	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
j. Worn a weapon with a political message.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
k. Participated in a legal march	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
l. Participated in an illegal march	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
m. Participated in a political event where property was damaged?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

V11. Do you think it is necessary that farm women, like yourself, participate in our democracy? Yes/ No. Give a reason please.

_____

Please carefully consider the following statements. Do you Agree...?						
		Agree Strongly	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
V12.	Women have no reason to ask for more rights.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V13.	There is a need for more women in politics.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V14.	Poor people, like farm women, are not considered by politicians.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V15.	People who live on farms have enough rights.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

V16. How often do politics seem so complicated, to you, that you do not understand it?

Always (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Seldom (4)	Never (5)

V17. If you want information about a political event, which of the following would you use predominantly? Choose only one please.

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ No access
- ☐ Other Specify_____

V18. In terms of the government, how satisfied are you with the work it is doing? Are you...?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied or unsatisfied
- ☐ Unsatisfied

☐ Very unsatisfied

V19. Are you currently experiencing any problems, i.t.o. services, on the farm?

_____

V19. (a) If so, what do you see as your biggest problem?

_____

V20. Has anyone ever come to speak to you about labour issues (your work on the farm)?

_____

V21. Do you know what a Non-governmental organization (NGO) is?

_____

V21. (a) If so, what type of input do these organizations bring to your development, if any?

_____

V22. Are you a member of a union? Yes/ No.

_____

V22. (a) If not, why?

_____

V23. How would you have liked to participate in our democracy, political issues, of our country?

_____

V24. Is there anything else you would like to add concerning the participation of farm women in our democracy?

_____

Thank You Very Much for Your Time & Cooperation!

Nr.

Appendix B

Inleiding: Ek is tans besig met 'n ondersoek oor die deelname van plaas vroue in die demokrasie. Ek wil graag u opinie hieroor hê.

V1. Wat is u ouderdom? Maak 'n x in die toepaslike blokkie.

- ☐ 18-28
- ☐ 29-39
- ☐ 40-50
- ☐ 51-61
- ☐ Ouer as 61

V2. Wat is u huistaal?

_____

V3. Hoe lank woon u al op die plaas? Maak 'n x in die toepaslike blokkie.

- ☐ Minder as 1 jaar
- ☐ 2-5 jaar
- ☐ 6-10 jaar
- ☐ 11- 15 jaar
- ☐ 16-20 jaar
- ☐ Meer as 20 jaar

V4. Watter van die volgende beskryf u situasie die beste? Maak 'n x in die toepaslike blokkie. (Merk net een blokkie asseblief.)

- ☐ In 'n betalende werk
- ☐ 'n Seisoenale werker
- ☐ 'n Permanente werker
- ☐ Werkloos
- ☐ Ander Spesifiseer_____

V5. Wat is u verdienste per maand, voor aftrekkings? Maak ‘n x in die toepaslike blokkie.

☐ Minder as R 500
☐ Tussen R 500 en R 1 000
☐ Tussen R 1 001 en R 1 500
☐ Tussen R 1 501 en R 2 000
☐ Meer as R 2 000

V6. Wat is u hoogste graad/standerd geslaag?

_____

V7. Hoe geintereseerd is u in die politiek? Maak ‘n x in die toepaslike blokkie.

Baie geintereseerd	Redelik geintereseerd	Weet nie	Min geintereseerd	Geensins geintereseerd

V8. Hoe gereeld volg u politieke gebeure in die nuus? (radio/ koerante/ televisie) Maak ‘n x in die toepaslike blokkie.

Elke dag	‘n Paar keer ‘n week	Minder gereeld	Nooit	Weet nie

V9. Hoe gereeld bespreek u politieke kwessies wanneer u saam met die volgende persone Is? Maak ‘n x in die toepaslike blokkie.

	Altyd	Gereeld	Soms	Selde (Baie min)	Nooit
a)Lewensmaat					
b)Broer of suster					
c)Vriende					
d)Kollegas					
e)U kind/ kinders					

V10. Daar is verskeie maniere hoe mens betrokke in die politiek kan wees.

C) Het u al ooit enige van die volgende gedoen?
D) Indien wel, Hoeveel keer in die laaste paar maande?

	Nooit	Een Keer	Twee Keer	3-5 keer	5 plus
n. In verkiesing gestem	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
o. Nie gestem uit protes	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
p. ‘n Politikus/ Raadslid gekontak	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
q. ‘n Vergadering bygewoon wat oor ‘n politieke of sosiale kwessie handel	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
r. ‘n Imbizo bygewoon	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
s. ‘n IDP-vergadering bygewoon	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
t. ‘n Wyksvergadering bygewoon	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
u. ‘n Politieke toespraak gemaak	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
v. Pamflette wat politieke inhoud bevat uitgedeel	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
w. ‘n Wapen met ‘n politieke boodskap gedra	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
x. Aan ‘n wettige optog deelgeneem	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
y. Aan ‘n onwettige optog deelgeneem.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
z. Aan ‘n politieke geleentheid deelgeneem waar eiendom beskadig is?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

V11. Dink u dis nodig dat plaas vroue, soos u, in die demokrasie deelneem? Ja/Nee.

Verskaf ’n rede asseblief.

_____

Kyk asseblief na die volgende stellings. Stem u...?						
		Stem baie saam	Stem saam	Weet nie	Verskil	Verskil Sterk
V12.	Vroue het geen rede om vir meer regte te vra nie.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V13.	Daar moet meer vroue in die politiek wees.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V14.	Arm mense, soos plaasvroue, word nie deur politici in ag geneem nie.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
V15.	Mense wat op plase woon het genoeg regte	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

V16. Hoe gereeld lyk die politiek vir u so gekompliseerd (moeilik) dat u dit nie kan verstaan nie?

Altyd (1)	Soms (2)	Gereeld (3)	Selde (4)	Nooit (5)

V17. As u inligting oor 'n politieke aangeleentheid wil hê, watter van die volgende gebruik u hoofsaaklik? Kies net een asseblief.

☐ Televisie
☐ Radio
☐ Koerant
☐ Geen toegang
☐ Ander Spesifiseer_____

V18. In terme van die regering, hoe tevrede is u met die werk wat die regering verrig? Is u...?

- ☐ Baie Tevrede
- ☐ Tevrede
- ☐ Nie tevrede of ontevrede nie
- ☐ Ontevrede
- ☐ Baie Ontevrede

V19. Ondervind u tans enige probleme, i.t.v. dienste, op die plaas?

_____

V19(a) Indien ja, wat beskou u as u grootste problem?

_____

V20. Het iemand al ooit met u oor arbeidsaangeleenthede,u werk op die plaas, gepraat?

_____

V21. Weet u wat ‘n NGO (Nie-regeringsorganisasie) is?

_____

V21(a) Indien wel, watter tipe bydrae lewer die organisasies tot u ontwikkeling, indien enige?

_____

V22. Behoort u aan ‘n unie (vakbond)? Ja/Nee

_____

V22(a) Indien nie, hoekom nie?

_____

V23. Hoe sou u graag wou deelneem aan die demokrasie, politieke aangeleenthede, van ons land?

_____

V24. Is daar enige iets anders wat u wil byvoeg oor die deelname van plaasvroue in die demokrasie?

_____

Baie Dankie vir u Tyd en Samewerking!