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KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for
policy development in KwaZulu-Natal Province, Harry Gwala District
Municipality**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Phumezile Garane, declare that:

The dissertation submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's Degree of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is my original work.

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P. Garane

Date

31 AUGUST 2022

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ABSTRACT

Rural communities have over the years continually been unable to embrace the fundamental exploitation of resources through collective agriculture development. Arguably, the problem is the need for a holistic approach, where social partners define and contextualise a problem as well as the type of intervention in a collective manner. Individuals in communal areas have not yet realised that the momentum cannot come from outside but through a participatory approach that promotes local ownership.

To instigate behavioural change, actors are required to sustain engagement with people and it is imperative to use traditional knowledge to address recent smallholder farming challenges. Diverse actors, therefore, can be viewed as the bases of addressing communal farming challenges and improving the adoption of policy with clear objectives, outputs and outcomes that translate into long-term state priorities in smallholder farming. Subsequently, the main aim of the study was to examine the effect of network governance in smallholder farming developments. Furthermore, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To scrutinise actors and their relationships,
- To evaluate the institutional features that hinder or promote smallholder farming in communal areas and
- To identify enabling policy environment in the management of actors in the network to achieve sustainable smallholder farming in communal areas.

The research questions were provoked by the above objectives of the study as seeking to differentiate the actors' behaviour as a determinant of success or failure of engagement and interaction in the system. The study employed network governance as a relevant theoretical framework to interrogate and answer the research questions related to the actors and their interdependencies, demystify the institutional features that hinder or promote smallholder farming in communal areas and possible identify enabling policy environment. Due to the complex nature of policy-making, the policy cycle theory was utilised to navigate the enabling policy environment. The above-stated latter theory created an awareness of the sequential stages that are critical and should be considered in policy-making.

The mixed-method research approach has been used to interrogate issues in-depth with descriptive thematic or coded methodology used to analyse the qualitative data. Furthermore,

the study worldview became the pragmatic paradigm to investigate in depth the actors' relationships towards smallholder farmer development. The findings of the study was that there is a lack of pluralism between heterogeneous actors involved in smallholder farming has been revealed as the order of proceedings in the study area. Mostly, there is fragmentism in the institutional arrangement and how external actors assist smallholder farmers has been questionable as no indicated achieved milestone even in a democratic era. The study further revealed that the is a lack of leading actors and good leadership among institutions causing bankruptcy in ethics, values, rules and accountability as an institutional feature that hinders smallholder farming development in communal areas. With its panoptic view on mechanisms, the disjointed institutional arrangement has been a basis for the lack of inclusive policy formulation, which continues to subjugate and subdue smallholder farmers in communal areas.

Subsequently, the study recommends a policy that should be formulated on the bases of good governance. The decision on the execution of a policy should be based on the adopted program of action and it should be implemented to execute the stipulated procedures of the system flawlessly. However, the current phenomenon is polluted by a manipulated change in policy, which leads to failure in the execution of such policy.

Keywords: Network governance; Smallholder farming; Communal area; Policy development; Harry Gwala District Municipality

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LISTS OF ACRONYMS

CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Plan
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DAFF	Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
HGDM	Harry Gwala District Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
LED	Local Economic Development
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic framework
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPOs	Non-Profit Organisations
OSS	Operation Sukhuma Sakhe
RASET	Radical Agrarian Socio-Economical Transformation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Plan
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

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CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction and background of the study

1.1 Introduction

This preliminary chapter delineates a background of smallholder farming and the complex challenges that contribute to its unsustainability particularly in South Africa. The multifaceted challenges in African smallholder farming are projected to have a significant impact on the structural issues of disasters, economic disturbances, food demands, import competitiveness, food system transformation, food safety, governance, intra-African trade, and policy implications in the African agricultural production systems (Haggblade, 2020). At the centre of the challenges, is the misaligned actors involved in smallholder farming development. Therefore, the research questions and objectives of the study sought to demystify and scrutinise both agrarian and non-agrarian actors in a sector whose demands are continually shifting. Furthermore, the research questions will determine the institutional features and enabling policy environment that supports or hinders smallholder farming. A policy environment needs to promote a holistic approach in dealing with issues of access to suppliers of agricultural inputs, knowledge on climate change, capacity development, agricultural value-chain systems, and food safety for smallholder farming. The chapter proceeds into the following chronological sections:

- The background to provide an overview and challenges faced in smallholder farming mostly in Africa to which, the study area is not immune;
- The research problem to present encounters that led to the study and amidst the backdrop, summarise the institutional arrangement as being weak, which is the basis of this study;
- The research purpose is outlined as an examination of the effect of networks, institutional arrangement and policy implications in smallholder farming networks;
- The research objectives and research questions that narrate the context of the study.

This chapter concludes with the justification of the research and the outline of the study chapters. A detailed discussion of most of the issues that transpire in this chapter will be in the literature review chapter 3. This chapter introduces the policy debate in smallholder farming as one of the crucial aspects of this study to draw a conclusion and recommend policy implications.

1.2 Background of the study

The contribution of smallholder farming to poverty alleviation has been the epitome of African development. African agriculture remains labelled as the driver of economic growth and livelihood sustainability (Addu-Raheem & Worth, 2016). The rhetoric of agriculture in the most developing world suggests that smallholder farming contributes immensely to food security (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds). Confusingly but essentially, scholars suggest that this farming category contributes less income to households than do remittances from migrant labour and social grants (De Cock et al., 2019 as cited by Yobe, Mudhara & Mafongoya, 2019). Despite contributing to low income, African agriculture which is dominated by smallholder farms has been contributing 57% of employment and the primary source of income to 90% of Africa's rural communities (African Development Report, 2015). The above narrative stipulates that the sustainability of Africa's rural livelihoods has depended mostly on agriculture even under such immense urbanisation (Yobe, Mudhara & Mafongoya, 2019; David et al., 2012 as cited by Jayne et al., 2014; Scoones, 2009). Disturbingly, the public concern is on the collapse or fold operations of small business projects (Rambe & Masweunyane, 2017) which include smallholder farming that is not immune from vulnerability.

The vulnerability of smallholder farming is exacerbated by many challenges that include climate change (causing drought, and floods) (Osabohien et al., 2020; Epstein et al., 2018), market failure, recession, economic instability and other devastating disasters (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds). The challenges are not limited to the above-mentioned. Still, they include the lack of post-harvest value addition that continues to propagate much stress in the already fragmented smallholder farming that contributes less income to households (Sikwela & Fuyane, 2017; Abdu-Raheem & Worth, 2016). According to Jama & Er (2020), smallholder farmers have been struggling to participate in the organised value chain. Noticeably, the absence of partnerships and actors' collaboration in smallholder farming is the main challenge that aggravates the limited support between primary production and marketing. In the African continent, the above-stated conditions add shock to already existing poverty and food insecurity. In most rural African farming, communities enjoy weak if any available policy and institutional support (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds; Connolly-Boutin & Smit, 2015). The inadequate institutional support is the reason for the limited delivery of appropriate extension and other services to smallholder farming in many remote areas (Adenle, Azadi & Manning, 2018). The above arguments demonstrate a lack of pluralistic support and poorly coordinated services that are needed to strengthen the diversity of actors in the emancipation of this group of farmers.

The disjointed farming systems and value chains lead to the exploitation of smallholder farmers by buyers who determine prices for what smallholder farmers produce (Bayiyana et al., 2018).

The disorganised actors in smallholder farming are viewed as a critical challenge by the study when current global phenomena and perspectives suggest smallholder farming as a significant sector in dealing with socio-economic challenges (Borrelli et al., eds. 2020). Among the challenges faced by South African smallholders are the discrepancies in agricultural policy that have unclear purposes and direction characterised by the immersed debate on their relevance (Manji, 2006). The comprehensive policies and programmes created an immense crisis in many areas of farmer development (Brown, 2016). The above allegations and arguments shaped and presented the study's interest in interrogating the concept of an enabling policy environment for the management of actors' engagement in policy development for smallholder sustainability citing the metaphor of agricultural policies that are not addressing smallholder farming challenges.

1.3 Research Problem Statement for the Study

Policy needs to offer both individuals and groups an opportunity to partake in their development to achieve sustainable smallholder farming for the rural community. According to Fan & Rue (2020, eds), smallholder participation depends on the policy that enables the equitable distribution of land rights and security of ownership, equal access to technology development and input subsidies as well as large infrastructure investments. Furthermore, the policy should advocate for a diversified rural economy and agri-food value chain for smallholder agriculture that can contribute to inclusive growth and employment generation in a well-integrated approach (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds). The above statement, therefore, signifies the diverse actors that engage in smallholder farmers' complex issues that are observed as challenges.

It is important to note that the positioning of African smallholder farming as the central point can reduce hunger and halve poverty by 2025. The Maputo and Malabo declarations demonstrate the significance of partnerships to increase the productivity of this category and reduce post-harvest losses (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds; Kamara et al., 2019). The frameworks mentioned above mirrored in the 'White Paper on South Africa Land Policy of 1997' that the policies on the betterment of agriculture should create an inclusive socio-economic growth and increase community involvement in controlling their developmental agenda (DRDLR, 1997). Government programmes, therefore, should encourage good governance that enforces

responsibility, transparency, and responsiveness as a tool to limit exploitation of communal agrarian progressions (NPC, 2011). Furthermore, there is a need to advocate for the actors' interaction to address agriculture-related challenges through policy intervention.

Inappropriately, smallholder farmers suffer because of policy discrepancies labelled as solutions to their challenges. The unethical practices by politicians that continue to drive their political agenda and self-enrichment (Henderson, Farmer & Whittam, 2020), amplify the lack of collaboration among stakeholders. Actors become unwilling to partake in the network citing a lack of trust, interdependencies, and information sharing (Jovita et al., 2018; Modirwa & Oladele, 2017). The above anomalies contribute to the weak linkages, despite government support programmes, for active stakeholder engagement (Modirwa & Oladele, 2017). The chronicle of weak ties in smallholder farming has shaped and compromised the contribution of this sector to the alleviation of triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Supplementary, agricultural reform policies do not advocate for collaborative management, which leaves smallholder farmers disorganised and lacking coordination (Mbokazi, 2018). In these above situations, the study recommends network governance as a tool for good governance, which considers public participation that gives credibility and legitimacy to policy development (Perdomo et al. 2017). Furthermore, the study advocates for a clear policy position that delineates collaborative management in dealing with actors in the system of smallholder farming development.

1.4 Research purpose

The main aim of the study was to examine the effect of network governance on smallholder farming development. Noteworthy, the study evaluated the complexity of institutional arrangements and their contribution to the progress of smallholder farmers in communal areas. Furthermore, the study identified the policy gaps at an institutional and system-level through the interrogation of current networks, agricultural policies and programmes, and related interventions for sustainable smallholder farming.

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Scrutinize actors and their relationships in promoting smallholder farming networks in communal areas;

- Evaluate the institutional and organisational features that hinder or promote smallholder farming in communal areas;
- Identify an enabling policy environment at an institutional and system-level for effective policy development that promotes sustainable smallholder farming networks in communal areas.

1.6 Research Questions

Four research questions were formulated to address the research problem as follows:

- Who are the actors and their relationships in supporting smallholder farmers in communal areas?
- What institutional features hinder or promote smallholder farming development in communal areas?
- What policy environment enables networks to promote and sustain smallholder farmer development in communal areas?

1.7 Research Methodology

The study was done in the three local municipalities (UMzimkhulu, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipalities) at Harry Gwala District Municipality (HGDM) in Kwazulu-Natal. These local municipalities are essentially black-dominated communities, and the perceptions were that smallholder farmers are still suffering the disparities and discrepancies of apartheid despite the democratic change. The three local municipalities have communal set-up under the traditional leadership demarcated into municipal wards by the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998.

Generally, the research comprises of different research methods found in the literature. However, this study employed the mixed-method research approach, which utilises both quantitative and qualitative methods for in-depth interrogation of issues. Therefore, the study's worldview became the pragmatic paradigm to investigate in depth the actors' relationships towards smallholder farmer development. Pragmatism justified mixed-methods research that included network governance as a theory to address aspects of social injustice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The convergent parallel mixed-method was utilised to comprehensively and concurrently examine the research problem (Creswell, 2014). Notably, quantitative data was utilised as a statistics narrative of farmers' sentiments, tactics, and observations as they

experienced life (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In another vein, the qualitative data discovered actors' behaviour change and what respondents' experiences were regarding the actors' involvement in a transformation system of smallholder farmers (Dawson, 2009).

The interview samples were twenty-nine (29) constituted from twenty (20) individual smallholder farmers and nine (09) traditional leaders with more than three years of farming experience in the smallholding categories purposively targeted. The data collection instruments were twenty-five (25) interviews, twenty (26) questionnaires, ten (10) Focus Groups, and secondary data. The interviews are regarded as an effective instrument and a source of gathering information mostly when recorded albeit permitted by the respondent (Yin, 2014). De Vos, (2011) viewed interviews as a great tool to create interactions between interviewee and interviewer for knowledge sharing. In incite of the COVID-19 pandemic, fifteen (15) interviews were conducted maintaining social distancing, wearing of masks and the use of sanitizers as pronounced by the National Disaster Management Act. In some instances, the ten (10) interviews were conducted virtual and telephonically which also assisted to comply with the COVID-19 regulations, and where respondents were unable to honour one-on-one interviews. Nevertheless, virtual, and telephonic interviews have been considered a tool that promoted honesty and allowed respondents to probe for questions seeking clarity, which might not have happened in a face-to-face conducted interview (de Vos et al., 2011).

Dichotomized closed and open-ended questions allowed a concurrent mixed-method approach (Dawson, 2009) as they appeared in the designed set of questionnaires. There was one set of questionnaires targeted thirty (30) samples intended for the following categories: three (03) Local managers all returned, fifteen (15) Agricultural Advisors from the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development all returned, three (03) Project Coordinators from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development all returned and nine (09) Local Economic Development (LED) officers with only five (05) questionnaires returned at HGDM in the three local Municipalities. The twenty-six (26) questionnaires were returned. The researcher designed a brief questionnaire to motivate respondents to complete, capture and incorporate all required information (de Vos et al., 2011). About 30 questionnaires were expected from the above-stated institutions.

Focus group participants were purposively selected, as they are the organised smallholder farmers and targeted ten (10) groups that have only been actively organised in farming for more than three years in communal areas of the three local municipalities. The Focus group brought

smallholder farmers into a qualitative interview workshop, where no more than ten (10) farmers mostly the executive committee were questioned simultaneously and systemically (Babbie, 2016; Gaižauskaitė, 2012). The collected secondary data was from existing policy documents and studies (Dawson, 2009). A desktop study was utilised to unequivocally navigate the theoretical framework, literature review and formulate lines of arguments toward research findings. The study also utilised knowledge received from public sector data as they sought to enhance and improve their service delivery.

1.8 Justification and significance

The problematic period of fragmented actors, institutions and policies continues to severely impact negatively on smallholder farming development in South Africa. Confusingly, this is happening regardless of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Maputo Declaration (2013), Malabo Declaration (2014) and Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Plan (CAADP) frameworks that are central to smallholder farmer development. These frameworks promote and bargain for the participation of stakeholders, including smallholder farmers' participation in their development (Kamara et al., 2019). Consequently, the issues of disasters, economic disturbances and other related matters faced by this group of farmer requires different actors with different approaches. Promisingly, the South African Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024 recognised the role of the private sector, civil society, and other actors in the realisation of its priorities, which smallholder development is among the key priorities (RSA, DPME, 2019). Confusingly, the actors' role and their relationships at the grassroots level are indistinctly demystified. There are no documented successes in smallholder farming in the South African agricultural sector.

Subsequently, the above arguments informed the researcher's worldview and shaped the direction of the study. The study sought to identify actors and their relationships in the development of smallholder farming, especially at the local municipality level. The aim was to contribute to the existing literature of network governance in smallholder farming by providing unique thematic perceptions on the subject. Furthermore, the study sought to contribute to the localising of SDGs and realisation of the Africa Agenda 2063 of modernising agriculture for increased productivity, food security and prosperity for farmers at the local level (Kamara et al., 2019). Furthermore, the study assisted to extract the most significant issues on how a network should contribute to the smallholder farmers' sustainability, as well as the creation of their resilience and support structures (Olaride et al., 2019). Significant literature on

smallholder farming in South Africa is localised around issues of market access, crop management, and climate change, with scant attention invested in network governance. The study acknowledges that scholars have done much work in the field of agriculture innovation systems, value chains and their framework in smallholder farming. However, the theory of network governance goes beyond stakeholder engagement but the public service mandate, especially in the South African context as it is entrenched in the constitution. Critical to the study, the effective engagement of actors in the agriculture value chain is believed to add value to the smallholder farmers' growth and resilience as they actively participate in the network as entrepreneurs (Mlotshwa & Msimango-Galawe, 2020).

Accordingly, the study interrogated governments' role as a leading actor in creating a conducive environment through active policy development and monitoring tools, for actors to interact without exploitation of smallholder farmers in the process. This study, therefore, was involved in the identification of actors, which includes the understanding of their working arrangements in supporting or hindering smallholder farmers on communal lands. The aim was to expose the status quo by recognising agrarian and non-agrarian actors' participation and their contributions to sustainable smallholder farmers, especially in remote areas. The study further recommended an appropriate enabling policy environment necessary in dealing with the actors' relationship in the network for smallholder farming development and sustainability in the area of study.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The limitation of the study is that conclusions drawn depend on the response of participants as the researcher tries to discover the nature of reality in the existing systems. The inaccurate descriptions of smallholder farming in the existing literature made it difficult to clearly distinguish the context of arguments that other scholars used concerning smallholder farming in communal areas. Although the study utilised the definition of smallholder farming in the South African context as defined in the comprehensive farmer support and development policy draft, most literature uses the World Bank description of smallholder farming that only considers the relationship between land and productivity.

Unexpectedly, a new historical event in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic declared a natural disaster, brought some confusion, uncertainty, and pessimistic future predictions. Contrary to what was expected, government-provided COVID-19 relief funds to smallholder farmers; interventions that could hinder the truth about the real situation and experiences in smallholder

farming on daily bases. The COVID-19 pandemic brought together social partners and institutions in areas of health care and social relief, which can influence how respondents view the actor's engagement and their support as huge grants funding labelled as relief was injected in most sectors in the communities. Furthermore, the study was not immune to the limitations of unwilling participants to partake as targeted groups such as LED officers and traditional leaders (Amakhosi).

1.10 Outline of the study

The study is designed into chapters that have an introduction and content with critical lessons drawn to conclude and summarise the chapter.

The introduction and background to the study are presented in chapter 1. The above-stated chapter also consists of a problem statement, research purpose, research objectives, research questions, research methodology, the justification of the study and study outline.

Chapter 2 covers the theoretical framework of the study, which is the network governance and policy cycle theories. It begins with the background of the above-stated theories, its idea behind and approaches that are relevant to the study objectives.

Chapter 3 focuses on the literature review, which forms the basis of this study. The literature review seeks to identify gaps and strengths in the previous studies on the network governance theory in smallholder farming. This chapter addresses the shortcomings of the area of study, contextualises, outlines the significance and justifies the need to conduct this research.

Chapter 4 is the research methodology that debates the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the study from a pragmatic worldview. This chapter further outlines the following areas:

- Where the study was conducted,
- The methods of data collection used,
- The data analysis and
- The ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter 5 focuses on the data collection and discussion of the results of the study based on the questions asked. Formulating this chapter are the arguments on the findings of the study compared with other previous findings from the literature.

The conclusion in chapter 6 summarises the thematic issues discussed in chapter 5. Furthermore, chapter 6 explicitly discusses the recommendations and the policy implications of the study. The above-stated process is followed by the proposal of enabling policy environment for effective network governance in smallholder farming.

CHAPTER 2

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical perspective of the study from the standpoint that smallholder farming requires various actors that are working together to circumvent the triple challenges of poverty, food insecurity and unemployment. The chapter is divided into the background of the theory; actors and their interdependency; interaction and complexity in the network; institutional features in the network; network management and facilitation and conclude by drawing critical lessons. The main ideas of the study were to explore the foundation of a collaborative management approach to promote, not only inter-organisational and inter-institutional communication but also proper stakeholder engagement to build mutual trust and interest (Gornish & Roche, 2017). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the development of smallholder farming does not adhere to the proper engagement of actors involved in the sector. It is against this background that the study utilised the network governance theory to investigate the institutional arrangements, their role and the dynamism of networks in smallholder farming. To conclude, there are suggestions on policy restructuring and how policy should be structured in the future. In this regard, the study utilised the policy cycle theory to investigate collaborative arrangements between actors in policy formulation and implementation for the success of smallholder farmers.

2.2 Network governance theory

In the history of administration and administration literature, some scholars were more influential and convincing that the significance of any development is through organisational structures. The researcher was nearly tempted to consider smallholder rural challenges as only associated with the nonexistence of planning, organisation, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting as five elements of public administration developed by Henri Fayol in 1916. In considering different avenues and study views, the fragmented actors and the poor coordination among actors in the system became the foundation of selecting the network government as an inevitable theory for this study. The above decisions were influenced by the fact that network governance promotes the coordinated arrangements within the system for a specific purpose that conflicts with or mats in the process (Ruth et al., 2015). According to Mubangizi et al., (2013) network governance is the established rules in the form of institutional frameworks that guide actors' engagement in the system.

It is researcher sentiments that inform the network governance theory on an understanding of how the network should be structured. South Africa, as a development-orientated state, should embark on an element of progressivism that is holistic in every functional area or component. Hughes (2003) argues that progressivism in a democratic developmental state means the strengthening of participation by pressure groups, political parties, NGOs, and civil society, not excluding the private sector. The emphasis on a participatory democratic state is entrenched in chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It offers tremendous respect for public opinions in government affairs (De Wet eds., 2014). Therefore, smallholder farming development should be supported through the involvement of diverse actors in all processes. Government policy should be the foundation of network governance where actors are guided. Figure 1 below illustrates how network governance should be shaped to address the issues of the legitimacy of platforms and the powers of actors in the systems.

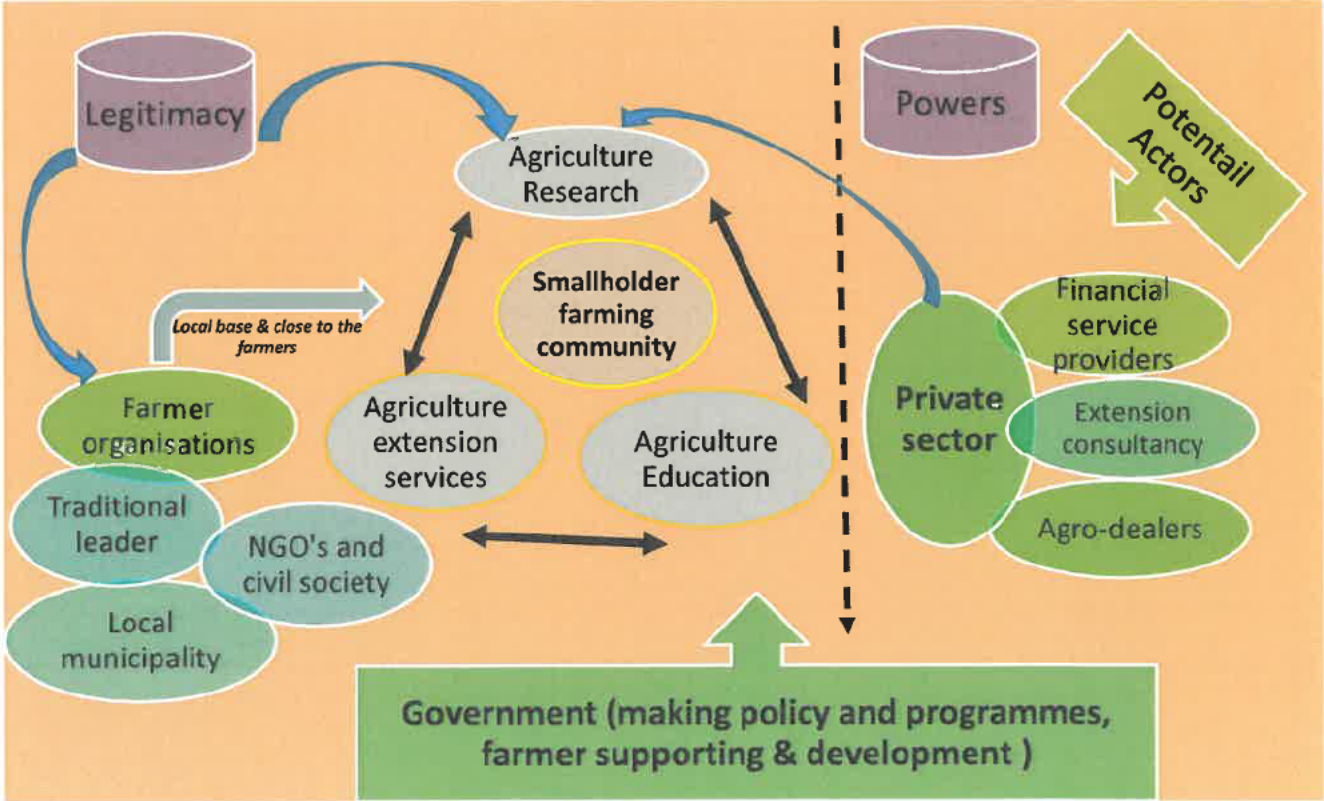


Figure 1: Network governance theory in smallholder farming in communal areas

2.2.1 Background of the theory

A Gramscian critique of New Public Management (NPM) introduced a business-like kind of approach in the public sector that considers the role of stakeholders (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). Klijn & Koppenjan argue that network governance theory developed from an NPM that created a disastrous effect by failing to address the intricacies and dynamics of problem-solving in the public sector. Consequently, Gramsci introduced network governance as a governing arrangement between diverse actors / or stakeholders that are directly involved in a particular project (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Jones, Hesterly & Borgatti (1997) defines network governance as the interaction between individual actors exchanging resources and developing relationships in the process. According to van Dijk et al. (2019), multi-actors are essential for farmers' innovation wherein the process, actors identify the problem, generate ideas, plan, trial the design, implement and share the results with others.

In recent years, actors in many developing countries increasingly recognise the importance of networking as an instrument to facilitate rural development, poverty alleviation, and the actualisation of their national development plans (Bixler et al. 2016). Therefore, the above description became the associated argument of this study, revolving around the transformative worldview and appropriate support required to assist smallholder farming citing Bixler et al. (2016) argument that investment initiatives from charitable actors drive network governance. The theory, consequently, is relevant in pursuing the rhetoric of agricultural development by embracing smallholder farming beyond monopoly government support in favour of the involvement of other sectors (Poole, 2017).

2.2.2 Actors and interdependency in the smallholder farming network

One of the most crucial elements of network governance is that the public becomes the centre of the whole engagement process. Contradictory, society is always at the receiving end than being involved from the initial stage. Consequently, in addressing the above-stated inconsistency, policies and service delivery implementation should be in the context of interdependent actors in the network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2017). According to Adjei & Adjei (2016), agricultural activities alone cannot address rural poverty as it is multifacetedly characterised by challenges of climate viability, economic changes and other stress factors that have significant ramifications on productivity. The above argument suggests that difficulties in smallholder farming are beyond primary agriculture, but foremost non-farm activities

influence the sector. From a pluralistic perspective, there is a growing need to understand the dynamism of working to address the challenges of smallholder farming.

In the process of project development and implementation, network governance can promote transparency and openness between actors involved in the commodity. Subsequently, institutions should be in a process of revising their relationships with the government structures for effective delivery of services to those who need them (Mubangizi, 2009). However, the stumbling block is the lack of ability by local actors in approaching the government to advance their interests. What ignites the above challenge is that abled rural citizens migrate to urban areas citing better urban opportunities and there is perpetuated pomposity as well as monopolistic tendencies of individuals in agriculture that degrades income in smallholder farming (Laura et al. 2019).

As the world evolves and moves away from the Weberian bureaucratic public administration, the phenomenon suggests collaborated efforts and participatory approaches which are labelled as good governance (Borry & Reuter, 2022; Duit & Galaz, 2008). The notion of collaboration and participation, therefore, should critically place smallholder farmers as significant actors in the process of changing their situation. Furthermore, it is crucial to distinguish relevant actors as an entry point to multi-actors' platforms in the network, which in some instances are called innovation platforms (de Janvry, Sadoulet, & Trachtman, 2019).

2.2.3 Institutional feature (Interaction and complexity) of the network

The interdependency between heterogeneous actors and their characters in terms of perception and strategies make it easy to deal with complex challenges through complex interaction and engagements on issues such as policy, service delivery implementation and solution (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). Subsequently, the approach to smallholder farming should be approached holistically and pluralistically, something hindered by the bureaucratic process and top-down developmental approach that is an alleged weakness of the state (Ngaka & Zwane, 2018).

Despite the suggested pluralism approach, institutional relations between actors in the system suggest that some institutions use their power to influence the decision-making of the network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). This narrative displays an institutional feature that is a structured formal and informal symbol of the power imbalance between actors as they seek to fulfil both individual and group expectations, interactions and behaviours (Bachev, 2018). In this regard, Brown (2016) identifies the uneven distribution of power and opportunities as the cause of

possible subtle reinforcement of the status quo in the dominance of players. Unfortunately, such actors' predispositions and behaviours jeopardise the fluidity of the network that its purpose should be to strengthen good governance, a symbol of decentralised processes and shared information among actors (Bixler et al. 2016). Consequently, it becomes impossible to oppose an actor that has powers in terms of investment opportunities as far as the public sector is concerned. The individual power of actors needs to be suppressed by a normative culture of new ideas shared, developed and implemented to deal with complex challenges as a tool to manage the network (Koutsouris, 2012).

The above narrative, therefore, needs an understanding of network governance theory as a solution and a meta-analytical approach to what should be the ideal situation for the sustainability of smallholder farming. One of the critical aspects of the network identified by van Dijk et al. (2019) is that structures need a facilitator to link diverse actors beyond support and in guiding the network processes. Furthermore, facilitation reflects the functioning of the system in terms of the required intervention, and on what level such response is necessary.

2.2.4 Network management and facilitation

The network management and facilitation should include the identification of relevant actors as an entry point to multi-stakeholder platforms, which, in some instances are called innovation platforms (de Janvry, sadoulet, & Trachtman, 2019). Interaction as a foundation of globalisation theories within the ideology of internationalism (Ruth et al., 2015) generates complexity in the network. To avoid the lack of participation and the isolationist concept of Westphalia doctrine, the facilitator needs to communicate a clear purpose of existence. Subsequently, the facilitator should have the experience and capacity to resolve conflicts and negotiations (Rwamigisa et al., 2018). Furthermore, the facilitator should provide leadership based on understanding that networks need a platform as a piece of the puzzle to complete the cycle.

2.3 Policy cycle theory in smallholder farming

Due to the complex nature of policy-making, the study utilised both the policy cycle and network governance theories to navigate the enabling policy environment. The policy cycle theory was important in the study as it introduced the awareness that policy-making is characterised by sequential stages of intelligence, recommendations, applications, appraisal and termination (Davis, 2003). Mohammed (2019) argues that many scholars recommend

research on the input and output of policy, without the inclusion of actors' roles and factors involved. The above statement becomes the reason that the study evaluated the enabling environment, by extracting some of the elements from the policy cycle theory.

2.3.1 Background of the policy cycle

Davis (2003) traced the policy cycle to the writings of Lasswell in 1951, where policy-making is described as a sequence of intelligence, recommendations, prescription, invocation, application, prescription and termination. Many scholars who mirrored the above sentiments argued that contemporary history suggests that the policy process should be described in a chronological order between stages such as agenda setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation and termination (Mohammed, 2019; Fischer, Miller & Sidney, 2007). According to Mohammed (2019), the process of public policy-making involves many actors that negotiate and bargain before the conclusion by political flavour. Mohammed further argued that political interactions are happening within the network where decision-making and programs are formulated.

Subsequently, the policy cycle implies a policy perceptions model that accommodates the comparison or divergence of arguments and approaches at an institutional level to assess each discipline in terms of its policy (Fischer, Miller & Sidney, 2007). This argument forms a most critical aspect of agricultural policy development that is not in sync with the environment, its system does not cater for the inclusion of actors. As it may be, there are limitations to this theory. Davis (2003) views the policy cycle approach as a linear government process that does not describe content formulated by a collection of venerable institutions. Davis' (2003) views demonstrate the bureaucratic process driven by politicians, and that does not accommodate many grassroots-level actors, which contributes to the formulation of arguments in this study. However, the research specifies that the policy cycle theory as shown in figure 2 below could address low-level actors if its context can be decentralised and democratised. The five levels of policy cycle theory should be considered in policy development as explicated by agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

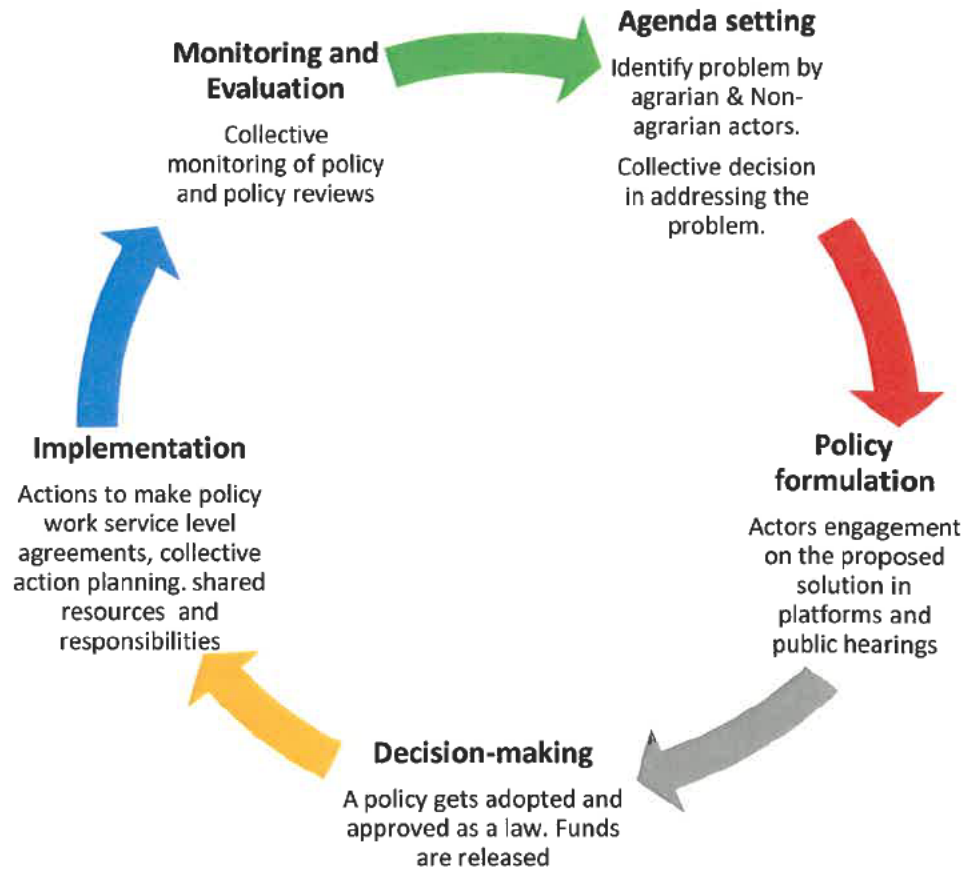


Figure 2: The diagram of a policy cycle

2.3.2 Policy Agenda-setting

The initial point in policy-making is problem recognition and the selection of priority. According to Mohammed (2019), the policy agenda is influenced by voices that compete to get attention. Worryingly, it is not clear if views are developing from the united voices. Significantly against the above statement, McNabb & Baker (2021) noted that “At the end of the decision-making stage, the final version of the policy is agreed upon and if legislation is warranted then it should ideally be drafted in precise language with an enforcement or accountability mechanism”. Arguably, at the stage of decision-making, the problem recognition should have been done in a holistic manner, where social partners defined and contextualised a problem to discern the type of government intervention required (Davis, 2003).

2.3.3 Policy-formulation

Policy formulation is the point of articulating problems, proposing solutions and identifying needs for government programs. Mohammed (2019) impersonated the above sentiments also adding that “it is determined politically with no guarantee that most significant issues will make it onto the list”. Subsequently, policy and service delivery should be formulated through interdependency of actors in the network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012) to avoid leaving out burning topics. Diverse actors, therefore, can be viewed as the bases of adopting the policy with clear objectives, outputs and outcomes that translate into long-term state priorities in smallholder farming (Davis, 2003). Furthermore, a pluralism advocated network governance should underpin the formulation of policy. Policy approaches should support a neo-hierarchical and mutual connection between heterogeneous actors involved.

2.3.4 Policy decision-making

The decision on the execution of a policy is based on the adopted program of action. “Decision making is neither an independent stage nor synonymous with entire policy-making process” (Mohammed, 2019). The prejudice of the above narrative in South Africa is developed through political and administrative dichotomy in public administration. Both parties must understand their role in the policy cycle, consequently, the leadership qualities should enforce the effective formulation of policies informed by the principles of good governance. The above sentiments mirrored by Khan (2018) point out that the policy cycle theory is influenced by leadership qualities, such as traits, ideas of intelligence, integrity, and sociability. It is the researcher’s that every institutional arrangement should adhere to the above principles for effective, efficient and cost-effective decision-making.

2.3.5 Policy Implementation

Policy implementation solely depends on the political and administrative will to execute the stipulated procedures of the system flawlessly (Fratellini, 2021). “Allocation of resources and assignment of responsibilities is significant at this stage if efficiency and effectiveness of policies are to be achieved” (Mohammed, 2019). Contrarily, the above dichotomy pollutes the changes and manipulation of policy, which lead to the delay in the execution of policy. “Indeed, in the implementation phase in Fieri’s adjustment of defined goals, the combination of sectoral agencies, actors and interests and tools become crucial” (Righettini & Lizzi, 2022). The study,

therefore, embraces network governance as a theory to enforce accountability, responsibility and transparency in the system to achieve well-coordinated policy development.

2.3.6 Policy monitoring and evaluation

“In order to estimate the effects that the policy can produce as accurately and precisely as possible, evidence is required to show that a given effect can be produced by acting in accordance with the policy, by implementing an intervention tailored to the issue or gap to be adjusted” (Fratellini, 2021). However, an institution suffering from the bankruptcy of ethics and accountability has no chance to implement proposed policy intervention citing poor monitoring and evaluation or reviewal tools. Although debatable, policy evaluation is a regular exercise that should integrate the political and consultative process in the assessment of outputs and outcomes (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012).

Further to that policy-making should consider solving smallholder-farming challenges, albeit such policy is monitored and reviewed against the set objectives and targets. The initial point should be to choose policy areas that need evaluation for legislative proposals (Fratellini, 2021). Noteworthy, evaluation should be guided by a collective decision on whether to terminate unsuccessful implementation or enforcement of a policy that achieved the anticipated results. In the process, policy-makers need to know that evaluation is a two-way process on what inputs evaluation provides side in policy development and verse versa (Ayres, 2021).

2.4 Key lessons are drawn

In the network governance theory, actors are central to service delivery rendered to the smallholder farmers. Firstly, the actors’ intended contribution should be relevant to the need as defined against the desired goals of the network. The overhead view does not exclude proper identification of relevant actors, and management of their interactions and relationships in the system. The above argument, therefore, provokes the pertinent question: "what are the actors and their interdependency in the development of smallholder farming in the study area?"

Following this question in this chapter was on the institutional features that support or hinder smallholder development. Noticeably, the behaviour of actors can determine the level of success of engagement and interaction in the system citing their powers in terms of resources, which can influence network towards their business agenda (Brown, 2016). The theory of network governance reveals the significance of the SWOT analysis in evaluating the

institutional features of the network. Critical to the institutional features are individual and group expectations, as well as interactions and behaviours of actors in the platform. Therefore, the multi-stakeholder's platforms are instruments for actors to engage in significant interaction, collaboration and contestation as actors successfully participate in agricultural policy processes to overcome institutional dynamism as noted in Uganda (Yami et al., 2018). Ironically, Petersen and Kruss (2019) argued that South African policy development promotes socio-economic inclusion without innovation policy systems (Petersen & Kruss, 2019).

Although the above statement is over generalised and contradictory to the South African policy development, there are fragments of truth that social policy has not been effective and innovative enough in reducing poverty and unemployment (Gumede, 2019). The motive behind the above statement is that South African policy processes, in some instances, displayed a government system that excludes actors especially at a grassroots level (Mbukazi, 2018). Consequently, the study utilised the policy cycle theory as an instrument that enables a policy environment that follows the sequence as literature categorises it into stages of intelligence, recommendations, applications, appraisal and termination. Therefore, it becomes relevant to utilise the network governance lens to strengthen actors' engagement at a grassroots level in the reduction of bureaucratic processes and promotion of mutual interest. Mbukazi (2018) presents an antagonistic argument that agrarian economic transformation becomes complex where there is no mutual understanding and poor coordination of actors involved. The limitations of factors of the policy cycle approach are the dichotomies of politics versus bureaucracy, process versus content, and consultation versus engagements (Davis, 2003).

The researcher, therefore, was well convinced that network governance was a relevant theoretical framework to interrogate the actors and their interdependencies, to unpack the institutional features that hinder or promote smallholder farming in the communal areas. Furthermore, the use of the policy cycle theory outlined the policy agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and evaluation as the critical stages necessary in policy development. Mostly, the pluralism and holistic approach should be the key citing heterogeneous actors that become involved in decision-making and in the developmental agenda.

This chapter is followed by Chapter 3, which first presents and deals with literature review as the foundation of this study. As previously explained in the outline of the study, this chapter addresses the shortcomings of the area of study, contextualises, outlines the significance and

justifies the need to conduct this research. Mostly, the literature review was pursued to recognize gaps and strengths in the previous studies on the network governance theory in smallholder farming.

CHAPTER 3

3. Literature Review of the Study

3.1 Introduction

According to Onwuegbuzie et al., (2011) as cited by Onwuegbuzie and Frels, (2012), literature review familiarises the researcher with the complementary methodology and knowledge used by previous scholars' research. Literature in this study was fundamental to the exploration and contextualisation of the research problem in the introductory chapter, the identification of the knowledge gaps that constituted the study research objectives and the theoretical aspects of the study as exhibited in chapter two.

This chapter is subdivided into the following thematic constructs:

- The actors and their responsibility in supporting smallholder farmers in communal areas,
- The institutional features hinder or promote smallholder farming development in communal areas, and
- The policy environment enables networks to encourage and sustain smallholder farmer development in a communal area.

Overall, this chapter defines network governance as an instrument to advocate for good governance as actors address multidimensional smallholder farming challenges and seek to redress the issues of community. According to Haggblade (2020), there is a growing need for farmers to increase production despite mounting challenges of land pressure, rise in wage rates, and shifting demands for perishable products. It is for this reason that the objective of network governance is to promote inclusive involvement of diverse actors and their participation to strengthen the decision-making process (Yami et al., 2018). Therefore, the study objectives were influenced by inclusivity where the effect of networks in smallholder farming were evaluated based on van Dijk's et al. (2019) view that multi-actor systems are essential for farmers' innovation and development.

3.2 Definition of smallholder farming in communal areas

There are diverse categories and smallholder farmer classes defined by their vulnerability and their ability to transform to the level of commercial farming in the literature. However, the relationship between land size and productivity has been the universal description of smallholder farming classes as proposed by the World Bank (Hall & Ntsebeza, 2007). The above description of smallholder farming is amid the confusing feature as land and productivity cannot be the only aspects that define agricultural practises.

Smallholder farming is in some instances categorised as subsistence farming, small-scale farming, emerging farming, and semi-commercial farming (van Averbeke & Mohammed, 2006). The different identification and categorisation display poorly contextualised groupings within the agricultural sector (Borreli et al., 2020). However, the acceptable description of smallholder farmers for this study is what has been employed by the South African government, where the above-stated farmers are categorised as those making an annual turnover of between Fifty Thousand Rand (R50 000) and One Million Rand (R100000) in its National Policy on Comprehensive Producer Development Support: Draft 5 ver.2. Expectedly, the yearly turnover of smallholder farmers within the agricultural sector is discerned in the returns made as farmers' exit subsistence farming to improved formal markets that has a potential of sustaining commercialised farming.

The agriculture economic transformation has the potential to turn around production systems into profitable enterprises towards a favourable terrain (Fan and Rue, 2020, eds). Furthermore, Fan and Rue (2020) suggest that various policies and programmatic channels can address both soft and hard constraints in smallholder farming. The benign conditions are limited by the lack of access to resources, information and asymmetric markets; whilst rigid restrictions are the small size of lands that are far away from markets, located in deficient rainfall regions with low soil quality.

Fan and Rue (2020, eds) argue that smallholder farmers occupy the largest portion (80%), which is 475 million hectares of the world but individually inhabit less than two hectares of land. In the world, smallholder farming is the largest despite occupying, only 12% of the world's farming area and the most diverse group in the agriculture industry. Encapsulating the above narrative is the distorted system on land use, access, and ownership that continues to plague most African nations (Akinola, 2019). However, the land is not the only significant

challenge that defines and exemplifies the historically grounded reality of rural agrarian reform, there are many other issues of inequalities and exclusive economic development experienced by smallholder farmers (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds). Mostly, the challenge of smallholder farming is clearly on the transformation process as it involves increased productivity and commercialisation in agriculture, alongside economic diversification and growth (Fan & Rue, 2020, eds). According to Fan and Rue (2020), the transformation agenda to address the above-stated challenges requires radicalised productivity and commercialised agriculture that is diversified for economic growth. Fan and Rue (2020) further debate that the duration of transforming this sector is influenced by different factors such as agricultural contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), employment rate, rural-urban migration, the rise of a modern industrial and demographic transition. The metaphor of smallholder farming has been the complex challenges and the historical diction that elucidate the need to support this most exploited group in the history of this country (Jordan, 2018).

Smallholder farming depends solely on the country's institutional support within the agricultural value chain. Wissink (2019) shared the same sentiments that support is necessary for farmers citing global economic challenges that created their farming operations viability. Auspiciously, the current phenomenon remains resolute to the objectives of giving access to smallholder households to source income in agriculture and beyond as a rural transformation strategy (de Janvry & Sadoulet, 2019). Therefore, the transformation of smallholder farming becomes the focal point for the realisation of agricultural development in Africa (Kamara et al., 2019); consequently, rural development must advocate for inclusive economic growth for inferior Africans (Swinner & Kuijpers, 2020). Nevertheless, agriculture policies and programmes should increase access to land, credit, inputs, and funding through grants and loans but mostly promote holistic and pluralism throughout the smallholder farming value chain.

3.3 Communal areas in South Africa

The Anthropologist and Historians' analysis suggests that rural areas, especially in Africa, are founded through systems of a communistic ideology, cultural beliefs and social relationships. The artistic repertoire of the rural regions is stored in the indigenous knowledge that, over the years, has been shared and reproduced (van Averbek & Mohammed, 2006). The indigenous knowledge of communal agriculture has been displayed in countries like Tanzania as having the third-largest indigenous cattle population documented in Africa (Bayiyana et al., 2018). However, the current phenomenon suggests a different arrangement that adopted different

cultural beliefs that are distorting in nature and renowned for suppressing the rights of youth, women, and disabled people.

According to the Communal Land Right Act 11 of 2004 and the Communal Land Tenure Bill (CLTB) of democratic South Africa, communal land is defined as land owned, occupied and used by members of a community subjected to shared rules, norms and customs of that particular community. Community rules in a participatory decision-making, where rules are adopted by 60% of households (Deochand, 2022). Even though section 25(7) and section 25(5) of the constitution of RSA promote land restoration and equitable access, the distorted systems have contributed immensely to the complicated and dynamic rural agricultural reform. Despite all the foreign influences and scientific methods imposed by colonialism, local farmers always respect and utilise their traditional knowledge systems (Nugroho, Carden & Antlov, 2018). Rural agriculture has been long the activities of subsistence to smallholder farming (Famakinwa & Adisa, 2020).

Some literature suggests that the process of improving livelihoods should advocate for the capacity building of community members and develop them into influential and highly enthusiastic leaders that would manage their local affairs (Famakinwa & Adisa, 2020). The above romanticisms constitute rural agriculture development in contemporary South Africa. On the contrary, the dichotomised system of formal (a system of title deeds) and informal (local land tenure arrangements) land ownership are the cause of heated public debate on what rural agricultural reform entails (Berry, 2018). Surprisingly, the land question and discussions have been a metaphor for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as post-colonial states have disastrously diverted the focus. As the land question intensified in the democratic era, the government allowed the existing rural agricultural infrastructure to deplete, citing their association with colonialism (Jordan, 2018). The farm infrastructure in the former homelands of South Africa such as irrigation schemes has been dilapidated by a lack of support after the withdrawal of international funders citing uncertainty in the democratic regime.

South African history of land conflicts and land tenure dictates that her communal areas were formulated by colonial and apartheid administrators purported as the solution to the chaotic traditional management systems (Musavengane & Llewellyn,). Deliberately, communal areas were introduced to surveyed plots by the apartheid government through the betterment policy that left rural people occupying less than a hectare in regions such as uMzimkhulu and parts of the former KwaZulu government. The architecture of colonialism and apartheid introduced the

traditional council system and land registration system in Black areas to intensify their powers through traditional authorities that left local communities with no control over unfair land distribution (Beinart, 1987). Communal areas have been ever since controlled by chiefs (Amakhosi) that were said to have given away their tribal birth rights through peaceful annexation to their oppressors (Deochand, 2022). The above narrative defines an erosion of traditional leadership that has created contradictions and complexity in land ownership. Furthermore, customary practises are the centre of communal life existence that has strengthened the uneven distribution of responsibilities where social hierarchies dictate inequalities as normality (Hornby & Hull, 2022). Noteworthy, rural smallholder farmers can hardly develop into commercial because of social obligation but mostly challenges that are multidimensional in nature.

The above narrative is the descriptive nature of the contemporary history of communal areas that have sought to divert and infiltrate differences. At the same time, poverty and inequalities are what rural black individuals or farmers' groups experience daily. The conflicting argument and debates on rural agricultural transformation, and what should be the priority assisted the study in looking at the different rural smallholder farming issues as the world is faced with rapid population growth and a global economic crisis.

3.4 Smallholder-farming challenges in the communal areas of South Africa

With much hope after the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, the perceptions were that the democratic-led government would manifest into proper and effective implementation of rural agrarian policies (Martin, 2019), that will benefit the poor. Smallholder farming especially in Sub-Saharan Africa has been experiencing challenges of lack of financial and technical resources, deficits in the infrastructure, prevailing pests and diseases that cause low yields (Nyambo, Nyambo, Mavunganidze & Nyambo, 2022). According to Tamako (2022), the lack of education in rural smallholder farming may affect the willingness to learn and experience new technology and other agricultural advancements. Davis (2022) identified smallholder experiences as being faced by the below challenges:

- Inadequate capital assets such as natural resources, physical assets, financial resources and human resources.
- The poor market linkages such as low bargaining power, lack of market information

- Under-developed rural infrastructure such as lack of storage facilities, road and transport networks and
- Climate change that worsens disasters.

The above challenges have been smallholder experiences even in areas like Nepal that are still faced with. Nepal smallholder farmers have not survived the earthquakes and devastating damages of landslides to their maize and millet fields, rudimentary infrastructure, housing, livestock, water source and production inputs were destroyed (Epstein, 2018). Nyambo, Nyambo, Mavunganidze & Nyambo (2022) added the lack of storage, road networks, processing facilities, disease epidemics and gender inequalities as the experiences of smallholder farming. Patriarchal beliefs that Nyambo, Nyambo, Mavunganidze & Nyambo labelled as hampering smallholder farming continue to cause limited access to land, property rights access to raw materials, extension services, innovative credits and markets. Diseases like HIV/Aids and the recent novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had added negative impacts on smallholder farming. Poor market management because of lack of contracts and readily available markets lower price value citing low quality such as poor feeding programmes and crop management (Malusi et al, 2022). Contrary to the assumption developmental state, smallholder farmers continue to face systemic challenges in their food production and distribution (Razzano, Mura & Borreli, 2020).

This study's pertinent question was on the effectiveness of the involvement of actors and their role in the development of smallholder farming in the communal areas of South Africa when they are confronted by the above-stated experiences. Adejomo and Adejumo (2014), as cited by Durokifa and Ijeoma (2018), argue that a country's development should be through interaction between the social, economic and institutional processes to meet the growing demands of the population growth. Mulema et al. (2019) echo the same views that a holistic approach is necessary for sustainable agricultural production. The collaborative effort by institutions can be a solution to smallholder multidimensional challenges as they are embedded in institutions that work in silos when dealing with them. Mostly, remote areas contend with weak institutional support and the limited delivery of appropriate services especially by the extension services to smallholder farming communities (Adenle, Azadi & Manning, 2018).

For smallholder farming, Extension and Advisory Services led by the government have the potential to improve farmers' productivity, net farm income, food security and access to

markets (Maake & Antwi, 2022). Despite their presence, smallholder farmers are a continuously exploited category of farmers by buyers who determine prices for smallholder produce (Bayiyana et al., 2018). Notably, more than 6% of smallholder farmers are located in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Eastern Cape (EC), and Limpopo Provinces (Zantsi, 2019). Ironically, a global perspective suggests that smallholder farming is a significant sector in dealing with socio-economic challenges (Borreli et al., eds. 2020), despite the unchanged role of this segment compared to the white farmers (Sebola, 2018). Among the unchanging circumstances in Sub-Saharan Africa's rural smallholders, the lack of access to agro-meteorological information hinders their productivity (Krell et al., 2020).

The inefficient use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) does not avert farmers' organisations to access information but also hinders their capacity to network with the outside environment. Individual smallholder farmers have the same challenges as smallholder farmer organisations (Bachev, 2018). According to O'Brien and Meador (2021), SSA is currently facing obstacles as they are limited by policy that fails to allow adjustment to the globalisation demands. Significantly, agrarian projects under poor networking have no benefits as they have poor institutional support and inadequate monitoring and evaluation (NPC, 2011). Rural agricultural projects need collaborative governance or network governance, synergy and coordinated effort between heterogeneous stakeholders. The networking can resolve challenges of financial support and capacity to sustain funded projects as attributed to lack of proper coordination, poor resource organisation, or mobilisation, which, when strengthened, can manifest into permanent solutions.

3.5 Defining the Policy debate in smallholder farming

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, South Africa was marked by the policy paradigm shift that sought to bridge the gap between the innovation policies of a democratic dispensation and cognate policies to those of the apartheid regime. Undoubtedly, the efforts were to move from racialized Weberian bureaucratic institutions that had complex legal and institutional systems. "The bureaucracy's focus on efficiency and technical rationality is compatible with just three of the four important values in public administration: efficiency, economy, and effectiveness" (Borry & Reuter, 2022). However, the egalitarian constitutional democracy that was labelled as having above stated characteristics has since bore no fruits. The inherited splintered state by the African National Congress (ANC) had to undergo major reform, to effectively and efficiently democratise its public administration.

A much-debated points are the current policies that fail to address challenges in more than 26 years of constitutional democracy. According to Petersen and Kruss (2019), problems are in the limited inclusion of informal economic actors in the policy development within the system, a symbol of lack of good governance. The concept of good governance signifies the importance of diverse actors partaking inclusively in the decision-making process. Consequently, good governance depends solely on the actor's participation and understanding of the role they have in policy-making (Yami et al., 2018). Undoubtedly, the South African democratic dispensation came with agricultural policy reforms and many policies, viewed as competent by the international space but with poor implementation (de Coning, 2008). The intense agricultural policy reforms are becoming a compound exercise and are misaligned in the smallholder farming sector which has the potential to reduce rural poverty and enhance the rural livelihood economy through multipronged approaches (Jumiyati et al., 2019). Mubangizi (2011) suggests that the poverty reduction strategy should acknowledge role players for providing services to the poor by encouraging citizen participation in planning, implementing, and monitoring such programs.

Incongruously, the low engagement of actors in the development and implementation of policy continues to engulf institutional reforms (Yami et al., 2018), despite such recommendations. According to Yami et al., (2018), multi-actor policy platforms are a critical instrument in providing space for interaction, collaboration, and contestation. Rodriguez-Pose & Wilkie (2017) uniquely debate that enhancing coordination and dialogue between actors can unfold the social empowerment process for the benefit of all parties. It is against the above narrative that the study seeks to evaluate the collaboration of actors in the smallholder farming systems. The view is that such collaborative approaches can be in a form of public-private partnerships (PPPs), a significant feature in smallholder farming, especially in a public sector that is constrained by limited resources (Raidini & Kabiti, 2017).

For South Africa to contribute meaningfully to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a United Nations (UN) member state, the country needs to be devoted to active policy development that is homemade. Contrarily, Yami et al. (2018) argues that policy formulation often excludes grassroots actors and non-experts. Yami et al., (2018) further debate that policy formulation is limited to stakeholder consultation at the National level, which usually poses challenges to the credibility and legitimacy of policy processes. Consequently, the study seeks to understand how smallholder farmers experience such atrocious conditions when there are

diverse agrarian and non-agrarian actors labelled as providers of extra support to this sector (Brown, 2016). The idea is to utilise network governance to evaluate how such actors are structured. Moreover, the study focuses on knowledge sharing and the flow of new information among actors for the sustainability and welfare of smallholder farmers (van Dijk et al., 2019). Dijk et al. further argue that the actors' engagements bridge the gap between policy, science, and producers. In the process, the priority becomes the smallholder farmers, as they require the support of actors to improve their situation.

3.6 Actors and their relationships in supporting smallholders in the communal area

According to Adjei and Adjei (2016), primary agricultural activities alone cannot address rural poverty as multifaceted by other factors such as climate change viabilities to productivity. Therefore, networking becomes crucial to link diverse actors and rally support and advocacy for smallholder farming to ensure diversification in rural livelihoods beyond conventional agriculture. The key activities of actors in the network are unpacked in figure 4 below as capacity building, providing financial support, promoting information sharing and advocating for an effective institutional arrangement that benefits the smallholder farming communities.

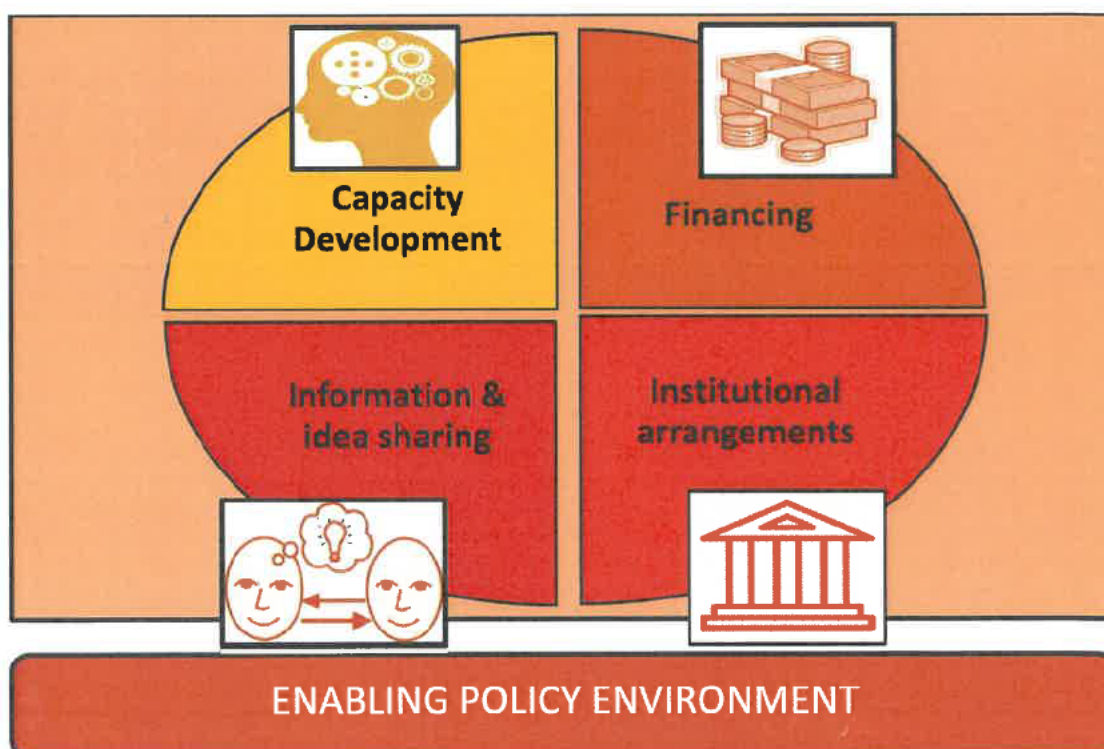


Figure 3: Illustration of the actor's activities in the agricultural development network

Van Dijk et al. (2019) view networking as a critical innovation process for problem-solving, generating ideas, and creating a well-consulted program. Therefore, the institutional

arrangements in networks should typically comprise of public sector (government departments), civic society organisations, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), private actors (financial service providers, input providers, and agricultural extension agencies), international and national research institutions, and educational institutions (Molomo, 2012).

The multilateral agencies in the network can provide farmers with operational and technical support such as generating and communicating climate data and other information (Crawford & Church, 2019). Simpson et al. (2012) discovered that the involvement of actors leads to the network's success as feedback signals commitment, responsibility, and accountability. Consequently, smallholder farmers become better positioned to influence government decision-making and, in the process, demand services and hold other actors accountable. Within the network, the actor's analysis is critical to identifying their interest, behaviour, and adequate power to bring about positive change (Eidt, Pant & Hickey, 2020). According to Mulema et al. (2019), sustainable agricultural production requires a holistic approach that considers multiple dimensional actors in the system.

3.6.1 The public institutional arrangement and policy-making in smallholder farming

Government is one of the network's actors that provides a policy framework, which generally determines the success of coordination, not excluding the issues of governance, leadership, and performance as instruments for network performance and analysis (Jovita et al., 2018). Expectedly, the public sector should provide guiding policy frameworks for the active engagement of actors in the network.

The government struggles to execute its responsibility of promoting collaboration for significant interaction with actors, especially local smallholder farmer organisations (Adenle, Azadi & Manning, 2018). Notably, the development of smallholder farming is the government's only obligation. Nonetheless, the private sector is required to generate information, link farmers to lucrative markets, and provide financial support. The unanswered question is, "How can the South African government adapt to a meaningful smallholder development that contributes to the country's economy when support structures are fragmented?"

Figure 5 demystifies the roles of spheres of government in providing and coordinating networks for smallholder farmers' support. As government institutions offer financial support, agricultural extension services, and infrastructural development to smallholder farming

(Pokhrel, 2019), he is expected to do such duties collaboratively. However, this sector is constrained by limited resources at its disposal (Raidini & Kabiti, 2019).



Figure 4: The role of public institutions in smallholder networking

- **The national and provincial departments and their role in the network**

The National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development (DALRRD) formulate agricultural policy and provides public extension support through the provincial department (Petersen & Kruss, 2019), which is most criticised for its dependence on the capacity of local departments (Venter, 2017). Despite the efforts to revitalise the sector, the synchronic systems and stereotypes of public extension and advisory services have been visible and continue to render extension services invisible.

Arguably, the challenge is the lack of public sector commitment to lead actors in rural agriculture development, which create ineffective platforms of engagement (Garane, 2017). Ngaka & Zwane (2018) argue that the bureaucratic and top-down processes in providing services had weakened the state. Unfortunately, the above contention is directed to an institution that should facilitate the practical existence of networks. As rural agriculture became one of the critical priorities and high potential areas for economic growth and labour absorption in the South African national development (NPC, 2015; Venter, 2017), the institutional

capacity to work inclusively needs to be strengthened. The NDP emphasises that the optimum utilisation of communal land can recover and improve rural livelihood sustainability. However, the government has devastatingly failed to develop programs for smallholder farming. The resolution of the governing party African National Congress (ANC) in its 52nd National Conference held at Polokwane had long endorsed rural agriculture as one of its economic growth strategies (Greenberg, 2010 as cited by Garane, 2017).

- **The Local Municipality and its role in the smallholder networks.**

According to Msomi, Reddy and Zondi (2018), South Africa has a significant commitment and constitutional mandate that better positioned local government institutions as more directly linked to the public to advocate for democratisation. The provincial government is an institution that should deal firmly with community expectations (Koma, 2010) and be developmental, accountable, and reasonable in its governance through coordinating service delivery by active stakeholder engagements (Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018; Msomi, Reddy & Zondi 2018). The above rhetoric acknowledges municipalities as a central point of interaction to promote local economic development holistically. The political-administrative dichotomy should advocate for an abundance of skills, competencies, knowledge in the local economic development and establish smallholder networks. Contrarily, municipalities are faced with challenges of lacking expertise and capacity to deliver local economic development services (Mnguni, Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020; Mazibuko & Fourie, 2013; Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018), which requires the involvement of diverse actors.

The incapacity of local government to coordinate, plan, and implement its LED initiatives does not contribute to the development of smallholder farming although among its primary focus became the agricultural projects mainly in the introduction of Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic Transformation (RASET) in KZN (Hambule & Mtapuri, 2018). Subsequently, the municipality's role in the smallholder network becomes unclear. Contradicting aspects in the municipality LED office and its LEDAs are the dual roles of both institutions in smallholder farming with no collaborative efforts and tangible evidence or results. The weak institutional governance at the local municipality contributes to the limited holistic delivery of appropriate services to rural smallholder farmers. Even with the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), the municipality seldom includes other departments but as a way of compliance with the constitutional mandate to promote public participation. According to Khambule and Mtapuri (2018), the local government always side lines local actors in planning development, which

creates challenges in getting local solutions. Arguably, it becomes the responsibility of the department of agriculture to collaborate with local government in the events of rural agriculture for smallholder farming. Despite egg and chicken theory, any institution is required to promote a bottom-up collaborative approach and farmers' participation in decision-making that will increase ownership through participatory learning and development (Adenle et al., 2018). Significantly, municipal LED should be the facilitator of smallholder networks where even the outside actors such as banks or private funders, international investors and service providers get invited. In the agriculture sector, coordination and partnership have been promoted by Agriculture Research Council (ARC) (Jacobs, Malewa & Ramoroka, 2022). There is no clear evidence of the role of municipality in the network of smallholder farmers.

3.6.2 Private sector and its role in supporting smallholder farming in the network

Raidini and Kabiti (2017) suggest that the future goals of the public sector are to involve various actors in the agriculture development process through public-private partnerships. A long-term collaborative effort between the public and private sectors as articulated by Muhammed and Johar (2019) creates a mutual interest and benefits of shared risks, costs, and development. The notion of numerous actors as a critical catalyst of change in smallholder farming needs to be considered as a significant piece in changing the rural agricultural segment.

The status quo in Africa's smallholder farmer development suggests that the private sector role is by virtual nature feeble even though institutionalised by CAADP processes (Badiane, Benin & Makombe, 2016; Kamara et al., 2019). Promisingly, the discovery of Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) is fostering private sector and development partnership investment in the African agriculture agenda (Sulle, 2020), despite being undocumented in the South African rural agricultural space. Below figure 6 illustrates the type of private sector service providers that are significant in smallholder financing.

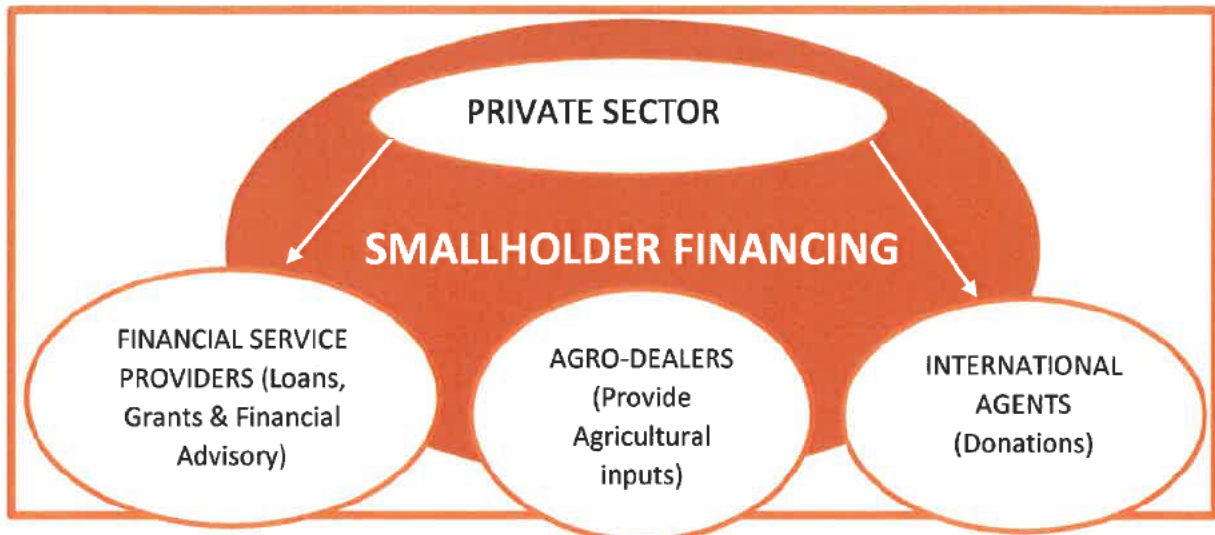


Figure 5: Private sector involvement in supporting smallholder farming

- **Financial service provider in smallholder farming**

Some parts of Africa suggest an active private sector, especially financial service providers. The perfect example is the Finance Innovation for Climate Change Fund (FICCF) in Kenya, which assisted smallholder farmers to repay their microfinance grants intended for climate-smart agriculture (Crawford & Church, 2019). Such initiatives recognise actors in the provision of agriculture development (Ngaka & Zwane, 2018). However, South African smallholder farming has not yet utilised effectively the financial institutions allegedly due to the procedures followed in accessing funds (Khoase et al., 2019).

The Masisizane fund, an Old Mutual non-profit company in South Africa, can be a perfect example of private intervention in rural smallholder farming. They provide support in partnership with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) to smallholder farmers with loans and production experts (Venter & Human, 2018). Confusingly, Masisizane fund successes are not yet displayed as a solution to the limited funding in smallholder farming in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, which has been a story of local commercial banks such as Ithala Bank in this province.

- **Agro-dealer as actors in the smallholder farming network**

Agro-dealers are the agencies that produce and manufacture agricultural production inputs such as fertilisers, new and improved seeds, and agrochemicals. According to Kamau et al. (2018) and Akpo et al., (2020), the prerequisite is the farmers' awareness about these new, improved technologies which influence the level and process of adoption among smallholder farmers.

Unfortunately, Kamau et al. further argue that many farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa have not been reached, which describes the lack of knowledge about the new, improved seed varieties. The reduction of the distance between agro-dealer and smallholder farming communities can have a positive impact on the access to information on the production input availability and the market information.

The worrying factors are the use of bio-pesticides and herbicides by farmers that have not been trained on their practical use. Constantine et al. (2020) argue that the incorrect use of agrochemicals could lead to disease and pest resistance, but mostly environmental degradation. The typical suggested practice is the Integrated Management (IPM), which includes the cultural methods of dealing with pests and diseases. The pertinent question is how such IPM can be achieved when agro-dealers are documented as far from the smallholder farming communities.

- **International actors in the network**

International agencies are among actors that provide agricultural aid and donor funding to the developing countries. China's President Xi Jinping pledged approximately US\$60 billion support funds for Africa's ten priorities, including agriculture research cooperation on issues of epidemic prevention and control on High-level Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) (Buckley et al., 2017). In some instances, donor organisations advocate for the neo-liberalism of smallholder farmers by promoting entrepreneurship, market integration, and privatisation (Brown, 2016).

Paradoxically, South Africa has not documented the positive effects of such interventions in smallholder farming, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The dominating international actors in Sub-Saharan Africa are the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). These institutions promote improved policy and legal framework for member states (Yami et al., 2018; Turner, Cilliers & Hughes, 2014). These actors have programs in areas of food security, poverty alleviation, and employment creation, which still need to be realised by the study.

3.6.3 Actors in building smallholder farmers' capacity, resilience and dynamics

The resilience and capacity of smallholder farming communities can be viewed as a solution to the rural farming sector. However, in the absence of local organisational structure, the above statement might be hard to achieve. The community-based organisations are among other local

actors such as Non-government organisations (NGOs), agricultural cooperatives or smallholder farmers organisations, traditional councils with the mutual interest of advocating for the betterment of livelihoods of its members (Pokhrel, 2019). Below figure 7 displays the institutions that are critical in building communal smallholder farmers’ capacity, resilience and dynamics.



Figure 6: Institutions critical in the capacity development of smallholder farming

- **Non-Government Organisation (NGOs)**

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are non-profit organisations that are crucial in the socio-economic development for local communities as they are capable of mobilising poor people towards project formation for economic growth (Pokhrel, 2019). According to Hall and Ntsebeza (2007), NGOs such as the National Land Committee were an organised voice from the local level dealing with land issues through a network of land-based NGOs.

During the 1990s, NGOs in South Africa were striving for change in land policy; however, their contribution to agricultural development is not yet realised in smallholder farming, especially in rural areas. In urban areas, NGOs have diverted their focus to landless people programs such as Abahlali baseMjondolo networks. As Moyo (2007) argues, rural social movements have been relegated into informal politics without any impact on rural development. The effort of World Vision of undertaking enterprises in communities around the HGDM is not documented in any literature. The above arguments concur with the

perception that Southern Africa has not historically organised civil society toward a radicalised model that is demand-driven.

- **Smallholder farmer Organisation (SFOs)**

South African agriculture is divided into two forms, namely subsistence or smallholder farming in communal areas and commercial farming, mostly for white farmers, these categories were created by colonialism and apartheid systems (Hall & Ntsebeza, 2007). Communal farming has been less organised than white commercial farming. Organised agriculture in industrial agriculture can be traced back to the 1920s as agricultural cooperatives (Greenberg, 2013). Overwhelmingly, smallholder farmers were not partaking in the leading economic streams, as they were deprived access to the services gained by financial power (Ortmann & King as cited by Garane, 2017).

Noticeably, the lack of diverse actor's engagement can be the contributing factor to the inconsequential number of only 5381 South African smallholder farmers that are partaking in agribusiness as only an estimated 3910 linked to the market (Wissink, 2019). Notably, in South Africa, more than 6% of smallholder farmers are located in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Eastern Cape (EC) and Limpopo Provinces (Zantsi, 2019), and their role is still unchanged compared to the white farmers (Sebola, 2018). According to Bachev (2018), both individual and smallholder farmers' organisations have the same challenges.

The fundamental issues facing smallholder farming in contemporary South Africa include how policymakers prioritise individual rural farmers and their organisations as a critical sector in poverty eradication and employment creation. The rhetoric has been a peculiar history of rural smallholder farming, despite being identified as a crucial structure in the agriculture value chain (DAFF, 2012). According to Garane (2017), smallholder farmers were encouraged by the government to register their entities for them to be recognised and then supported. On the contrary, there is no proper documented support and progress, which raises a pertinent question of whether the government approach was holistic. Consequently, the above argument was among the entrenched reasons the study looked at the involvement of smallholder organisations in decision-making focusing on matters of agricultural policy and its development.

- **Traditional councils**

In South Africa, the role of traditional leaders as local actors is determined by the history and paradigm shift between administrations. Traditional leaders can be local chiefs, traditional religious leaders, and other leaders with traditional responsibilities (Dansoh, Primpong & Oppong, 2020). However, in the study context, the traditional leaders are local chiefs with legitimacy rooted in cultural, historical ownership, executive, and judiciary power at the local level. Traditional leadership in South Africa was distorted and fabricated by the despotic colonialism and apartheid rulings that coaxed them to govern with the white decision (Moosa, 2018).

The Eurocentric image of colonialism has reshaped the world (Hall, 2004) but mostly central to the rural leadership complexities. Traditional leadership, as they are the rightful owners of the communal land were part of the distorted history created by colonialism and the apartheid system and its policy, such as Betterment Policy/ plans that left indigenous people struggling against spatial estrangement ontology (Tsheda & Makhuda, 2019). Therefore, communal farming becomes the contributing factor to the degradation of smallholder farming, citing the rural-urban migration as most rural households' family members seek to support their families by working in semi-urban and urban areas (Laura, Almagul & Diana, 2019). The colonial regime and apartheid government in South Africa depleted and created complexity and hardships that are hard to resolve in rural black communities and on the rural agriculture developmental agenda. Families are still occupying unproductive plots of land less than a hectare for household and backyard gardening.

Although neutralised by previous administrations, notwithstanding the post-apartheid government retained the powers of traditional authorities with its dynamism that lives tenure insecurity to smallholder farmers. However, the power battles between current democratic dispensation and traditional leaders still exist. They have a massive influence on indigenous people with rooted legal powers of being the custodians of communal land. For any municipal project, the institutions need to understand local actors' needs and how they perceive them as the objective of the development (Dansoh, Primpong & Oppong, 2020).

3.7 The institutional features hinder or promote smallholder farming in communal areas.

According to Khoase et al. (2019), networking can be a solution to individual problems when engagement platform advocates sharing ideas and learning from each other. However, the entry point is to understand the institutional features in the system. The institutional features can be defined as the organisational behaviours, values, logics and social capital of actors that are either hindering or promoting partnership in the network. Partnerships are considered as the solution in a fragmented state that uses a top-down approach without considering poor people (Ngaka & Zwane, 2018). Below figure 8 illustrates that powers and behaviours, network platforms and management make it easy to share information, knowledge and resources. The diverse histories of stakeholders can build constructive dialogue, experiences, knowledge, and values of participation (Fernandez-Gime'Nez, et al., 2019).

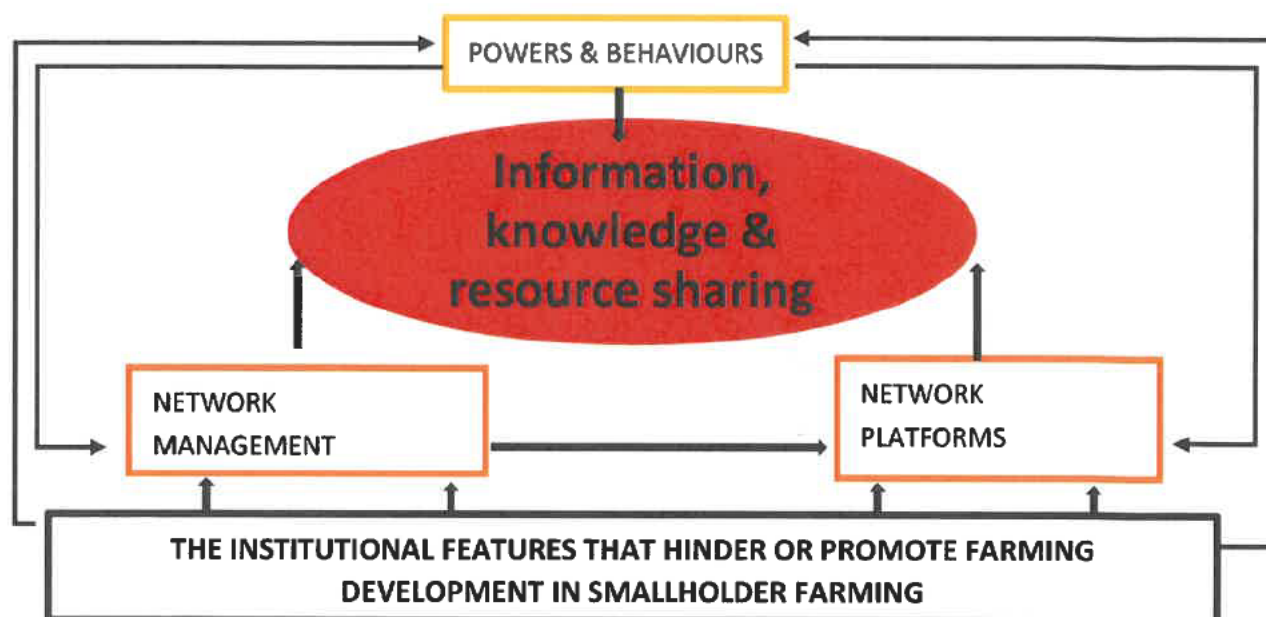


Figure 7: The institutional features in smallholder farming

3.7.1 Powers and behaviours of actors in the network

The nature of reality in the network is that different views shape how diverse actors engage (Perrotton et al., 2017). The private sector is typically market-driven and influenced by profit maximisation, which reduces its commitment to excellent services to smallholder farmers. In the process, farmers' organisations are seeking to enhance their bargaining power as producers; reduce the cost of acquiring technology, capacity building, and quality control (Swinner &

Kuijpers, 2020). Contrarily, in the network, the allocation of power is predisposed by the resources actors can contribute to the system, which dilutes the tenacity of the network. In such a contaminated network environment, local actors cannot have the supremacy to exploit virtually such platforms by acquiring knowledge for their competitive advantage (Borreli et al., 2020). Subsequently, stakeholders' engagement in a tremendous or less extent displays poor citizen participation in decision-making (Moques & Erman, 2018).

3.7.2 Platforms and model of engagement in the network

According to Jari & Gavin, (2011), formal and informal actors shape the institutional arrangement in the system where legal rules exclude the informal sector. Unfortunately, most of the rural smallholder farmers belong to this group. Crawford and Church (2019) state that understanding how other actors operate should be a principle of networking attained through research and consultation that endorses constructive dialogue. The OECD (2017) suggests that the engagements model needs a platform for actors to express their views, share perspectives, and opinions freely in the following manner:

- All actors need to be honest regarding the objectives of the network and give feedback through consultation where all parties share the context of activities, preferences, concerns, and expectations.
- Responsiveness to the agreed-upon commitment and be able to address challenges. Therefore, a platform promotes actor's engagement for accountability on collective decisions taken in response to the issues collectively.
- Promote ongoing engagement through a two-way communication approach, which does not place any actor in a passive stunt to the proposed operations. Every actor should have a clear role to play towards the planned objectives.

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the documented success in the actors' engagement is in the sugarcane industry. The South African Sugar Research Institute (SASRI) and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZNDARD) provide the Extension Venture Agreement (EVA) (Ngaka & Zwane, 2018) in addressing the challenges of smallholder sugarcane growers. Therefore, this emphasises the importance of public-private partnerships in other commodities to promote a collaborative approach for the development of mutual interest, sharing of risks, costs, and benefits in smallholder farmer development (Muhammad & Johar, 2019; Connolly-Boutin, & Smit, 2015).

3.7.3 Management of networks

Every network requires a specific connotation drawn out of a context of engagements that are either informal or formal. According to OECD (2017), the actors' participation requires a network driven by the active involvement of actors, and continuity reached through mutual understanding. However, meaningful engagement needs a well-coordinated process through which problems are identified and mitigated by potential solutions. Therefore, actors should give priority to the facilitation of engagement in the network. OECD (2017) proposed the following strategies in the promotion of the actor's involvement in the system:

- The vision needs to be established and communicated through a policy where actors become involved in every stage.
- Platforms need to provide feedback and promote business relationships and mutual interest.
- Identify and prioritise actors and their value in the network.
- Develop a framework to ensure good governance and that actors are treated equally.
- The network should provide an opportunity for capacity building to benefit all parties.

All institutions in the network should be aware that they are part of management. They have the responsibility to plan, execute, and monitor the progress for meaningful interactions and interventions. Therefore, it is critical to have a guiding document, which in this instance, is a policy framework on the management of the actor's engagement in the network. The policy framework should address the recognition of actors in the process to build relationships and avoid confusion. According to OECD (2017), the policy should establish a system that would be against manipulation, interference, coercion, and intimidation. Furthermore, the policy should promote transparency through open reporting or public reporting on the level of actors' involvement.

3.8 The enabling policy environment for sustained smallholder farmers networks

Imperatively, there is no “one-size-fits-all” policy that can sustain smallholder farming in the absence of actors' engagement processes (Fan & Rue, 2020). For the policy to be effective and relevant to the development pathway, they need to address the transformation of smallholder farmers from their fragile positions to a profitable farming business. Below figure 9 illustrates

three factors of enabling policy environment cited as holistic policy development and reform, the bottom-up than top-down approach and reduced discrepancies in policy making.

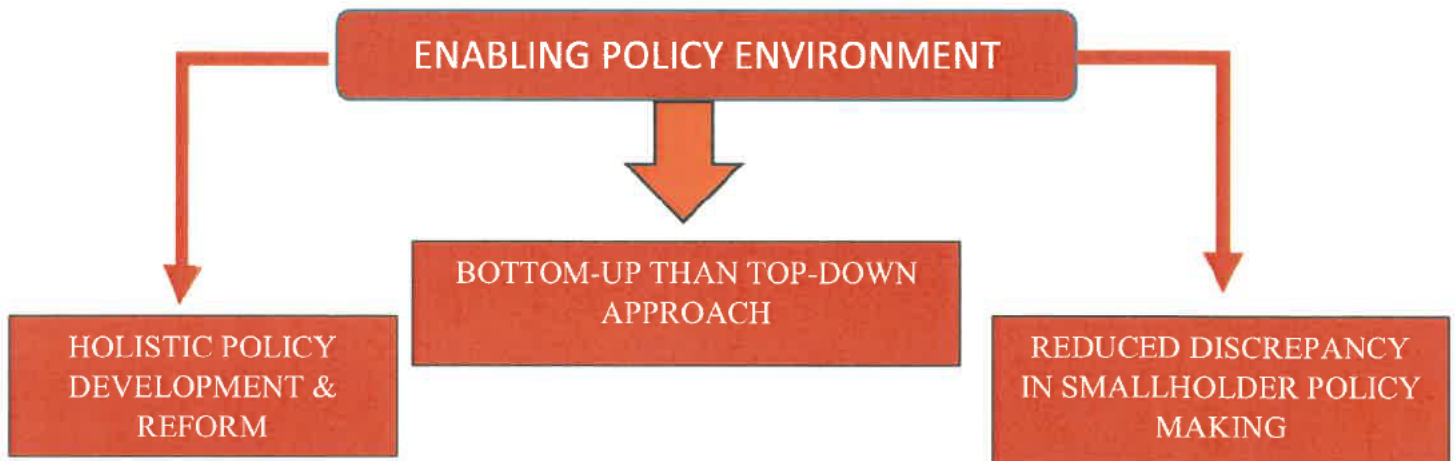


Figure 8: Enabling policy environment for the network to sustain smallholder farming

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, South Africa was marked by a policy paradigm shift that was aimed at closing the bridge between the haves and have nots. Unfortunately, closing the inequality gaps remain hard to achieve in a fragmented actors environment. Rwamigisa et al. (2018) suggested that collective action, mutual interest, knowledge sharing, and proper coordination between public and private sectors should mark the policy environment. According to Petersen and Kruss (2019), the entry point to network governance should be on a pluralistic policy that emphasises the interaction and collective action. Contradictory to their statement, Petersen and Kruss further argue that policymakers have no clear policy network map to strengthen the coordination of better strategic direction.

Therefore, the pertinent question is how government can achieve holistic policy reform when policymakers have no capacity. Disturbingly but the objective is African countries’ long history that suggests poor policy formulation associated with the colonial effect of inequalities. The paucity of a holistic approach in prevailing agricultural policies especially in Africa has created an immense crisis in many areas of this sector (Brown, 2016). The situation in agriculture is pointed out in the policy discrepancies unequivocally fail to address the actor’s involvement. In Kwayiya’s (2019) argument, the misdemeanours in policy interest should be corrected by immense consideration of a bottom-up than a top-down approach where all levels are engaged.

3.8.1 Uncertainty in the policy development process

It is worth noting that agriculture transformation is in policies that are formulated through the involvement of actors that have mutual interests, and well-coordinated activities (Mbokazi, 2018). The agricultural transformation policies and programs should adhere to an inclusive process, in which heterogeneous vital stakeholders such as local actors, participate (Ijeoma, 2013 as cited by Mbokazi 2018). Subsequently, the policy discrepancies have created a poor consideration of farmers' participation as potential beneficiaries. But mostly, the legacy of apartheid still has an enormous impact in the democratic state as shaping the importance of financial institutions, notably, which adhere to international standards.

It is important that South Africa begins to reconfigure the policy transformation process and review the efficacy of its current policy towards smallholder farming development (Moosa, 2018). However, sustainable smallholder farming needs a well-institutionalised government, the political will to implement the policies and aligned policy promoting inclusive growth (Petersen & Kruss, 2019). It is crucial to align strategy to the global list as displayed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and CAADP policy framework for Africa's agricultural transformation. The CAADP is among the promising continental frameworks policy that African countries have developed influenced by Agenda 2063 to reflect their ambition to deal with inclusive growth and the elimination of absolute poverty (Turner, Cilliers & Hughes, 2014). The agenda 2063 sees the African state reducing poverty to below 10% by 2045 and 3% by 2063. The pertinent question is how possible it is to achieve such excellent outcomes when actors are working in silos in the same objective they seek to achieve.

The effects of crises such as Covid-19 need a reconfiguration of interest in uplifting smallholder farmers and reducing the impact of such economic disasters to sustain their existence. Paradoxically, the shelving of policy during political changes contaminates the system and leads to abandoned programs (Sulle, 2020). This phenomenon suggests an authoritarian populism associated with most liberation movements that use populist positions to change policy as a way of marketing themselves as trusted political members (Monjane & Bruna, 2019).

3.8.2 Policy-making for smallholder farming

As a prerequisite, policymakers should establish discrepancies in policy-making and realise that smallholder farmers have a different social need to move from subsistence into market-

orientated space (Zamchiya, 2019). Therefore, policy formulation should often be inclusive, as Yami et al. (2018) suggest it has been excluding grassroots actors and non-experts. This claim by Yami et al. revealed a policy administration that is bureaucratic and top-down in its approaches, which could miss the burning issues at the sub-national level. It is observed that an actor's consultation is used as an instrument of compliance and disseminating information than sharing ideas. The policies designed in such contexts display an ineffective policy implementation where obstacles and windows of opportunity are not identified (Lencuch et al., 2020).

According to Khwidzhili and Worth (2017), the policy should prevent foreign behaviours in the network and categorise farmers as essential stakeholders in the process. Accordingly, good governance should solely strengthen the actor's participation and the understanding of the significance of policy-making. However, the reductionist behaviours of politicians as actors that drive policy direction always at the implementation phase have the individualism and compartmentalised character seldom advocating for critical interaction in the network (Lim, Jorgensen & Wyborn, 2018). Therefore, the policy aim is diluted instead of stimulating inclusive innovation towards the development of marginalised groups, increasing their interest and income (Petersen & Kruss, 2019).

3.9 Lessons learned

The institutional arrangement in the development of smallholder farming displays diverse actors with unique roles that need effective coordination. These actors are government departments, private sector, civil society organisations and international organisations. Interestingly, the government as a public sector is considered to be a coordinating institution even though it lacks capacity to execute an inclusive approach. Therefore, the effectiveness of networks needs facilitation and coordination to eliminate the manipulation, exploitation of less-resourced actors and enforcing procedures to avoid conflicts in the system.

Without a policy that outlines the methods, rules and standards of engagement, some actors can push their institutional agenda, which might be outside the network objectives. The concern, therefore, is whether institutions understand their role and the role of other institutions. Coordination has been identified as a challenge in the existing literature that causes poor actors' engagement in smallholder farming. The leading departments, such as local government and agriculture departments through their local economic development initiatives,

have not mastered the art of engaging diverse actors in their programs. Surprisingly, their policy documents emphasise and stipulate actors as critical instruments for them to execute their constitutional obligations.

The private sector that is renowned for serving its interests at the expense of poor farmers is in the middle. On the other angle, civil society is documented as not advocating local farmers' interests especially in the area of smallholder farming development. Some civil organisations are critiquing the High-Level Panel Report (HLPR) chaired by Mr Kgalema Motlanthe. The debate created is on the proposition that the Ingonyama Trust in KwaZulu-Natal and other rural traditional areas registered trusts should be administered by the government (HLPR, 2017). This public debate and scrutiny continue the ontological perceptions of small-unprotected rural agricultural lands in the former homelands and TBVC state, which hinder further agricultural investment by smallholder farmers. Surprisingly, the land question fits the current literature hence the unresolved rural land tenure with no titling. From the earliest literature, land defined the injustices created by the poor land policies that have been the metaphor of rural agricultural development. However, the study worldview is that the main challenge is in the lack of stakeholder engagement that must come up with lasting solutions.

The challenging factor is the policy-making process that does not include local actors such as smallholder farmers, civil societies, and NGOs in agricultural development activities. However, the above argument could be a piece of anecdotal or objective evidence that needs to be further interrogated to add a new view to the concept of collaborative or network governance in the literature of public administration. The pertinent question is "How can actors be fragmented if the national policy promotes holistic and pluralistic approach?" The state of fragmented actors in the agriculture sector needs to be verified by research in the study area. The research will assist in strengthening the understanding of the application of network governance principles especially in the rural agriculture development at a subnational government level for the successful execution of a program influenced by the local context.

Furthermore, it is inevitable that platforms of engagement are a critical instrument to management actors and promote accountability in the network. The platforms are an essential piece of the network puzzle that stimulates trust and promotes good relationships through continuous engagements. However, it is not clear if such platforms do exist especially at the local level. The proposed solution to the democratic government is for current policies to be effectively reviewed and implemented (Moosa, 2018). Therefore, the research revelations

assisted in continuing the dialogue and elaborate discussion on what should be the best approaches to rural agricultural development-pending unimplemented agricultural reform policy, such as the 1997 White Paper on Land Reform Policy. Noticeably, what is missing in rural agriculture is actors' engagement or inclusive approach that seeks to address the challenge not only in smallholder farming but on the land question and otherwise. It is the researcher's view that the status quo should suggest studies around the conflicting ideologies of actors on the priority of localising and achieving SDGs. The history of rural agriculture in South Africa as dictated by the current pastoral challenges caused by the exclusion of indigenous black citizens from their growth cannot be disputed. However, something much more than race-related claims on ownership, oppression and legal protection needs to be investigated to get solutions to the continuous undeveloped rural agricultural farming. Therefore, it is for the above reasons that the study aim was to evaluate the effect of network governance, hoping that the study revealed areas of concern that can be utilised in other agriculturally related matters.

Chapter 4 as a following chapter defines the research methodology utilised in the study that debated the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the study from a pragmatic worldview. The above-mentioned chapter demystifies where the study was conducted, the methods and instruments, the data analysis and what was considered ethical.

CHAPTER 4

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter guides the framework on how the research was conducted. The chapter begins with discussions on the research worldview as a foundation of the study research methodology. The pragmatism worldview was used in this study to guide the research approach. Specifically, this study relied on the mixed-method research approach, which is both quantitative and qualitative. The initial opinions towards the authentic research design were adopted to explain the nature of reality and the social patterns smallholder farmers experience in communal areas. The chapter describes the purpose of the research, the research design, the research paradigm, the study area, sampling procedures, and ethical considerations.

4.2 Purpose of the research

The research endorsed unique approaches to discover what was projected as a nature of reality and social occurrences. Apprehensively, Babbie (2016) argues that smallholder farmers are continuously facing challenges in making a meaning out of their life experiences and ethnomethodology. However, the current phenomena in smallholder farming suggests fragile groups that undoubtedly provided unique views on actors' roles and responsibilities and how the network governance might eradicate their complex issues and the ramification of poor actors' engagement in the systems. To intensively expose the phenomenon, the descriptive approach was used to define the necessary processes in a mixed methods approach. The descriptive study in de Vos et al. (2011) view is both quantitative and qualitative, in which the qualitative data seek to interrogate in depth the situation for a meaningful description of the phenomenon. Expectedly, the outcome describes the reality and kind of support that smallholder farming receives from diverse actors in the agriculture farming system.

The phenomenological approach was used to avoid and restrict any bias when research questions were asked. The assumption from the network governance theory and literature in the previous chapter is that diverse actors' engagement can improve the provision of services to citizens and can be a solution to complex smallholder challenges. Therefore, the pertinent question is why institutions in this sector are viewed as fragmented. Grounded by the above pragmatic worldview, the research attempted to expose a unique narrative on what causes the lack of engagement and holistic approaches in smallholder farming. Consequently, the research

view was to empower the most deprived actors to understand their developmental issues from the recommendation and conclusion of the study. The research, therefore, embarked on a pragmatism paradigm to impact on the smallholder transformative agenda. The transformative perspective informed an assumption that the responses of participants were influenced by their willingness to transform. The participant has experiences, feelings, and convictions displayed by answering questions in a direct or indirect interaction (Graziano & Raulin, 2004).

The study aimed to come up with a methodical and logical knowledge to contribute to the literature of smallholder development. On embarking on heterogeneous research data (a mixed-method approach), the study utilised the knowledge attained in the research problem of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Consequently, it was equivalent to determining a research approach that should be responsive to the rhetorical aspects of the challenges as displayed by the research problem.

To validate the research findings, a mixed-method was purposively utilized through a triangulation research approach to interpret data (Wagner et al., 2012; de Vos et al., 2011). Noticeably, the triangulation of mixed methods favoured the concurrent but separate collection and analysis of data to expose the phenomenon effectively.

4.3 Research design

The research design is underpinned chiefly by many worldviews categorised into positivism or post-positivism, constructivist or interpretative, transformative and pragmatism paradigms. Subsequently, Chilisa & Kawulich (2012) debated philosophically that there is an additional worldview called a postcolonial indigenous paradigm was discovered. The above-stated paradigm challenges the discrepancy in the descriptions of the former colonial developed literature to craft a pathway for hopes for the betterment of life of previously marginalised human beings.

Arguably, the content of the study nearly adopted the postcolonial indigenous worldview that surrounded legitimate, however, antiquated pragmatism paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A pragmatism worldview has offered a unique opportunity to accentuate the research problem using all critical approaches, and liberty to use any form of inquiry which allows systematic analyses of the case (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012).

4.3.1 The Pragmatism worldview

The emancipatory driven assumptions and pragmatism worldviews were relevant to the study citing its transformative nature that offers a voice to the voiceless (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The pragmatic paradigm was employed to address the research objectives and subjected to philosophical assumptions of what the researcher believes are the nature of reality (ontology), how knowledge gets accumulated (epistemology) and what is considered as proper ethics and value systems (Axiology) (Patton, 2002 as cited by Chalisa & Kawulich, 2012).

4.3.1.1 The ontology of pragmatism

Creswell (2007) defines ontology as a philosophy associated with the nature of reality. Expressively, the verifiable reality of society is created by what people believe (Patton, 2002 as cited by Chalisa & Kawulich, 2012). The nature of reality in this context is a socio-economic factor that comes with misaligned stakeholders, affecting smallholder farming. The challenges of smallholder farming displayed by the literature were the tangible evidence that constituted this worldview on the nature of reality and assumptions on reality (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). Smallholder farmers are faced with multiple challenges because of poor collaborated effect of fragmented and weak institutional structure (Adenle, Azadi & Manning, 2018). The incapacity of actors in coordination and facilitation is displayed in the lack of platforms in the network.

4.3.1.2 The epistemology of pragmatism

Epistemology defines how we accumulate the knowledge we have (Patton, 2002 as cited by Chalisa & Kawulich, 2012). Consequently, the epistemology assumption directed the researcher to conduct the study in close proximity with the potential study areas (Creswell, 2007). The researcher had to consult the majority of actors relevant to the development of smallholder farming, including farmers as the most exploited and affected groups or individuals. The research pursued a flexible and participatory approach administered through an exchangeable engagement (Du Plooy, 2009). It is believed that smallholder farmers have been working with different institutions that seek to facilitate the development of this sector. The above institutions are not easily accessible by actors, which might cause the lack of information on production and markets (Kamau et al, 2018).

4.3.1.3 The Axiology of pragmatism

The Axiology of a pragmatic worldview needs to be realised not only by the researcher but by participants in particular. Axiology is the role of values and ethics in research (Creswell, 2007). The researcher's axiological assumptions were embedded in ethical considerations where participants were given necessary information about the research and were voluntarily partaking in the study without physical or conditional emotional harm and blackmail. The above stated approach limited any possible unethical conduct, laden and biasness in the entire research study (*see appendix E & F: Ethical clearance and Consent form*).

4.4 Research Methods

4.4.1 The Mixed-Method Research

The mixed-method research approach used qualitative and quantitative methods respectively for issues to be interrogated comprehensively. A pragmatic paradigm covered political, historical and dogmatic social contexts, which justify mixed-method research without excluding the problems of social injustice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The convergent parallel mixed-method was used where concurrent qualitative and quantitative data created a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative data addressed transformative ideologies of effecting social justice for farmers who lack sustainability and who contribute less to the country's economy. Social injustice is characterised by factors such as public interest, social ills and political interference that warrant investigation of complex challenges and agricultural policy discrepancies to predict the possible solutions.

The statistics or numeric narrative of sentiments were utilised only for profound quantitative data collection and its analysis in a cross-sectional form (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Babbie, 2016). Qualitative data established the behaviour change and respondents' experiences (Dawson, 2009), which offered the direct portrayal of challenges communal farmers encounter as actors continue to be misaligned. Mixed-method research justified the pragmatic paradigm to evaluate the impact of stakeholder engagement towards smallholder farmer development as an approach to social justice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4.4.2 Data Collection Methods

4.4.2.1 Interviews

Yin (2014) argues that an interview is a critical measure of collecting proof, especially when audio recording is used, in permitted circumstances. According to Du Plooy (2009), trust allows free talk on the topic throughout information sharing. The face-to-face interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes with individual participants.

In some instances, there was a need for telephonic and electronic or virtual interviews in cases where a respondent could not honour one-on-one interviews. The telephonic and virtual interviews lasted 30-45 minutes. Subsequently, utilising telephonic and electronic interviews assisted in complying with COVID-19 regulations. Furthermore, telephonic and electronic interviews are viewed as a tool that assists respondents to contribute freely and probe for clarity, seeking questions, something a face-to-face interview was not going to offer (de Vos et al., 2011). “The results on the reliability, validity and response rate are quite mind-boggling” (Ndenje-Sichalwe & Elia, 2022). Therefore, Isizulu was used to increase the reliability in data collected. The interview guide was translated into Isizulu, which is the local language used at HGDM (*see appendix H: interview guide*).

Between the month end of June and October 2021, interviews were conducted and structured as follows:

- Twenty (20) out of twenty (20) individual smallholder farmers that had been actively farming for the past three (3) years were interviewed from three Local Municipalities. Ten out of twenty individual farmers were interviewed virtually and telephonically;
- Seven (05) traditional leaders (Amakhosi waseNdlunkulu) were interviewed out of Nine (09) traditional leaders as custodians of communal areas that were purposively selected as the critical local actors interested in rural agriculture development.

All interviews were purposively conducted in the following areas

- UMzimkhulu Local Municipality: Places were a) Gugwini location (30°30'13.80" S; 29°56'57.11"E), b) Elukhanyeni location (30°05'53.72"S; 29°46'05.69"E); Korinte location (30°06'16.38"S; 29°43'13.35"E) and Ndawane location (29°59'1.03"S; 29°27'51.49"E).

- Ubuhlebezwe Local municipality: Places were a) Madungeni location (30°18'23.37"S; 30°03'58.13"E); b) Nokwenja location (30°16'46.79"S; 30°01'23.63"E); Umhlabatyane location (30°20'42.92" S; 30°09'50.51"E).
- Dr Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma municipality: Places were Pholela location (29°47'31.64"S; 29°36'58.94"E); Nkwezela location (29°51'52.45"S; 29°47'25.94"E).

4.4.2.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a set of pre-designed questions where respondents put their honest responses rather than just being philanthropic (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The design and administration of questionnaires were in the category of closed-ended and open-ended questions (Dawson, 2009). The set of questionnaires was designed for the following actors and returned to allow a concurrent mixed-method approach:

- Three (03) Local Agricultural Managers as supervisors of their respective local municipalities in agricultural development for the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZNDARD) returned all questionnaires filled;
- All fifteen (15) Agricultural Advisors supporting smallholder farmers with Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) for the KZNDARD in 03 local Municipalities of HGDM returned their questionnaires filled;
- Three (03) out of three (03) Project Officers working as rural development agents for the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in 03 Local Municipalities returned all questionnaires filled;
- Five (05) out of nine (09) Local Economic Development Officers (LED) constituted by three (03) LED officers from each local municipality returned questionnaires filled and they were selected as one of the significant stakeholders in smallholder development.

The researcher designed a brief questionnaire (*see Appendix G: Questionnaire*) to motivate respondents to complete all required information to be captured and incorporated (de Vos et al., 2011).

4.4.2.3 Focus Group Discussions

The Focus group was purposively selected from the organised smallholder farmers grouping that has been together for more than three (3) years. Among the selection criteria was to select

smallholder farmers organisations perceived as marketing their products to local networks. These perceptions were used against the background of previous literature that traditional communal farming is multifaceted and characterised by lack of market infrastructure, local input networks, smallholder farming policies and fragmented land tenure systems (Oloa, Nalugala & Asatsa, 2021). The Focus Group was a group of farmers in a workshop of qualitative interviewing, where several respondents were questioned simultaneously and systemically (Babbie, 2016; Gaižauskaitė, 2012). The research was aware of the COVID-19 regulations of social distancing, wearing a mask, and use of sanitisers during meetings.

The ten focus group discussions were held in the three local municipalities (UMzimkhulu, Ubuhlebezwe & Dr Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma local municipalities) of HGDM between June and October 2021. Each focus group discussion was limited to less or equal to Ten (10) persons and greater or equal to seven (07) persons who formed an executive committee of the smallholder farmers organisation. According to Kumar's (2021) suggestion, the number for focus group can be considered enough when they are approximately eight to ten members. Below are the names of focus groups that were purposively selected and a number of farmers per group that availed themselves for this research:

- a) UMzimkhulu Local Municipality were Nyangwini cooperative (30°30'13.80" S; 29°56'57.11"E) at Gugwini location with seven (07) farmers, Lukhanyeni cooperative (30°05'53.72" S; 29°46'05.69" E) at Lukhanyeni with seven (07) farmers; Korinte cooperative (30°06'16.38" S; 29°43'13.35" E) at Korinte location with nine (09) farmers and Thabo Morena wool growers Association (29°59'1.03"S; 29°27'51.49" E) at Ndawana location with ten (10) farmers.
- b) At Ubuhlebezwe Local municipality, the focus groups were as follows: a) Madungeni Multipurpose Project (30°18'23.37" S; 30°03'58.13" E) with ten (10) farmers; Nokwenja cooperative (30°16'46.79" S; 30°01'23.63" E) with nine (09) farmers; Umhlabatyane cooperative (30°20'42.92" S; 30°09'50.51" E) with ten (10) farmers.
- c) The focus groups at Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma municipality were the Polela cooperative at Beersheba location (29°47'31.64"S; 29°36'58.94" E) with eight (08) farmers; Dlidli cooperative (29°51'52.45" S; 29°47'25.94" E) at Gobhogobho village with seven (07) farmers, Nkwezela location with ten (10) farmers and Atlas cooperative (29°57'07.70" S; 29°51'01.94") at Nomadlovo location with seven (07) farmers.

4.4.2.4 Secondary data

The secondary data was collected from existing studies (Dawson, 2009), and the desktop study was utilised to sketch up the theoretical framework, literature review and formulating arguments on findings. Some of the information and data attained from government departments generated knowledge utilised by the state to enhance and improve its service delivery. Among such documents were policies, strategies and other frameworks.

4.5 Study Site

The Harry Gwala District Municipality (HGDM) in Kwazulu-Natal was the study area. The above-stated municipality (see figures 10 and 11 below) is among the most black-dominated community, and smallholder farmers are quietly suffering the disparities and discrepancies of apartheid despite the democratic change. The district is occupying *10 618.0 km²* with approximately 502 265 population (Stats SA, 2018) and has a communal set-up in three local municipalities (UMzimkhulu, Dr Nkosana Dlamini-Zuma and Ubuhlebezwe local municipalities). The communal areas of UMzimkhulu Local Municipality were previously in the former homeland of Transkei, and the two latter municipalities were in the KwaZulu government. These communal areas might have a different experience in smallholder farming, citing influences by the various administrative regimes.

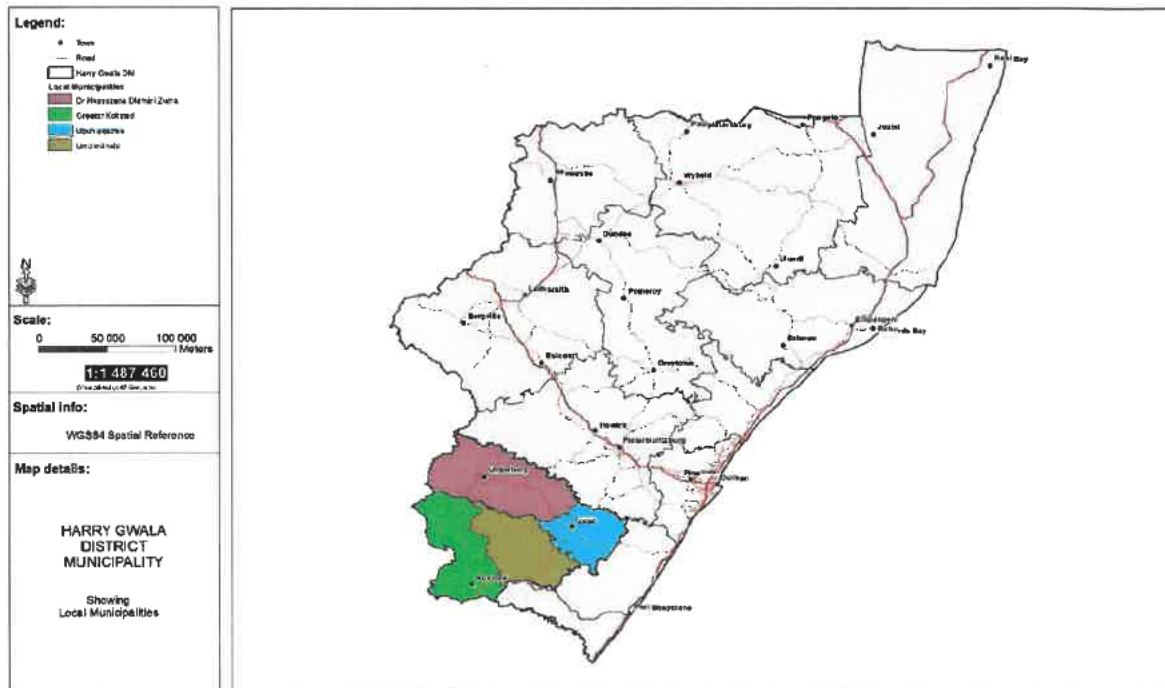


Figure 9: The KZN map locating Harry Gwala District Municipality (source: KZN, DARD)

Rural Development and 03 Local Economic Development officers from three local municipalities (see the table below).

Table 1: Typology of the target population

Local Municipalities	Type of target population						
	The executive committee of farmers' organisations	Individual Smallholder Farmers	Traditional leadership (Amakhosi)	KZNDARD Local Agricultural Managers	KZNDARD Agricultural Advisors	DALRRD Project Officers	LED Officers
Ubuhlebezwe, DR Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma & UMzimkhulu	10	20	09	03	15	03	09
TOTAL TARGET POPULATION							69

The researcher is well aware that superlatively, the whole population is suitable for any effective research. However, the population of smallholder farmers in a communal area is not well defined, making it impossible to include every participant, resulting in an infinite type of research.

4.7 Sampling

The study employed purposive sampling (non-probability sampling), known as judgemental sampling (Landerneau, 2013). The initial step in sampling was determined through a purposive selection of numerous participants to represent the entire population size, whose responses were expected to be of critical importance in the results, discussions, recommendations and conclusions of the study. Furthermore, the sampling considered the recommendations of the cost of the sample size and time saving with access to the samples (Heuman, 2003).

4.7.1 Types of sampling strategies

The research embarked on purposive sampling with minor convenience sampling. The practical criteria included accessibility, geographical proximity, time availability, or participants'

willingness in the intended study. Purposive sampling is the population selected based on the predisposition and mostly accurate information with the hope of a detailed knowledge to be exploited (Krysik & Finn, 2010). Etikan et al. (2016) note that purposive sampling, also called judgment sampling, deliberately selects respondents based on specific characteristics they possess. Furthermore, it does not require a set of several respondents but on participants' ability to provide information as they have knowledge and experience about the phenomenon of interest. Etikan et al. (2016) further express that purposive sampling is determined by data saturation than statistical power.

The rationale behind including convenience sampling, also called haphazard or accidental sampling, is that it is a non-probability that allows the selection of a target population that meets certain practical circumstances (Etikan et al., 2016; de Vos et al., 2011). De Vos et al. (2011) further explain that any phenomenon and case scenario that crosses the researcher's path is included until the desired sampling is attained. Subsequently, the researcher has avoided the bias in the convenience sampling as it is a nonprobability that has practical criteria of favouring proximity geographically and items of area accessibility, availability at a given time and willingness of respondents to partake in the intended study. Noteworthy, a researcher was intelligently in a position to pick out respondents that would be a source of information data analysed (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). The purposive sample (non-probability sampling) considers the variable in a mixed-method approach, leading to the unforeseen discovery of most reasons given by respondents (de Vos et al., 2011).

4.7.2 Sample and sample size

The study displayed a sampling size of 61 units identified through purposive sampling with little convenience sampling, as described in Table 2 below. The focus group of 10 were farmers' organisations such as livestock associations, agricultural cooperatives and commodity organisations; 20 individual smallholder farmers were interviewed to get an independent view. Traditional authorities are at the centre of the rural land tenure system; therefore, 05 traditional leaders as custodians of the land were interviewed out of nine (09) targeted. Traditional leaders are among the essential stakeholders in the system.

The three (03) Local Agriculture Managers and fifteen (15) Agricultural Advisors from the local offices of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development were given questionnaires, and all questionnaires were returned. Five (05) Local Economic Development

officers returned questionnaires out of the nine (09) units targeted as they were the relevant actors in the development of smallholder farmers, and the questionnaires that were given to three (03) Project officers from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development were also returned. These actors provided information on the institutional arrangement and relationships in smallholder farming in the area.

4.8 Recruitment of participants

The participants were contacted telephonically to explain the content of the study, and their participation was requested. The data collection began with participants that accepted the invitation to partake in the study with alacrity. The dates of interviews were arranged with individual smallholder farmers, smallholder farmers' organisations and traditional leaderships. On receiving the ethical clearance, all target groups within the institutions were contacted to request their participation in the study. Subsequently, the questionnaires were distributed to Local Managers, Agricultural Advisors, Project officers and Local Economic Development officers willing to participate in the study. In most instances, the informed consent document and questionnaires were emailed to the participants after they were contacted to get their enthusiasm.

4.9 Data Quality Control

Data integrity was invested in through authenticating reliable data to all interested participants and those who see research findings as applicable. Scholars define research data quality by its credibility and dependability, as well as transferability and confirmability as follows:

- **Credibility and Confirmability:** The reliability and confirmability of this research are through the interrogation of different forms of spectrum in a triangulated mixed-method approach.
- **Transferability and dependability:** This researcher compares results and discovers similarities or relationships with previous studies.

The credible and proper interpretation of results and findings (avoiding omissions, errors and manipulation of data) ensured the research's dependability.

4.10 Measurements

In most cases, commonly used measures are the minimal and ordinal scales such as Likert or Semantic differential (*see Appendix G: Questionnaire*). The Likert scale, as an instrument for measuring data, in quantitative data in a mixed-method approach, was extracting the statistical data (Ndimbwa, Mwantimwa & Ndumbaro, 2021; Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The eccentricity of the rating scale was 01 equals to very poor, and 05 equals to excellent. The rating scale measured the respondent's specific satisfaction (05 = very satisfied; 01= poorly satisfied).

The feedback from the scales demonstrated the strength or weakness of the discernments from the individual score as a measure of the dominant attitude (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The qualitative data was attained through the use of categories, codes and themes received through profound interviews and additional clarity seeking questions to support the previous answer.

Table 2: Sample Size

Type of sample	Data collected			Sample size
	Questionnaires	Interviews	Focus groups	
The executive committee of Smallholder farmers' organisations/groups	0	0	10	10
Individual smallholder farmers	0	20	0	20
Traditional leadership (Inkosi)	0	05	0	05
Local Agricultural Managers	03	0	0	03
Agricultural Advisors	15	0	0	15
Project Officers	03	0	0	03
LED officers	05	0	0	05
TOTAL	26	25	10	61

4.11 Data analysis

The mixed method analysis was used, which is a segregated analysis of quantitative and qualitative studies that are treated as separate methodologies and are analysed and synthesized separately before their drawn conclusion gets integrated (Younas, Inayat & Sundus, 2021). "Mixing two methods might be superior to a single method as it is likely to provide rich insights

into the research phenomena that cannot be fully understood by only qualitative or quantitative methods” (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2022).

The descriptive thematic or coded methodology was used to analyse the qualitative data where participants responses were extracted and the experiences of actors were captured. The descriptive data analysis method was utilised citing being with least amount of effort and to follow data analysis procedure to get meaningful information (Taherdoost, 2022). Furthermore, the descriptive analysis such as frequency and percentages were utilised to summarize data as a basic method to determine the disruption of variables. The qualitative data analysis first involved the preparation of a data that was then thematised or coded. The open coding was the method to transfer data into thematises with a descriptive label that converted data into small and discrete components (Younas, Inayat & Sundus, 2021). This is a common technique in a qualitative data analysis that involves content analysis, where selected text from a large population assist in diving such text into segments to find most frequency responses.

The quantitative data was used in a cross-sectional manner and was analysed using the services of mathematicians through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 28.0. The quantitative data was organised, verified, coded and analysed. In analysing and interpreting information into findings, the researcher was discussing both qualitative and quantitative results in concomitantly where quantitative findings were validated and elaborated by qualitative findings.

4.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered as follows during the study:

- Respondents were apprised with all the obligatory information related to the research and participation was voluntarily during data collection (*see Appendix E & F: Ethical clearance and Consent form*).
- The research avoided any interrogations and theme tune that might have scared and embarrassed respondents with a possibility to cause physical or emotional harm and or frighten respondents.
- The interviewers were well aware of research standpoint in protecting research integrity (de Voss et al., 2011).

Participants remain nameless; their identities will not be disclosed (kept secret from the public domain) and will remain unknown (Neumann, 2006). The researcher sought permission and

requested participants to sign a consent form (*see Appendix F: consent form*) before embarking on the interviews.

4.13 Key Lessons Learned

The research had many challenges, especially during data collection due to COVID-19 regulations and restrictions. The delayed response from the institutions like LED officials, DALRRD officials and some of the DARD agriculture Extension officials was allegedly created by the rotational workforce plan, COVID-19 related illnesses and quarantine, which had immense pressure on the researcher. The researcher had to make individual appointments to meet them, explain the academic research content, and request them to participate once again. Among other challenges was the researcher's relocation, citing new responsibilities in another district. New arrangements were made for data collection, which at a later stage had to be redone because of gaps in data capturing. The researcher had to redo the area that was captured poorly. However, the researcher was adamant and continued with the study.

Chapter 5 focuses on the data collection and discussion of the results of the study based on the questions asked. Formulating this chapter are the arguments on the findings of the study as compared with other previous findings from the literature.

CHAPTER 5

5. Data presentation and analysis

5.1 Introduction

As part of the quantitative data obtained, this chapter discusses the study area's demographics in terms of gender, age distribution, educational levels, and nationality including biographical information. The following section achieves the study's aims by simultaneously giving quantitative and qualitative data. The section then examines both quantitative and qualitative findings concerning the network governance theory used in this study. The final section of this chapter deduced numerous inferences based on the study's results. The aims and research questions defined in Chapter 1 are interconnected with each of the themes in this chapter.

5.2 Demographics

The demographics give a brief profile on gender representation, age distribution, education level, years of experience and the purpose of farming. Demographic trends have many definitions, but the most appealing defines them as a study of social effects that affect the life of a particular community or population (Delisante Morato, 2015). The study utilised human capital as referred to as age, education and gender of a particular group. Human capital is a contributor and determinant of technology adoption. The above arguments present critical features when smallholder farming networks are interrogated. Mainly the networks should be used to relate and distinguish between sophisticated and user-friendly technology for farmers.

5.2.1 Gender of respondents

Men and women have different characteristics and behaviours regarding the adoption of new technology or new norms. The gender characteristics and behaviours influence how men and women partake significantly and benefit from the activities such as actors' engagement, citing differentiated responsibility created by social dynamism (Iradukunda et al., 2019). The above statement warrants gender to be interrogated to bring awareness as it can contribute to the level of adoption.

Subsequently, the researcher needed to know the gender of respondents as this could influence the participation of individuals or groups in smallholder farming in the study area. Figure 12 below shows the gender classification.

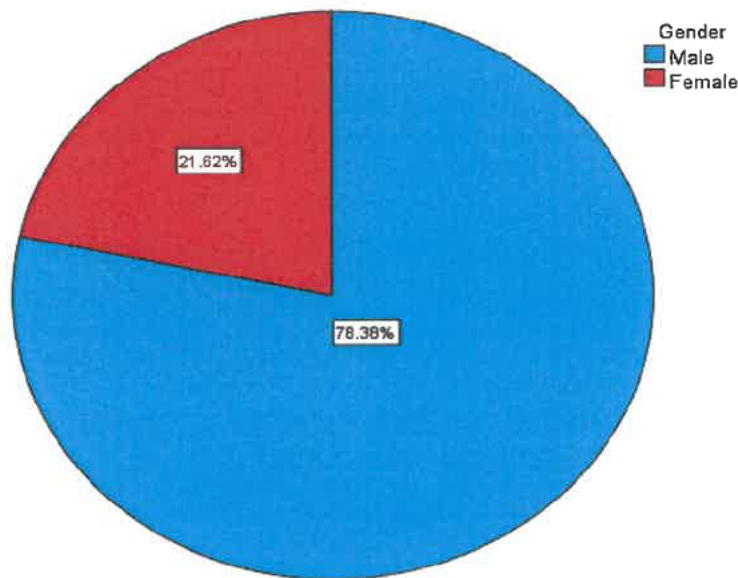


Figure 11: The classification of respondents according to gender

Figure 12 above shows that 78.4% of the respondents were males, and 21.6% were females. The statistics above indicate that males are more heavily involved in smallholder farming than females. Male dominance in smallholder farming was also reported in Ochube & Ndalazhi's (2021) study in rice farming at Makurdi Local Government of Benue State, where land ownership still culturally restricts women. Again, the results of this study are equally similar to Okonyi and Awolu (2020) that discovered male dominance in the Ekiti State in Nigeria maize production projects. The above rhetoric denounced the notion that communal farming activities are still setups by patriarchal views that motivate men to be the breadwinners on behalf of their families. However, findings by some scholars argue that women are contributing more than men in agricultural activities, albeit not fully recognised (Raj & Hall, 2020). Masca et al. (2022) echo the same revelation that females dominated smallholder potato producers in the Molo Sub-County of Kenya. Further to that, women constitute a large-scale workforce at 43% in African Agriculture, which contributes to household food security even though they are hampered by poor access to agricultural information and decision-making is still male-dominated (Fan & Rue, 2020; Sones et al., 2015).

Although this study reveals males as dominant in smallholder farming, the role of women cannot be overlooked as it is significant in farming (Swanson, 2008). Didanna (2021) discovered that women's contribution was more than men to a dairy management practice in Ethiopia though they have been heavily burdened by daily domestic routines of preparing food

for their families. Coincidentally, in some instances, women attend meetings on behalf of men that choose not to attend. In Iradukanda et al. (2019), network governance should give such women the opportunity to be transformed as they attend to the network platforms, which can bring about change in the norms and traditional practices.

5.2.2 Age of respondents

The researcher needed to know the age distribution of respondents as this could imply smallholder farming in HGDM. Consequently, the age distribution has been considered cautious as it can be influenced by other factors such as level of education (Garane, 2017). Figure 2 shows the age of the respondents.

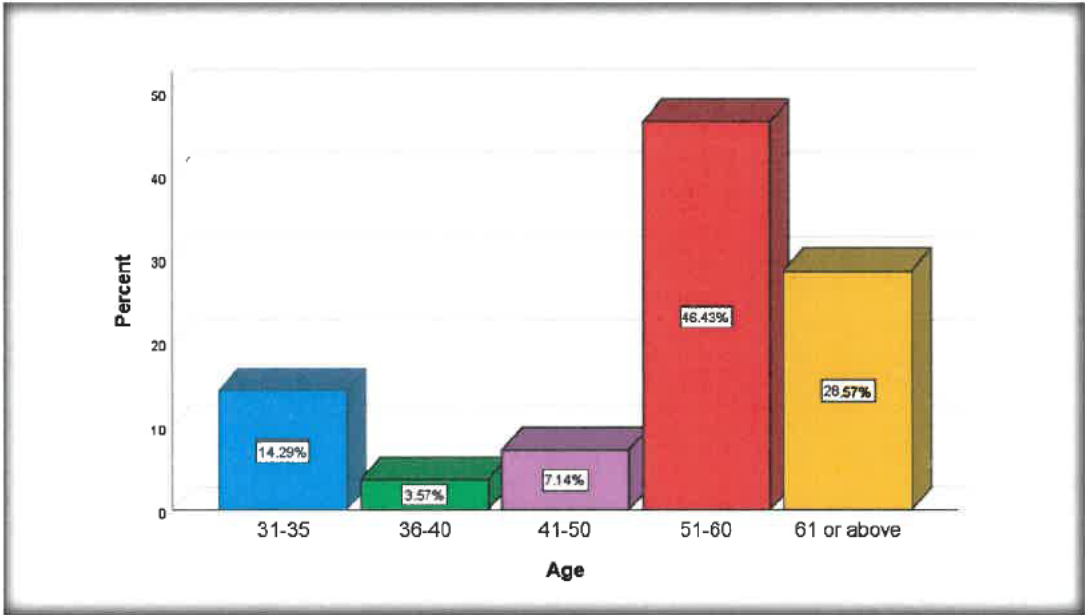


Figure 12: The classification of respondents according to age

Figure 13 above shows that 14.3% of the respondents were 31-35 Years of Age, 3.6% of them were within the 36-40 age range, 7.14% were within 41-50 years, 46,43% were within 51-60 years, and 28.6% were 61 and above. It is clear from this graph that older people within the 51-60 age range had the highest number of smallholder farmers in HGDM and probably the entire KZN Province. The perception created by the above statistics is that older people become active farmers at retirement age, and youth is engaged in other economic activities.

Expectedly, youth involvement in Agriculture has been lacking even though, over the years, they were always encouraged by governments to participate citing their low interest in this

sector (Sharma & Singh, 2021; Osabohien et al., 2021). Subsequently, Osabohien et al. (2021) hypothesised that countries like Nigeria have attempted to persuade youth interest in agriculture production and processing since the late 1980s. In contradiction, governments are renowned for their lack of support for the rural farming youth, perpetuating their low interest (Mthi et al., 2021). Mthi et al. (2021) further argues that youth involvement is paramount for sustainable agriculture. The current phenomenon suggests that youth are involved in the primary occupation, which contributes to poverty alleviation, then secondary occupation as it provides high income (Osabohien et al., 2021).

Further to the above statement, Masca et al. (2022) agree with Osabohien et al. (2021) that landless youth who can be given a reasonable land size could participate in agriculture, citing expected higher income when producing in a bigger space. The youth in Sub-Saharan African agriculture are increasingly forming functional Farmers' groups and networks to market their produce, access production inputs and other required services (Odero-Waitituh, 2021). Odero-Waitituh (2021) posits that more youth in agriculture could bring a more innovative and effective workforce that has the possibility of sustaining smallholder farming. Despite the above suggestions, the rural youth will continuously be dissuaded from agriculture, citing lack of well-coordinated institutional support.

5.2.3 Education of respondents

Education has been assumed by other scholars as having a positive effect on farmers' decision-making but primarily influences the level of adoption of new technology (Mwangi & Kariuki, 2015). Subsequently, the benefits of education are exclusively focused on enhancing the ability of an individual to face and be able to solve problems (Wolinsky & Stump, 1996). Presumably, level of education positively impacts the adoption of new technology as the attitude changes and the ability to analyse improves (Mwangi & Kariuki, 2015). Different scholars have contrary viewpoints that education has no significance in the farmers' decision-making and adoption level. The mixed evidence and reaction probed the researcher to interrogate the education level of respondents. Therefore, the respondents were asked about their level of education as a variable that can stimulate participation in smallholder farming. The responses are presented below.

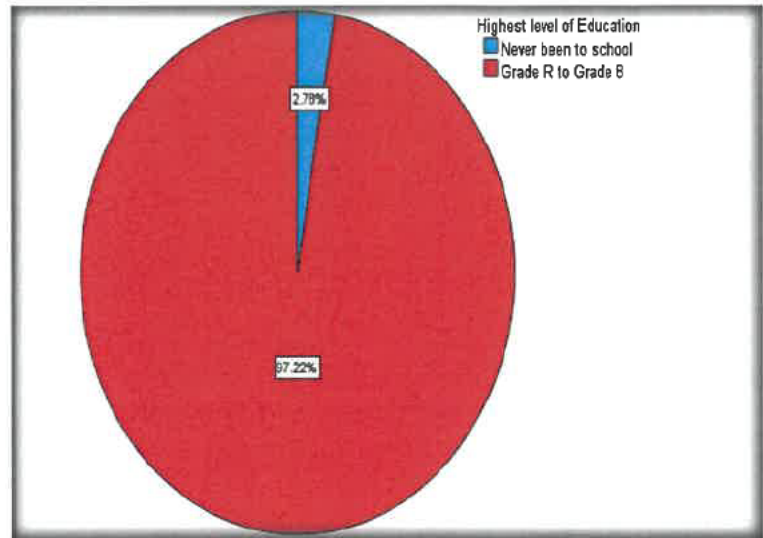
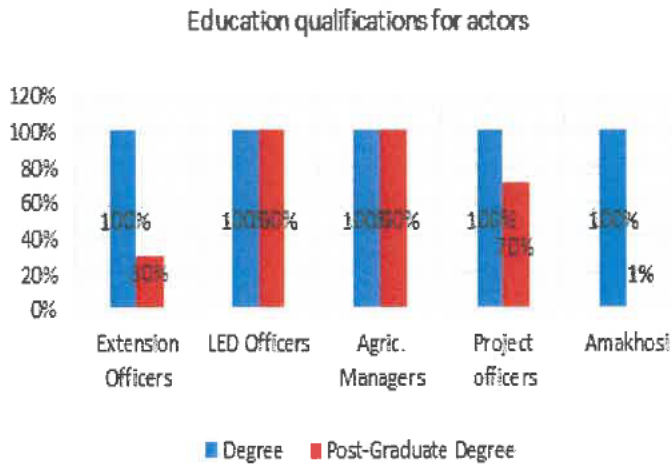


Figure 13: Education level of Actors (Officials A and Farmers B)

In Figures 14 A and B, overwhelmingly, actors (100 %) indicated that they have tertiary education, primarily post-graduate degrees. These discoveries are crucial as extension services help disseminate information about new technology to farmers (Fadeyi et al., 2022). The South African extension services serve as a link between farmers and the Department of Agriculture (Khephe et al., 2021). However, there is no synergy between farmers' education and that of actors, which presents an unprecedented uncertainty regarding how the information is transferred. Sporadically, with the educational level of farmers, actors need to incorporate the traditional farming systems and translate the foreign language that most new technologies advance. The advancement in technology from foreign countries needs to be securitised and converted through agriculture policies for the benefit of smallholder farmers (Mtshali & Akinola, 2021).

Figure 14B presents the education level of farmers, and the questions were segmented into Never been to school, Grades R to 8, Grades 9 to 11, Matriculated and Tertiary Qualification. Figure 14 above stipulates that 2.8% of the respondents had never been to school, and 97.2% had grades R to 8. Based on these results, one can argue that smallholder farming in rural areas does not have much education; hence many rural citizens engage in smallholder farming using their indigenous farming knowledge and expertise helped by extension officers without necessarily going to agricultural schools. The above findings agree with Masca et al. (2022) that most rural smallholder farmers have primary to secondary levels of education. Masca et al. (2022) further assume that highly educated people may have been in other non-agriculture jobs in urban areas.

5.2.4 Race of respondents

The practice of smallholder farming varies with race and area of existence. The ethnic groups and barriers to communal smallholder development are still evident. Not surprising, the circumstances were intensified by the colonial regime and a legacy created ethnic groups to divide and gain access to African natural resources (O'Brien & Meador, 2021). The racial divisions caused by the Natives land Act 27 of 1913 proliferated black communities to subsistence and smallholder farming in 13% of lands utilised for settlements, grazing and arable lands (Bolarinwa & Falode, 2021).

The respondents were asked about their race as the above narrative might have changed, citing, among other factors, the leasing of arable lands by other races in communal areas. The leasing of communal lands has been a phenomenon even in liberated post-colonial countries. Such cases were reported in Mali, where 100 000ha customarily owned and used for rice production were leased to Libya at no cost for 99 years (Wily, 2010). Similarly, South African communal lands have been alienated, where Amakhosi (Chiefs) negotiating with investors agree to transfer rights in the name of development (Delius & Beinatt, 2021). Their views are presented below:

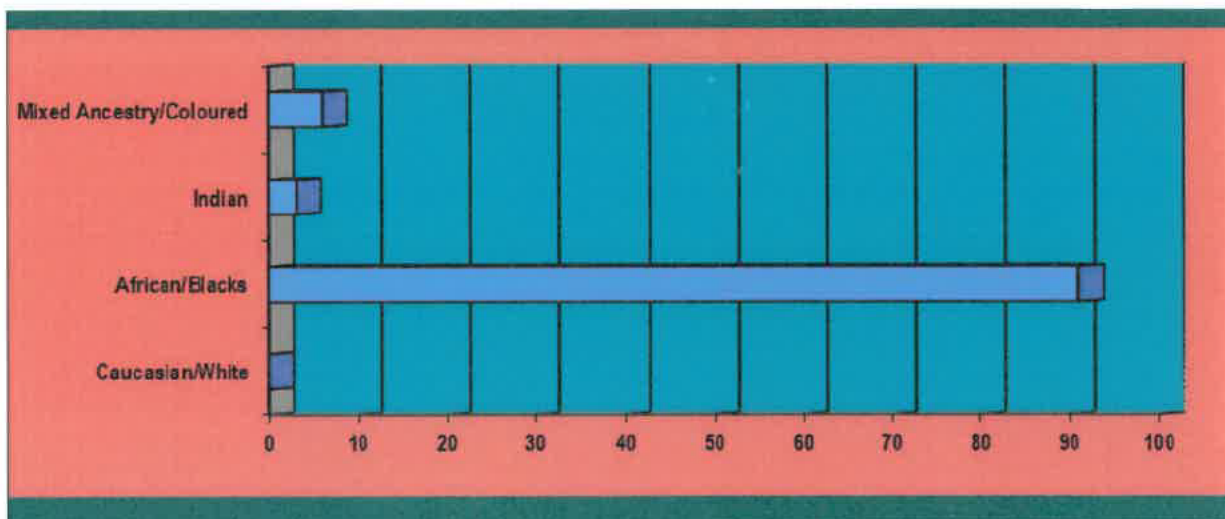


Figure 14: Classification of respondents according to their race

Figure 15 above shows that 90.9% of smallholder farmers were of an African/Black origin, 3.1% defined themselves as Indians, and 6% had mixed ancestry or coloured origin. The results above indicate that communal areas are still dominated by Black racial groups and mainly in smallholder farming. The above discoveries confirmed what the previous literature indicated that racial segregation caused by Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 and apartheid racial

laws that kept blacks in self-government homelands unofficially called Bantustans and created socio-economic inequality triggered by unequal land distribution among races (Bolarinwa & Falode, 2021). The minority of smallholder farmers that identified themselves as Indians (3.1%) and of coloured origin (6%) might exist because of leasing communal lands.

5.2.5 Work experience in smallholder farming

In many rural areas of the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, smallholder farming has long existed as people strive to sustain their livelihoods. The respondents were asked about the number of years they have worked in smallholder farming. The responses are presented below in figure 16.

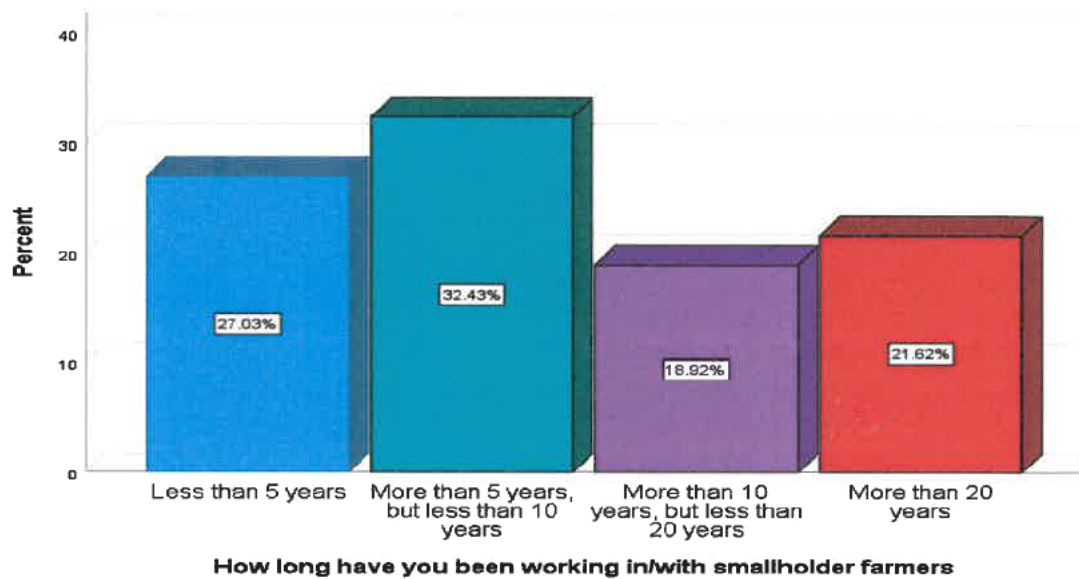


Figure 15: Classification of respondents according to their farming experiences

Figure 16 indicates that there were 27 % of the respondents had less than five years of working with smallholder farming; 32.4% had more than five years but less than ten years of working experience with smallholder farming; 18.9% of them had more than ten years but less than 20 years of working experience with smallholder farming, and 21.6% of the respondents had more than 20 years of working experience with smallholder farming. Interestingly, most smallholder farmers interviewed indicated that they practise mixed farming with a few in crop and animal production, respectively. Relatedly, Odero-Waitituh (2021) and Oloo et al (2021) stated that smallholder farming comprises crop and crop, livestock and livestock and crop and livestock farming systems. Chavula & Turyasingura (2022) argue that 80% of the rural population practise subsistence and smallholder farming under customary land tenure systems.

5.3 Actors and their role in smallholder farming

The liveliness of actors in the network can be viewed as a critical element in smallholder development. The pertinent question is, what are those actors involved in smallholder farming? Actors are viewed as public sector (government institutions), private sector (financial service providers, private extension services), semi-private sector and third sector (Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations) (Klijn & Koppenjan 2012). Mubangizi et al. (2013) argue that NGOs, the private sector, scientific networks, and international institutions are critical for the government to perform diverse functions toward fulfilling its constitutional mandate. Consciously and unconsciously, Mubangizi et al. (2013) further state that the engagement between these actors could promote knowledge sharing and decentralised problem solving, which displays effective network governance. Conversely, it is noteworthy to know that knowledge shared between actors should be pertinent and attainable through a holistic and pluralistic manner to inform policy and practice (Chinseu et al., 2022).

5.3.1 Actors' definition of smallholder farming

Generally, smallholder farming defines rural producers from developing countries that utilise family labour and receive income through farming (Odero-Waitituh, 2021). A considerable amount of literature has no consensus on what a smallholder definition as others should refer to as 'emerging', 'small-scale', 'peasant', and farmers interchangeably (Mtshali & Akinola, 2021). For this study, the accepted definition is that the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), formerly called DAFF, conceptualised it according to their annual income. Subsequently, the researcher needed to know the respondents' views regarding the definition of smallholder farming. This variable is the entry point in analysing how respondents understand the actor's role and responsibility in smallholder farming. Figure 17 below illustrates the responses.

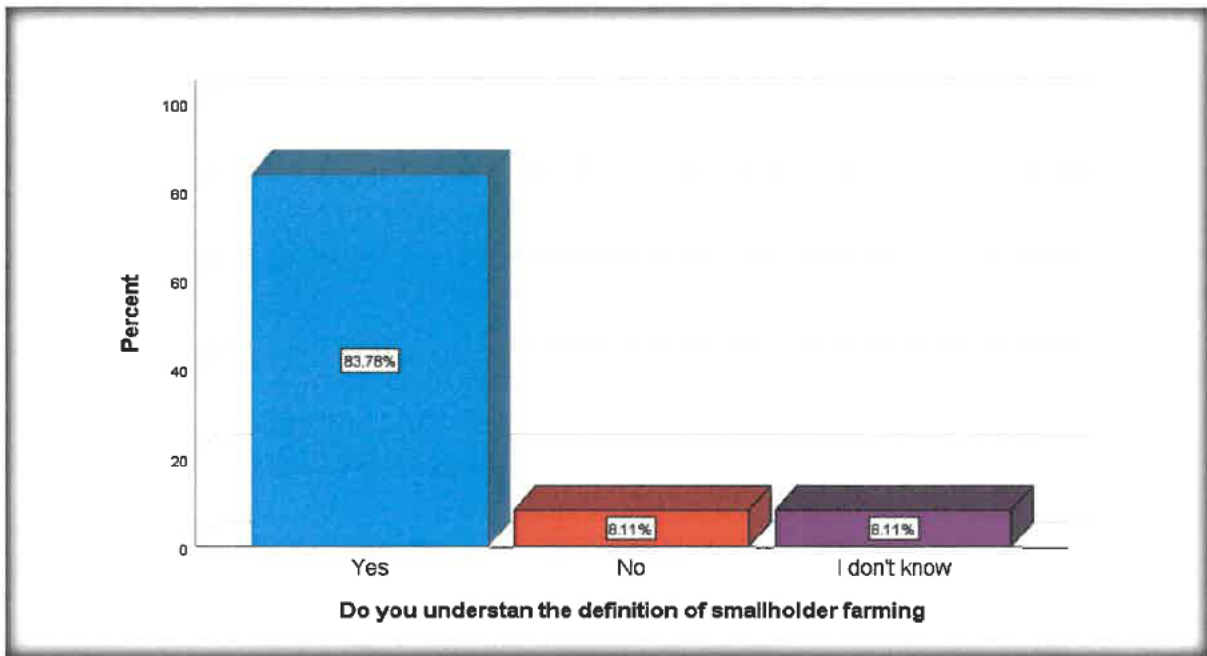


Figure 16: Respondents' understanding of the definition of smallholder farming

Figure 17 shows that 83.8% of the actors indicated that they understood the definition of smallholder farming; an overwhelming qualitative response from actors was:

“A producer making annual turnover between R50000 and R5000 000 (Extension officer, uMzimkhulu Local Municipality)”.

The above definition is what is acceptable for the study taken from the South African Comprehensive Producer Development Support: Draft 5 ver.2, which categorises smallholder farmers or producers with an annual turnover of more than 50 thousand Rand and less than five million rands. Most literature has a contrary definition that views smallholder farming homogeneously as a historical culture of small farm size, family labour, capital assets and access to market or market-oriented views (Mtshali & Akinola, 2021; Kamara et al., 2019). Only 8.1% of actors indicated that they do not know what smallholder farming is. The rest, 8.11%, said they are not sure their understanding of the smallholder definition is correct.

Contrary to the above quantitative findings, findings from interviews revealed that most farmers understood smallholder farming as those farmers producing crops and livestock for domestic consumption. Paradoxically, most farmers' responses from a further interrogation admittedly make an annual turnover of more than R 50 000, with less close to R 1000 000. Consequently, the heterogeneity in actors' and farmers' responses might be influenced by the fact that there is no shared vision and purpose of what smallholder farming needs to achieve.

Noted from the above discovery is that most smallholder farmers view themselves as solely focused on food security with less commercial orientation while income displays a different narrative.

5.3.2 Actors and their involvement in smallholder farming

Generally, actors in the network have roles, responsibilities and the purpose of being involved. Successful networks are built on various actors in the systems established to coordinate various functions. Active institutional actors have a possibility of improving performance in smallholder farming (Mwadzingeni et al., 2020). In light of the above-stated argument, actors in the network are expected to bring about positive effects by adequately citing inter-organisational structures and with similarities in their views. Subsequently, the collaborative approach should be a tool that actors use to bring together fragmented knowledge into achievable mutual goals (Mwadzingeni et al., 2020).

5.3.2.1 Active actors in the network

Although network governance can be lauded for providing solutions in a fragmented institutional arrangement, the system is not self-propelling as it is influenced by how platforms are coordinated. The entry point is the actor's analysis that refines and selects those that should participate in the value chain of smallholder farming (dejanvry et al., 2019; Adekunle et al., 2016). However, different scholars view detecting actors as predominately challenging in developing countries (Chinseu et al., 2022).

Consequently, there is a need for leading actors that will schematise other actors towards a specific strategic direction and clear goals. In the absence of a leading actor, network governance remains a theory than a practical undertaking. The inability to mobilise networks and foster relevant linkages between diverse actors towards a mutual goal is evident in developing countries (Kilelu et al., 2011). Therefore, the above statement propels a researcher to question respondents on their views regarding the active actors involved in the network. Table 3 below shows the views of various participants.

Table 3: Active stakeholders in the network

ACTIVE ACTORS IN THE NETWORK	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Department of Agriculture	13	50
Private Sector funders	2	7.7
Local Municipality	5	19.23
Farmers Organisation	2	7.7
Others	3	11.57
Do not know	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 3 shows that 50% of the actors indicated that the Department of Agriculture is the leading actor. The above responses might be aided by the fact that the Department of Agriculture has been close to the communities through agricultural extension services since around 1925 in South Africa (Khwidzhili & Worth, 2019). At 7.7%, actors indicated private sector funders in smallholder farming in the area. The above reveals that private banks are less involved in smallholder farming. Generally, financing smallholder farming has been problematic due to the land permits that offer no security for private banks to release credits (Shone & Scoones, 2022). These discoveries confirm Badiane et al.'s (2016) statement that the private sector is remarkably absent in African agriculture development programmes. The above proclamations contradict Raidimi and Kabit's (2017) statement that private sector expenditure in agriculture research has increased over the years, citing a need to sustain its presence through collaborative systems.

Promisingly, the Local Municipality (Local Economic Development: LED) at 19.23% has been indicated as another smallholding actor. However, the LED directory at the municipality is supposed to be among the leading actors citing scholars that label LED as central to the success of land reform programs for effective poverty alleviation (Khan, 2021). Furthermore, 7.7% of the respondents indicated that the Farmers' Organisations are involved in smallholder farming.

Worryingly, farmers should be the advocators of their development through institutionalised structures. 11.6% of actors indicated that other actors were unidentified. However, the qualitative responses by farmers cited the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) as another actor in the system.

Responses from interviews and FGDs indicated and confirmed that the Department of Agriculture is the leading actor in smallholding farming in their area. SEDA was also identified as another actor involved, which was not identified by the quantitative responses from actors. One of the participants stated that:

“Yes, the Department of Agriculture and SEDA provide influential support in our smallholder farming activities (FDG). The Department of Agriculture assists with production inputs, while SEDA offers training to smallholder farmers (FDG)”.

5.3.2.2 Most muscular actor in the network

The viability of networks is influenced by each actor's contribution to the system. The researcher probed the respondents to recognize the most substantial actor in their network. The responses are given below in Table 4.

Table 4: Strongest Actor in the network

STRONGEST ACTOR IN THE NETWORK	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Department of Agriculture	16	61.5
NGO's	3	11.5
Local Municipality	3	11.5
Private sector	1	3.9
Others	2	7.7
Total	25	96.1
System missing	1	3.9
Total	26	100.0

Table 4 shows that 61.5% of the respondents indicated that the Department of Agriculture was considered as the most substantial actor in the network. Consequently, 11.5% of the respondents indicated that NGOs and Local municipalities were considered the most substantial actor in the network; 3.9% of the respondents noted that the private sector was regarded as the most muscular actor in the network, and 7.7% of the respondents indicated that other departments were also considered the most muscular actor in the network.

One of the participants believed that the Department of Agriculture is the most muscular actor in the network simply because of its pivotal role in safeguarding the interests of the smallholder farmers in the HGDM. One of the participants was quoted saying:

“In my view, the Department of Agriculture surpasses all other departments as it stands with us. We always see the agricultural extension officers advising us on issues related to smallholder farming”.

This assertion bears a critical message that many smallholder farmers are well acquainted with the Department of Agriculture as it provides much-needed support to smallholder farmers. The role of public extension services has been identified as significant. However, they have not yet excelled in promoting network governance as it is reported as none existent in the area of study. The statement above mirrors Mwadzingeni et al. (2020) and Perret et al, 2003) view that extension services fail to give farmers information on economic and management factors to connect them to the relevant institutions. Still elaborating on the similar issues, the participants expressed that:

“The local municipality can play a critical role in linking the actors to each other, and calls are on political leadership involved in our affairs to have a will. In this manner, the municipality is considered to be very important”.

The divergent view, in this case, is not something new as some smallholder farmers believe that the political will should also be included as a factor that hinders smallholder farming activities and development. Drawing a comparison from the above responses, one can note that smallholder farmers value each actor regardless of their contribution and role in smallholder farming.

5.3.2.3 Collaborated role of actors in the smallholder farming network

The basic framework to classify characters of institutional structure is by knowing the number of actors involved in the system and how are they collaborating in decision-making. Arguably, problem recognition needs a holistic approach, where social partners define and contextualise a problem to categorize the type of government intervention. Diverse actors, therefore, can be viewed as the bases of adopting the policy with clear objectives, outputs and outcomes that translate into long-term state priorities in smallholder farming. The researcher posed a question to understand whether smallholder farmers received any collaborated support from actors or not. Figure 18 below shows the responses.

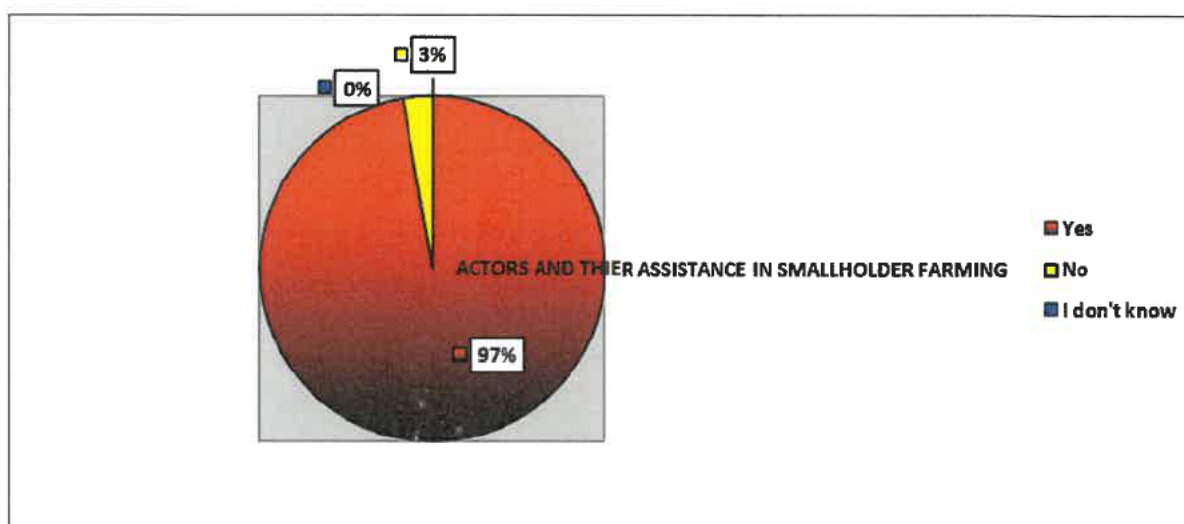


Figure 17: Illustration of actors' involvement and role in smallholder farming

Figure 18 shows that 97.2 % of the respondents indicated yes, meaning they render services in smallholder farming, and only 2.8% did not receive any support in smallholder farming, which has been identified as production inputs, mechanization and infrastructure. In analysing the above revelation further, the researcher needed to know whether respondents understood the actor's role in smallholder farming in the HGDM.

- *The support services rendered by actors in smallholder farming*

According to Mtshali & Akinola (2021), the development of smallholder farmers can be achieved through support provided by diverse actors in the area of capacity building, mentorship, infrastructure development, provision of production inputs and mechanisation, and

promotion of extension services. Therefore, respondents were asked to share their views regarding the type of service that they render as multiple institutions within the network. The responses vary as actors have different perceptions and experiences in smallholder farming, as illustrated in Table 5 below. The further interrogation of services rendered by actors was encouraged by the fact that smallholder farmers response was limited to agricultural services and mentorship as illustrated in table 5 below.

Table 5: The support services rendered by actors in smallholder farming

SERVICES RENDERED BY ACTORS IN SMALLHOLDER FARMING	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Agricultural advisory	15	57.7
Mentorship	7	27.0
Do not know	4	15.3
TOTAL	26	100.0

Table 5 illustrates that 57.7% of actors indicated that their role in smallholder farming in the area is agricultural advisory, and 27.0% of them noted that their role in smallholder farming in the area was mentorship, with 15.3% not clear about their roles. The above discoveries suggest that the area is dominated by actors providing extension services to the farmers. Agriculture extension services are undoubtedly critical in equipping farmers with knowledge of best practices and creating self-reliance. Therefore, the pertinent question is how smallholders are always labelled as unable to effectively contribute to food security, employment creation and poverty alleviation with no adoption of new technology (Fadeyi et al., 2022).

Arguably, the level of education might hinder the agriculture extension service's effort to capacitate farmers. In another vein, the high cost of reaching a majority of subsistence and smallholder farmer for "training and visits" on a limited budget and insufficient political support hinders the adequate provision of extension services, mainly in the developing countries (Feder, Willet & Zipp, 1999 as cited by Chaudhuit & Kendall,2021). Mwangi and Kariuki (2015) argue that the above dichotomous views that there are many determinants of technology adoption can be influenced by how the technology is presented, which

distinguishing features are used and how sophisticated or user-friendly the technology is to the farmer.

- ***Specification services rendered by actors in smallholder farming***

Diverse actors can have specific roles and can bring advanced technologies in smallholder farmers development. However, Mwangi and Kariuki (2015) state that farmers can choose to adopt the technology by assessing the benefit that suits their needs. It goes without saying that technology has evolved drastically, which benefits farmers. Sharma and Singh's (2021) study in Dhamntari revealed that most farmers used ICT to get agriculture-related information and support. One would wonder if such technology advancement can be observed in the study area. However, it is not for this study to interrogate such interests. Based on the above arguments, the researcher opted to interrogate the specific roles actors have in smallholder farming. The respondents were allowed to select more than two variables; hence institutions can offer different services to the farmer. Table 6 below reflects the responses.

Table 6: Specification of roles in smallholder farming

SPECIFIC ROLES	FREQUENCY	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PERCENT	TOTAL PERCENT
Social mobilisation	12	26	46.1	100
Institutional development	5	26	19.2	100
Coordination and networking	3	26	11.5	100
Information and dissemination to farmers	11	26	42.3	100
Facilitating the interaction in the platforms	3	26	11.5	100
Funding of smallholder farmers	3	26	11.5	100

The illustration in Table 6 shows that 46.1% of the actors indicated that they understand the role of social mobilisation. The above discovery poses a question on the effectiveness of actors in executing their task, citing Kilelu et al. (2011) statement that countries like South Africa have been unable to mobilise networks between various actors. At 19.2%, some actors viewed their role as that of institutional development. Further, 11.5% of actors noted that their part is

that of coordination and networking, of which 42.3% indicated that they disseminate information to farmers; 11.5% of respondents indicated that they know their role as that of facilitating the interaction on the platforms and funding of smallholder farmers respectively. Table 6 above confirms the previous stance that most actors provide extension services, with only 11.5% responding as funding smallholder farming.

Qualitative findings support the quantitative findings that most smallholder farmers in the study areas receive services from actors such as the government. One of the participants stated that:

“Yes, the government provides us with financial assistance to buy fertiliser and other smallholder farming inputs”.

Supporting the same sentiments, one participant from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD 1) confirms that:

“Smallholder farming cannot succeed without government support since we are poor and do not have money to buy farming equipment and inputs. We rely on the government”.

These assertions confirm the level of support rendered to smallholder farmers by the government through the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The above narrative explains that smallholder farming in communal areas depends on the state that supports them with production inputs and mechanisation. Considering such poor support, the group will remain occupying the largest portion of the communal populace in the developing world (Verger et al., 2021). These results further display a lack of collaborative support citing actors not clearly active to ensure that farmers are holistically assisted to successfully address triple challenges of food insecurity, poverty and unemployment. Simultaneously, the study reveals that the extension services, labelled critical, have not yet effectively promoted network governance, citing unrestored socialised rural agriculture displayed by the study results.

The qualitative finding presents DARD's unwavering support to smallholder farmers as indicated in one of the Focus Group Discussion (FDG) response that:

“DARD supports farmers with production inputs (Female, FDG)”

There are also various actors in the study area that play a pivotal role in smallholder farming. The response from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) shows that Local Economic Development has a role in smallholder farming in the area. One particular response from the respondent farmer indicated that:

“LED Officers’ most important role is to organise training and irrigation infrastructure”.

The above responses indicate that DARD and LED officers play a critical role as network players in advancing smallholder farming in the study area. However, it is still unclear whether their support for farmers is collaborative. Significantly, the network concept as a framework seeks to analyse the presence and absence of relationships, trust and engagement and institutions (Jovita et al., 2018). Subsequently, it becomes fundamental to note from the response that smallholder farming requires practical support from various actors with inputs and equipment, access to infrastructure and farmer capacity building to succeed.

Apart from the various responses listed above, qualitative findings have also shown that all actors play different roles, which one particular participant reported to be:

“Capacity building and promoting sustainable production of agricultural products”.

Commenting on similar issues, one of the participants responded to an open-ended question posed to actors expressed his roles by stating that:

“We advise farmers on the weather issues and the type of crops to plant in which season. Our advice helps reduce risks that farmers may not perceive”.

The above-stated response from both farmers and actors declares that farmers are capacitated as they also receive information on the weather patterns and how this may affect their planting or harvesting season. The above statement echoes Spielman et al. (2008) in that actors' interactions in smallholder farming are capacitated on production knowledge and information, production inputs and raw material, credit and financial matters, and market and price information. Such information is fundamental to network governance, as farmers may know how to avoid certain disasters through adequate information dissemination. Network theory, according to Klijn and Koppenjan (2019), suggests a new relationship arrangement between actors as providers of knowledge through interaction on societal matters, inclusive of farmer

support and development. Therefore, if practised correctly, Network Governance supports actors' engagement and encourages coordination and sharing of vital information towards achieving a common goal. Mwadzingeni et al. (2020) echoes the sentiments that collaborations between diverse actors can be a tool that brings together fragmented knowledge and develops it into common achievable goals.

- ***Traditional leader with specific services rendered in smallholder farming***

The traditional leaders (Amakhosi) as the custodian of the traditional rules that communal area has been subjected to over the years, for example, can have a way of contributing to the formulation of guidelines for sustainable network platform that will direct actors towards an effective engagement for smallholder development. Subsequently, the role of Amakhosi and CBOs is still vague. Contrarily, the study by Ricker-Gilbert (2020) and Eidt et al. (2020) reveals that other developing countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria and Kenya have a decentralised system that accommodates Amakhosi (Chiefs) to identify beneficiaries of production inputs. It can be noted from the two assertions that although smallholder farming is common in rural areas, its dynamics are affected by the nature of rules or the lack of rules that govern network as actors need to be directed to make the relations work.

Confusingly, the same Amakhosi are labelled with some unscrupulous behaviour of having unfair dealings as they distinguish potential farmers groups or individuals, as revealed in a study done in Yatta Sub-County (Eidt, Pant & Hickey, 2020). The above revelations have proliferated the lack of institutional framework and policies that guides the process of assisting smallholder farmers within the system. Therefore, the call is for the government to formulate policies and regulations that respond to the challenges raised in the arguments above. For the realisation of inclusive economic growth free from manipulation, the government has to play an oversight role in how actors are managed in the network platform. Most significantly, government should invest on designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating policies together with communities (OECD, 2016).

5.4 Institutions and organizational features hinder or promote smallholder farming

Arguably, the institutional feature is formal and informal structured processes that seek to fulfil a specific goal through interactions guided by the norms and behaviours (Bachev, 2018). As argued in the literature review, actors' behaviour gets tested by the power the institution has in terms of resources, which influences decision-making in the network. The institutional features

are regarded as institutional utilitarian values, responsibility, culture and beliefs as demystified as the conduct of actors in the system; collective action of actors involved; and regulations compulsory to control the behaviours of actors. Therefore, the relationship between institutions in the system becomes very crucial as it is built on trust and mutual understanding. The statement above echoes Jovita et al. (2018) in defining the networking concept as a framework that analyses the presence and absence of relationships, trust, and engagement among actors. Noteworthy, the institutional feature determines the complexity of the network (Shaffer, 2020).

5.4.1 The level of relationship among actors in the smallholder farming

It becomes relevant to management relationships as built on mutual trust and understanding. The above arguments propel a researcher to investigate the level of network behaviours in terms of shared vision or self-governance, a leading organisation and network management, which will define the institutional features through understanding the relationship and how strong or weak, such relationships are in smallholder farming. Aided by what the study reveals, the research will then conclude the institutional arrangement of the study area and come up with a recommendation. Figure 19a and 19b below illustrates the responses.

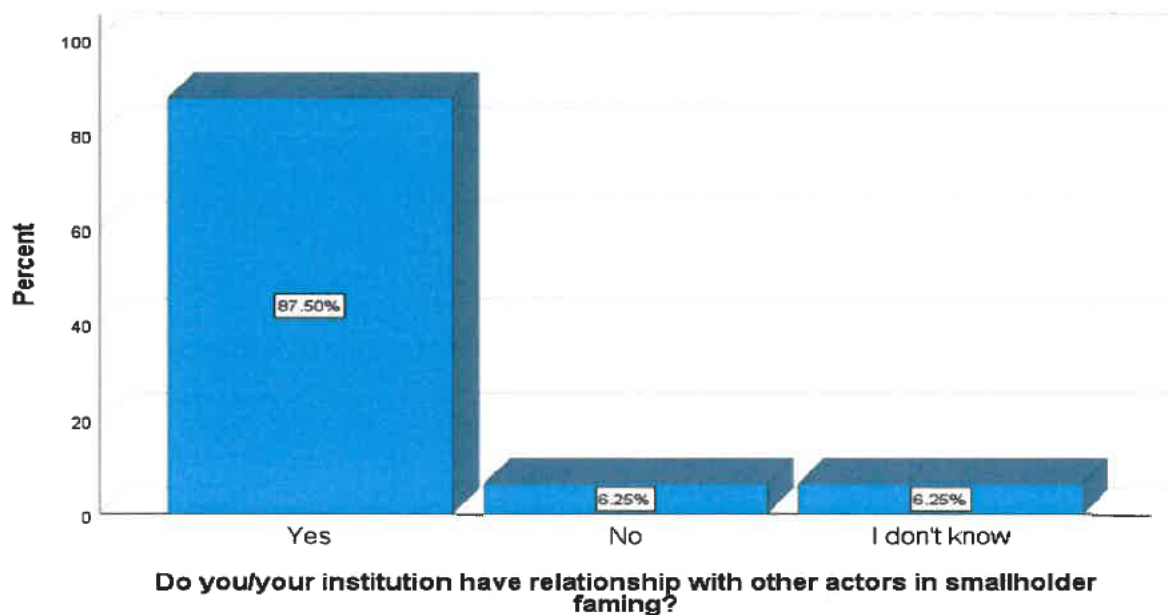


Figure 18a: Institutions and relationships with other actors in smallholder farming

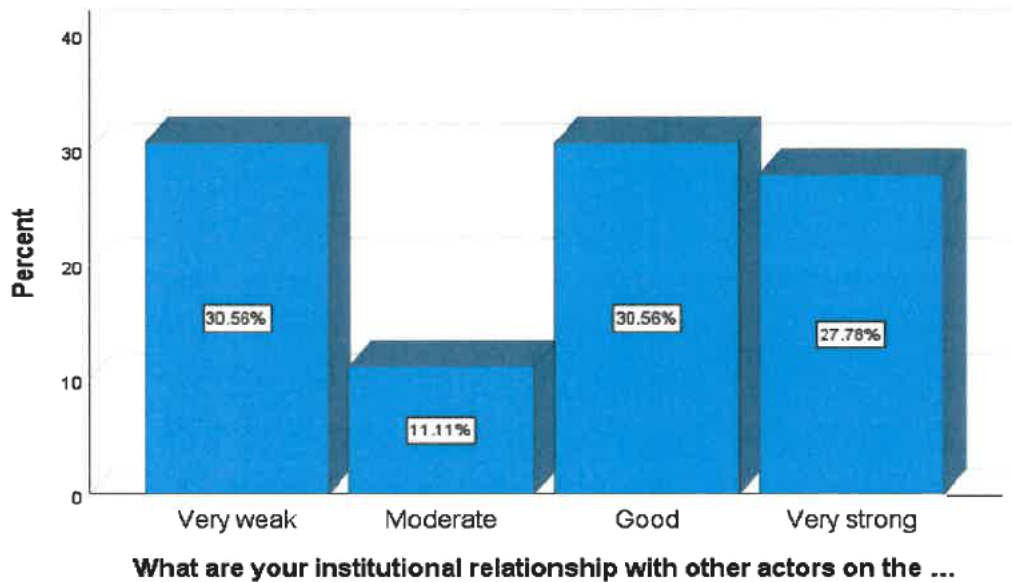


Figure 19b: Institutional relationships actors have in smallholder farming

Figure 19a shows that 87.5% of actors indicated that their institutions have a significant relationship with other actors in smallholder farming. The above reveals a system with a foundation of trust and mutual understanding between external actors in smallholder farming. According to Sako et al. (2021), the relationship between actors defines the level of collaborated institutional support for farmers. Paradoxically, a previous study by Khephe et al. (2021) revealed that agriculture institutions fail to provide adequate support to farmers because of the different working environments within the public sector. The above finding is supported by 6.3% of the actors who indicated that their institutions do not have a relationship with other actors in smallholder farming. Some of the dissimilarities were further confirmed by the 6.3% of actors who did not know if any relationship exists between actors in the network.

Qualitative findings from farmers' interviews and FGDs indicate that actors in the study area do not often converge to discuss issues of common interest with specific reference to smallholder farming. One participant confirmed the above argument among many related responses from the FGD who stated that:

“Yes, actors (DARD, LED and Farmers Organisations) are not working together, and the relationship is good but we are not always involved in every activity related to smallholder farming”.

One of the observations drawn from the above findings is that actors in smallholder farming have little moments of interaction on the network to discuss issues affecting farming livelihoods. Noteworthy to the discussion above, farmers are not always involved in advocating their developmental needs. The above narrative displays poor institutional utilitarian values in the network where not all actors meet to find solutions to their problems. The results further define a strong culture where resourced actors grouped themselves against the farmers as weak actors in the network. Albeit actors confirmed as working together, the reality is that the involvement of LED officers, Private sector funders, farmers’ organisation, third sector and SEDA (identified as other actors) is minimum to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The above revelation gives the impression that farmers in the study area are isolated and there are poor institutional relationships and networking. Noticeably, NGOs in countries like Malawi have frontline extension officials, albeit mimicking the public extension services setup and are renowned for side lining the same government extension services, which eroded the collaborative spirit (Chinseu et al., 2022). Most importantly, the actors mentioned should be central to the success of smallholder farming as their diverse roles remain essential. Furthermore, the public sector should lead and foster partnerships among the actors involved (Khephe et al., 2021).

The researcher interrogates the status of actors' relationships further by quantifying the way respondents view the level of institutional relationships in the system. Figure 19b above shows the various responses as 30.6% of the respondent actors indicated that the institutional relationships with other actors in the smallholder farming is fragile, the while majority of actors (58.34%) viewed it as good (30.56%) and very strong (27.78%). Subsequently, the qualitative findings indicate that actors' relationship in smallholder farming is not strong. The above revelations can be due to poor regulations that have an effect on the facilitation and coordination in the network as farmers; for instance, indicate that actors do not communicate on issues of common interest in the same area. The disjointed services have caused smallholder farmers not to fulfil their identified potential of contributing to economic growth (Jama, 2020; Okorie, Bitrus & Ugwu, 2021), and display a poorly coordinated effort by actors in the system.

As indicated in the theoretical framework in previous chapters, van Dijk et al. (2019) identifies facilitation as a critical instrument in the network, citing diverse actors that need guidance. However, without institutional values, culture and mutual accountability, there can be no effective coordination and facilitation. Undoubtedly, the Extension and Advisory Services as cited close to the farmers is not assisting in linking external actors to the farmers. Contrary to the study done in the Southern region of Tanzania, public extension services were utilised by other actors to disseminate and reach farmers at the ward level (Lukurungu et al., 2021).

5.4.2 Network platforms in the development of smallholder farming

The network platform (as others refer to it as the Innovation Platform or Multi-Actors Platform) has been utilised as a space for information sharing by actors involved in a commodity value chain (Akpo et al., 2022). The above statement defines the system's complexity as institutions become interconnected in the network (Fadeyi et al., 2022). However, the Multi-Actors Platform cannot be divorced from the entire system; hence they are like pieces in a puzzle that connect things to a perfect match (Makini et al., 2014). The system requires rules and regulations, utilitarian values and a culture that seek to promote mutual accountability. Subsequently, a researcher wanted to know what rules and regulations guide actors for a justified engagement in the development of smallholder farming development in the study area. The initial point was to find the existence of network platforms where actors share information in solving problems presented, which cannot be achieved without norms and standards. Figure 20 below shows the responses.

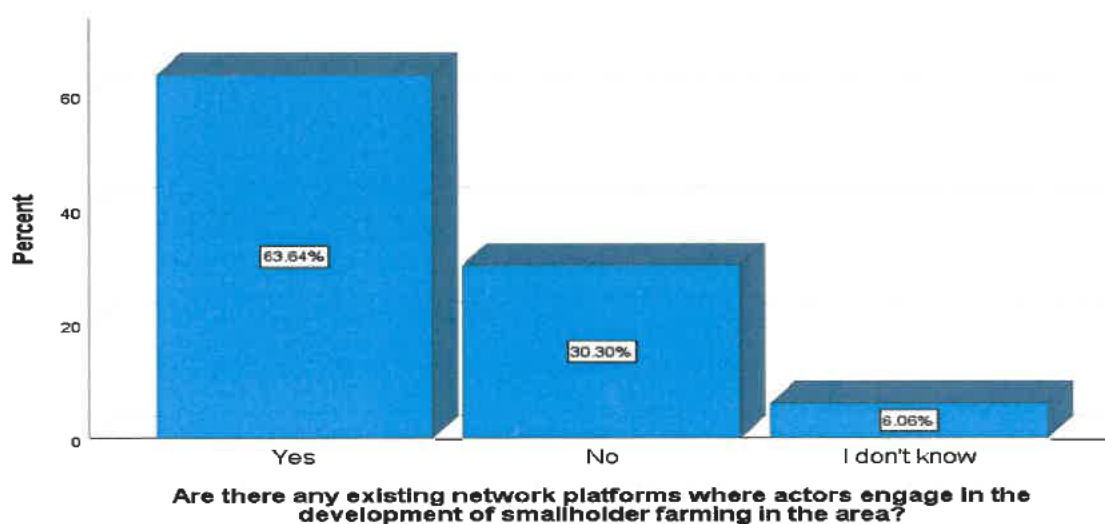


Figure 20: Existing network platforms in the development of smallholder farming

Figure 20 shows that 63.6% of the actors indicated that they have existing network platforms where actors interact in the development of smallholder farming in the area. However, 30.3% of the actors disputed that they have no existing network platforms where actors engage in the development of smallholder farming in the area, and 6.1 % of the actors indicated that they do not know whether there are any existing network platforms in the area. The most contradicting factor is that farmers were disputing the existence of network platforms.

Subsequently, the findings from the interview with farmers and FGDs point to the absence of networking forums or platforms with relevant institutions to share ideas and information regarding new markets. The above reveals contrary circumstances to the Mingou et al. (2021) study that network platforms (also referred to as multi-actor's platform interchangeable) bring together different actors who engage in challenging matters related to smallholder farming and come up with a solution. Platforms enable actors such as researchers, public institutions, farmers, and otherwise to have good collaborative relationships (Sako et al., 2021). The absence of the farmers shows a missing piece that makes the puzzle incomplete. Ambiguously, actors (Project officer and Extension officer) confirmed the absence of farmers and stated that:

“We assist each other as actors in developing smallholder farming by providing different services working together”.

“Yes, we have two partners such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Local Economic Development, uMzimkhulu Local Municipality (DLRRD, Official)”.

This assertion verifies earlier findings where farmers expressed concern about not being considered in the network and a confirmation of weak relations. The phenomenon demonstrates that besides smallholder farmers' isolation, there is an eccentricity in the actors' approach towards smallholder farming. Government and other institutions such as domestic agribusiness and civil society need to understand that they have a critical role in promoting inclusive development (Badiane & Collins, 2020). From the analysis of all participants' responses, it is clear from these findings that a gap exists in terms of network management as effectively guided by the collective formulation of rules and regulations controlling individual actors' character; hence facilitation is key to enable farmers to interact and share all the relevant information guided by rules. Furthermore, the government restricted services created by the

bureaucratic processes are similar to NGOs and the private sector (Bidogeza et al. 2020), which accordingly, warrant to be changed through policy review or formulation of the new policy to accommodate a sharing of resources and expertise in the development of smallholder farming.

5.4.3 Levels of network platforms in the development of smallholder farming

The existence of networks in smallholder farming has distinct levels. Subsequently, the researcher further probed the respondents to reveal the level of networking platforms existing for communal smallholder farming. Figure 21 below shows the various levels.

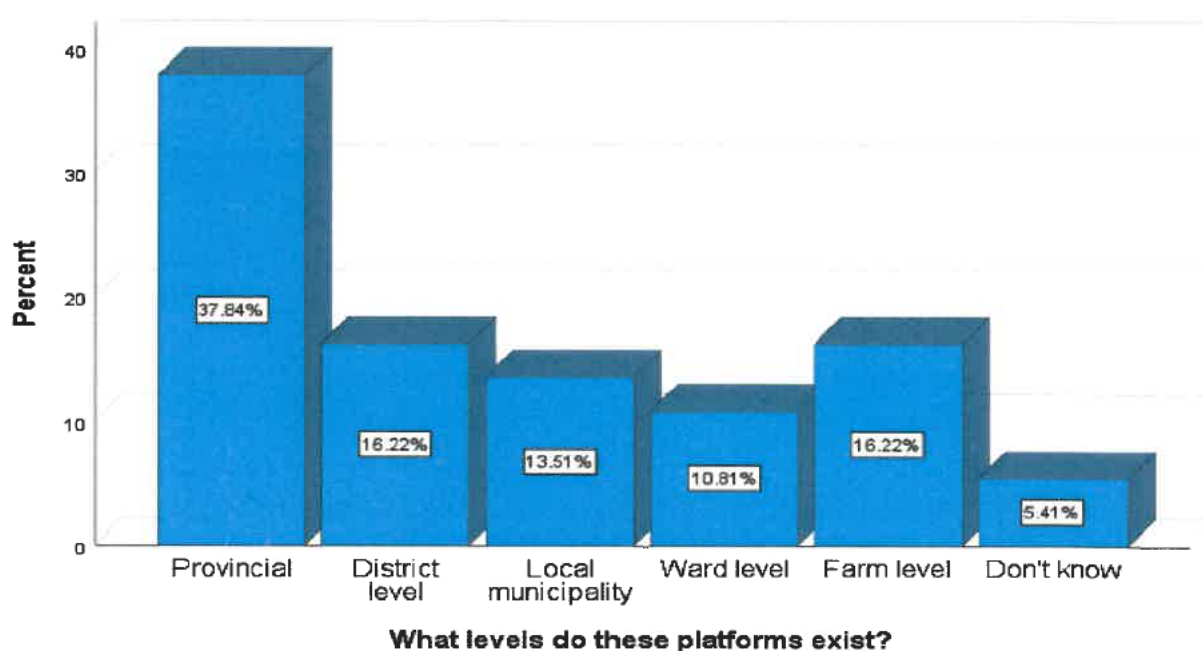


Figure 21: Levels of government spheres where platforms exist

Figure 21 shows that 37.8% of the actors indicated that networking platforms exist at a provincial level. Actors at 16.2% indicated the existence of the district and farmer level platforms, respectively, whilst 13.5% of the actors indicated that local municipality levels of those platforms exist. Expectedly, the actors (10.8%) indicated that platforms exist at ward levels, and 5.4% of the respondents indicated they do not know any level of those platforms. This seems to be a fundamentally top-down approach where policymakers and strategists make decisions without smallholder farmers in communal areas. Without any ambiguity, it is clear that the institutional feature suggests no rules and regulations guiding the system and network

governance at a local level is far from being practised in the study area, citing poor guidelines and values of collaboration.

The findings from farmers' interviews and FDGs reveal that farmers are not engaged in all other various platforms but are individually invited to farms. Further to that, the above findings confirm farmers' expression that there is absence of platforms, with a minority of participants expressing a presence of platforms. Contrarily, a study done in the southern region of Tanzania, the Tari Naliendele, revealed the involvement of all interested private sector, traders, and financial institutions, not excluding smallholder farmers, where institutional actors were financed to attend meetings (Lukurugu et al., 2021). The institutional feature suggests a non-existence of policy or laws guiding the interaction at a ward, local and district municipality level. Further interrogation revealed that farmers elaborated that the purpose of such platforms should be to understand the experiences of smallholder farmers and find standard procedures that will assist in problem solving to improve agriculture in the region. The above elaboration expresses what Sako et al. (2021) suggests as the purpose of the network platform in a regulated TL III project in Mali, which enabled various actors to effectively collaborate among themselves, helping women to access land for all agriculture activities.

Subsequently, the pertinent question is how actors can effectively promote smallholder farmers excluding farmers as the main actors in communal development. The lack of platforms displays a lack of rules and regulations guiding actors as there is no network, which is detrimental to the improvement of network governance. In the absence of rules, most resourced actors can be exploited due to inadequate experienced actors and in the process being unable to deal with the complexity attached to the platform's existence. Contrary to Mingou et al. (2021), platforms were monitored and actors such as farmers, traders, processors, financial institutions, researchers, extension agencies, and NGOs were partaking in meetings and decision-making under certain rules. Subsequently, these results call for the empowerment of key network actors such as LED officers in the local municipalities, Extension Officers, Project Officers, traditional leadership and farmers organisations in facilitation, which is central to a holistic formulation of rules of the platform for smallholder farming development in the study area.

5.4.4 Interacting and patterns of interaction in smallholder farming

The key ingredients in the institutional feature are actors' interaction and patterns that creates mutual interest. Mutual interest develops into responsibility and mutual accountability, which is the process of actors accounting for each other (Badiane & Collins, 2020). The actors'

interaction at the local level encourages the learning process with the platform (Gonzalez-Porras et al., 2021). As stated in the previous session, actors' engagement is measured, among other things, by the issues of discussion, which are the identified problems for possible solutions. Subsequently, a question was posed to the respondents to evaluate the purpose of interaction with other actors in the study area. The varied responses are presented below.

Table 7: Areas of interaction in smallholder farming in the area of study

AREAS OF INTERACTING WITH SMALLHOLDING	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
New varieties of seeds	9	34.6
New technology information on farming	12	46.2
Support in disaster and economic stress	2	7.7
Improve finance and general management	2	7.7
Others	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 7 shows that 34.6% of the actors indicated that their interaction in smallholder farming in the study area is with regard to new varieties of seeds, with 46.2% of the actors indicating that their interaction is with new agriculture technology information. As none of the rules and regulations mentioned as a topic of discussion, as confirmed by the previous discoveries, it can be assumed that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, through its extension services, is not assisting in regulating small existing platforms. The confirmation received for the study is that actors (7.7%) are interacting on support to be rendered in disaster and economic stress. Of particular interest to the discussion is that 7.7% of the actors indicated that their interaction in smallholder farming is on improved finance and general management but there were no clear guidelines on how actors jointly provide financial support. Juxtaposing the above discovery with the general view, the financing of smallholder farming has been problematic, citing collateral and land permits rather than lease agreements not favoured by the commercial banks (Shonhe & Scoones, 2022; Langyintuo, 2020).

Response from interviews corroborates quantitative findings as participants reported that interaction with various actors in smallholder farming was on issues related to new farming

strategies, inputs, and information on the economy and weather conditions. One of the participants stated that:

“Our interaction is based on the mutual relationship concerning smallholder farming. As farmers, together with Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, and other actors (LED & SEDA), we speak on Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) regarding the future of smallholder farming”.

The above response reveals that interacting with actors in the network is sharply on new ideas of seed varieties and timing for planting or harvesting crops. However, there are no indications that actors shared certain rules and regulations for accountability as well as shared responsibility. The study by Badiane and Collins (2020) state that interactions build mutual understanding and are a crucial element in promoting shared accountability on agreed-upon rules, issues and expected results. Consequently, the agriculture systems as the assemblage of diverse commodities should promote collaborative efforts guided by the set of rules, values and norms to achieve a specifically targeted objective without excluding beneficiaries in the interaction and interdependence process (Karubo & Ndiame, 2020). The above-stated view divulges the significance of network governance as all actors are required to combine forces on issues of common interest. The interaction of actors in this study area should help improve smallholder farming.

Notably, the reasons for lack of values, culture and norms in the network are caused by the notion that actors are working in silos as other participants from FGD tend to converge when they state that:

“Actors are not working together, and they only come towards events of Member of the Executive Council (MEC) visits projects. That is when you will see them together”.

These assertions further dismiss the previously mentioned mutual cooperation, where responses show much interaction among actors in the networks. The assumption created from the above argument is that actors are not adequately coordinated on daily routines but meet when there are only critical events. As a result, their coming together is mainly for main events. Similar results emerge from Dlamini and Mutereko (2021) that most formal institutions view the interaction as positive, while community members have different views as they indicated as not being engaged in consultation. Expectedly, rules and regulations cannot be found in a fragmented institutional arrangement which displays poor regulated and coordinated structure.

5.4.5 Level of satisfaction with interaction in the platform

The assessment of literature on network governance has shown that for a network to survive, actors must be active and adequately coordinate with one another. In the absence of effective coordination, other actors will be unsatisfied. Therefore, the researcher wanted to know the level of satisfaction with the patterns of interaction between actors in a network. The responses of respondents are presented in Figures 22a and 22b below.

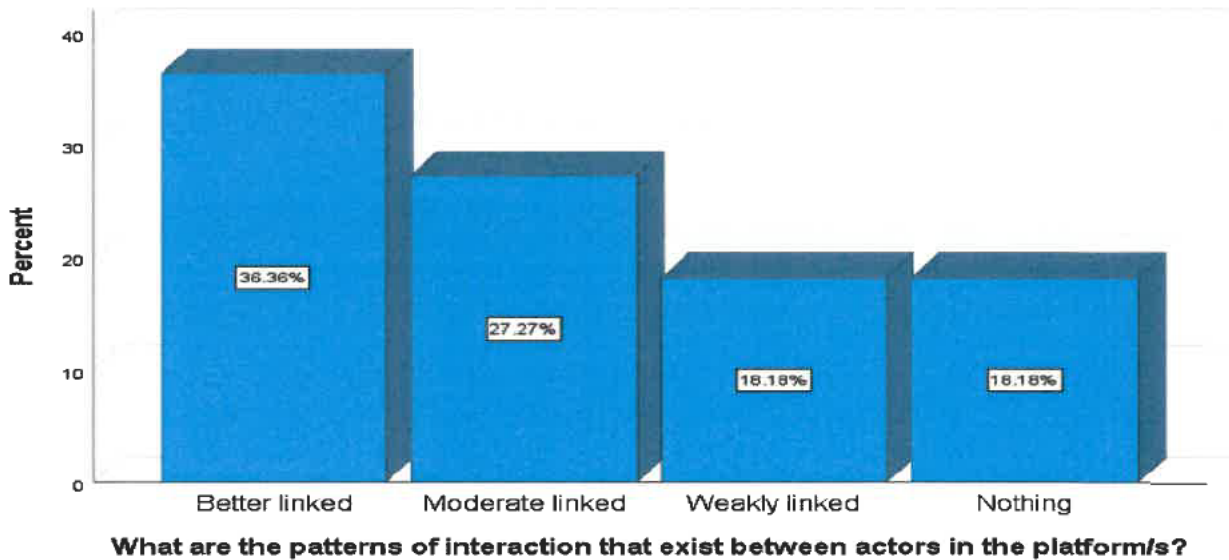


Figure 22a: Patterns of interaction that exist between actors in the platform/s

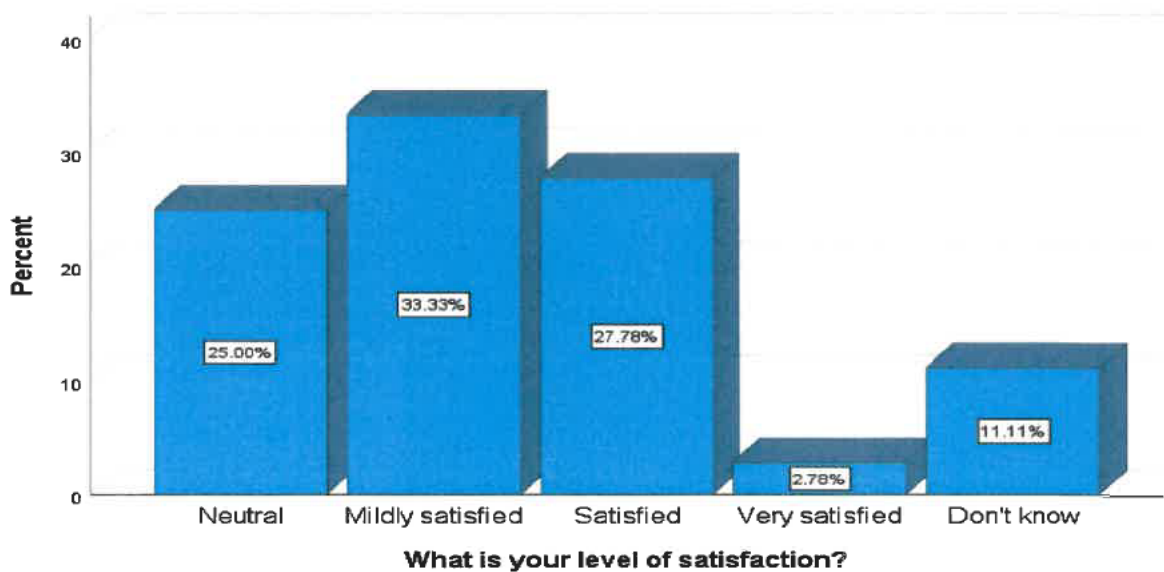


Figure 23b: The level of satisfaction that actors have with interaction in the platform/s

Figure 22a shows that 36.4 % of the respondents indicated that the interaction pattern between actors in the platform was better linked. Confirming the previous actor's response, the above views are expected, citing that they have indicated a good relationship with each other. At 27.3%, actors indicated that the interaction patterns are moderately linked between actors on the platform. The results contradict findings from Khephe et al. (2021), in a study done in Limpopo province, South Africa that the poor linkage caused agriculture institutions to fail in providing sufficient support to farmers. Dlamini and Mutereko (2021) also revealed that most actors have uncertainty about the linkage citing limited participation. The above view confirms the minority of actors' responses (18.18 %) that indicated interaction patterns as weakly linked and that there was nothing like the interaction pattern between actors in the platform, respectively.

The findings above, narrate a situation that lacks an actor's engagement and what defeats Hughes et al. (2021) defined the purpose of engagement as a decentralised and delegated decision-making process attained through a commitment to problem-solving. Hughes et al. (2021) further outline that engagement offered internal and external actors the opportunity to reflect freely and actively share knowledge with the expectation of developing good relationships.

Figure 22b shows a contradicting response by the same actors in the previous sections as actors (25 %) indicated that they were neutrally satisfied with interactions, while 33.3 % stated that they were mildly satisfied. Almost equating to the above percentages, 27.8% of actors stated that they were satisfied, and 2.8% of the respondents indicated delighted. These mixed views on levels of satisfaction dispute what actors refer to as significantly good patterns of interaction among themselves. The metaphor created by these discoveries suggests a lack of engagement of smallholder farmers in the study area. Consequently, the engagement process is undermined and cannot achieve what Roux et al. (2021) cite as the possibility of reducing conflict, building trust, and facilitating learning. About 11.11% of actors indicated that they do not know of anything that might cause the level of satisfaction.

Findings from interviews reflected that farmers view actors' interactive patterns in the network of smallholder farming as not vital. Concurrently and synonymously, the above findings display the scenario discovery by Mnisi and Selelo (2021) that community services rendered, in some instances, are not communicated with citizens because of poorly coordinated processes between government officials and users. Unequivocally, the above argument is perpetuated by

the divergent interest actors have that disrupt the potential of actors to meet a common goal. These findings were further affirmed by the majority of farmers' responses, in whom one of the participants from the FGD submitted that:

“We do not have a specific area for meetings. All actors visit the farm as individuals; hence there are no network platforms available”.

Another FDG member added that the topic of interaction on those actors' individual visits:

“We interact on issues of farming, training and extension services”.

These responses from FGDs show the levels of interaction of actors as on-farm-visits and the absence of formal network platforms guided by regulations to ensure that actors meet and discuss issues of common interest. In contemporary adaptive management, smallholder farmers are antagonised by the conundrum of manipulative actors' behaviour, where they need to adjust to incorrect information for the benefit of individuals with an egoistic interest in exploiting farmers (Mnisi & Selelo, 2021). Since actors represent various interests and seek to achieve different aims, the farmers believe more needs to be done to ensure a collaborated actor's effort in supporting smallholder farmers. Diversity and justice in the network platform can be attained through a regulated structure to provide guidance in dealing with crucial issues such as information for farmers to withstand the economy's shocks or other unforeseen circumstances.

5.4.6 Sustainable actors' engagement in smallholder farming

It is apparent that for a network to be sustainable, actors need to have a shared vision and clear direction that they are committed to potential collaborative decision-making (Jovita et al., 2018). Mostly, the shared vision and clear direction solely depend on what the set of rules is, formulated in the platform for effective management of actors. Based on this understanding, the researcher asked actors view on the network sustainability in smallholder farming. Figure 23 below demonstrates the responses.

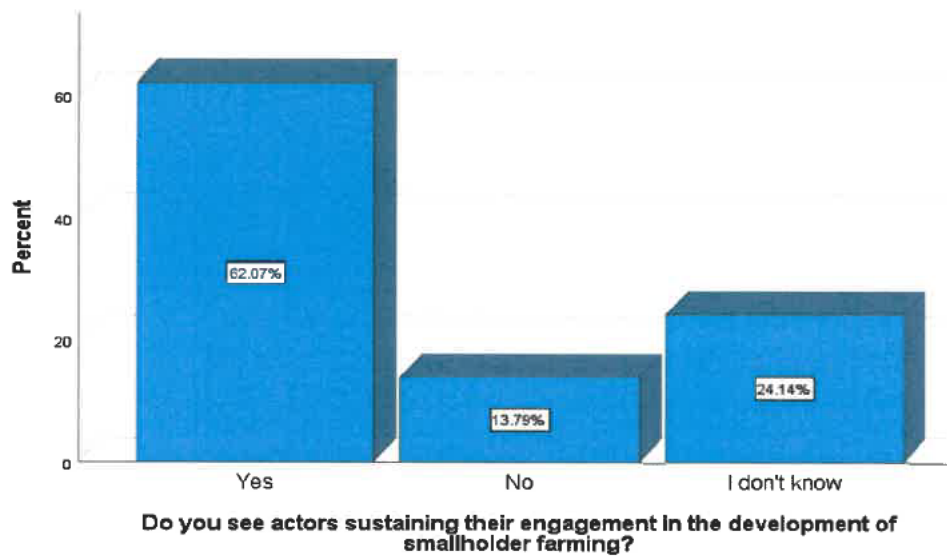


Figure 24: Actors sustaining their engagement in smallholder farming

Figure 23 shows that 62.1% of actors indicated that they are adamant that there is the possibility of sustaining their engagement in developing smallholder farming. The above discovery was the views of other actors (13.8%) indicating that actors have no chance of sustaining their engagement in the development of smallholder farming, and 24.14% of the respondents indicated that they do not know whether actors can sustain or not sustain their engagement in the development of smallholder farming in future.

Qualitative findings from interviews and FGDs indicate that actors such as the DARD, attempt to sustain their engagement concerning smallholder farming in the study. The above statement was echoed by one of the participants who stated that:

“The Department of Agriculture is working hard to sustain the farming culture to the public and support the stakeholder’s engagement”.

Similarly, the above findings display the deficiencies of platforms identified by Adekunle & Fatunbi's (2012) study that platforms are magnified by extension services systems, which collapses in the absence of competed agriculture extension services personnel. The narrative by farmers and Amakhosi is that DARD is viewed as the only actor that can sustain the platform citing their availability. Zersa et al. (2021) state that extension services should go beyond their call of duty and theoretical information but offer practical aspects as farmers are not interested in first hand workable solutions. Notwithstanding the highlighted narrative above, the actors

such as Extension Officers, LED officers, and other institutions can contribute to the sustainable network platforms by considering them as a tool to ensure continuity of engagement. These cited arguments are influenced by the dominant literature that dictates platforms as relevant tools for engaging actors. Interestingly, one Inkosi (Chief) from Amakhosi AseNdlunkulu in the study area commented differently:

“In smallholder farming in communal areas, poorly coordinated structures cannot sustain longer. Worryingly, actors are not open to each other concerning critical matters that affect their level of engagement”.

During interviews, the above statement has been dominant with Amakhosi and farmers and has become more dominant with FGD. The above argument is influenced by the popular views, which one participant stated:

“If all actors involved can prioritise engagement on the network platform, sustainability can be achieved (FGD)”.

The above response was probably based on the lack of engagement and poorly maintained relations among the actors involved in smallholder farming.

5.5 Government policies environment in networking for smallholder farming

The government has identified smallholder farming as one of the critical sectors for economic growth (Mtshali & Akinola, 2021). However, scholars have identified uncertainty in policy development as the main challenge of contemporary South African agriculture (Mtshali & Akinola, 2021; Yami et al., 2018). A conducive policy and institutional environment are crucial prerequisites for the dynamism of the smallholder farming system (Odero-Waitituh, 2021). Formulating and implementing policies in the network is crucial for developing smallholder farming. The researcher wanted to know if available government policies promote interaction and networking for smallholder farming. Figure 24 below discloses the responses of diverse actors.

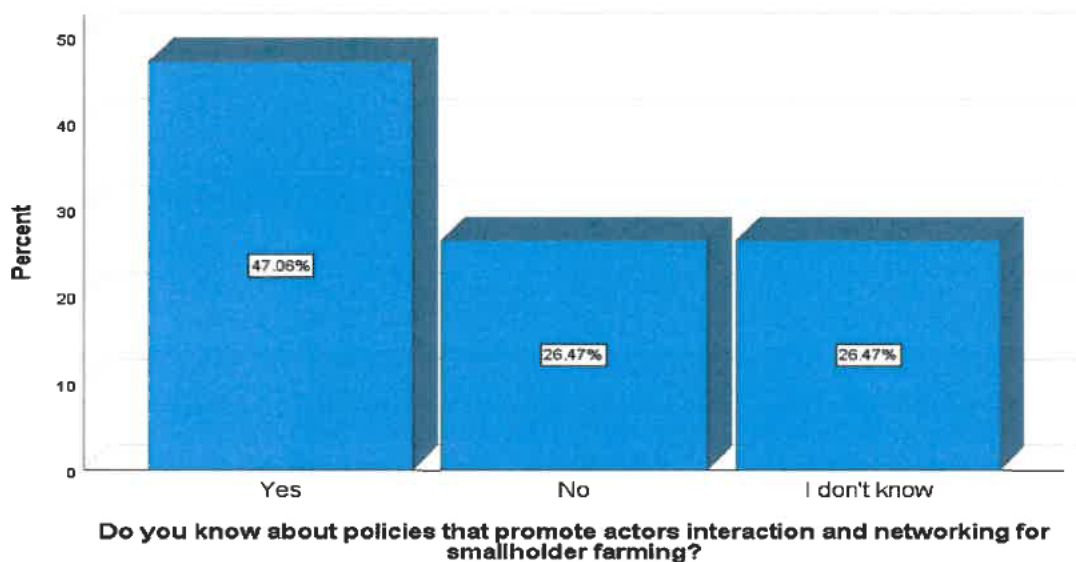


Figure 25: Illustration of policy that promotes networking in smallholder farming

Figure 24 shows that 47, 6% of the actors indicated that they know about the policies that promote actors' interaction and networking for smallholder farming. The above reveals that policies guide the actor's interaction, which is a contradiction because some actors dispute any existence of such policies. Evidently so, other actors (26.5%) indicated that there are no policies that encourage actors' interaction and networking for smallholder farming. In contrast, others (26.5%) noted that they do not know anything about the policies promoting actors' interaction and networking for smallholder farming. These findings are a mixed reaction of actors, which display a linear network of policy-making and a definition of linear opportunities to deal with smallholder farming challenges encountered.

The findings reported from interviews and focus groups overwhelmingly indicate that farmers have little knowledge of the policies that promote interaction and networking among actors in smallholder farming. One of the participants from FGD reports that:

“I do not understand any policy promoting smallholder farming (FGD)”.

Commenting on a similar issue, another participant stated that:

“I have little knowledge of how these policy issues work (FGD)”.

The above responses from FGDs bring a worrying angle as farmers are not privileged enough to understand the whole complex policy environment, although it determines their success in smallholder farming. These are caused by a lack of awareness of existing policies and how they can be used to leverage the relations among actors to make sure smallholder farming becomes successful. The above argument is the proclivity that has engulfed agrarian policy-making, making South Africa fail to achieve the emancipation of smallholder farmers (Mbukazi, 2018).

Contrary to the first world countries like Russia's smallholder situation, there have been significant advancements recorded in the policy environment and economy through proper engagement (Wegren, 2021). South Africa, in particular the HGDM in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, is still facing discriminatory approaches as the study reveals policy-making that excludes local actors, mostly smallholder farmers. The above narrative can be expanded to South African socialised rural agriculture that is far from being restored or reformed. Policy often misses addressing the bottlenecks citing limited coordination and integration among actors (Rasheed, 2021). The prescriptive top-down approach does not solve the root cause, which results in a lack of awareness as the existence of policies and approaches need to leverage the relations among actors to make sure smallholder farming becomes successful.

5.5.1 Participation in policy and strategy formulation for smallholder development

The participation of smallholder farmers in policy-making is essential to ensure resilience as farmers benefit in various ways, such as providing mechanisation and production inputs, accessing loans, adequate land, and access to markets (Wegren, 2021). Subsequently, the policy not consulted enough among the actors involved cannot achieve the desired outcomes. The statement may sound undistinguishable in South Africa, a country assumed to have good policies that are informed by public participation (Mtshali & Akinola, 2021; Sako et al., 2021). The researcher asked the respondents to assess if they participated in formulating policies for smallholder farming development. The responses are presented in Figure 25 below.

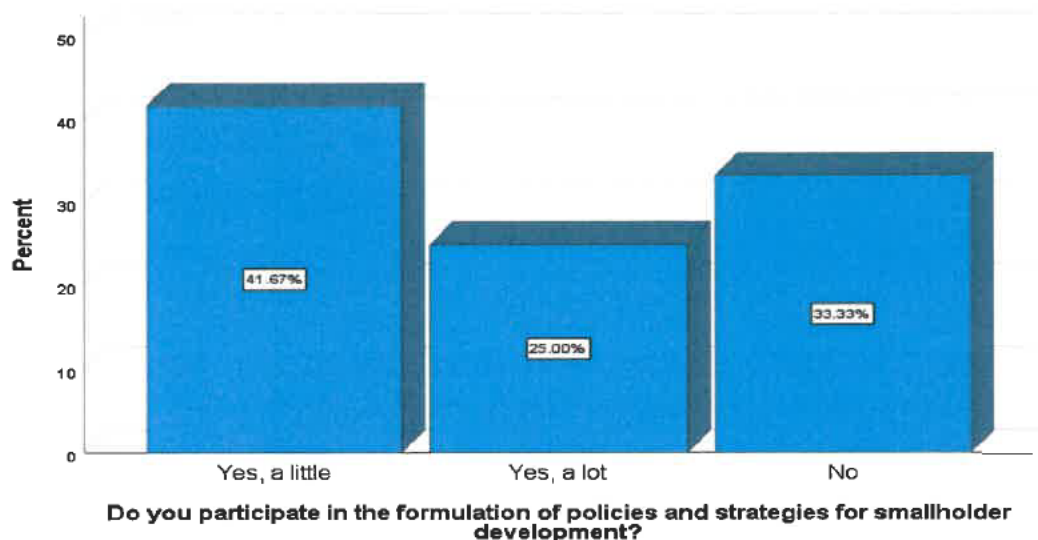


Figure 26: Participation of actors in policy formulation for smallholder development

Figure 25 illustrates that most actors (41.7%) indicated that they are participating less in the formulation of policies and strategies for smallholder development, with 25 % stating that they experienced greater participation in the policy and procedures for smallholder development. Similar to the actors' response in Figure 18, policy-making does not consider local actors. Concurrently and synonymously, the above-stated has been viewed by 33.3% of the actors who indicated that they did not participate in the formulation of policies and strategies for smallholder development.

The presentation of qualitative findings articulates the minimal role that actors play in policy formulation. Most participants suggest that agricultural policies are imposed on them with a minimal contribution. Relatedly, in the previous chapters, the lack of significant farmers' participation as potential beneficiaries should be addressed in the processes of agriculture policy reforms (Mbokazi, 2018). The above statement is worrying as the policy-making process must accommodate farmers' input regarding smallholder farming. Further, the findings report that participation in policy-making is based on what farmers expect to get in such procedures. Therefore, it is no uniform participation across actors. One of the participants from the FDG claims that:

“I do not remember being invited to a policy meeting of such a nature. We only heard that meetings have happened, and decisions have been made on our behalf”.

These assertions demonstrate the dilemma associated with policy formulation in smallholder farming. The questions that the researcher may ponder include interrogating who should invite all actors to meet and discuss the policy issues. This scenario pronounces that existing policies to support farmers have not collaborated awareness to ensure that all actors' voices in a network are heard regarding policy formulation and implementation. Mainly, actors' participation opens opportunities for farmers to exchange knowledge on technological changes and be able to add their indigenous knowledge and experiences to the existing scientific knowledge (Ogunyiola et al., 2022).

Central to policy-making, local structures need to be appraised as they are currently ascribed to an oppressive approach that adds no value to policy formulation's initial purpose. The researcher wanted to know if respondents were interested in partaking in policy-making forums or the committees that make policies. The responses are presented below in Figure 26.

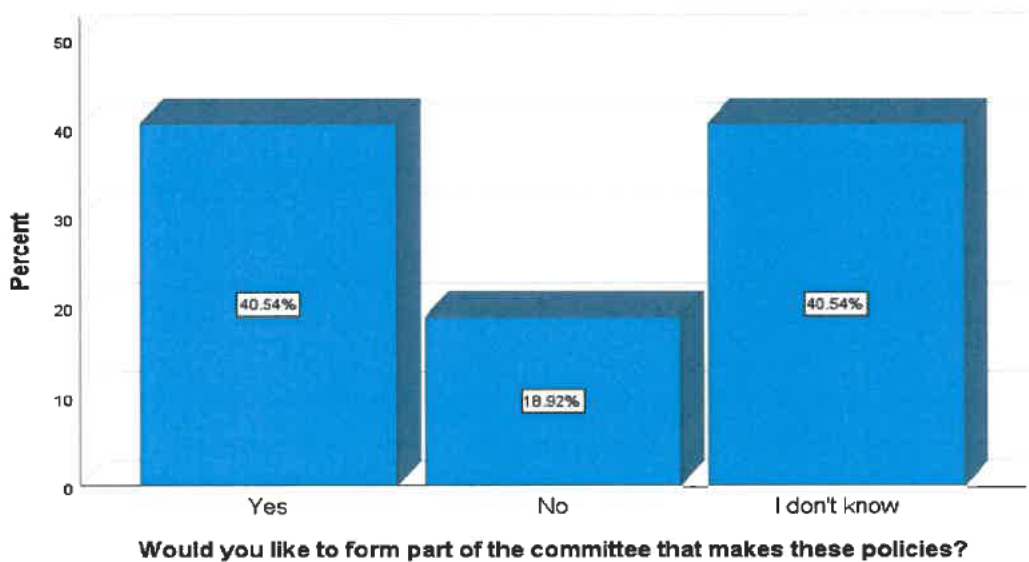


Figure 27: Illustrating the interest of actors in policy-making

Figure 26 illustrates that 40.5% of the actors indicated that they would like to form part of the committee that makes the policies. The above findings show that due diligence in policy-making is far from being reached, citing the divergence of priority to other issues. Worryingly, actors (18.9%) indicated that lack of interest as they would not like to partake in the committee that makes the policies, and actors (40.5%) were confused as they did not know whether or not they would like to form part of the committee that makes the policies.

Responses from interviews indicate that some farmers were willing to be part of the committees, although they were unsure. The above shows a gap in committee involvement as farmers who engage in smallholder farming should actively get involved in issues related to their daily lives. Further, some participants claim they are engaged in one committee which directs and advises farmers on the farming business. Despite being a minority engagement in policy committees, smallholder farming still needs to be strengthened to ensure farmers benefit from interacting with other actors.

5.5.2 Policies as a tool to address smallholder networks in communal areas

Some scholars believe that the agriculture and correlated challenges can be instrumental in the policy development (Hamilton, 2019). Therefore, network governance should be linked with institutions and policies that guide the operations of networks. In smallholder farming, policies should exist to guide how actors should interact to achieve a common goal. The researcher probed the respondents to understand policies that guide networks in smallholder farming. Table 8 below illustrates the responses.

Table 8: Policies and strategies for addressing smallholder challenges in communal areas

POLICY ADDRESSING SMALLHOLDER CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	14	53.8
No	7	26.9
I do not know	4	15.4
Total	25	96.2
Missing	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 8 shows that 53.8% of actors' responses indicated that the policies and strategies address smallholder networking challenges in communal areas. The above responses once more contradict the majority of actors' views in figure 21 and that of Beattie & Sallu's (2021) study, which argued that policies in South Africa are not considering the views of rural smallholder farmers in the communal areas. The minority of actors (26.9%) agree with the above-stated view revealed by Beattie & Sallu that policies and strategies are not addressing smallholder

challenges in communal areas and are quite similar among states, and other actors (15.4%) indicated that they do not know anything about the policies and strategies in smallholder farming in communal areas, which the study cannot just ignore.

The majority of participants from the FGDs highlighted the absence of knowledge regarding policy formulation. While farmers are aware that the DARD should assist them, limited knowledge is worrying as they are not aware of any policies to address the challenges they experience in smallholder farming. One of the participants from the FGD stated that:

“Different actors such as Amakhosi, Youth, women, smallholder farmers, and disabled farmers must be involved in policy-making issues”.

This statement informs the need to integrate all actors regarding policy issues as these actors are either directly or indirectly affected by any policy outcome. Unambiguously, the study displays a neoliberal policy environment for actors’ reform and does not empower vulnerable actors or create interest. Further evidence from interviews shows the need for raising awareness on how the policy environment can be used to ensure that farmers are aware of how they can improve smallholder farming in their communal areas. Qualitative findings support quantitative findings; policy issues are complex to understand for farmers who are the actors within the whole web of networking regarding smallholder farming.

5.5.3 The biggest obstacle in the policy that promotes networking

Mbokazi (2018) posits that involvement in the agrarian policy reform is augmented by lack of mutual interest, and poor coordination by diverse organs of states, which creates a misperception of what one department needs to do. The respondents were asked about their views on the policy obstacles that affect networking in their area. Many views were presented, as illustrated below in Table 9:

Table 9: Biggest obstacle in the policy that promotes networking

OBSTACLES IN NETWORK POLICY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Formulation	4	15
Implementation	7	27
Review	7	27
Political will	4	15
I do not know	3	12
Total	25	96
System missing	1	4
Total	26	100.0

Table 9 above shows that actors (15%) indicated that policy formulation is the biggest obstacle in promoting networking. The respondents (27%) indicated that implementation and review are considered the biggest obstacle in promoting networking policy. Relatedly, Dlamini and Mutereko's study argues that policy implementation is the most challenging stage in the policy process, citing different actors' securities. Interestingly, actors (15%) indicated that policy-formulation and political will were considered as the second biggest obstacles, as cited by 15% of actors respectively. A similar discovery by Eidt, Pant & Hickey (2020) identified political influence as among the significant hindrances as politicians always want people to depend on relief for easy manipulation during election periods. Anecdotal evidence and conjecture about political influence are that politicians use manipulative participation and bombard participants with the incorrect information for vote-buying. Staggeringly, 12% of the actors indicated that they do not know anything about the obstacle in the policy that encourages networking. These are the same actors that are not satisfied with policy-making processes.

Qualitative findings corroborate the quantitative findings as the participants also reported policy implementation as one of the key obstacles in ensuring effective networking. The existence of legal frameworks in agriculture does not mean every smallholder farmer has adequate knowledge of how it can be used. The findings report that agricultural extension officers and other relevant actors who work with smallholder farmers should implement

educative campaigns and awareness. Worth to be considering is Gonzalez-Porras et al.'s (2021) suggestion that the engagement of local level or societal level actors needs to encourage a learning process within the multi-actor's collaborative approach for innovations and sustainability. The above revelation further helps farmers understand the broader policy framework and how it can be used to their advantage in rural areas. Additional to the above-stated view, the farmer to farmer learning approach can be utilised as a collaborative approach. Very significant and a key ingredient, the policy environment should persuade private sector engagement (Jama, 2020). However, the participants' expression is that smallholder farmers are faced with policy problems as they remain small and fail to be substantial commercial farms due to limited funding.

The above sentiments are shared by Kafle et al. (2022) study that funding for smallholder farmers seems insufficient even when the private sector funding is advocated and piloted due to the high repayment rate. Subsequently, the lack of knowledge on policies and networking affects smallholder farmers. Khephe et al. (2021) suggested that public institutions need to take the lead in coordination and fostering partnerships among actors. However, the public sector is always renowned for lacking the expertise to explore other avenues to find actors that can support farming activities.

5.5.4 Network governance significance in policy-making for smallholder farming

Much literature on network governance undoubtedly labels it as what seeks to achieve good governance. According to Yami et al. (2018), good governance depends on the understanding of participating actors and how they put policy into practice. Most appealing is understanding that network governance is an objective theory that cannot be achieved as a single approach. The researcher asked respondents about network governance to assess if it was fundamental in smallholder farmers' policy. The responses below illustrate their views.

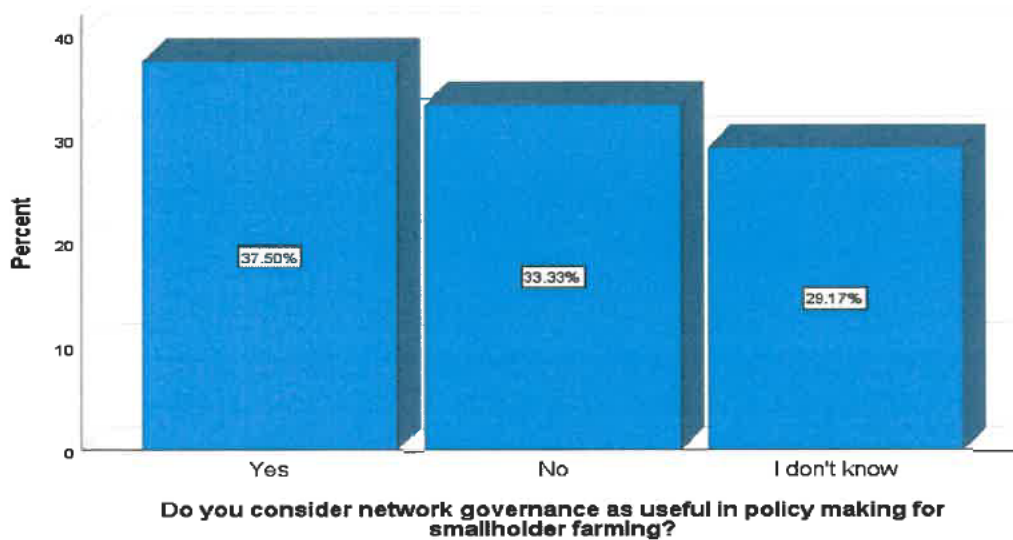


Figure 28: Network governance as useful in policy-making for smallholder farming

Figure 27 shows that 37.5 % of the respondents indicated that they considered network governance useful in policy-making for smallholder farming. The findings corroborated a study by Yami et al. (2018) in Tanzania, where elements of network governance were utilised to demonstrate partnerships in legitimising debt relief and adjustment reforms without many changes considered in the policy. Contemporarily, the actors (33.33 %) indicated that they do not consider network governance as useful in policy-making for smallholder farming, assumedly influenced by poor policy-making, and 29.17 % of actors do not know anything about policy-making.

The analysis of qualitative findings revealed that network governance as a concept is still far from being understood in smallholder farming. Study respondents expressed their knowledge of collaborations, although smallholder farming seemed less of a reality to them. Their knowledge of network governance is limited to their association with the DARD and local municipalities only. Raising awareness to smallholder farmers regarding networking governance is fundamental to improving network relations and smallholder farming in the future.

5.6 Discussion

This section discusses findings based on both quantitative and qualitative data presentation. The themes were drawn from the study objectives.

5.6.1 Actors and their relationships in promoting smallholder farming

A successful network is based on various actors who collaborate and jointly deal with issues of common interest. Petersen and Kruss (2019) identified different actors in smallholder farming, and these include among them the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), previously promulgated into the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). The significance of these actors lies in their ability to network and coordinate with each other on various issues related to smallholder farming. The analysis of quantitative findings revealed that the actors mentioned above played a pivotal role in sustaining the network. However, the qualitative results indicate that the institutional relationship among actors requires improvements.

In some instances, actors claim to be more potent than others, creating tensions and a lack of mutual understanding on smallholder farming issues. As noted in this study, actors need to adhere to a comprehensive engagement process where diverse but vital actors become involved. Excluding smallholder farmers in policy-making or science-policy dialogue hinders the implementation of such policies citing a lack of ownership as experienced in the CSA studies in some countries in the continent of Africa (Ogunyiola et al., 2022).

Within the same discourse, analysis of quantitative findings also shows that a minority of respondents receive good working relationships from proactive actors such as the DARD. The above statement is because this Department works closely with farmers through its agricultural extension officers, who provide guidance and knowledge on what and when to farm. However, Venter (2017) dismissed the above notion of the Department's role as claims that the agricultural policy formulated by the national departments creates dependencies on provincial departments as there is minimal capacity to steer smallholder farmers. In the same understanding, Adenle et al. (2018) remind the government to promote collaboration for effective interaction with actors, especially local smallholder farmer organisations. Notably, the Network Governance Theory allows various actors, including the private sector, to get involved in issues that may affect other network members closely. In this study, the role played by the private sector appears to be minimal; hence the private sector and third sector are required to contribute by generating information and financial support for farmers.

The third sector that constitutes NGOs, Multilateral organisations, and other CBOs can help improve smallholder farming by influencing governing policy on agriculture. Since the

findings have shown that actors, especially farmers, hesitate to lobby the government regarding agricultural policy that adequately supports farming activities, Mbokazi (2018) calls for agrarian reform policies that promote collaborative management and help smallholder farmers from being disorganised and non-coordinated. Furthermore, Eidt, Pant & Hickey's (2020) study appeals to the network, actor's analysis, which is vital for identifying an actor's interest, behaviour, and sufficient power to bring about positive change. The study of Jovita et al. (2018) holds the view that, since the government is one of the principal actors in the network that provides a policy framework, which generally determines the success of coordination, it should ensure the non-exclusion of governance, leadership, and performance issues as they decide the continuity of a network. Furthermore, the government provides financial support, agricultural extension services, and infrastructural support (Pokhrel, 2019) but mainly the facilitation of the network as a leading institution.

5.6.2 Institutional features that hinder or promote smallholder farming

The literature suggests that the entry point to institutional features is an institutional design that seeks to effectively change the institutional arrangement to implement desired aims. Klijn & Koppenjan (2006) define institutional design as a deliberate change in the rules that structured interact, in this case, within the network of smallholder farming. The findings have shown that smallholder farmers do not receive adequate collaborated institutional support to ensure effective farming operations, albeit South Africa has progressive smallholder farming that can be transformed into huge-scale commercial agriculture.

The study identified that there are many institutional barriers hinder smallholder transition in rural communities. As a prelude, the study confirms the tautological character of institutional features that divulges a lack of rules and regulations in the network platforms. Mostly the challenge is the lack of knowledge actors have about institutional support systems in smallholder farming (Khephe et al., 2021). As the study utilised the institutional feature to determine the network complexity (Shaffer, 2020), the lack of rules and regulations that govern the individual institutions within the network has been identified as the system's complexity but mainly the unshared goals and objectives of what institutions seek to achieve.

What has been demonstrated by the study is the limited role played by institutions in the development of smallholder farming because of non- existence of network platforms. The lack of platforms leads to the lack of institutional values, culture, norms and beliefs. However, a significant number of respondents acknowledge the role played by agricultural advisors in

ensuring that smallholder farming is improved in their area. As significant as it may look, extension services have not yet excelled in promoting linkage between actors in the system for effective network governance. Among challenges, Feder, Willet and Zijp (1999) as cited by Chaudhurt and Kendall (2021) state that extension services are hindered by limited budgets as it becomes impossible for extension officers to cover the majority of smallholder farmers and insufficient political support to desire relevant policies. The above assertions support the study by Henderson, Farmer and Whittam (2020), who believed that smallholder farmers suffer because of policy discrepancies labelled as solutions to their challenges and the unethical practices by politicians that drive their political agenda and self-enrichment. The literature on the policy blunder has been alluded to as another institutional feature that discourages smallholder farming in many communal areas. As noted in this study, politicians are blamed for infiltrating the framing space and influencing decisions that benefit them. As a result, this slows down progress in smallholder farming and ultimately hinders progress.

At this juncture, the institutional relationship seems fragmented, citing bureaucratic processes by the public sector as a leading institution and what Khephe et al. (2021) cited as a lack of coherence in institutional support. The study divulges that programs implemented are poorly linked due to the inflexible nature of government processes and procedures and how actors operate. The issue of merit versus patronage in the government process impacts the trust that actors have in the public sector. The above argument creates an environment that has no mutual trust, which affects the collective action expected in the network governance. Zerssa et al (2021) affirm that agriculture extension services and other actors supporting communal smallholder farming offer nothing to empower and practically capacitate this vulnerable group. Furthermore, Zersaa et al (2021) suggest that extension services should be based on practicality than being hypothetical in nature. Mostly, government through extension and advisory services should strengthen the facilitation and coordination within the network notwithstanding that they are failing to act as a link between farmers and external actors. Subsequently, the government can do more to promote and create linkages between actors for easy access to resources and facilitation of the involvement of the private sector (Badiane & Collins, 2020). The current phenomenon suggests a complex architecture of institutions in a system that requires a holistic developmental approach to keep up with the paradigm shift as things evolve. However, the study reveals a culture of individualism where farmers are excluded from their development. The culture of solipsism provides little chance for adherence to the Network Governance Theory, citing that actors are not actively interacting on issues of common interest

to ensure that the network's goals are achieved. The most appealing observation is that the network environment in the study area has been hindered by lack of actors' commitment and poor collective action, unclear purpose and direction, and poor network management. In such a scrappy network situation, typically, the network platform should have the following characteristics of network governance for it to perform:

- a) Shared or self-governance: Network should have a high commitment level with a clear purpose and consensus
- b) Network Institutions: All actors should have a clear network direction and an understanding of network management to effect active actors' participation.
- c) Network administration: there should be a leading institution as a facilitator (actor/s that manage networks potentially) to avoid decisions taken for other actors rather than working with other actors.

From the above descriptions, it is clear that network governance requires a leading actor with clear direction and the ability to facilitate the engagement process under a shared vision, which the study reveals as non-existent in the study area. In light of the preceding narrative, the actor's engagement becomes necessary as it embodies the philosophy of building relationships and interactions among actors in the system (Gonzalez-Porras et al., 2021). Notably, the facilitator should know that the role of actors is not always positive, as some can opt to support or oppose the presented technology or vision and decide not to be involved (Pasko et al., 2021).

Although the Network Governance Theory dictates unity and collective actions among actors in a network, the findings of this study show weak linkages and the haphazard manner in which smallholder farming challenges are dealt with citing lack of rules, values and regulations in the network platforms seeking to implement programs. These weak linkages observed in the findings discourage information dissemination and coordination, which lag progress in dealing with smallholder farming challenges that are multidimensional in nature. Modirwa and Oladele's (2017) study affirms that weak linkages and weak institutional structures between farmers and actors present numerous challenges to smallholder farming in rural areas, which Okorie, Bitrus and Ugwu (2021) state as compromising factors in the development of smallholder farming citing less contribution to poverty alleviation, food security, and employment creation for the poor rural citizen. The above stated weak linkages and institutional structure are noted in the findings as LED in local municipalities and the Department of Agriculture, are heavily criticized for disjointed programs even though involved

in smallholder farming. Their role is manifold as providers of funding information to farmers and facilitators of interaction of actors in the network. However, both stated institutions have not exhibited a character of being a leading actor in the network of smallholder farming in the study area. Central to the LED at the municipality level is implementation of agriculture reform programs that should provide opportunities to address triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment (Raidimi & Kabiti, 2017). Worryingly, the weak linkages have caused the above institutions not to drive integrated developmental agenda of smallholder farmers using a bottom-up approach but a top-down approach where farmers are told what to do. Ogunyiola et al. (2022) recommend a bottom-up approach as a tool that ensures actors do not foster their developmental agenda but place local smallholder interest at the centre of programs designed.

Undoubtedly, the role played by the Department of Agriculture is highly recognisable. However, significant work needs to be done to ensure that smallholder farming is adequately supported and sustained as a crucial aspect of mitigating hunger and poverty levels in rural communities. The study reveals that agriculture as an institution is failing to advocate collaborated institutional support to farmers. As indicated in the study, the DARD should be a leading actor providing training not only to farmers but to the entire network especially on the issues of cooperative governance. Training was ranked as the highest in a study by Khephe et al. (2021) as it displays an input towards building farmers' resilience, citing being informed. Furthermore, DARD should not only take a lead but coordinate and foster partnerships among actors in the system. The above sentiments are influenced by the fact that private sector and NGO's contribution is revealed as less prevailing. Kafle et al. (2022) view private sector involvement as a solution to the lack of resources and has the potential of providing financial and technical support, albeit insufficient to address smallholder credit constraints when piloted in other countries. Contrarily to the above narrative, the NGO-led approaches in Extension and Advisory Services had a positive impact in countries like Kenya though criticised for not having adequate funding (Karubo & Ndiame, 2020).

The unclear cultures, rules and regulations, and institutional values attached to the network in the study area are attributed to what was revealed by Jovita et al. (2018) as the unwillingness of actors to partake in the network creating a lack of trust, interdependencies, and information sharing. It is clear from these discussions that actors and farmers in the study area were experiencing many challenges related to unity and networking. They seem to operate independently, which is a setback in improving the general scope of smallholder farming in

communal areas. As study reveals a lack of actors' platforms for inclusive knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, and interactions, actors should promote network platforms as enabling environment for various actors to collaborate in engagement and develop solutions (Mingou et al., 2021), a vacuum that exists in this regard. Subsequently, a strong governance and networking platform should ensure that every farmer is aware of the network activities and has adequate knowledge on where and how to look for support for improving smallholder farming. Promisingly, most actors and farmers view network governance as a useful tool in policy development (see Figure 24), which can also assist in improving the poor coordination and fragmented institutional structures in the study area. Understanding the concept of network governance will aid in addressing the lack of sustainability in the existing platforms, but primarily the formation of platforms for actors to interact.

5.6.3 Policy environment enabling networks in smallholder farming

The research conducted by Petersen and Kruss (2019) revealed that an entry point to network governance should be a pluralistic policy that emphasises interaction and collective action. The author's arguments came from the fact that, in most cases, policymakers lack a clear policy network map for the strengthening of coordination for better strategic direction. As a result, policymakers implement ill-advised policies that do not address the needs of actors within the network. The above-stated argument depletes the purposes of public policy as a guiding document for all actors but mostly the collective nature of making a series of intentionally coherent decisions (Gonzalez-Porras et al., 2021).

Expectedly, it becomes very peculiar that South Africa, as displayed by the mixed responses in the study at HGDM on Figure 27, has not yet succeeded in developing policies that can be identified as formulated under the principles of network governance. Contrary to Russia's smallholder situation, where significant advancement in areas of inclusive policy environment was done immediately after the World War II economic recession (Wegren, 2021), South Africa has not done much justice in including smallholder farmers in policy development as the study reveals the discriminatory acts on Figure 25. Subsequently, Wegren (2021) critically suggested that policy be adopted based on corrective measures among actors involved. The food security policy of 2012 stipulates the government's role as to create and enabling conditions for a food secured society that produces and has control over the means of production. According to Mubanga and Kaonga (2021), the smallholder farming system is equal to addressing food and nutrition security challenges, supporting livelihoods and

economic reconstruction as the population rises. South African population is projected to rise at an alarming rate in future irrespective of reductions in the world population growth (Holden, 2020; Caliciogh et al., 2019). The researcher deduced from these assertions that creating an enabling policy environment is critical in sustaining a smallholder network to achieve government objectives as simulating the above-stated view.

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative findings reveals the limited knowledge participants have regarding the networks' policy framework. The statement above shows a glaring scenario where smallholder farmers who are supposed to be well-coordinated in terms of policy frameworks are not adequately equipped to understand how policies are formed and enhance their farming activities. Worryingly, the study reveals a situation clouded by the distorted agriculture policy and uncertainty because of the lack of farmer participation. Excluding smallholder farmers in the policy-making process and science-policy dialogue has been cited by Ogunyiola et al. (2022) as hindering implementation and having no sense of ownership.

Further to the above, Ogunyiola et al. (2022) present the detrimental effect of farmer exclusion, which diminishes the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in policy and brings no policy reforms as informed mainly by foreign knowledge systems and language. It becomes clear that even institutions such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, as revealed close to the farmers citing their Extension and Advisory Services, have not yet fully exploited the local knowledge (Ogunyiola et al., 2022). The above statement is influenced by the fact that only a minority of highly educated respondents were aware of the policies and frameworks that may help improve interaction and participation in networks. The suggestion by Odera-Waitituh (2021) is that conducive policy and institutional environment are prerequisites to address dynamism in the farming systems, and such an environment needs to consider inclusivity in all processes for meaningful smallholder development. These observations coincide with the study of Kamara et al. (2019), which advocates for actors in the network to work together on many complex issues to ensure that access to loans and markets is maintained towards mitigating hunger and starvation. However, from the findings, a gap still exists in policy awareness, which is worrying given the poverty levels in rural communities and the need to strengthen smallholder farming.

Achieving Zero Hunger by 2025 may be an obstacle as actors within the network find it challenging to coordinate and network to solve problems. Furthermore, the intense production

systems in smallholder farming pose more weaknesses and threats (Odero-Waitituh, 2021), citing their predisposition outside supportive structures. From these claims, actors' failure to engage in policy formulation and implementation demonstrates the lack of corroboration of the Network Governance Theory, which perceives issues that could arise in networking due to poor coordination and planning. The findings further showed that participants were reluctant to be part of formed committees and may profess ignorance of such committees' existence and effectiveness. Even if such committees exist to guide the policy issues, the majority admit that they fail to address communal farmers' multifaceted challenges. As cited in previous chapters, the White Paper on South Africa Land Policy of 1997 states that the modification of agricultural policies should consider all actors contribution in the decision-making so as to achieve inclusive economic growth (DRDLR, 1997). Surprisingly, many smallholder farmers in the study demonstrate the limited knowledge of this policy and how it can improve their lives. There is a considerable deficit in knowledge and skills to implement this policy toward sustaining smallholder farming. Subsequently, the knowledge deficit of policy and the lack of policy implementation, such as the White Paper on South Africa Land policy of 1997, dissuades smallholder farmers from understanding the policy framework in South African rural communities. Comparatively, the challenges mentioned above exhibit the various policy challenges facing smallholder farming in other countries, and these have adverse effects on addressing poverty and other societal ills (Borreli et al., eds. 2020).

The respondents' identified that the absence of politics will be another setback to fully embracing the policies that promote networking. The above sentiments affirm what has been a general view of the public in many areas. Many politicians are labelled as influencing how smallholder farming has to be handled. Such views contradict the conducive policy and institutional environment that should be a prerequisite for a dynamic farming system (Odero-Waitituh, 2021). As a result, some farmers fear that networking platforms will not add value in allowing them to air their grievances of being marginalised due to political interference. The above argument calls for a need to balance the political will with what smallholder farmers intend to do in the study areas. Political elites should advocate for a structural adjustment that promotes inclusiveness where smallholder farmers become key role players. As mentioned by some participants, political affiliation plays a crucial role in influencing the policy agenda; hence public participation in the policy implementation becomes minimal.

Furthermore, the divergence in policymakers' priorities contributes immensely to the policies that fail dismally to alleviate to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequalities. Although Network Governance stipulates the need for clarity in the policy angle and interpretations, it remains vague as to how smallholder farmers can benefit from the broader policies that have been long in existence. Therefore, it becomes crucial for the South African government to reinforce network governance, which goes a long way in ensuring that smallholder farming is promoted and sustained to enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness toward achieving Zero Hunger.

5.7 Lessons learned

This research is grounded in the Network Governance Theory, which notes that actors in a network should be involved in all stages to ensure success. The findings were analysed using the three broader objectives of the research that seek to identify actors and their relationships in promoting smallholder farming in communal areas. Furthermore, findings seek to detect the institutional and organisational features that hinder or encourage smallholder farming in communal areas and suggest an enabling policy environment in managing actors in the network to achieve sustainable smallholder farming.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis has demonstrated that actors' network with smallholder farmers in the study area. However, minimal networking among actors was also noticed as funding remains a challenge among smallholder farmers. The main reason is the lack of unity and coordination among actors who are supposed to be working as a network. As a result, this triggered supremacy challenges as other actors felt more critical than further; hence, cooperation and coordination became obstacles. Awareness has been noted as imperative to help actors within the same network to engage and emphasise the significance of collaboration and coordination to improve smallholder farming. Secondly, the analysis of findings revealed some of the institutional challenges affecting networking among smallholder farmers in the study area. These include limited funding to support agricultural activities; this may be traced to poor networking among actors. Some actors might have adequate knowledge on how to fundraise or source for loans to support agricultural activities. This gap demands vital networking and coordination among actors to ensure that members benefit from the available resources and knowledge. In addition, the review of findings has shown that weak linkages among actors are one of the barriers that affect smallholder farming in the study area. The weak linkages can be viewed as each actor focusing on doing its things without necessarily

considering the viability of each other's ventures. The lack of unity hinders the growth and sustainability of networks. Thirdly, the policy environment is a challenging factor affecting smallholder farmers in the study areas. The antagonistic argument cited by Mbukazi (2018) defines the rural policy environment in South Africa as complex, where there is no mutual understanding and poor coordination of actors involved.

As revealed in the study findings, some farmers do not know how to implement policy since they do not have the skills in the field of policy-making. Their views regarding policy implementation are insignificant, resulting in the agricultural policies being implemented without the farmers' input. Sharma and Singh (2021) argue that the challenge for policymakers and actors is to make agriculture any area of interest in the process change the demographics in rural areas. The critical aspect of the statement above is to make agriculture attractive, productive and profitable to pluralism and holistic approaches. Through the Department of Agriculture, the government must raise awareness of smallholder farming policies in rural areas, among other influencing actors. Such campaigning assists in harnessing farmers' participation in farming issues that affect their economic livelihoods. Actors need to attend to the concerns of rural smallholder farmers and utilise local knowledge systems and farmer approaches in disseminating information knowledge as a tool in the network (Oguniola et al., 2022).

Explicitly, the following chapter summarises findings, discusses recommendations and draws a conclusion. Among the issues to be discussed in the next chapter are the policy implications of the study and the proposed enabling policy environment for effective network governance in smallholder farming. The conclusion in chapter 6 summarises the thematic issues as discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 6

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter first offers a study synopsis, its findings and recommendations. It aligns with the research questions and objectives as highlighted from the outset. The chapter further presents the conclusion and the recommendations emanating from the study and recommendations for further research as informed by the gaps identified as being out of the scope of this study. In accordance with the aim of the study, the theory of Network Governance was used to highlight actors, institutional features and the enabling policy environment that supports smallholder farming in communal areas.

6.2 Summary of findings synthesis and recommendations

In Chapter 1, the background defines the taxonomy of the smallholder farmer and, in particular, the concept and challenges of communal farming areas. The chapter further outlines the problem statement, research objections and research questions. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework that guides the entire research and assists in formulating the research questions. Chapter 3 deals with the literature review that assisted the researcher in the identification of gaps in the knowledge on smallholder farming and the significance of the study. Chapter 4 provides the study research methodology and the mixed-method approach used in this study. In Chapter 5, the results and discussions provide a foundation for the conclusion, recommendation and the possibility of another research. Chapter 6 is the conclusion. It summarises the findings and related recommendations the policy implications and areas for further research.

The findings and recommendations suggest an ideal Network Governance Framework to be followed in the HGDM and similar geographic areas for effective collaborative service delivery and development of communal smallholder farmers. Further to the above, findings are discussed in line with each research objective as reiterated in the following discussion.

- **Perception and definition of smallholder farmer**

The study begins with the findings of the smallholder definition as follows:

Findings: The study identifies heterogeneity among actors' understanding of what is smallholder farming. Smallholder Farmers define themselves as farming for domestic consumption, which might be influenced by a range of social differences, citing different purposes of farming and varying typologies in focus. The above sentiments contradicted extension officer's response that smallholder farmers have an income above R50 000 but less than R1000 000 (*see figure 17*). Subsequently, the above discoveries define confusion, and unclear distorted definition of smallholder farmers created among the associated institutions.

Recommendations: The smallholder farming definition should be standardized to consider not only farm resources but the annual turnover, where a producer is called smallholder farmer than different naming such as small-scale, subsistence, and emerging farmers. Furthermore, it should be a pronouncement that does not only consider the land size but the income generated from production, which other literature has been utilised influenced by other resources and commodity types. Consequently, there should be a universal definition and title of this group of farmers as smallholder farmers or producers in terms of annual turnover.

- **Actors and their role in promoting smallholder farming in communal areas**

Despite being local, smallholder farmers as individuals or groups require external actors for support (Mnguni, Giampiccoli & Mtarupi, 2020). This study established that the actors involved in smallholder farming are LED officers, Extension Officers, Farmers, SEDA and Amakhosi. The above actors are expected to assist local farmers with different expertise to sustain their production and understand policies that affect them. However, the challenges of smallholder farming start with unclear actors' role in the promotion of smallholder farming in communal areas.

Findings: Most significantly, there is lack of actors' understanding of their role which affected the implementation of network governance and dissuaded pluralism and collaborative effort between actors. Some actors (46%) (See Table 6) define their duties as social mobilisation, which raises a concern in a non-existence of network platforms. The system displays a failure to address the issues of displaced actors as there are no leading actors that facilitate the engagement process and identify key actors in the process. It has been clear that very few actors are involved in developing smallholders in the study area as both external (50%) (See Table 3) and internal actors are identified as the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and LED municipality. The DARD has been revealed as an actor

providing production support and close to the farmers, corroborating Khwidzhili and Worth (2019) study that DARD is close to the farmers through its extension and advisory services. The dominance of DARD has not been translated into useful attraction of other actors such as NGOs, Civil society, foreign investors, and private sector in communal smallholder farming

Recommendations: The smallholder farming systems need all actors in the agriculture value chain. Subsequently, there should be actor engagement strategies and an understanding of the local context of smallholder farming. Actors should identify and design well-scheduled activities and mobilise resources through a mutual understanding. The role of private sector, LED in the local municipality, NGOs, Amakhosi AseNdlunkulu, Civil society and foreign investors need to be revised to see how they can involve and contribute meaningfully to the emancipation of smallholder farmers in the communal set up.

- **The institutional features that hinder or promote smallholder farming**

The institutional features have not been widely investigated in the literature on smallholder farming. These are formal and informal guidelines that govern the socio-economic and political affairs between actors in the smallholder farming system. The institutional features are regarded as utilitarian values, responsibility, culture and beliefs as demystified as the conduct of actors in the system. These rules and guidelines promote a collective action of actors involved and are compulsory regulations to control the behaviours of actors.

Findings: The current phenomenon favours individualism, a linear approach toward smallholder development in the study area. There is no simplified approach to how actors are identified, invited and managed in the network. Even in the cited platforms indicated by actors, the lack of congruence between actors prevents an environment where farmers are excluded and, in the process, suffer because of ineffective collaborative services. These are among the institutional features in the study that dictate a culture of individualistic institutional values, lack of collective rules and mutual trust but mostly the culture of unshared vision and unclear direction adopted by actors citing the silos approach of servicing farmers. The study reveals a mixed reaction between actors and farmers, citing that actors (63, 6%) admit to having network platforms (*see figure 21*). In contrast, most farmers indicated the lack of such platforms (FGDs responses). Subsequently, the conclusion drawn is that there are fragmented structures as the study reveals a lack of network platforms at the local and ward level (*see Figure 21*) where smallholder farming exists and operates in the study area. Subsequently, external actors are

failing to holistically and collectively address farmers' challenges citing lack of platforms for engagement and development of a set of rules and regulations guiding actors in the network.

Without networking platforms, it becomes difficult to evaluate the institutional utilitarian values, culture and beliefs. However, the relationship and the linkages between actors were used to identify the existence of values, culture and beliefs. The lack of relationships and linkages between actors prevents the challenge of duplication of services and poor monitoring and evaluation of services rendered in smallholder farming in communal areas. As much as actors (33.3%) reveal their level of satisfaction with the interaction patterns as having well adequate and as better linked with other actors (36,3%) (See Figure 22 a and b), farmers, on the other side are displaying unsatisfied with the level of interactions. The narrative above suggests a strong culture that dictates the continual dominance of solipsism, lack of rules and regulations in the system. The fragile structural position of actors in the system display no well-synergised interaction but only technically, agricultural-orientated approach exclusive of organisational development issues utilising a network governance approach.

Recommendations: Seamless individualism displayed by actors should be discouraged, and emphasis should be put on diversity and collective action with less intimidation to less-resourced institutions as might have experts. All actors should be engaged in a structured manner that promotes practical collaborative action in smallholder farming. Most significantly, there should be well-coordinated support to farmers, and the principles of network governance should be taught to all actors involved. Subsequently, effective engagement in the network should go beyond the actors' choice toward collaborative interactions that build mutual trust and accountability. Encourage a well-coordinated structure through effective facilitation by the relevant department. The study answered the question of a simplified approach by proposing that problems should be holistically identified and emerge with solid resolution on the social issue at the initial stage. Actor relations should be strengthened to advocate for the robust engagement toward effective implementation of programs grounded on mutual trust, responsibility and accountability. The entry point should be identifying actors and the leading department to facilitate networking processes. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, as labelled close to the farmers (Khwidzhili & Worth, 2019), should take the lead as a facilitator of network platforms for smallholder farmer development, albeit failed to assist farmers in attracting other actors such as NGOs, civil societies, foreign actors, the Private sector and otherwise. Redesigning institutional features is necessary to ensure that actors

adhere to legitimate decisions made on what should be the rules and regulations guiding actors' participation in the network. Institutions in the network should be guided by rules and coaxed to accommodate network governance to avoid silo approaches. The solution to sustainable smallholder farming depends on the collaborative effort that should be facilitated by one of the actors in the network. Building communal farmers' capacity should be considered an entry point to encourage them to lead their development. The capacity-building should not only be viewed as one-sided; all actors need the capacity to understand network governance.

- **Policy environment enabling networks to promote smallholder farming**

According to Mohammed (2019), public policy-making involves many actors who negotiate and bargain before political flavour concludes. Mohammed further argues that political interactions happen within the network where decision making and programs are formulated. This argument forms a most critical aspect of recommendation on smallholder farming policy environment that its developmental system does not cater for inclusion actors.

Findings: The quantitative findings reveal that actors know the policy that promotes smallholder farming networks (see Figure 24), which is disputed by the qualitative findings, which suggest limited knowledge of the policy framework by smallholder farmers. Both quantitative and qualitative findings reveal poor local actors' participation in smallholder farmer development policy and strategic making (see **Figure 26 and FGDs responses**). The current phenomenon suggests policy-making that still follows the Weberian “hierarchy” and bureaucratic approach and does not promote network governance. From the above observation, it becomes clear that a top-down approach dominates policy formulation and its related processes. The study reveals a policy environment that dissuades the views of smallholder farmers as they are not afforded the opportunity in the policy-making process. The lack of actors' participation, especially the farmers, leads to an unsustainable policy as they lack local ownership. This study reveals that policy-making embodies no political will.

Recommendations: The development of innovation policies should be informed by smallholder participation. Communal farmers should form part of the policy and strategic development as a pluralistic approach but mostly to decentralise policy formulation. The policy environment should favour both bottom-up and top-down approaches. Assiduously, policy should be localised, where the initial stage should be at the grassroots level, such as IDPs and be presented in the local language that smallholder farmers understand. Noticeably against the

top-down policy approach, the literature has long recommended different policy-making approaches to mitigate discrepancies. Among such theories is the policy cycle theory, which recommends due diligence in policy-making. Due diligence requires politicians to be drivers of a fair policy-making process, where politicians advocate for inclusiveness. Accordingly, politicians should be constantly reminded about their oversight duties. The fundamental issue is the making of policies that collaboratively address challenges and be specific to the aim and objectives.

The concept of collaborative governance and network governance has been long in the literature. However, there are still gaps decades after its implementation as influenced by the lack of understanding of the content of the theory. This calls for revamped strategies in policy-making to avoid linear processes.

6.3 Conclusion

Smallholder farming has been targeted as the sector that can contribute to the country's food security and economic transformation. However, there is a minimum effort to emancipate the above stated sector that has been long complicated by challenges of poor synergy between institutions supporting them. Among the challenges in communal farming has been the lack of beneficiation from social groups as they are traditionally labelled as formulated under shared ideas and learning from each primarily in using new technology (Mwangi & Kariuki, 2015). The relationship between communities they reside in and community-based organisations has been that of togetherness but exclusive of contribution to socio-economic empowerment (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Amazingly, the aggregated models similar to network governance in communal areas have been long promoted but effective towards funeral arrangements and most self-propelling social events. Typically, every community member knows what to perform with clear responsibility, commitment and self-interest. Worryingly, the same community does not have courage to mimic similar behaviours in smallholder farming for economic transformation. The communal areas have abandoned social-cultural practices, beliefs and norms of collectivism, with few still practising them (Nugroho, Carden & Antlov, 2018). Promisingly, some farmers continue to mix new methods with their traditional knowledge systems (Nugroho, Carden & Antlov, 2018), despite being discouraged by the use of foreign languages and scientific methods in smallholder farming. Noteworthy, the actors should understand the traditional knowledge systems and the local context.

The Network Governance Theory was adopted to guide the study objectives of identifying actors involved, an institutional feature and policy gaps for policy recommendations in smallholder farming in communal areas of HGDM. The above-stated theory recognised the pluralism and shared vision among actors involved (Kruss, 2019). Canonising the fragmented institutional structure, the study reveals the absence of institutions that should support farmers with few institutions close to the farmers. DARD, through its extension and Advisory services, has been viewed as a strong actor that is working close to the smallholder farming communities. According to Zersa et al. (2021), the extension should go beyond theoretical information but practical aspects citing farmers' preference to see first-hand workable solutions. Subsequently, the lack of capacity of DARD, LED (local municipality), and local organisations such as farmers' organisations and Amakhosi led to misunderstanding the local issues and poor usage of local knowledge that embedded culture and spirituality for the gain of smallholder farming. Undoubtedly, DARD as labelled close to communal farmers has failed to take a lead in facilitating the actors' engagement in particular smallholder farming, which contributes less to the realisation of the South African agriculture transformation agenda. Farmers should be capacitated to lead their developmental agenda than being told what to do. Worryingly, the calibre of communal farmers is far from leading, citing being dominated by retirement age and lack of capacity. LED from the local government has also been revealed as not assisting with the coordination. The challenge of local government cited by Mnguni, Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2020) and Khambule and Mtapuri (2018) was the institution's lack of expertise and capacity. The above argument defines one of many challenges that hinder the delivery of services to communities (Mazibuko & Fourie, 2013). The local government is not expected to have hindrances as a sphere that is locally based on dealing close with community needs and expectations (Koma, 2010). According to Msomi, Reddy & Zondi (2018), local government has a developmental role in coordinating service delivery through multi-actor engagement to promote accountability and democracy.

The current phenomenon in smallholder farming in the communal area suggests an institutional feature that has no regulations and guiding policies for actors' interactions, which led to inadequate support for farmers. The study has identified the lack of network platforms, individualistic actors' behaviours and lack of values, culture and rules, which defines a fragmented institutional arrangement that contributes the poor collective actions and decision making. The above-stated discrepancies are the institutional features that hinder collaborative support and development to smallholder farmers. Critical to the institutional features (ethical

conduct, culture and beliefs, rules and regulations and collective action) are individual and group expectations, the purpose of interactions and behaviours of actors in the platform. Noteworthy, the Multi-Actors Platforms should be instrumental for actors to develop utilitarian values, culture and beliefs that promote flexibility for effective interaction, collaboration, and contest.

The study suggests that network governance in the policy-making process ought to include the local actors. Debatable policy-making is a regular exercise that should integrate all spheres of government but primarily apolitical and consultative processes in assessing outputs and outcomes. Surprisingly, policy-making does not consider smallholder farmers, albeit such policy is formulated and reviewed against the farmers' objectives and targets. Due to the complex nature of policy-making, collectively, actors need to decide on what should be the successful policy process for the attainment of anticipated results. The lack of network governance theory implementation in the study area calls for the revamping and revitalisation of processes in policy-making. The circumstances are driven by the bureaucratic process of the upper structure, which does not accommodate many grassroots-level actors. The study revealed a policy-making approach that is not characterised by sequential stages of intelligence, recommendations, applications and appraisals (Davis, 2003). Yami et al. (2021) suggests that actors could successfully participate in agricultural policy processes to overcome institutional dynamism, as displayed in a country like Uganda. Policy and service delivery are formulated through the interdependency of actors in the network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012).

Ironically after nearly three decades of democracy, South African policy development has been seeking to promote socio-economic inclusion without innovative policy systems (Petersen and Kruss, 2019). Although the statement is overgeneralised and contradictory to the South African policy development, there are fragments of truth that social policy has not been effective and innovative enough in reducing poverty and unemployment (Gumede, 2019). The motive behind the above statement is that South Africa's policy processes, in some instances, displayed a government system that excludes actors, especially at the grassroots level (Mbokazi, 2018).

As an exit point, it becomes relevant that network governance should be strengthened at the grassroots level to reduce bureaucratic processes and promote a bottom-up approach during policy formulation. The limiting factors of policy-making are the dichotomies of politics versus bureaucracy, process versus content, and consultation versus engagements (Davis, 2003). As contemporary history suggests, the public should be part of a policy process in chronological

order between stages such as agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation and termination (Mohammed, 2019; Fischer, Miller & Sidney, 2007).

6.4 Recommendations for further study

The hindering issue that defines the institutional feature is the capacity of external actors to aggregate their effort toward the development of smallholder farmers in communal areas. A participatory study is required to investigate further the institutional features as it was hard to point out values and norms in a situation with less platforms and poor collaboration of actors in the same developmental area. Further research is needed to evaluate the capacity challenges of actors not excluding farmers to execute network governance principles in the smallholder development, albeit identified as highly qualified personnel in the study area. The above statement is influenced by actors' inability to execute collaborative approaches. The study has not looked at the more profound courses of poor network governance as it was not among the objectives. A further study should also investigate the limiting factors at an individual level and institutional level, as it was not clearly defined when evaluating institutional features at a network or system level even though external actors' education has been revealed as highly educated personnel.

The literature has proven that smallholder farming in Africa has been the pillar of food security against all multifaceted challenges of ineffective policy and a lack of consultation with local actors. Consequently, this study needs to be pursued to the level of policy-makers to hear their view about the findings and how they seek to address concerns raised by the respondents. Furthermore, the study reveals a sector that has been part of the history of rural agriculture. The pertinent question is how these communal farmers have been resilient over the years of hardship, citing challenges of poor institutional arrangement, and what other scholars relate to as lack of land, markets, and rural credits, and knowledge gaps between smallholder farmers and commercial farmers. The smallholder communal farmers' resilience can be attributed to the indigenous knowledge that farmers have been passing on from one generation to another. However, the above statement remains an assumption and needs further investigation to contribute to the sustainability of smallholder communal farming.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Gate Keepers letter (DALRRD)



**agriculture, land reform
& rural development**

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCIAL SHARED SERVICES CENTER
Port Shepstone District Office, 41 Nelson Mandela Drive, Port Shepstone, 4240
Tel: 039 – 682 2295; Fax: 039 – 682 0509

Mr. P Garane
KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Umzimkhulu Office

Dear Mr P. Garane

RE: LETTER OF APPROVAL (GATEKEEPERS LETTER) FOR MR. P GARANE TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH: RESEARCH FOR MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WITH PROJECT OFFICERS IN HARRY GWALA DISTRICT (UBUHLEBEZWE, UMZIMKHULU & DR NDZ LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES).

I have read and understand the information submitted in your letter dated 25 June 2020. I hereby give consent to use **Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development** as a case study for the purposes of this research project with the **University of KwaZulu – Natal**.

Approval is hereby granted to contact **Project Officers** within **Harry Gwala District Office** for data collection / interviews.

For further assistance, please contact Ms N. Radebe on 039 – 682 2295.

PP

Mr. N.C. Mndaweni

Chief Director: KZN PSSC

Date: 20/07/2020

Appendix B: Gate Keepers letter (UMzimkhulu Local Municipality)

169 Main Street
Private Bag 53
Umzimkhulu
3297



Email: info@umzimkhulu.gov.za
Tel: (039) 259 5000/5300
Fax: (039) 259 0427

STRATEGIC, PLANNING, HOUSING, LED & TOURISM DEPARTMENT

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
KZN 438

Enquiries: Ms N. Tyekela

25th AUGUST 2020

Mr P Garane

P.O Box 527

UMzimkhulu

3297

Dear Garane

GATEKEEPER'S LETTER: PARTICIPATION OF UMZIMKHULU IN THE CASE STUDY RESEARCH

It is with pleasure that I advised that your permission is hereby granted for you to conduct a case study research for your Master of Public Administration (MPA) at the UMzimkhulu local municipality. This permission is based on the information which you provided with regards to your registration status at UKZN even though its missing your ethical clearance. The topic of your study is said to be:

"Networks in smallholder farming communities: identifying the actors for policy development in KwaZulu-Natal Province, Harry Gwala District"

Kindly receive the list of LED officials that are dealing with small business and smallholder farmer development as per your request.

Kindly note that should the scope of your research or any of this information change, you will have to notify and / or obtain further approval from Ms N. Tyekela at Nwabisa.tyekela@umzikhululm.gov.za

I wish you well in your studies

Yours faithfully


MS N. TYEKELA

MANAGER: STRATEGIC PLANNING, HOUSING AND LED

Appendix C: Gate Keepers Letter (Cogta)



cogta

Department:
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Tel. 039 834 2400/08 Fax. 039 8342405
Postal. Private Bag X 506, Ixopo, 3276
Office. L12 Stuartstown, Fnb Centre, Cnr Margaret and
mercail Street, Ixopo, 3276.

TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: HARRY GWALA LOCAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

Enquire:
Imibuzo: W.T. Nkomo
Navrae:

My Reference:
Inkomba Yam: P. Garane
My Verwysing:

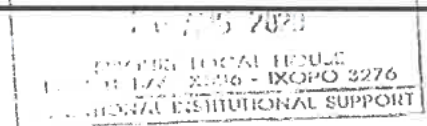
Date:
Usuku: 20.08.2020
Datum:

MR. P. GARANE

White city

UMzimkhulu

3297



Dear Mr Garane

APPROVAL LETTER FOR MR P. GARANE TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH FOR MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WITH AMAKHOSI ASENDLUNKULU IN HARRY GWALA DISTRICT.

1. Motivating for the above mentioned subject, Mr Phumezile Garane ID NO.: 7901195615085 and UKZN student number: 218083513, has been granted approval to conduct a his academic research for the Masters of Public Administraton (MPA) with University of KwaZulu-Natal, year 2020/202.
2. The official is required to fulfil and adhere to the following restrictions:
 - The COVID-19 regulations are declared by Disaster Management Act (Act No. 57 of 2002) as National State of Disaster: protect public and participants, Social distancing, wearing of masks, use of sanitizers during interviews. If possible avoid contact by utilizing e-mailed questionnaires, electronically interviews.
 - To research ethics and Code of protecting identity of participants and should provide the consent form to the aMakhosi participating.
3. The Department reverse the right the to ristRICT access to files that of sensitive nature and access to classified information is prohibited. and write

4. Herewith, Mr P. Garane is granted permission to do interviews with selected amakhosi at Harry Gwala District. Consequently, this approval letter will sincerely be used for data collection as per narrative above and be presented in cases of resistance.

Kind Regards

PP / 

Mr T.S. Biyela

District Deputy Director

Harry Gwala District Office

Appendix D: Gate Keepers letter (KZNDARD)



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DIRECTORATE:

EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES

01 Cedars Road, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

KZN Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, Private Bag 39059, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

Tel: 033 343 8022 / 076 510 7400

Fax: 033 3559 121

TO: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

GATE-KEEPER LETTER APPROVAL: FOR MR PHUMEZILE GARANE: IDENTITY NUMBER: 79011956150065

This is to confirm that Mr Phumezile Garane a Masters of Public Administration Candidate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal with Student Number: 218083513, contacted our office to obtain an approval to interview relevant officials in our organization on "Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for policy development in KwaZulu-Natal Province, Harry Gwala District."

Therefore, having considered his proposal as one that will add value to models of our organization, I, Z. N. Dlamini do hereby grant Mr. Phumezile Garane (Student Number: 218083513) permission to interview officials in my organization for the purpose of conducting his research for his Masters of Public Administration in Agricultural Extension.

Signed: Z. N. Dlamini at HILTON

Capacity: CD

On the 24 day of July 2020

Kind regards



MR ZN DLAMINI

CHIEF DIRECTOR: AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

24/07/2020

DATE

Appendix E: Ethical Clearance



30 October 2020

Mr Phumezile Garane (218083513)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Garane,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001927/2020

Project title: Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for policy development in KwaZulu-Natal province, Harry Gwala District.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 08 September 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL on the following condition:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 30 October 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research/Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix F: Consent letter

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Phumezile Garane from the school of Management, Information Technology and Governance University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Westville, Durban.

You are being invited to consider participating in a research on the networks in smallholder farming to identify the actors for policy development in KwaZulu-Natal. The main aim of the study is to examine the effect of network governance in the development of smallholder farming. It is noteworthy that the research also seeks to evaluate the complexity of institutional arrangement and their contribution to smallholder farming. Among the issues to be studied is the actor's role and relationships in the network towards smallholder farming. Furthermore, the study will identify the policy gaps at an institutional level and the system-level through interrogation of current agriculture policies and related smallholder developmental approach. This research is conducted in communal areas of three local municipalities (Umzimkhulu, UBuhlebezwe and Dr NDZ Local Municipalities), which exclude Greater Kokstad Local Municipalities. This research will include diverse stakeholders involved in smallholder farming. These actors are individual smallholder farmers, smallholder organisations or associations, Agricultural Advisors (Extension Officers), Deputy Directors as Managers of local agricultural offices, Led managers officers in the local municipalities, District directors of Harry Gwala Agricultural office and Traditional Leaders as custodians of communal land. The duration of your participation if you choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be 4 to 8 months.

The study may involve the following some risks and/or discomforts and/or confusion. If participants are confused by the question, fill free to call the person doing the research for clarity. Questions requires your honest, and it will be very assisting if you answer according to what you know, not what others think. The participants might feel some questions are requesting too much details, whilst others might be reserved or carried away as they relate to some issues raised in questions. Some of the questions have follow ups question, please go through a question before answering it. We hope that the study will create the following benefits, it would address the policy gaps and promote the holistic approach when actors develop smallholder farming. The study benefits solely depend on your loyalty in answering the questions, which assist in correct research findings that expected to be helpfully to others and in the future. Noteworthy, the study will provide no direct benefits to participants.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0844042013 / 0768217071 or 218082513@stu.ukzn.ac.za or My supervisor Prof. Mubangizi at Mubangizi@ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

Appendix G: Questionnaire



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**
**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

Master's in Public Administration Programme
**School of Management, Information Technology and
Governance**
College of Law and Management Studies

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACTORS INVOLVED IN SMALLHOLDER
FARMING**

Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for Policy Development in KwaZulu-Natal province, Harry Gwala District Municipality.

Researcher: Phumezile Garane

Mobile: 0844042013 / 0768217071

E-mail: 218083513@ukzn.ac.za / Phumezig@gmail.com

Questionnaire No:

--	--

Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for policy development in KwaZulu-Natal province, Harry Gwala District Municipality.

INFORMATION LEAFLET:

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please follow instruction written in each question of this questionnaire. If you are getting confused by the question, feel free to call the person doing this research for clarity. Questions requires your honesty, and it will be very assisting if you answer according to what you know not what others think. Some of the questions have follow ups questions, please go through a question before answering it. The questionnaire needs to be returned to the researcher before the 14 of September 2020 as they still need to be analysed and interpreted. Your loyalty in answering questions will assist in correct research findings that will be helpful to others in the future. Please use a pencil to fill up the questionnaire.

Please note, the information provided will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality.

INTERVIEWER DECLARATION:

I, declare that I have asked this questionnaire as it has been laid out. I declare that all responses which have been recorded are the true responses of the respondent and that I have fully checked the questionnaire.

Signature:

Date:

PARTICIPANT CONSENT:

I, agree to take part in the aforementioned survey. I understand that my responses to this survey will be treated with the strictest confidence. I further understand that I will not receive any compensation for taking part in this study.

Signature:

Date:

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Respondent name: _____

Contact number: _____

Date: _____

Name of the Farm/company/ Department: _____

Job title: _____

Area/location of farm/cooperative/s: _____

Size of the farm/s: _____

Instructions: Mark the appropriate block with an X or write your answer in the provided space where applicable.

Personal details and cooperative/s information

1.1 Gender

(a) Male	1		
(b) Female	2		

1.2 Age

(a) 31-35	4		
(b) 36-40	5		
(c) 41-50	6		
(d) 51-60	7		
(e) 61 or older	8		

1.3 Ethnic group

(a) Caucasian/White	1		
---------------------	---	--	--

(b) African/Black	2		
(c) Indian	3		
(d) Mixed Ancestry/Coloured	4		

1.4 What is your highest level of education?

(a) Never been to school	1		
(b) Grade R to grade 8	2		
(c) Grade 9 to grade 11	3		
(d) Matriculated	4		
(e) National certificate	5		
(f) Tertiary qualification	6		

1.5 (a) Are you assisting or involved in any smallholder farming?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

1.5 (b) If yes to question 1.5 (a), How many cooperative/s you are involved with?

--	--	--

1.6 How long have you been working in/with smallholder farmers?

(a) Less than 5 years	1		
(b) More than 5 years, but less than 10 years	2		
(c) More than 10 years, but less than 20 years	3		
(d) More than 20 years	4		

1.7 (a) Do you understand the definition of smallholder farming or farmer?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

1.7 (b) If yes, what is your understanding? Please give your answer below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

SECTION 2: THE ACTORS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS IN SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER FARMING IN COMMUNAL AREAS

2.1 (a) Do you or your institution render or receive any service in smallholder farming in the area of study?

(a) Yes	1		
---------	---	--	--

(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

2.1 (b) If Yes, what is your role in smallholder farming in the area?

(a) Agricultural advisor	1		
(b) Mentor	2		
(c) Financial service provider	3		
(d) Farmer	4		
(e) Other	5		

2.1 (c) If other, please specify

--	--	--	--

2.2 (a) Do you understand your role in smallholder farming in your area of duty?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

2.2 (b) If yes, what is your understanding of such roles? Select all that apply.

(a) Social mobilization	4		
(b) Institutional development	5		
(c) Policy Advocacy	6		
(d) Coordination and networking	7		
(e) Information dissemination to farmers	2		
(f) Facilitating the interaction in the platforms	4		
(g) Funding of smallholder farmers	5		
(h) Others	6		

2.2 (c) If other to question 2.2 (b), Please specify.

.....
.....
.....
.....

2.3 (a) Are there any actors and stakeholders involved in smallholder farming development you / or your institution/s are working with?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

2.3 (b) If Yes, what are these actors and stakeholders? Select all that apply.

(a) Department of Agriculture	1		
-------------------------------	---	--	--

(b) NGOs	2		
(c) Private funder	3		
(d) Local Municipality	4		
(e) Farmers' organisation	5		
(f) Others	6		

2.3 (c) If other, please specify by listing the names

.....
.....
.....
.....

2.4 (a) Do you / your institution have a relationship with other actors in smallholder farming?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

2.4 (b) If yes, what is your institutional relationship with other actors on the smallholder farming?

Very weak	Moderate	Good	Very strong	Don't know	
1	2	3	4	5	

2.5 (c) Please give a reason for your answer in question 2.4 (b).

.....

SECTION 3: Institutional features that hinder or promote smallholder farming development in communal areas

3.1 (a) Do you interact with other organisation for the development of smallholder farming in the area of study?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

3.1 (b) If yes, what are your interacting about in the smallholder farming in the area of study?

(a) New varieties of seeds	1		
(b) New information on farming	2		
(c) Support in disaster and economic stress	3		
(d) Improve finance and general management	4		
(e) Others	5		

3.1 (c) If others, please specify

.....

.....

.....

3.2 (a) Are there any existing networking platforms where actors engage in the development of smallholder farming in the area?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

3.2 (b) If yes, on what levels do these platforms exist? Select all that apply.

Provincial	District level	Local municipality	Ward level	Farm level	Don't know	
1	2	3	4	5	6	

3.3 (a) What are the patterns of interaction that exist between actors in the platform/s?

(a) Better linked	1		
(b) Moderate linked	2		
(c) Weakly linked	3		
(d) Nothing	5		

3.3 (b) Please give a reason for your answer in question 3.3 (a).

.....

3.4 (a) Are you satisfied with actor's involvement in the network of development of smallholder farming?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

3.4 (b) If Yes, what is your level of satisfaction?

Neutral	Mildly satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know	
1	2	3	4	5	

3.5 (a) What do you consider as the strongest actor in the network?

(a) Department of agriculture	1		
(b) NGO's	2		
(c) Local Municipality	3		
(d) Private sector	4		
(e) Farmers organisation	5		
(f) Others	6		

3.5 (b) If other, please specify by writing the name

.....

3.5 (c) Why do you consider your selected actor the strongest?

.....

3.6 (a) Do you see actors sustaining their engagement in the development of smallholder farming?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

3.6 (b) If Yes / No, please explain the reason of your answer

.....

SECTION 4: POLICY ENVIRONMENT ENABLING NETWORKS THAT PROMOTE AND SUSTAIN SMALLHOLDER FARMING

4.1 (a) Do you know about policies that promote actors interaction and networking for smallholder farming?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

4.1 (b) If yes, what is your experience and understanding of such polices?

.....

4.2 (a) Do you participate in the formulation of policies and strategies for smallholder development?

(a) Yes, a little	1		
(b) Yes, a lot	2		
(c) No	3		

4.2 (b) If yes, where and how do you participate?

.....

4.3 (a) Would you like to form part of the committee that makes these policies?

5 Yes	1		
6 No	2		
7 I don't know	3		

4.3 (b) If Yes/ No, what is the reason of your answer?

.....

4.4 (a) Are these policies and strategies addressing smallholder challenges in communal areas?

(a) Yes	1		
---------	---	--	--

(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

4.4 (b) If yes, which aspect of such policies addresses smallholder challenges?

.....

4.5 (a) What do you consider as a biggest obstacle in the policy that promote networking?
 Select two (2) items to answers this question.

Formulation	Implementation	Review	Political will	I don't know	other	
1	2	3	4	5	6	

4.5 (b) Please specify the reason for your answers.

.....

4.6 (a) Do you consider network governance as useful in policy making for smallholder farming?

(a) Yes	1		
(b) No	2		
(c) I don't know	3		

4.6 (b) If Yes to question 4.5 (a), Please specify

.....

4.6 (c) If No to question 4.5 (a), Please specify.

.....
.....
.....

Appendix H: Interview guide



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**
**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

Master's in Public Administration Programme

School of Management, Information Technology and Governance

College of Law and Management Studies

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL SMALLHOLDER FARMERS, FOCUS
GROUP AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

**(DLIWANO NDLEBE KUNYE NABALIMI ABAZIMELE, INTLANGANO ZABALIMI
KUNYE NAMAKHOSI ASENDLUNKULU)**

Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for Policy Development in KwaZulu-Natal province, Harry Gwala District Municipality.

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Networks in smallholder farming communities: Identifying the actors for policy development in KwaZulu-Natal province, Harry Gwala District Municipality.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please follow instruction in each question of this interview. The interviewer may not follow the sequence of questions as displayed in this guide. Questions requires your honesty, and it will be very assisting if participants answer according to what they know not what others think. Some of the questions have follow-ups question, interviewer must persuade the participants to give an in-depth answer to the question. Interviewer must not be bias and guide participant to his / her way of thinking. Your loyalty of the interviewer and interviewee is paramount to the correct research findings and conclusion thereof. Please use a notebook to record the answer. If possible, a request of permission to do an audio recording need to be considered for accurate data collection.

Please note, the information provided and captured should be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality.

Sicela ulandele imininingwane kumbuzo ngamunye obuzwayo koludliwano-ndlebe. Ozobuza imibuzo angangakulandelezi imibuzo ngendlela ebhalwe ngayo kwiphepha lemibuzo. Imibuzo idinga impendulo enyanisekile kungasiza xa obuzwa umbuzo andaphendula ngendlela azingayo kunokuphendula ngedlela abanye abacabanga ngayo. Eminye imimbuzo ingalandelwa yeminye edinga ichaziyo ukuze kutholakale inqikithi yempendulo kulombuzo. Obuza imibuzo akufuneki acheme okanye aphoqelegele ophendulayo kuhlanothi lwakhe njengo buzayo. Ukunyaniseka nokwethembeka kobuza imibuzo nophendulayo kuba lulekile kwiziphumo eziyizo zolucwaningo. Kuyanxuswa ukuthi uqophe phantsi zonke izimpendulo. Kubalulekile ukucela imvume kuqala yokuqopha amazwi abantu ababambe iqaza kolucwaningo.

Niyanxuswa ukuthi loku olutholakele kwaqosha kolucwaningo, kungcinwe kuyifihlo.

1. Personal details and information (English Question)

- What do you consider as your gender, age, ethnic group, and level of Education?
- Are you assisting or involved in any smallholder farming?
- How long have you been working in/with smallholder farmers?

Imininingwane ekhombisa wena noLwazi lwakho (Umbuzo ngesiZulu)

- *Ngokwakho buyini ubulili bakho, iminyaka, ubuhlanga bakho, izinga lemfundo yakho?*
- *Ingabe uyingxenye kumbe uyazibandakanya kunoma yiluphi uhlobo lokulima okusathuthuka?*
- *Singakanani isikhathi usebenza kumbe uyingxenye nabalimi abasathuthuka kwezolimo?*

2. The actors and their relationships in supporting smallholder farming in communal areas (English question)

- Do you know of any institution that renders or receives any service in smallholder farming in this area? Can you please list them?
- What do you think or understand as their role in the smallholder farming in your area?
- Do you think or / see these actors or / stakeholders in smallholder farming as working together? What is your relationship with these actors on smallholder farming?

Izinhlaka/zikhungo nobudlelane bazo ekuthuthukiseni izindawo zasemakhaya (Umbuzo ngesiZulu).

- *Zikhona izikhungo ozaziyo eziletha noma ezisiza ekulethweni kwentuthuko yezolimo olusathuthuka kulendawo? Ungakwazi ukuzibala?*
- *Yini oyicabangayo kumbe oyiqondayo njengomsebenzi ezizikhungo eziwenzayo endaweni?*
- *Ungabe ucabanga kumbe ubona lezikhungo zokuthuthukiswa kwezolimo zisebenzisana? Buyini ubudlelwano bakho nalezinhlaka kumbe izikhungo ezisebenza ngokwezolimo?*

3. Institutional features hindering or promoting smallholder farming development in communal areas (English Question)

- Do you interact with other actors for the development of smallholder farming in the area? And what are you interacting about in smallholder farming in the area of study?
- Where do you meet for engagement and interaction (like networking platforms) in the development of smallholder farming in the area?
- What do you consider such platform/s of interaction that exists between actors in the platform/s? (What do you consider the strongest and weak actor in the network?)

- Do you see actors sustaining their engagement in the development of smallholder farming?

Izim pawu zezikhungo / izinhlaka ezigqoguzela kumbe ezivimba ukuthuthukiswa kwabalimi abafufusayo ezindaweni zasemakhaya (Umbuzo ngesiZulu).

- *Ngabe uyaxhumana wena/ nina nezikhungo zentuthuko endaweni?*
- *Yini enixhumana ngayo maqondana nokuthuthukiswa kwezolimo endaweni?*
- *Nihlanganela kuphi ukudingida izindaba zentuthuko yezolimo endaweni (lapho nidingida khona izindaba zenu)?*
- *Ingabe uzibuka ziluqilima noma zintengantenga izingxoxo zezikhungo?*
- *Ubona ziphumelela kepha zihlulela izikhungo ezingxoxweni zazo zokuthuthukisa ezolimo kwabasafufusa endaweni?*

4. Policy environment enabling network that promote smallholder farming (English Question)


- Do you know about policies that promote actor's interaction and networking for smallholder farming? What is your experience and understanding of such policies?
- Do you participate in the formulation of policies and strategies for smallholder development? (*Question may be extended by where, how and why. Also the interest to form part of the committee that makes these policies*)
- Are agriculture policies and strategies addressing smallholder challenges in communal areas? (*The answer and reasoning should be further interrogated*).
- What do you think or consider as a biggest obstacle in the policy that promotes smallholder farming?
- Do you think different actors are useful in policy-making for smallholder farming? (*Answers should be further interrogated*). What is your suggested effective approach for policy to address involvement of all actors in smallholder farming?

Indawo yokuxhumana ngenqubo-mgomo egqoguzela abalimi abafufusayo (Umbuzo ngesiZulu).

- *Kukhona okwaziyo ngenqubo-mgomo egqoguzela ukuxhumana kwezinhlaka ezahlukene ezidingida izindaba zengezolimo? Singakanani isipiliyoni sakho nokuqonda kwakho mayelana naleyo nqubo-mgomo?*

- *Ngabe uyazibandakanya ekwakhekeni kwenqubo-mgomo kanye namasu okuthuthukisa balimi? (Lombuzo ungaqhubezwa ngokuthi kuphi, kanjani, ngobani. Okunye futhi intshisekelo yokuba yingxenye yamakomiti elenza inqubo-mgomo)*
- *Ngabe inqubo-mgomo namasu eZolimo kuyakhulumisana yini nezingqinamba zasezindaweni zasemakhaya (Impendulo nokuqonda kulombuzo kumele kuphenyisiswe kabanzi).*
- *Yini ocabanga kumbe oyibana iyisithikabezo noma inselelo ezinkulu kwinqubo-mgomo ethuthukisa noma egqugquzela ezolimo?*
- *Ngokucabanga kwakho, ngabe izinhlaka ezahlukene kwezolimo ziwusizo ekwakhiweni kwenqubo-mgomo yezolimo labasafufusa? (Impendulo nokuqonda kulombuzo kumele kuphenyisiswe kabanzi).*
- *Ngokwakho ukubona, iyiphi indlela enempumelelo ongayiphakamisa engenza zonke izinhlaka zabalimi abafufusayo bazibandakanye ekwakhiweni kwinqubo-mgomo?*

Appendix I: Certificate of Editing

<table border="1"><tr><td>B</td><td>S</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>C</td></tr></table>	B	S	C	C	BE STILL COMMUNICATIONS For effective communication solutions	bestillcommunications@gmail.com +27835641854, +27618043021
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