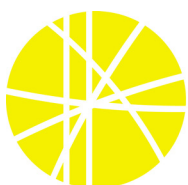


DESIGNING  
SOCIAL CAPITAL  
SENSITIVE  
PARTICIPATION  
METHODOLOGIES

Tristan Claridge June 2004



SOCIAL CAPITAL  
RESEARCH

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Social Capital Research  
20 Allandale Road  
Saint Clair, Dunedin  
New Zealand  
Tel.: +64 (0)22 018 9043  
Email: [info@socialcapitalresearch.com](mailto:info@socialcapitalresearch.com)  
[www.socialcapitalresearch.com](http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com)

Social Capital Research

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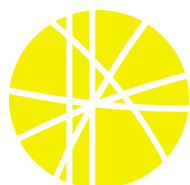
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# ABSTRACT

Participation methodologies have been evolving and improving since first gaining international recognition in the 1960s. Despite these improvements there are still genuine concerns and criticisms of participation, particularly surrounding its application and effectiveness. The recent advent of social capital theory provides another lens for the analysis and ensuing improvement of participation methodologies. Social capital theory encompasses the notion that our social relationships are productive in nature; that is, 'capital'. The theory describes the various dimensions of the complex social world that enable this capital. Both participation and social capital theories have many similarities; both are poorly defined, conceptualized and operationalized in both debate and application. The two concepts are highly context specific and highly complex. Individually, the concepts still require further analysis to answer key questions, particularly about appropriate application. Jointly, little work has been done to identify the impacts that they have on each other and particularly how social capital benefits can be maximized in participatory methodologies.

This study explored the theories with extensive literature reviews of each concept before breaking new ground with an integration of the two theories. This synthesis was then applied to a case study; an IFAD funded project in Zimbabwe. The project's participatory methodology was analysed through the lens of social capital theory. The participatory methods analysed included; focus groups, public meetings, information dissemination and questionnaires. The analysis highlighted the potential importance of social capital sensitive participatory methodologies. Despite the efforts of the project development team, there were numerous oversights or missed opportunities where the project and community could have benefited from variations to the methodology used. It was found that by providing opportunities for repeat interaction in the participatory methodologies, social capital benefits could be maximised. It was also stressed that any social capital sensitive participatory methodology is by definition local context specific and application of such methods require careful analysis of the local context in which it is being applied.



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**Table 1.** Four views of social capital (Source: Woolcock and Narayan 2000)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Participation methodologies have been evolving and improving since first gaining international recognition in the 1960s. Despite these improvements there are still genuine concerns and criticisms of participation, particularly surrounding its application and effectiveness. The recent advent of social capital theory provides another lens for the analysis and ensuing improvement of participation methodologies. Social capital theory encompasses the notion that our social relationships are productive in nature; that is, 'capital'. The theory describes the various dimensions of the complex social world that enable this capital. Both participation and social capital theories have many similarities; both are poorly defined, conceptualized and operationalized in both debate and application. The two concepts are highly context specific and highly complex. Individually, the concepts still require further analysis to answer key questions, particularly about appropriate application. Jointly, little work has been done to identify the impacts that they have on each other and particularly how social capital benefits can be maximized in participatory methodologies.

This study explores the theories with extensive literature reviews of each concept before breaking new ground with an integration of the two theories. This synthesis is then applied to a case study; an IFAD funded project in Zimbabwe. The project's participatory methodology are analysed through the lens of social capital theory. The participatory methods analysed included; focus groups, public meetings, information dissemination and questionnaires. The analysis highlights the potential importance of social capital sensitive participatory methodologies.

The first section outlines the methodology this study follows before an overview of the case study. The discussion section firstly

includes an integration of social capital and participation theories before applying this integration to the case study participatory methodologies. The case study discussion is split into 4 sections: focus groups, public meetings, information dissemination and questionnaires. The final section includes a long description of the recommendations coming from the case study findings before identifying the overall conclusions of the study.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

Primary data analysis was ruled out as an option for this study as both participation and social capital are abstract in nature and do not lend themselves to meaningful or rigorous quantitative or qualitative measurement. Secondary data analysis was therefore used and a rigorous method of literature identification and review was undertaken. Databases were selected from a range of disciplines including sociology, economics, political science and anthropology. The extensive literature reviews provided a sound platform for further exploring the integration of social capital and participation theories and for application to the case study. As both concepts are complex and poorly defined and conceptualized in the literature, this study firstly, will review literature on each concept to gain a more thorough understanding of the concepts. These literature reviews will draw out questions that will be explored in the discussion chapter that will synthesis the literature and apply it to a case study.

A case study approach provides an opportunity to apply the literature on the concepts to real situations. For the purposes of this study, a case study in a developing country context was selected and findings from this case study were applied to the developed country context. A suitable case study was chosen that includes clear participatory

methodologies and identification of their outcomes, appropriate for the illustration of the findings of the literature review synthesis. Chapter 4 outlines the details of the case study situation.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY

#### 3.1.1 EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY

Social capital's intellectual history has deep and diverse roots which can be traced to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Adam and Roncevic 2003). The idea is connected with thinkers such as Tocqueville, J.S. Mill, Toennies, Durkheim, Weber, Locke, Rousseau and Simmel (Bankston and Zhou 2002; Brewer 2003; Lazega and Pattison 2001; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Putnam 1995). The term explains a commonly used adage: 'it's not what you know, it's who you know', and thus the concept is not new, but the term has only been coined fairly recently (Labonte 1999; Lazega and Pattison 2001; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Putnam 1995).

The first use of the term has been traced to Hanifan in 1916 however others have identified Jacobs (1961) (Felkins 2002), Loury (1977) (Lappe *et al.* 1997; Leeder and Dominello 1999), and the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects (Schuller *et al.* 2000). Routledge and Amsberg (2003) identified that Hanifan used the term 'capital' specifically to highlight the importance of the social structure to people with a business and economics perspective. It was not until the early 1990s that the concept gained widespread recognition with the writings of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993), who are considered the contemporary authors on social capital.

#### 3.1.2 CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS ON SOCIAL CAPITAL

The contemporary authors commonly cited are Pieere Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam (Carroll and Stanfield 2003; Lang and Hornburg 1998). Adam and Roncevic (2003) cite the release of his well-known book *Distinction* published in French in 1979 as the origination of the modern notion of social capital. Bourdieu's definition of social capital could be described as 'egocentric' as it is considered in the broader framework of symbolic capital and of critical theories of class societies (Wall *et al.* 1998). Bourdieu defines social capital as

*'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word' (Bourdieu 1986, web page).*

James Coleman, a sociologist with strong connections to economics through rational-choice theory (Jackman and Miller 1998; Li *et al.* 2003; Schuller *et al.* 2000), draws together insights from both sociology and economics in his definition of social capital:

*'Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure' (Coleman 1988, p. S98).*

Coleman's work represents an important shift from Bourdieu's individual outcomes

(as well as in network-based approaches) to outcomes for groups, organizations, institutions or societies which represents a tentative shift from egocentric to sociocentric (refer to table 1) (Adam and Roncevic 2003; Cusack 1999; McClenaghan 2000). Coleman extended the scope of the concept from Bourdieu's analysis of the elite to encompass the social relationships of non-elite groups (Schuller *et al.* 2000).

Robert Putnam, a political scientist was responsible for popularizing the concept of social capital through the study of civic engagement in Italy (Boggs 2001; Schuller *et al.* 2000). In *Making Democracy Work* (Putnam *et al.* 1993) the authors explore the differences between regional governance in the north and south of Italy, the explanatory variable being civic community. The next of Putnam's work focused on the decline in civic engagement in the United States (Schuller *et al.* 2000). Like Coleman, Putnam was extensively involved in empirical research and formulation of indicators and was responsible for the development of the widely applied measure so-called 'Putnam instrument' (Adam and Roncevic 2003; Paldam and Svendsen 2000). Putnam's arguments have been criticized as circular and tautological – simultaneously a cause and effect (Pope 2003; Portes 1998).

The current works on social capital represent early attempts to identify and conceptualize this complex theory. Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002a) suggested that the social capital model may currently be at the same early stage that human capital theory was thirty or forty years ago. By the late 1990s the number of studies of social capital increased significantly. It could be generalized that much of this work lacked rigor and did not take into account the multi-dimensional nature of social capital. Much of the work was piece-meal in nature, simply applying an approach to a discipline or area of interest. The role of Putnam's research in this

process was significant. Putnam's work, while popularizing the concept, led to a significant weakening of the conceptualization and operationalization of the concept. Coleman's earlier work provided a more thorough path towards conceptualization and operationalization. Putnam however, applied a single proxy analysis of social capital and applied it to good governance. Seen as the foremost expert on social capital at the time, many authors followed in his footsteps, and Putnam's lack of rigor was replicated in piece-meal works across a variety of disciplines (Claridge, 2004). Putnam is not solely to blame for this situation, which is due mostly to the complexity and attractiveness of the concept of social capital. The result was a plethora of definitions and operationalization of the concept that led to the theory itself being questioned. From this work many recent authors have synthesized a more rigorous framework for the conceptualization and operationalization of the concept, but much work is left to be done if social capital theory is to provide a meaningful contribution in all its facets.

### 3.1.3 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The commonalities of most definitions of social capital are that they focus on social relations that have productive benefits. The variety of definitions identified in the literature stem from the highly context specific nature of social capital and the complexity of its conceptualization and operationalization. There is no commonly agreed definition of social capital and the definition adopted by any given study seems to depend on the discipline and level of investigation (Robison *et al.* 2002). Social capital is commonly identified in terms of discipline, level of study and context and definitions vary depending on whether they focus on the substance, the sources, or the effects of social capital (Adler and Kwon 2002; Field *et al.* 2000; Robison *et*



*al.* 2002). Adler and Kwon (2002) identified that the core intuition guiding social capital research is that the goodwill that others have toward us is a valuable resource. As such they define social capital as ‘the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor’s social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor’ (Adler and Kwon 2002, p. 23). Dekker and Uslaner (2001) posited that social capital is fundamentally about how people interact with each other.

### 3.1.4 CAPITAL DEBATE

There is considerable controversy in the literature over the use of the term ‘capital’ (Falk and Kilpatrick 1999; Hofferth *et al.* 1999; Inkeles 2000; Lake and Huckfeldt 1998; Schmid 2000; Smith and Kulynych 2002). Social capital is similar to other forms of capital in that it can be invested with the expectation of future returns (Adler and Kwon 1999), is appropriable (Coleman 1988), is convertible (Bourdieu 1986), and requires maintenance (Gant *et al.* 2002). Social capital is different from other forms of capital in that it resides in social relationships whereas other forms of capital can reside in the individual (Robison *et al.* 2002). Further, social capital cannot be traded by individuals on an open market like other forms of capital, but is instead embedded within a group (Gant *et al.* 2002; Glaeser *et al.* 2002). It is clear from the literature that social capital has both similarities and dissimilarities with neocapital theories and is certainly quite dissimilar from classical theory of capital.

Many authors identify that both forms of social capital, structural and cognitive, qualify as capital because they both require some investment – of time and effort if not always of money (Grootaert 2001; Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002b; Krishna and Uphoff

2002). It can be concluded that social capital is unlike other forms of capital but also not sufficiently dissimilar to warrant a different term. Certainly it is the use of the term capital that makes the concept attractive to such a wide range of people given the bringing together of sociology and economics (Adam and Roncevic 2003). Perhaps a more appropriate term may be social solidarity as the notion connotes relations of trust, cooperation and reciprocity just as much as social capital and might be used in place of it to overcome the problem identified above with using the term capital. It is interesting that the term capital should be used with social, considering capital is already a social relation. In the original sense of the word capital, an object is only capital under particular social conditions. In the same way the sources of social capital are only capital under particular social conditions. For example, a favor owed is only capital under certain, not necessarily favorable conditions. This idea brings in the notion of negative or perverse social capital (see negative social capital section).

### 3.1.5 THEORY

Social capital theory is incredibly complex with researchers and practitioners approaching it from various disciplines and backgrounds for various applications. The result is considerable diversity, controversy and disagreement surrounding the theory. This section will discuss the following components of the theory: dimensions, levels, types, determinants, benefits, and downsides.

#### 3.1.5.1 DIMENSIONS

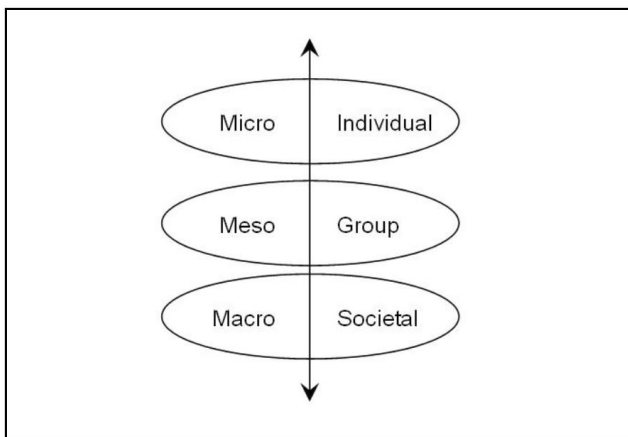
Social capital is multi-dimensional with each dimension contributing to the meaning of

social capital although each alone is not able to capture fully the concept in its entirety (Hean *et al.* 2003). The main dimensions are commonly seen as:

- » Trust (Coleman 1988; Collier 1998; Cox 1997; Kawachi *et al.* 1999a; Kilpatrick 2000; Leana and Van Buren III 1999; Lemmel 2001; Putnam 1993; Putnam *et al.* 1993; Snijders 1999; Welsh and Pringle 2001)
- » Rules and norms governing social action (Coleman 1988; Collier 1998; Fukuyama 2001; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993)
- » Types of social interaction (Collier 1998; Snijders 1999)
- » Network resources (ABS 2002; Kilpatrick 2000; Snijders 1999)
- » Other network characteristics (Burt 1997; Hawe and Shielle 2000; Kilpatrick 2000; Putnam 1995) adapted from (Hean *et al.* 2003, p. 1062).

### 3.1.5.2 LEVELS

Social capital has been located at the level of the individual, the informal social group, the formal organization, the community, the ethnic group and even the nation (Bankston and Zhou 2002; Coleman 1988; Portes 1998; Putnam 1995; Sampson *et al.* 1999). There are divergent views in the literature; some



**Figure 1.** Levels at which social capital exists (Source Claridge, 2004).

authors posit social capital at the individual level, some the community level and others have a more dynamic view.

Kilby (2002) stated that social capital exists within levels or scales as one feels belonging to family, community, profession, country, etc, simultaneously. Adler and Kwon (2002) supported this stating that social capital's sources lie in the social structure within which the actor is located. Thus, social capital can be thought of as having an individual and an aggregate component (Buys and Bow 2002; Newton 1997; Slangen *et al.* 2003). That is, social capital belongs to the group and can be used by the group or individuals within the group (Kilpatrick *et al.* 1998; Sander 2002).

### 3.1.5.3 TYPES

Attempts to more thoroughly conceptualize social capital have resulted in many authors identifying different types and characteristics, the most common being the distinction of structural and cognitive, and bonding and bridging. Generally, bonding is horizontal and equates to interaction between and among equals within a community. Bridging on the other hand is vertical or between communities (Dolfsma and Dannreuther 2003; Narayan 2002; Narayan and Pritchett 1999). The structural/cognitive distinction of social capital, was developed by Norman Uphoff and Wijayaratra (2000) and spans the range from structural manifestations of social capital to cognitive ones (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002a). Structural social capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective action through established roles and social networks supplemented by rules, procedures and precedents (Hitt *et al.* 2002). Cognitive social capital, which includes shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs, predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective

action (Krishna and Uphoff 2002; Uphoff 1999).

### 3.1.5.4 DETERMINANTS

The determinants are numerous and varied and there is both a lack of consensus and a lack of evidence to support the propositions. Several influential studies have suggested that social capital's roots are buried in centuries of cultural evolution (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam *et al.* 1993).

Other investigators suggest that social capital can be created in the short term to support political and economic development (Brown and Ashman 1996; Fox 1994; Tandler and Freedheim 1994). Aldridge, Halpern *et al.* (2002) suggested that the main determinants of social capital include: history and culture; whether social structures are flat or hierarchical; the family; education; the built environment; residential mobility; economic inequalities and social class; the strength and characteristics of civil society; and patterns of individual consumption and personal values.

Pantoja (1999) identified a different set again, including: family and kinship connections; wider social networks of associational life covers the full range of formal and informal horizontal arrangements; networks; political society; institutional and policy framework which includes the formal rules and norms that regulate public life; and social norms and values.

The majority of these claims originate in applied theory and stem from much work done on other concepts such as network analysis, civic society, cultural studies, education, psychology, and many others. Even where empirical research has been performed, the findings have questionable validity.

### 3.1.5.5 BENEFITS

The importance of social capital theory is apparent from the literature with many empirical studies that purport to show the importance of social capital to a very wide-ranging set of socioeconomic phenomena (Durlauf 2002a; Krishna 2001). Existing studies have provided ample evidence of its pervasiveness and offered useful impressions of its political, economic and social influence (Fine 2001; Jack and Jordan 1999; Montgomery 2000). Without a rigorous method for measurement it is unclear how the benefits are ascertained and tested. It is surprising that there is little skepticism in the literature over the validity of the purported benefits of social capital given the uncertainty of measurement techniques identified above. This is due to two factors: the intrinsic appeal of the concept; and the common misguided faith in measurement methodologies. The majority of benefits described in the literature have not been empirically tested at all but arise through theoretical extrapolation based on other concepts.

The literature recognizes social capital as important to the efficient functioning of modern economies, and stable liberal democracy (Fukuyama 2001; Kenworthy 1997), as an important base for cooperation across sector and power differences, and an important product of such cooperation (Brown and Ashman 1996), and Lyon (2000) described the importance of social capital in shaping regional development patterns. Social capital is charged with a range of potential beneficial effects including: facilitation of higher levels of, and growth in, gross domestic product (GDP); facilitation of more efficient functioning of labor markets; lower levels of crime; and improvements in the effectiveness of institutions of government (Aldridge *et al.* 2002; Halpern 2001; Kawachi *et al.* 1999b; Putnam *et al.* 1993). Social capital is an important variable in

educational attainment (Aldridge *et al.* 2002; Israel *et al.* 2001), public health (Coulthard *et al.* 2001; Subramanian *et al.* 2003), community governance, and economic problems (Bowles and Gintis 2002), and is also an important element in production (Day 2002). Economic and business performance at both the national and sub-national level is also affected by social capital (Aldridge *et al.* 2002). Others have emphasized the importance of social capital for problem solving and how only certain types of social capital contribute to this (Boyte, 1995; Sirianni & Friedland, 1997).

fostering behavior that worsens rather than improves economic performance; acting as a barrier to social inclusion and social mobility; dividing rather than uniting communities or societies; facilitating rather than reducing crime, education underachievement and health-damaging behavior. (Aldridge *et al.* 2002). The same orchestrating mechanisms that reduce transaction costs in market exchange can have negative consequences (Carroll and Stanfield 2003; Fine 1999; Torpe 2003).

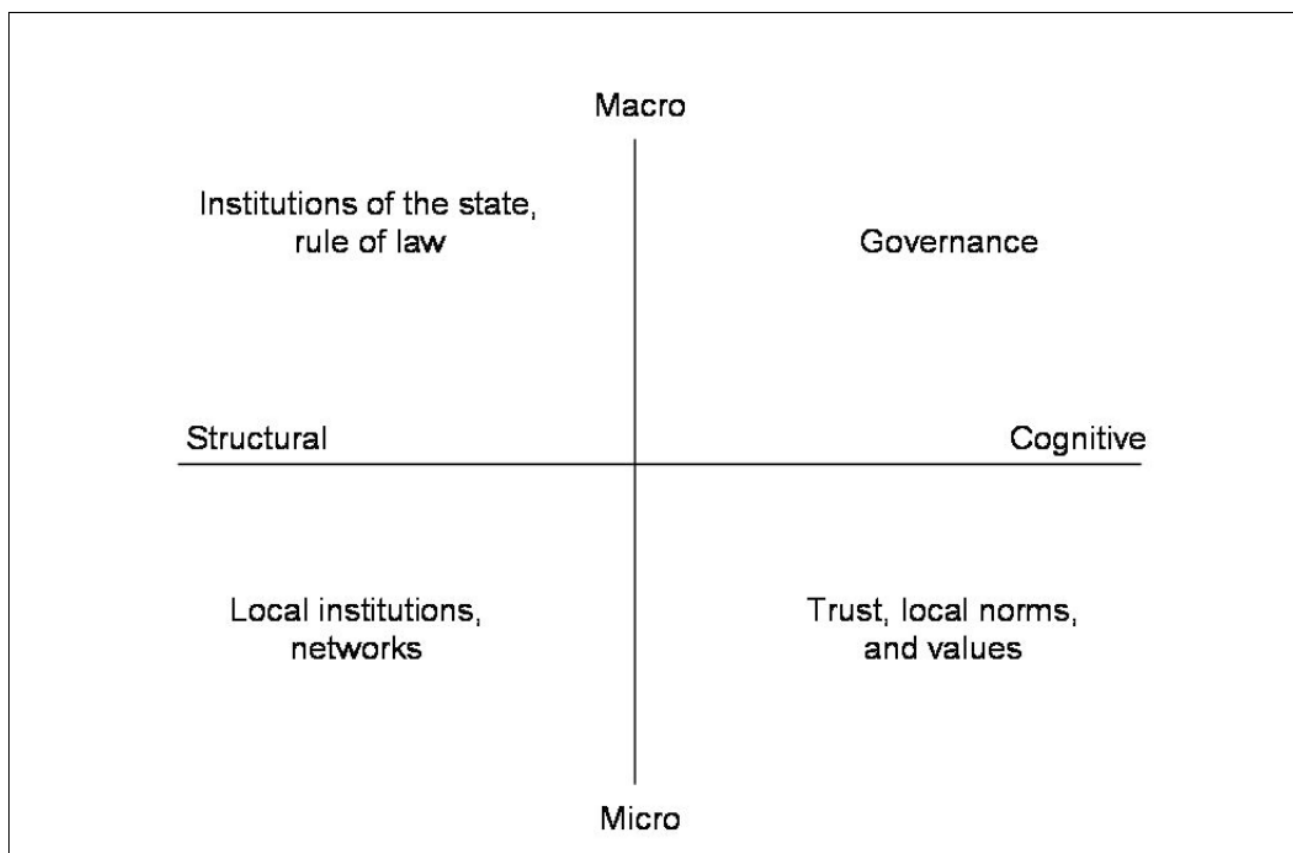
### 3.1.5.6 DISADVANTAGES

The same characteristics of social capital that enable beneficial, productive benefits have the potential to cause negative externalities. Potential downsides of social capital include:

## 3.1.6 CONCEPTUALISATION

### 3.1.6.1 PROBLEMS

At present there is a lack of rigorous conceptualization of social capital (Krishna and Uphoff 2002). Lin, Cook *et al.* (2001, p. 58) identified that there is a 'danger that we may



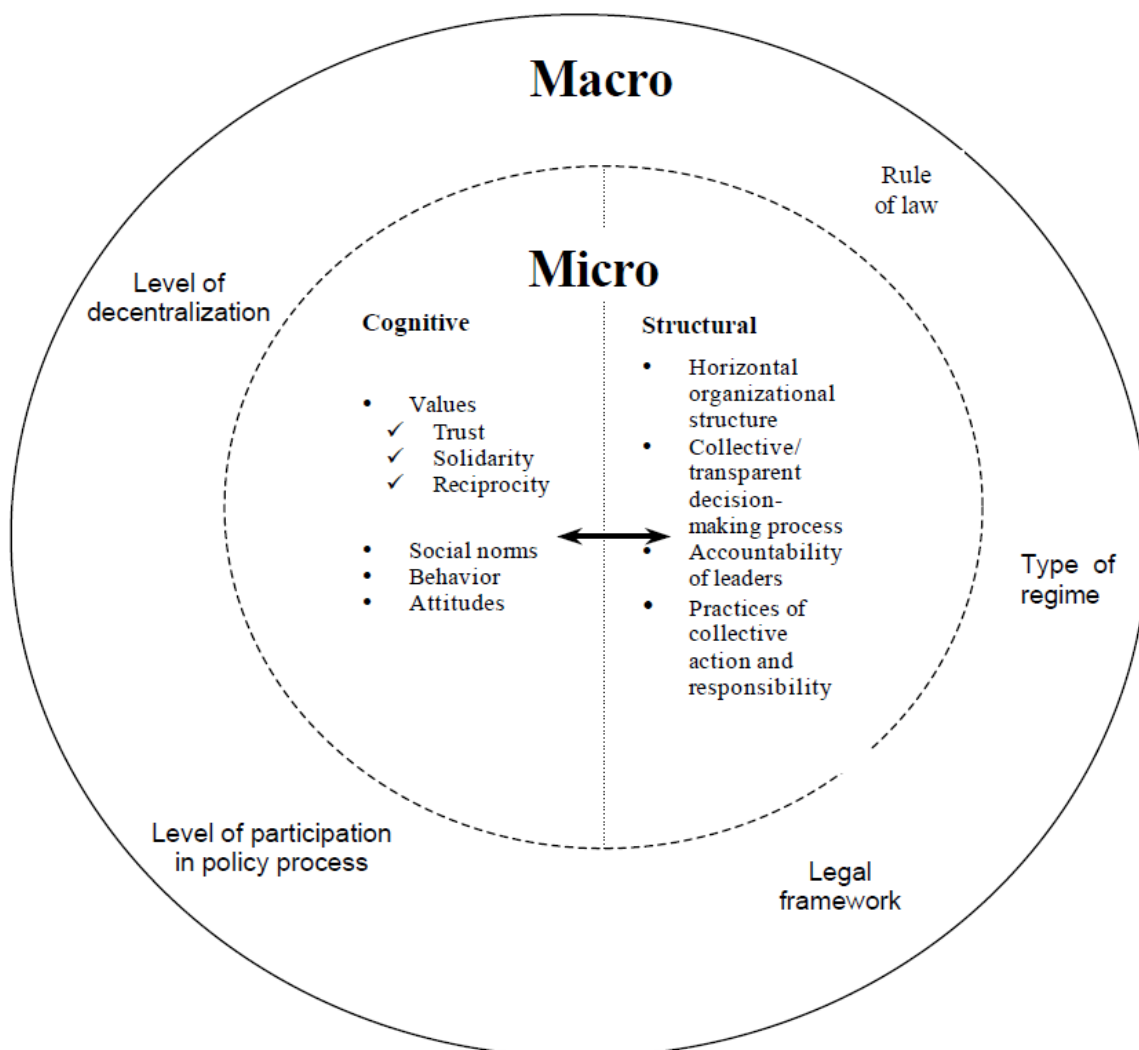
**Figure 2.** Conceptualization of social capital developed by Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002)  
Source: Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002)

reach a point where the term might be used in whatever way it suits the purpose at hand, and thus be rendered meaningless as a scientific concept that must meet the rigorous demands of theoretical and research validity and reliability'. Hean, Cowley *et al* (2003) made the observation that the accumulation of literature on social capital has begun to obscure the understanding of the concept. The inappropriate measurement techniques that have been implemented have caused problems for understanding social capital at the conceptual level and led to debate over whether the concept is relevant or appropriate (Stone 2001). Collier (1998) provided a good starting point for conceptualization, identifying that a conceptual model for social capital should identify the concept

within the complexity of the social world, as defined by dynamic relationships between its components, rather than what at present often appears to be a disparate collection of circumstantial variables.

Problems with the conceptualisation stem from problems separating the source, form and consequences of social capital (Adam and Roncevic, 2003). The result is problems with accounting for level, type, determinants, dimensions and numerous other factors, often with unknown and context specific manifestations (Claridge, 2004).

Attempting to conceptualize the concept, Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) building on the work of Uphoff (2000) identify two



**Figure 3.** Conceptual Framework: Levels and Types of Social Capital  
Adapted from: Bain and Hicks, 1998

important dimensions of social capital: level from micro to macro; and the continuum from cognitive to structural (refer to figure 2).

Figure 3 illustrates an existing conceptualization of social capital developed by Bain and Hicks (1998). The authors roughly divide social capital into two levels: the macro and the micro. The macro level refers to the institutional context in which organizations operate while the micro level refers to the potential contribution that horizontal organizations and social networks make to development (Bain and Hicks 1998).

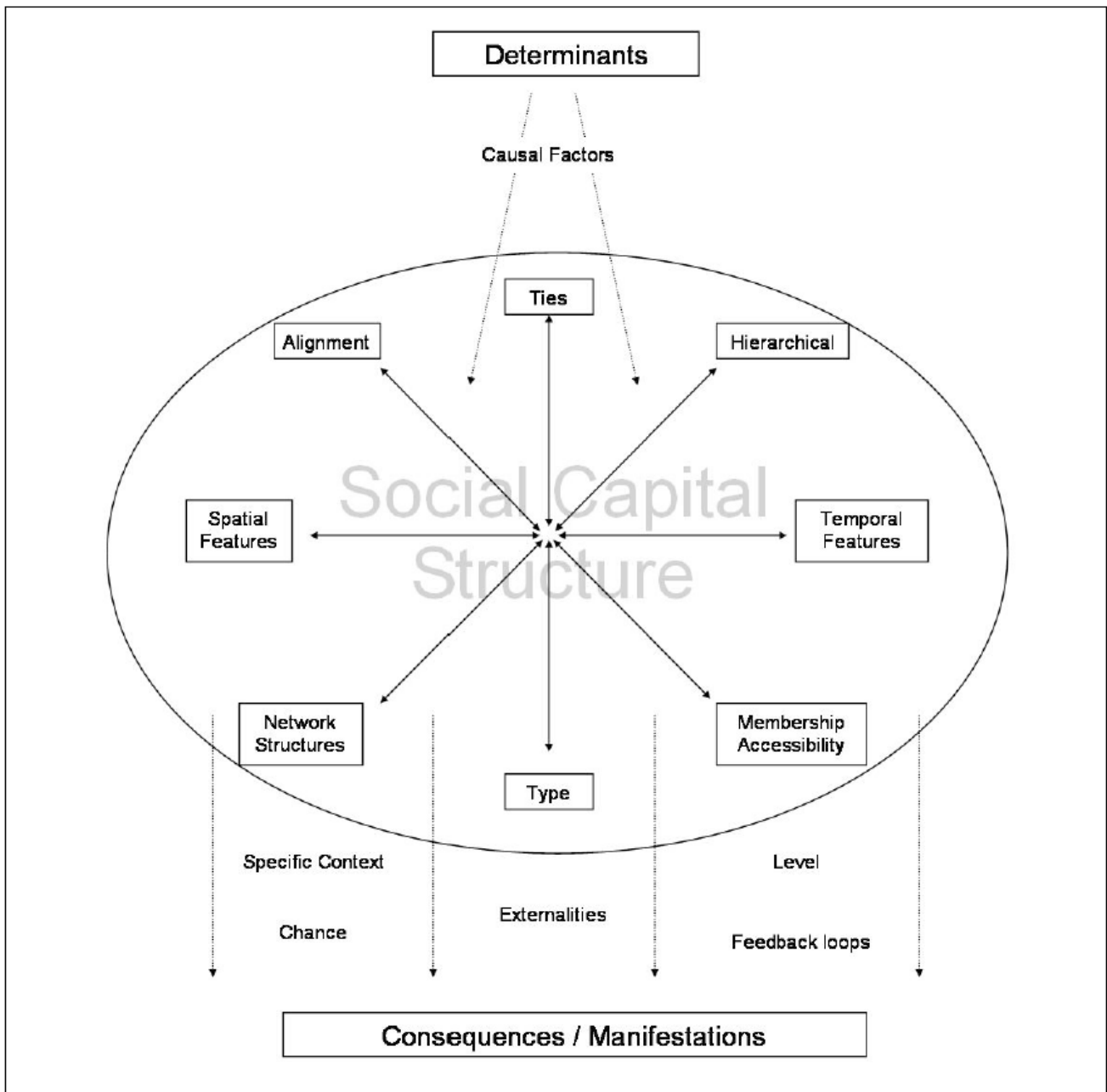
### 3.1.6.2 APPROACHES

As previously identified, there is considerable diversity in the way in which social capital is approached, leading from its diversity of disciplines and definitions. Woolcock

and Narayan (2000) have identified four distinct approaches the research has taken: communitarian, networks, institutional, and synergy (refer to table 1). Claridge (2004) discussed the weakness of these approaches and has identified a series of factors that would lead to a more appropriate conceptualisation of social capital.

Although other authors have identified the problems with separating source, form and consequence of social capital, Claridge (2004) highlighted the unknown relationship between the determinants and consequences or outcomes of social capital. Claridge (2004) attempts to take into account factors such as causal relationships, specific contexts, externalities, levels, feedback loops and chance (refer to figure 4). Although still not adequately capturing the detail of the social world, this conceptualisation provides a starting point for a new discussion of social capital.

<b>Table 1. Four views of social capital (Source: Woolcock and Narayan 2000)</b>		
<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Actors</b>	<b>Policy prescriptions</b>
<i>Communitarian view</i>		
Local associations	Community groups Voluntary organizations	Small is beautiful Recognize social assets of the poor
<i>Network view</i>		
Bonding and bridging community ties	Entrepreneurs Business groups Information brokers	Decentralize Create enterprise zones Bridging social divides
<i>Institutional view</i>		
Political and legal institutions	Private and public sectors	Grant civil and political liberties Institute transparency, accountability
<i>Synergy view</i>		
Community networks and state-society relations	Community groups, civil society, firms, states	Coproduction, complementarity Participation, linkages Enhance capacity and scale of local organizations



**Figure 4.** Conceptualization of social capital simplifying the complexity of the social world into a diagram outlining relationships between determinants, structure (or elements) and consequences.

### 3.1.7 OPERATIONALISATION

#### 3.1.7.1 MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

There is considerable debate and controversy over the possibility, desirability and practicability of measuring social capital, yet without a measure of the store of social capital, its characteristics and potential remain unknown (Durlauf 2002b; Falk and

Harrison 1998). Measurement attempts are flawed by problems with separating form, source and consequences (Adam and Roncevic 2003; Onyx and Bullen 2001; Sobels *et al.* 2001). Social capital cannot be measured directly but must be measured by the use of proxy indicators of social capital. Social capital is such a complex concept that it is not likely to be represented by any single measure or figure. The multiple dimensions require sets of indicators to be effective

(Cox and Caldwell 2000). Considerations of measurement of social capital inevitably reflect the conceptual debates about social capital itself, in particular, whether social capital can be measured at an individual or community level (Baum and Ziersch 2003).

The measurement of social capital is in its infancy and at present there is little evidence to suggest how measures of social capital actually relate to the theory (Fox 1997). Paxton (1999) identified that this problem could in fact be getting worse, with a widening gap between the concept of social capital and its measurement. Fukuyama (2001) posited that producing anything like a believable census of a society's stock of social capital is a nearly impossible task, since it involves multiplying numbers that are either subjectively estimated or simply non-existent. Perhaps social capital should not be quantified, but instead studies should use descriptive analysis based on the theoretical understanding of the concept. In this way the structure of social capital is analysed and complexity of the social world is maintained and not trivialised to a number or even a series of numbers.

### 3.1.7.2 BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

A fundamental question is whether social capital can be increased in the short term. This question is further complicated by the debate over whether social capital can be measured, as without measurement, change cannot be determined. There are contradictory views in the literature over whether social capital can be built in the short term. According to Putnam (1993), social capital is largely determined by historical factors; it can thus not be enhanced in the short term. This view has been challenged by Petersen (2002) who posited that social capital creation is possible by definition. This is supported by Schmid (2000) and Uslaner and Dekker (2001) who saw social capital development

as a by-product of other activities that result in dynamic changes. Any social interaction creates, or at least, changes social capital. This is supported by Soubeyran and Weber (2002) who posited that social capital can be created through repeated exchange and face-to-face contacts.

### 3.1.8 GENDER ISSUES

Ethnic and gender dimensions of social capital remain under-recognized (Fox and Gershman 2000; Molinas 1998). In the literature, social capital is generally conceptualized gender-blind, paying little attention to gendered intra-household issues of power and hierarchy (Norton 2001; Silvey and Elmhirst 2003). Silvey and Elmhirst (2003) argued that for a more complete picture of social capital, specifically one that includes attention to the gendered and intergenerational conflicts and hierarchies within social networks, and the broader context of gender difference within which social networks are forged. The authors also posited that social capital that exists within a broader context of gender inequality can exacerbate women's disadvantages, as women remain excluded from the more powerful networks of trust and reciprocity that exist among men (Silvey and Elmhirst 2003).

### 3.1.9 SOCIAL CAPITAL LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

Social capital is a new term for an old concept with intellectual roots in 18th and 19th century economics and sociology. The contemporary authors responsible for bringing the concept to present day discussions were Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam and although different authors see their contribution differently, it is commonly agreed that they are responsible for the popularisation of the concept. Despite



the extensive work that has been done on social capital, there is still no commonly agreed definition of social capital and these problems have led to a general questioning of the appropriateness of the term.

Social capital is a complex theory with many dimensions, types, levels and determinants and although different authors identify different dimensions of social capital, all authors seem to agree that social capital is multi-dimensional. There is much work left to conceptualise social capital to develop a workable framework for its operationalisation. Without this, the purported benefits of social capital cannot be tested and social capital activities will continue to be questioned and criticised.

## 3.2 PARTICIPATION THEORY

### 3.2.1 EVOLUTION OF PARTICIPATION THEORY

Participation is not a new concept (Buchy, Ross *et al.* 2000). It represents a move from the global, aspatial, top-down strategies that dominated early development initiatives to more locally sensitive methodologies (Storey 1999). There are differing opinions as to the origins of participation theory. Midgley *et al.* (1986) suggested that the historical antecedents of community participation include: the legacy of western ideology, the influence of community development and the contribution of social work and community radicalism. Buchy, Ross *et al.* (2000) suggested that literature on participation and participatory processes stems broadly from two major areas: political sciences and development theory. Lane (1995) added to this view, suggesting that participation is heavily influenced by theories of development and is therefore highly varied and complex due to different theoretical positions. The dominance of the top-down approaches to development

was largely a result of modernization theory which was dominant in the 1960s (Lane 1995). Modernization theory surmises that for developing countries to develop they need economic growth along the path already travelled by western countries (Hulme and Turner 1990; Peet and Hartwick 1999; So 1990). This has been heavily criticized and other development theories have highlighted disparities. From the modernization point of view participation meant involvement of the community in the implementation of a project with the purpose of increasing the acceptance and efficiency of use (Lane 1995). This represents a low level of participation that is reactionary and ignores the site-specific complexities of management needs (Kolavalli and Kerr 2002).

According to Holcombe (1995), acknowledgement of the importance of participation grew out of the recognition that the worlds' poor have actually suffered as a result of development, and that everyone needs to be involved in development decisions, implementation and benefits. As participatory approaches advanced, they highlighted the weaknesses inherent in traditional, top-down approaches that focused on single disciplines and reductionist paradigms (Johnson and Walker 2000). Agrawal and Gibson (1999) identified the limitation of the state in top-down resource conservation practices and emphasis popular participation as the remedy of these shortcomings. Mompoti and Prinsen (2000) made a similar observation of the uniqueness of an individual as an entity who is capable of making unique contributions to decision-making. This move represents a move towards people centered development at a normative level (Chambers 1993; Kelly 2001). Midgley *et al.* (1986) posited that the community development movement of the 1950s and 1960s was another source of inspiration for contemporary community participation theory and that community development and participation theory are

Era	Trends in participatory processes
1950's & 60s	Rapid industrialization and growing influence of technological expertise; supremacy of scientific knowledge. Chambers (1992) said that this era was characterized by the diffusion model of adoption in agriculture. Extension agents were involved primarily in teaching farmers, and in the transfer of technology.
1970s Need for alternatives	Concern expressed about 'giving a voice to the voiceless' specifically the poor in developing countries (Friere 1972). Increasing focus on learning, adult learning principles and group extension. Early experimentation of participatory approaches in development. Frustration over the ineffectiveness of externally imposed & 'expert' orientated forms (Chambers 1992). Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) grew out of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA).
1980s The participation boom	Change from top-down to bottom-up; acknowledgement of the value of local indigenous knowledge. The 1980s witnessed flourishing of activity, particularly amongst non-government organizations (NGOs) in seeking alternatives to top-down outsider driven development. The emphasis was on participatory appraisal and analysis in rural communities. Proliferation of participatory methodologies, including PAR (participatory action research) and tools such as rich pictures and venn diagrams.
1990s The participation imperative	The fervor about participation continued in the early 1990s. Participation became synonymous with 'good' or 'sustainable' in the development field (Guijt and Shah 1998:4). As Green (1998:71) emphasized, the popularization of participation is dangerous, as the problems are often glossed over. Funding bodies began demanding participatory processes as a condition for funding. The push for participation stimulated a proliferation of guidebooks and courses on 'how to'. A growing interest in natural resource monitoring and evaluation has led to community involvement in these activities.

**Table 1** Development of participatory processes (adapted from Kelly 2001)

very similar. Moser (1987) identified that community development is now considered in some countries to have colonialist overtones and has become discredited. Kelly (2001) provided a good account of the evolutionary trends in participation from the 1960s however does not identify the influence of community development (refer to table 1).

### 3.2.2 DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATION

Participation is a very broad concept (Lane 1995) that means different things to different people (Hussein 1995; Kelly 2001). The term is often used by people with different

ideological positions, who give it very different meanings (Nelson and Wright 1995). Pelling (1998) identified that participation is an ideologically contested concept which produces a range of competing meanings and applications. The result is a variety of views on how participation is defined, whom it is expected to involve, what it is expected to achieve, and how it is to be brought about (Agarwal 2001).

The vagueness and lack of conceptualisation of the concepts of participation and empowerment cause confusion over expectations and over the evaluation of outcomes of the participatory development process (Lyons, Smuts *et al.* 2001). A wide

suite of definitions of participation have been identified from the literature and will be identified and discussed below.

One commonality to all definitions is the role of community in decision-making. As such participation is often referred to as community participation. Community can be defined as a range of factors including geographic location, norms, and interests. Many definitions of participation hint at the participation continuum (see typologies section) and the various levels of community involvement. Some definitions focus on other aspects such as the involvement of all stakeholders, at all stages of development; on outcomes; on empowerment; and on the important role of disadvantaged groups particularly women and the poor. Ndekha, Hansen *et al* (2003) and Chamala (1995) provided good holistic starting points for defining participation:

*‘a social process whereby specific groups with shared needs living in a defined geographic area actively pursue identification of their needs, take decisions and establish mechanisms to meet these needs’* cited in (Ndekha, Hansen *et al*. 2003) page 326.

*‘in true participation, even at the highest level, power and control are shared by the participants ... similarly, scientists, managers, politicians, financial institutions and farmers collectively are also involved in controlling (rather guiding) these projects’* (Chamala 1995) page 7.

White’s (1981), Eyben and Ladbury’s (1995), and Devas and Grant’s (2003) definitions emphasize the basic requirement of involvement in decision-making:

*‘involvement of the local population actively in the decision-making concerning development projects or in*

*their implementation’* (White 1981) page 3.

*‘a process whereby those with a legitimate interest in a project influence decisions which affect them’* (Eyben and Ladbury 1995) page 192.

*‘citizen participation is about the ways in which citizens exercise influence and have control over the decisions that affect them’* (Devas and Grant 2003) page 309.

Tikare, Youssef *et al* (2001) expand the scope of decision-making in their definition: *‘Participation is the process through which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocations and access to public goods and services’* (Tikare, Youssef *et al*. 2001) page 3.

Lane (1995) provided a similar definition adding the importance of involvement at different stages of action:

*‘meaningful participation of individuals and groups at all stages of the development process including that of initiating action’* (Lane 1995) page 183.

*‘the only way to ensure that individuals have the power to attack the root causes of underdevelopment is to enable them to influence all decisions, at all levels, that affect their lives’* (Lane 1995) page 191.

Paul (1987) included details of the motivation behind participatory methodologies while Price and Mylius (1991) detailed not only the importance of participation in all stages of the intervention but also the level of participation in their definition:

*‘In the context of development, community participation refers to an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development*

*projects rather than merely receive a share of project profits' (Paul 1987 cited in (Bamberger 1988) page 5).*

*'Participation means the involvement of intended beneficiaries in the planning, design, implementation and subsequent maintenance of the development intervention. It means that people are mobilized, manage resources and make decisions that affect their lives' (Price and Mylius 1991) page 6.*

Agarwal (2001) included insight into the diverse ranges of participation in his definition:

*'At its narrowest, participation is defined in terms of nominal membership and at its broadest in terms of a dynamic interactive process in which all stakeholders, even the most disadvantaged, have a voice and influence in decision-making' (Agarwal 2001).*

The World Bank (1995) identified the importance of participation of disadvantaged groups in their definition.

*'the [genuine] participation of the poor and others who are disadvantaged in terms of wealth, education, ethnicity or gender' cited in (Warner 1997) page 414.*

Ndekha, Hansen *et al* (2003) supported this, identifying that the overall objective of community participation is twofold in that it is a mechanism to empower and facilitate an improvement in the lives of the world's poor people. Kelly (2001:15) did not clearly identify the importance of community decision-making but does identify the crucial role of power in decision-making:

*'participation is a range of processes through which local communities are involved and play a role in issues which affect them. The extent to which power is shared in decision-making varies*

*according to type of participation'.*

Numerous other definitions of participation can be found in the literature for example (Bamberger 1988; van Asselt Marjolein and Rijkens-Klomp 2002; Warner 1997). The key finding for Fals-Borda (1991) is that participation is a real and endogenous experience of and for the common people, that reduces the differences between experts and community and between mental and manual labor. O'Neill and Colebatch (1989) identified that participation is real when participants are able to determine their outcomes (cited in (Sarkissian, Walsh *et al.* 1997) page 17).

The most common misinterpretation occurs when people fail to understand the difference between participation and consultation (Coakes 1999). Sarkissian, Walsh *et al* (1997: 17) made the distinction: 'community participation indicates an active role for the community, leading to significant control over decision' while consultation is taken to mean 'sharing of information but not necessarily power'. Often the terms participation and consultation are used interchangeably, particularly in Australia (Sarkissian, Walsh *et al.* 1997). Coakes (1999:1) provided an example when she used the term consultation inappropriately stating that 'consultation is about involving the public in decision making in a structured and rigorous way'.

It is clear that there is confusion surrounding the definition of participation and that what is needed is a more baggage-free, or more easily understood term or terminology. Terminology that would replace participation is 'collective action' or 'collective governance', as these terms emphasize the power relationships and the need for equity which defines genuine participation in the development literature (Kelly 2001). 'Good governance' is another possibility although it is considered to be too broad a term to be of immediate operational relevance in its

totality. 'Participatory governance' adopts a narrower perspective that is more useful in development situations (Schneider 1999).

### 3.2.3 COMMUNITY IN PARTICIPATION

In discussions of community participation it is important to identify the appropriate definition of community. When involving the community it is essential to recognize that communities are not homogeneous but in fact heterogeneous (Mompoti and Prinsen 2000). Cleaver (1999:603) identified common myths of community.

*'Community in participatory approaches to development is often conceptualized as some kind of natural, desirable social entity imbued with all sorts of desirable values and the simple manifestation of this in organizational form.'*

Three aspects of community are most important to those who advocate a positive role for communities in resource management: community as a small spatial unit; as a homogenous social structure; and as shared norms (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). Boundaries of community are usually based on people or places so the distinction between interest communities (people centered) and territorial communities (place centered) is often made (Kelly 2001). Boundaries are often culturally and socially determined making them unclear and defining them will depend on the perspective of the individual. The concept of community is linked to thinkers such as Tonnies, Durkheim, Cooley and Weber (Colombo, Mosso et al. 2001). Agrawal and Gibson identified that it is more important and realistic to view community as having multiple interests and actors with a focus on how these actors influence decision-making, and on the internal and external institutions that shape the decision-making process.

### 3.2.4 EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is a term frequently associated with participation that is often poorly used and conceptualized (Lyons, Smuts et al. 2001). Holcombe (1995:17) identified that

*'participation and empowerment are inseparably linked, they are different but they depend on each other to give meaning and purpose. Participation represents action, or being part of an action such as a decision-making process. Empowerment represents sharing control, the entitlement and the ability to participate, to influence decisions, as on the allocation of resources.'*

White (1981) identified that empowerment grows out of involvement in thinking, planning, deciding, acting and evaluating. Because empowerment refers to control, words commonly found in definitions include access, control, entitlement, deciding, enabling, acting, awareness, and participation (Holcombe 1995). An example of such definitions are:

*'the idea that some can act on others to give them power or enable them to realize their own potential' (Nelson and Wright 1995) page 7.*

*'in simple definitional terms, the verb to empower means to enable, to allow, or to permit and can be conceived as both self-initiated and initiated by others. For social agents, empowering is an act of building, developing, increasing power through cooperation, sharing and working together. It is an interactive process based on a synergistic, not a zero-sum, assumption of power; that is, the process of empowerment changes the power in the situation as opposed to merely redistributing it' (Vogt and Murrell*

1990, cited in (Chamala 1995) page 11)

Some authors identify empowerment on participation continuums (Choguill 1996) due to the fact that participation is often seen as an essential ingredient of empowerment (Holcombe 1995).

### 3.2.5 POPULARITY PERVASIVENESS OF PARTICIPATION

Participation has grown in popularity since the 1970s and has become a catchword in development studies and practice (Hjortso 2004; Midgley, Hall *et al.* 1986; Sanchez, Cronick *et al.* 1988). Nelson and Wright (1995:2) suggested that participation has become a 'warmly persuasive word ... [that] can be attached to very different sets of relations'. Lane (1995) supports this, stating that 'participation is dangerously close to becoming a buzzword, rhetorical term without theoretical clarity or practical content'. Chambers (1995) credited the new popularity of participation to several origins:

- » the recognition that many development failures originate in attempts to impose standard top-down programs and projects on diverse local realities where they do not fit or meet needs;
- » concern for cost-effectiveness, recognizing that the more local people do, the less capital costs are likely to be;
- » preoccupation with sustainability, and the insight that if local people themselves design and construct they are more likely to meet running costs and undertake maintenance; and
- » ideologically for some development professionals, the belief that it is right that poor people should be empowered and should have more command of their lives (Chambers 1995).

Davis (1996:2 cited in Buchy, Ross *et al.* (2000)) added to this discussion citing that the interest and application of the concept has grown due to a mixture of circumstances: increased access to information; a more intrusive media; alienation from traditional structures; protest movements; and a new sophistication amongst interest and lobby groups. In the literature, the commonly cited reasons for participation's popularity are; failed development projects, misused resources and disillusioned communities (Buchy, Ross *et al.* 2000; Chambers 1997; Rahman 1993).

The popularity of participation is evident from the diverse application and acceptance of the needs for participation, in fact many authors have found that it has become mandatory for development strategies to be participatory (Agarwal 2001; Chambers 1995; Cleaver 1999; Eyben and Ladbury 1995; Holcombe 1995; Kelly and Van Vlaenderen 1995). Literature on participation and empowerment cuts across disciplines, including economics, anthropology, sociology, politics and geography (Holcombe 1995). Macnaghten and Jacobs (1997:6) identified that participation is one of the principals of the global action plan Agenda 21, suggesting that 'the involvement of ordinary citizens in both decisions about and the implementations of social and economic change'. Some authors see participation's biggest application being to poverty alleviation (Holcombe 1995). Other applications include health, education, housing, social work and urban and rural development (Midgley, Hall *et al.* 1986).

Buchy, Ross *et al.* (2000:3) have identified a number of assumptions that explain the enthusiasm for participation that has been outlined above:

- » better participation of local communities in the management of their own resource will lead to better (ie more sustainable) environmental management

- » local communities are willing and enthusiastic about engaging on a voluntary basis in the management of their own affairs
- » local communities, while engaging in a participatory process are seeking a transfer of power from government agencies to the benefit of communities, or at least equal power in the decision making process
- » at one extreme of the spectrum, participation may be considered as a useful tool to achieve a specific management aim, while at the other participation will lead to empowerment and greater social justice.

### 3.2.6 APPLICATION AND MISUSE OF PARTICIPATION

Community participation theory is applied to a variety of situations, although not always appropriately. Michener (1998) suggested that participation has become a panacea. Chamala (1995:6) stated that 'community participation has been the hallmark of many successful development projects around the world'. Michener (1998) however posited that the term is widely applied in academic and project documents without regard for implementation realities. Even within the project cycle there has been varying applications of participation. Estrella and Gaventa (1997) identified that there has been a growing emphasis on participation at the 'front-end' of development projects in appraisal and implementation and now there is recognition of the importance of participatory processes in monitoring and evaluation of development and other community-based initiatives.

Biggs and Smith (1998) have identified that practitioners tend to have a preoccupation with specific participatory methods but pay

little attention to how they are applied, by whom and in what circumstances. There are many methods for involving the community, no one method is necessarily better than another, each has potential advantages and disadvantages depending on the situation (Coakes 1999). Any participatory technique needs the 'right occasion' to be used responsibly and effectively - it is certainly not a situation of one size fits all (Kelly 1995). Kelly also considers different interpretations of, and strategies for participation are important in different situations (Kelly 2001). A detailed analysis of historical cases suggests that the development of both technologies and methodologies is highly dependent on local context (Biggs and Smith 1998). Tikare, Youssef *et al* (2001) supported this view stating that participation is different in different contexts, projects and for different purposes.

As identified above, participation has increased in popularity to the point where it has become pervasive in development initiatives (at least in rhetoric). Chambers (1995) has identified three main ways in which 'participation' is used.

- » As a cosmetic label to make a project appear good. It could be a requirement or a 'will be done' or 'has been done'.
- » As a co-opting practice to mobilize local labor and reduce costs.
- » As an empowering process which enables local people to do their own analysis, to take command, to gain in confidence and to make their own decisions.

The prevalence of Chambers' first point has led some authors to pessimistic views of the role of participation. For example, Cleaver (1999:597) stated that 'participation has become an act of faith in development; something we believe in and rarely question'. Kelly (2001) identified that participation

is often romanticized as a cure-all so that anything participatory is assumed to be 'good' and 'empowering'. Cleaver (1999) agreed, stating that participation is intrinsically a 'good thing'. He goes on to suggest that many practitioners focus on 'getting the techniques right' and that is the principal way of ensuring success and that considerations of power and politics on the whole should be avoided as divisive and obstructive (Cleaver 1999). Biggs (1995) suggested that a techniques-based approach to participation fails to adequately address issues of power, control of information and other resources, and provides an inadequate framework for developing a critical reflective understanding of the deeper determinants of technical and social change. This is supported by Kelly and Van Vlaenderen (1995:373) who stated that 'the use of the concept of participation in development sometimes obscures real power differentials between 'change agents' and those on the 'receiving end' of the development relationship, and sometimes serves as a pleasing disguise for manipulation'.

Midgley, Hall *et al* (1986:viii) identifies that 'community participation is not a simple matter of faith, but a complex issue involving different ideological beliefs, political forces, administrative arrangement, and varying perceptions of what is possible'. Pretty and Scoones (1995) have identified that there is a tendency for those who use the term participation to adopt a moral high ground, implying that any form of participation is good. Because of this inherent goodness of the notion of participation, it has become a substitute for the structural reforms needed for social change (Botchway 2001). Thus there is a tendency for the focus on participation to become narrow and ignore many of the contextual issues which remain out of the control, or influence, of the beneficiaries of the development project (Botchway 2001).

Chambers' second point is widely supported in

the literature and often included in typologies of participation (see section on typologies). Holcombe (1995:15) succinctly outlines the situation stating that 'development agencies verbalize their commitment to participation but less often do they state the steps necessary to structure operations that allow participation beyond that of voluntary labor in projects designed by outsiders'. Pretty and Scoones (1995) supported the view that this often occurs in development projects and Cernea (1995) stated that real participation in rural development programs is more myth than reality. White (1981:3) states that the 'involvement of the population in the physical work of implementing a project can hardly be considered as community participation unless there is at least some degree of sharing of decisions with the community'.

Eyben and Ladbury (1995) have identified four main reasons why participation does not occur in practice: economic, political, professionalism and the nature of the product. Economic reasons for non-participation involve a simple cost benefit calculation. The benefits must be greater than the costs of participating. The authors' political argument for non-participation is that participation of all or some of the beneficiaries may not be in the political interests of other actors in the project. 'Participation is more frustrating than it is advantageous for those who are powerless' (Eyben and Ladbury 1995) page 194. Professionalism is put forward as a reason for non-participation because the professional training and culture of some specialists mitigates against an emphasis on participation - 'professional knows best'. The final argument is that the degree to which participation can be achieved will depend on the nature of the product, in particular, whether its delivery brings people together in a way that they can, or must, develop common interests. (Eyben and Ladbury 1995). Kolavalli and Kerr (2002) argued that most successful examples of



participation come from NGOs and that government projects generally employ more superficial participation because staff lack the skills and incentives. Despite pervasive requirements for participation at all levels in natural resource decision making, there is little detailed, strategic guidance available to help managers understand when and how to involve the public (Lawrence and Deagen 2001).

'Despite significant claims to the contrary, there is little evidence of the long-term effectiveness of participation in materially improving the conditions of the most vulnerable people, or as a strategy for social change' (Cleaver 1999) page 597. Cleaver (1999) suggested that there is some evidence of efficiency but little regarding empowerment and sustainability, and appropriateness is often reliant on evidence of the rightness of the approach and process rather than outcomes. Other issues include whether many rural people want to participate more comprehensively in development projects or whether they are satisfied by an outside organization functioning in 'traditional' ways (Hussein 1995). These arguments have led Hussein to posit that the effectiveness of participatory approaches may be different in practice than in theory (Hussein 1995). Many other authors consider that participation is important and can provide results, and this will be discussed in a later section.

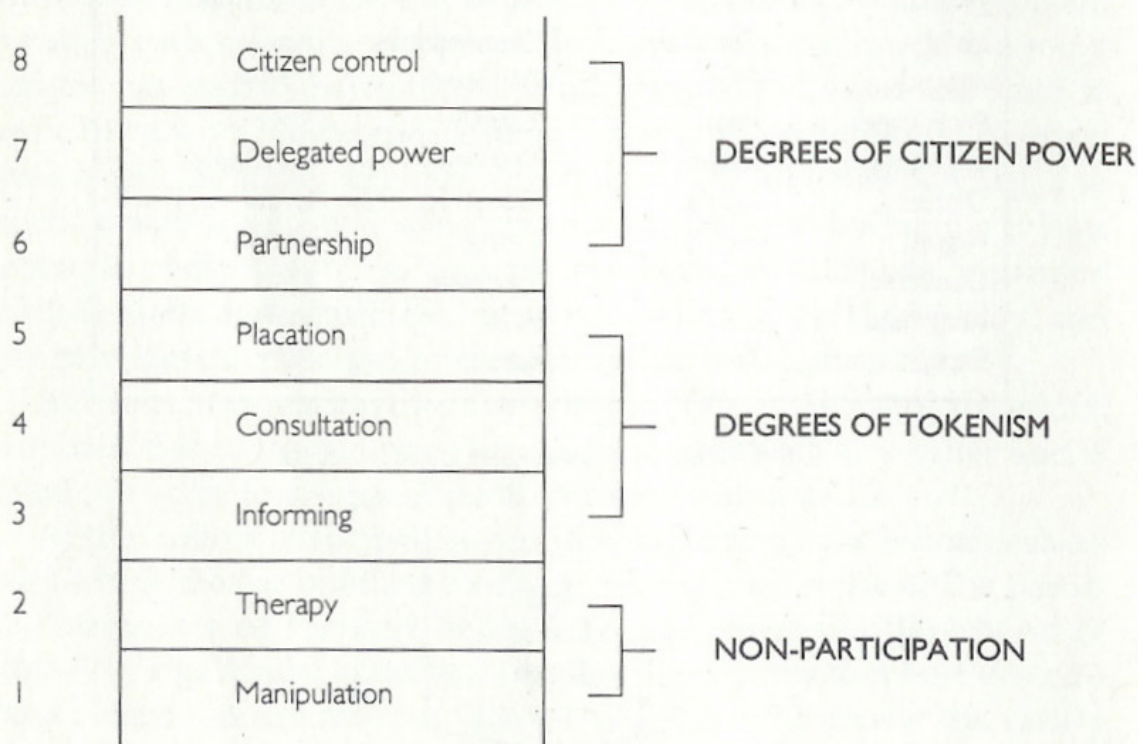
### 3.2.7 PARTICIPATION AS AN END OR MEANS

Buchy, Ross *et al* (2000) have identified two emerging themes in the literature: participation as an approach, an ideology, a specific ethos for community development; and participation as a method, a set of guidelines and practices for involving communities or the general public in specific planning activities (Buchy, Ross *et al*. 2000) page 6. This could be summarized

as participation as an end or as a means to an end (Cleaver 1999; Goebel 1998; Lane 1995; Macnaghten and Jacobs 1997; Williams 2002). This discussion was also described by Nelson and Wright (1995) as the distinction between instrumental and transformative participation and by Macnaghten and Jacobs (1997) as value based or instrumental. The means or ends argument is comparable to efficiency, and empowerment and equity. Cleaver (1999) identified efficiency as participation as a tool for achieving better project outcomes, and empowerment and equity as participation as a process which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of disadvantaged or marginalized groups. But Bamberger (1988) questioned whether efficiency and empowerment are complimentary or conflicting objectives. At a more superficial level Nelson and Wright (1995) identified the common distinction between 'participation as a means', as to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively or cheaply, as opposed to 'participation as an end' where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development. The authors go on to state that the extent of empowerment and involvement of the local population is more limited in the first approach than it is in the second (Nelson and Wright 1995).

### 3.2.8 TYPOLOGIES

The most commonly cited typology of public participation is Arnstein's (1969) ladder of public participation which depicts participation's multiplicity of meanings (refer to figure). Subsequent typologies, (for example (Agarwal 2001; Choguill 1996; Cohen and Uphoff 1980; Maywald 1989; Michener 1998; White 1981) are essentially variations on the same idea; of ordering the degrees of power-sharing between an agency and the public (Buchy, Ross *et al*. 2000).



**FIGURE 5.2**  
A 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' (from Arnstein, 1969).

In typology discussions it is important to emphasize that stronger forms of participation are not necessarily better than those lower on the ladder i.e. it is context specific (Buchy, Ross *et al.* 2000).

### 3.2.9 IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

Despite some authors contesting that participation makes no difference, the importance of community participation is well established in the literature. Chamala (1995) identified efficiency benefits from participation, stating that 'involving stakeholders and empowering community participants in programs at all levels, from local to national, provide a more effective path for solving sustainable resource management issues'. Participation

enhances project effectiveness through community ownership of development efforts and aids decision-making (Kelly and Van Vlaenderen 1995; Kolavalli and Kerr 2002). Price and Mylius (1991) also identified local ownership of a project or program as a key to generating motivation for ecologically sustainable activities. The authors also identify the role of community participation in disseminating information amongst a community, particularly local knowledge, that leads to better facilitation of action (Price and Mylius 1991; Stiglitz 2002). Kelly (2001) identified that participation results in learning, and learning is often a prerequisite for changing behavior and practices.

Gow and Vansant (1983) identified four affirmations that summarize the importance of participation in development:

- » People organize best around problems they consider most important
- » Local people tend to make better economic decisions and judgments in the context of their own environment and circumstances
- » Voluntary provision of labor, time, money and materials to a project is a necessary condition for breaking patterns of dependency and passivity
- » The local control over the amount, quality and benefits of development activities helps make the process self-sustaining (cited in (Botchway 2001) page 136).

White (1981) identified a number of beneficial reasons for community participation: with participation, more will be accomplished, and services can be provided more cheaply. Participation: has an intrinsic value for participants; is a catalyst for further development; encourages a sense of responsibility; guarantees that a felt need is involved; ensures things are done the right way; uses valuable indigenous knowledge; frees people from dependence on others' skills; and makes people more conscious of the causes of their poverty and what they can do about it.

Curry (1993:33) identifies that 'policies that are sensitive to local circumstances will not only be more effective in taking the uniqueness of local social structure, economy, environmental, and culture into account, but also, through the involvement of the local community, will be more likely to be successful in their implementation. Communities that have a say in the development of policies for their locality are much more likely to be enthusiastic about their implementation' (Curry, 1993: 33 cited in (Storey 1999) page 308). Golooba-Mutebi (2004) found that participation has a role in enhancing civic consciousness and political maturity that makes those in office accountable.

### 3.2.10 LIMITATIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Despite the importance and benefits identified above, participation has limitations, particularly in relation to being context specific. Campbell (1992) identified four constraints to participation: institutional, cultural, knowledge and financial (cited in (Chamala 1995) page 38). There are limits to what participation alone can achieve in terms of equity and efficiency, given pre-existing socioeconomic inequalities and relations of power (Agarwal 2001). Biggs and Smith (1998) have found that participatory events (such as PRA) can construct knowledge in ways that strongly reflect existing social relations of power and gender. Devas and Grant (2003) identified that participation can be inhibited by social dynamics of exclusion and inclusion at the community level. Barriers to participation may include professional elitism, time and financial costs, lack of interest and skills among proponents and planners, and uncertainty about the results of public involvement (Jaffray, 1981: 6 cited in (Sarkissian, Walsh *et al.* 1997) page 23). Bamberger (1988) has identified the following costs of participation:

- » Project start-up may be delayed by negotiations with beneficiaries
- » Participatory approaches frequently increased the number of managerial and administrative staff required
- » Well organized communities are able to exert pressure to raise the level or widen the range of services beyond those originally planned, with consequent increases in project costs

Grimble and Chan (1995) suggested that methods need to be located within a broader frame that enables stakeholders to be identified and conflicts potentially defused, circumvented or resolved. Participatory

methods per se cannot guarantee success (cited in (Biggs and Smith 1998) page 240). Kleemeier (2000) found that of projects implementing various methods of community participation, the smallest schemes and the newest ones were performing best in terms of long-term sustainability. Skeptics argue that participation places unrealistic demands on people, with more pressing demands on their time (Golooba-Mutebi 2004). Non-participatory methodologies for resource management have negative impacts for efficiency but the damage that poor participatory methodologies do is more significant in setting norms and expectations for future participatory methodologies – even if they are better designed and informed with the right intention (Turner 1999b).

### 3.2.11 GENDER ISSUES AND PARTICIPATION

Participation is determined by rules, norms and perceptions, in addition to the endowments and attributes of potential participants. These factors can disadvantage women, both separately and interactively (Agarwal 2001). Buchy, Ross *et al* (2000) identified that consideration of gender is necessary for two reasons: men and women have different perceptions, needs and opportunities to engage in the management of their own resources; and in most societies, there is no gender equity and the genders operate from an unequal power base especially in relation to access and control over natural resources. For example, in many societies women are the principal farmers; or marketers of the produce, so participation of this group may be vital (Buchy, Ross *et al*. 2000) page 20. Karl (1995:10) (cited in (Buchy, Ross *et al*. 2000) page 21) has identified a number of factors that influence women's capacity to engage in public debate:

- » household status;

- » employment and remuneration;
- » work related rights (maternity leave, job security, provision of childcare);
- » double burden of work;
- » education and literacy;
- » health;
- » ability to control fertility;
- » access to financial resources;
- » legal rights;
- » traditions and cultural values;
- » socialization and self confidence;
- » violence against women; and
- » the mass media.

Management of local natural resources by village communities is widely accepted as an institutional imperative (Agarwal 2001) but ignoring a large part of the community could jeopardize the effectiveness of the process and more importantly, alienate and increase the burden of disadvantaged groups, particularly women and the poor (Buchy, Ross *et al*. 2000). Even seemingly participatory institutions can exclude significant sectors, such as women (Agarwal 2001). In the context of natural resource management, devolving greater power to village communities is now widely accepted as an institutional imperative by governments, international agencies, and NGOs (Agarwal 2001).

### 3.1.12 PARTICIPATION THEORY LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

The evolution of participation is seemingly built on trial and error with participation enjoying questionable success and at times practice represented perversion. Participation theory represents a move from the global, aspatial and top-down strategies that dominated early development initiatives to more locally sensitive methodologies.

Although there are differing opinions in the literature as to the origins of participation theory there is consensus that it stems from political sciences and development theory. The importance of participation grew out of the recognition that the worlds' poor have actually suffered as a result of development, and that everyone needs to be involved in development decisions, implementation and benefits.

There is no commonly agreed definition of participation this vagueness and lack of conceptualisation of the concepts of participation and empowerment cause confusion over expectations and over the evaluation of outcomes of the participatory development process. It is agreed that participation is about decision making.

The terms usefulness has been significantly undermined by the popularity or pervasiveness of the term. As a result the term has gained almost honorific meaning and used without recognition of its meaning. In this way application of the concept is often misused and becomes instrumental, rather than transformative. In an attempt to categorise the various extents of participation, a number of typologies have been created to explain the continuum.

Although having many important benefits, participation also has a number of limitations, most importantly being that methodologies are context specific. Skeptics also argue that participation places unrealistic demands on people, with more pressing demands on their time.

## 4.0 CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

The selected case study is an evaluation undertaken in 2002 by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The

evaluation is reported in draft form in a document entitled 'Gender Diagnosis and Evaluation of Three IFAD Funded Projects in Zimbabwe'. This report provides background, methodology, discussion and findings and recommendations gained from the evaluation of the three IFAD funded projects. The three projects were Smallholder Dry Areas Resource Management Project (SDARMP), Smallholder Irrigation Support Programme (SISP), and South Eastern Dry Areas Project (SEDAP). The aim of the study was to facilitate the overall evaluation of the current projects identification, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M & E) systems in relation to their inclusion of gender issues, and then based on these findings, to facilitate the design of effective and appropriate interventions for the discovered weaknesses. The Gender Diagnosis and Evaluation (GDE) assesses whether, and to what extent, the projects respond to the specific interests and needs of various categories of women, as compared to men and proposes strategies/ actions to address existing and potential weaknesses.

The project was highly participatory and involved various methodologies to ensure accurate and representative data collection. It was identified that the project areas were generally traditional villages with distinct gender roles and power distinctions. Traditionally strong norms and mores were observed with social status highly dependent on age and gender. The key participatory tools used in the project included stakeholder analysis, key informant interviews, workshops, focus groups, public meetings, dissemination of information and questionnaires. These tools were used at key parts of the project cycle. During the project scoping stage a high level stakeholder analysis was performed. During the design phase, a more detailed stakeholder analysis was done for each project area. Key informant interviews and workshops were also performed during the

design. During implementation of the project a range of participatory tools were used, including key informant interviews, focus groups, public meetings, dissemination of information and written questionnaires. For the purposes of this study the following participatory tools were selected for analysis and discussion: focus groups; public meetings; dissemination of information; and written questionnaires.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 INTEGRATION OF PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORIES

It is evident from the literature reviews on participation and social capital above that there are many similarities between the two concepts. Both concepts are poorly defined, conceptualized and operationalized in both debate and application. The two concepts are highly context specific and highly complex. Individually, the concepts still require further analysis to answer key questions, particularly about appropriate application. Jointly, little work has been done to identify the impacts that they have on each other and particularly how social capital benefits can be maximized in participatory methodologies. Pelling (1998:477) is one of the few authors to make connections between the two concepts, identifying that there is 'some recognition of the role participatory methods could play in strengthening social capital in host communities'. Coulthard, Walker *et al* (2001) identified that social capital reinforces partnership and participatory approaches to sustainable development but neither author gives details as to how these processes take place. Brown and Ashman (1996:1477) stated that 'active participation in intersectoral problem solving and implementation by NGOs and grassroots organizations can

generate social capital that fosters future problem solving, which will generate more social capital ... and so on. Implementation arrangements will become increasingly effective to the extent that they can facilitate the creation of social capital'. Again, this claim is unsubstantiated and there is currently no direct empirical evidence available to backup these suggestions.

There is however value in applying the theoretical assumptions made by each theory to each other to generate a greater understanding of how they interact. Ideally an empirical study would ascertain the causal relationships however the scale of such an exercise is beyond the scope of this study. This study will make connections between social capital and participation and illustrate some specifics through a case study approach that indicates the value to other participatory methodologies. The following discussion identifies numerous points that require further investigation to uncover the causal mechanisms. The content of the participation and social capital literature reviews provides ample material to discuss many important relationships between the concepts.

Different participatory tools will have different impacts on social capital in terms of gain or loss and social capital types and levels will interact to effect participation. An important clarification from the literature must be made on this last point. Social capital cannot be equated to a number or even a series of numbers. Social capital is multi-dimensional with each dimension having a different relationship to the 'capital' under different contexts. For example, it is not possible to add bonding capital to bridging capital especially when considering that the 'amount' does not result in productive social capital but a mix of productive and perverse. Therefore it would be more relevant to talk of changes to social capital structure. That is, the make

up of the social capital and the components relative externalities. In this way, important 'events' such as community participation do not necessarily result in more or less social capital but changes in social capital structure – for better or worse.

Network theories of social capital provide a good starting point for understanding the possible social capital structural changes that result from participation. The majority of participatory methodologies involve social interaction. This interaction results in the formation of weak ties, an important component of social capital. The formation of weak ties, often between diverse groups outside of normal interaction circles, means that the actors are located at structural holes. In situations where the participation of representatives of various groups is sort, the actors may find them located at structural holes between groups with network closure. This has significant benefits, particularly in terms of information flows. Methodologies that involve repeated interaction of the same individuals result in the formation of stronger ties and norms of reciprocity. Other factors that would be involved in realising these benefits would include social stratification, gender, income and education and whether the interaction is based on work/livelihood, pleasure, family, religion, or general interest.

Many discussions of participation are based on a continuum of participation, often from low level (participation as one-way information flows), to high level (participation as empowerment). Factors such as level and type of participation as well as the level and type of existing social capital are likely to have different impacts on resultant social capital structure. At the upper level of participation, social capital building is likely to occur as a result of achievement, interaction, membership and group identity. As identified earlier, social capital is not always good and can result in perverse outcomes therefore

increased social capital could have negative outcomes for project and society in general. At the lower end of the continuum it is also possible that social capital could be developed. Ineffective participation can also result in social capital benefits through different mechanisms. Group dynamics theory suggests that where groups form in response to adversity, group function is generally highly effective. This motivation for social interaction generates strong ties with strong norms of reciprocity and also places actors at structural holes. These processes do not result in benefits to all types of social capital and there are unknown possible negative impacts from this kind of social capital interaction. Vertical networks are likely to be weakened through distrust and skepticism and future participation impaired.

Historical factors are documented in participation literature as important in prescribing participatory methods. They are even more important when taking into account social capital theory. The success or failure and nature of past interventions can have significant impacts on the structure of social capital present in the community. Success is associated with good feelings of achievement and therefore the positive emotion associated with high levels of social capital. Networks, norms and trust are simply mobilised for future participation, resulting in further building of social capital – a virtuous cycle. Failure on the other hand can lead to feelings of betrayal, loss of trust and cynicism. Participation is likely to be lower and more ineffective reinforcing the negative feelings resulting in a vicious cycle. It is important to highlight the impact of specific events in these cycles. Social capital built over time can be lost from a simple action such as change of government policy or the decision not to go ahead with a planned project.

From this discussion it can be seen that there

are both positives and negatives associated with participation at both ends of the continuum. Perhaps the inappropriate use of medium levels of participation are most damaging to a wide range of social capital characteristics. Care must be taken to take these possible factors into account in the design of participatory methodologies. Further research into the role different variables play in the interaction of participation and social capital in this setting is required.

The role of negative or perverse social capital has received considerable attention in the literature. Clearly high levels of social capital can result in some unwanted externalities. The social capital benefits associated with belonging include feelings of obligation and reciprocity but there are also negative effects, particularly where this results in exclusion. In participation this is particularly important, especially where information is seen as, or equates to, power.

In developing countries traditional networks of social interaction are critical determinants of social capital structure where social stratification is strongly evident and there are strong norms and mores that often result in exclusion of some social groups. Strong social capital can also facilitate contrivance against the project for which community participation is undertaken, thereby strongly influencing project outcomes. In this sense, high social capital can be a major obstacle to participation and project implementation.

In developed countries social networks are increasingly being facilitated by modern technology. Email is increasingly being utilised for communication, which offers cheap and fast connectivity that compresses the space-time continuum. More recently SMS (short message service) is increasing networks of mobility. Both of these technologies have different impacts on social capital because of the lack of personal contact of face-to-face interaction. The type of social capital

that is produced from this interaction is significantly different from that found in traditional relations (for further discussion see (Kavanaugh and Patterson 2001; Meredyth and Ewing 2003; Pruijt 2002; Sullivan, Borgida *et al.* 2002; Wellman, Haase *et al.* 2001)). This contributes to social isolation, particularly in urban centres of developed countries. Whereas in the past, social networks were commonly based on proximity, they are now based more on work and interest groups. The strength of networks based on proximity has decreased because people know few of their neighbours, particularly in medium to high density areas and where there is high residential mobility. The result is limited opportunity for repeated interaction, which is fundamental to the equilibrium concept for social capital generation.

The contrast highlighted above between developing and developed countries is strongly influenced by modernisation and globalisation. Increasingly the transition from traditional leadership with traditional networks and change of culture will impact on the structure of social capital within these communities. This illustrates the highly context specific nature of social capital. Therefore participatory methodologies that take into account social capital theory will not be homogeneous but must be adaptive to the local context.

In discussion of the role of culture in participation and social capital debate, it is important to identify an important generalisation – developed country communities are generally egocentric, whereas developing country communities are generally socio-centric. This will result in a very different interaction process and therefore very different social capital related outcomes. There are similar divides such as rural / urban and rich / poor that can assist in the prescription of methodologies with expected benefits.



Existing studies of social capital differences in rich and poor communities are flawed, not because there is not a difference, but because they do not adequately take into account the nature of social capital. Network theorists will tell you that the key productive assets of a social network lie within the actors in the network. Wealthy actors have a few key differences to less well off actors; they generally have access to higher quality information and generally have greater power of influence. Therefore if rich and poor communities exhibited identical types and structures of social capital and social networks, then rich communities would have 'more' social capital. The results of such studies do not consistently reveal this, indicating that social capital is far more complex, explained by the differences in the types and structures of social capital itself. Network assets result in only minor differences in comparison to other factors such as available time, information overload, and over consultation. The role of poverty is often overlooked in participatory methods, but not for the above-discussed social capital reasons. Time away from work activities can greatly limit participation, limiting social capital benefits, further disadvantaging these groups.

A multitude of other factors are likely to impact on the interaction of social capital and participation such as: political society and structure, optimism, satisfaction, perceptions of government institutions, political involvement, and participation setting and the built environment. Further research is required to gain a greater understanding of the processes discussed above. Generally participation and social capital are highly context specific, taking into account the local differences and intervention need to reflect this context specific nature. The discussion above assists in the identification of important factors for discussion in reference to the participatory methodologies used in

the case study project.

## 5.2 CASE STUDY FINDINGS

### 3.2.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were held in several villages in each project area. They were conducted in late morning and a set time frame of two hours was established and catering was provided. Attention was paid to include all social groups that had been identified for each project. Fifteen people were asked to attend each focus group and the seats were placed in a circle to encourage participation and even power distributions. It was observed that participants did not sit in a circle, the socially dominant members of the group would sit directly in front of the facilitator and the remaining people would move chairs to sit behind or they would sit on the ground behind. The vast majority of participation came from the participants sitting directly in front of the facilitator.

Holding the focus groups in the late morning would exclude economically disadvantaged groups who could not afford the time away from work activities. In terms of project outcomes, this undermines the effectiveness of the project as the input of an important social group is missed. This exclusion further disadvantages poor people as their interests are not represented in project development. In terms of social capital theory, this exclusion represents a missed opportunity for poor people to make bridging connections, to strengthen bonding connections and benefit from information flows. This has a particularly significant impact as social capital is one of poor peoples' major assets, particularly in terms of minimizing vulnerability.

Underprivileged groups are further disadvantaged by seating patterns. As identified above, seats were arranged in a

circle to facilitate participation, however in all project sites, the participants did not sit in a circle. In reality, seating arrangement was determined by social stratification and disadvantaged groups always sat behind and often lower than the socially superior members. This further limited the participation of the disadvantaged groups, which limited the opportunities for building social capital. In this respect the project's participatory planning failed to include all stakeholder groups.

The potential for building social capital is particularly significant given the effort of the project team to include all social groups identified. Combining members of social groups that are likely to have internal network closure, places the focus group participants in the unique position of being located at various structural holes simultaneously. The most significant benefit of being in this location is information flows, however another benefit – norms of reciprocity – could also be established between social groups, through individual members. This is best understood as empathy. Given the opportunity to hear the views and perspectives of different social groups develops a two way understanding that reduces the perceived gap, thereby initiating the process of forming norms of reciprocity. This process also allows for greater collaboration through identification of opportunities for individual or mutual benefit. In developed countries it is widely acknowledged that one can benefit from 'networking' opportunities at conferences, meetings and through interest groups.

The findings above represent social capital benefits that may be realized only under ideal circumstances. In the situation identified in the case study, participation of all members of the focus group did not occur due to power differentials and therefore the opportunity for norms to develop was limited, especially given only a one-off 2 hour focus group. Focus

group theory in a developed country context would suggest that as participant numbers reached as high as 15, only some people would participate. In the case study context, people disadvantaged by social standing or gender were precluded from participation. The result was a disequilibrium of power where the views of the higher social classes prevailed and this was evident in the results of the project focus groups. This represents a further failure of the project's participation plan, which aimed to include all stakeholders in the process.

In the developed country context, gender and social standing generally do not determine the pattern of participation. Other characteristics of the participants tend to be determinants of participation, such as the personality, education and knowledge, level of interest or motivation and attainment (in terms of being invited to attend). A common grouping distinction is 'social group' in developing country context and 'stakeholder group' in developed countries. The social capital building potential is also much greater in developed countries, particularly in urban areas. Under these circumstances it is unlikely that participants would know each other and the contact would establish weak ties and even in the short term, the establishment of group mores and norms of reciprocity. The role of residential proximity would have an impact of the strength and longevity of the weak ties formed through participation in the focus group and therefore the likelihood of reconnection and strengthening of the ties that represent social capital formation. Based on these findings, social capital building potential in the developed country context could be maximized by holding a series of focus groups with a smaller number of participants from a wide range of interest groups originating from a close residential proximity. This would maximize participation as well as allow time for formation of weak ties and norms of reciprocity that are more

likely to endure after the participation process ends. Focus group participants would be located at various structural holes simultaneously as well as have inter- social group norms of reciprocity.

In the case study, participation could have been maximized by holding separate, small, focus groups for different social groups. This would separate disadvantaged groups who are inhibited by power differentials, enabling effective participation of all groups. The project background data identified gender power imbalances, which represents a need for separate focus groups. Although not carried out, it is acknowledged that the project may have been constrained by time or resources. Holding separate focus groups would limit social capital building opportunities in situations with high levels of participation but as discussed above, the project suffered from a lack of participation and thus holding separate focus groups would have little impact on the overall opportunities for generating social capital. It is recommended that providing feedback on issues that were identified to the whole group could enhance social capital building. This could be either through a public meeting or a meeting of all focus group participants. If further social capital building was an objective of the project, a further round of focus groups could then be help, mixing key individuals from different social groups, identified from observation. The familiarity of the topic and process, and increased empathy, should enable more even participation of all focus group members and allow for tie formation and establishment of group norms. Cooperation could be enhanced with benefits for project effectiveness and general civil society.

The key recommendation for the developed country context is that holding a number of focus groups with ample opportunity for networking could maximize social capital

building. Although not as significant as in developing countries, giving feedback by way of a public meeting would increase understanding between stakeholder groups. This may have benefits for project effectiveness and social capital through enhanced community cohesion and understanding.

## 5.2.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings were held in many of the villages in each project area. They were conducted in the evening for a maximum of two hours. Some seating was provided where possible, generally about 20 seats from the local school. The public meetings were open to all and generally about 70-80 people attended the public meetings and it was observed that the socially dominant people sat in the chairs and the rest sat on the ground behind. The primary purpose of the events were for information dissemination in the way of informing them of the project and collection of views. The same power and gender differentials were observed as in the focus groups with very few people participating and participation coming from those people sitting in the chairs, i.e. those with high social status.

The timing of the meetings meant that people who worked during the day could attend. It did however exclude some disadvantaged groups. Carers, who are generally women, could not attend and this is particularly significant given the high rates of HIV/AIDS in the project areas. This has similar effects on social capital building opportunities as the focus groups situation identified and discussed above. Despite the fact that the excluded people are unlikely to participate in the public meeting, their exclusion can result in carers feeling ostracized and socially isolated. Missing the formal public meeting component is not as significant as missing

the informal social interactions that occur before and after the meeting. There are important opportunities for interaction with a wide variety of people, which represents an important opportunity for building and strengthening social capital. The village extension people such as health workers, teachers, etc, who would be excluded from a meeting held during the day attended the meetings held in the evening. This represents a networking opportunity for the extension people and the wider community through the strengthening of weak ties and formation of new ones as well. Particularly important is the opportunity for information sharing which is itself an outcome of social capital but also contributes to social capital through increased trust, cohesion and empathy.

Public meetings in the developed country context are very different. Usually there is seating for everyone with higher levels of participation. There is generally a much lower attendance rates as people suffer from a shortage of time and an overload of information. Attendees must have a strong reason for attendance, usually in terms of personal impact, or in terms of strong views and beliefs. This changes the patterns of participation from those observed in the developing country contexts where most people will attend a public meeting, even if they are not involved or impacted. In developed countries discussion between stakeholder groups is common and can be quite animated. In developing countries, views are expressed in a more controlled way, if expressed at all in a public meeting situation. In developed countries people will often ask questions of the project team and disagree with what is being said however this is very uncommon in developing countries. For these reasons public meetings will have a different function in developing and developed contexts. In developed countries they may be used more for the collection of views and information than for information

dissemination.

Where public meetings are used for feedback in developing countries the participants will generally listen respectfully and not question the results however in developed countries this is not the case. Participants will often question or clarify the outcomes. This stems from the much higher levels of literacy and education and the social norms.

### 5.2.3 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

The major mediums for information dissemination utilized included posters, local newspapers, local radio and the before mentioned public meetings. The purpose of these activities was to inform the general public of the project and that meetings would be happening. It involved one time publication in newspapers and was broadcast on local radio stations over a few days.

Information dissemination is a very low level of participation with only one-way communication however it has a role in awareness raising and can support other participatory tools as it does in the case study. The main advantages are that it has the potential to reach the non-attendees of public meetings including the carers and HIV/AIDS sufferers. It is unlikely however to reach the most disadvantaged groups including the women and poor due to their workload, accessibility to newspapers and radio, and much lower literacy rates. In many project areas there are also language barriers with disadvantaged groups having different dialects. Literacy, languages and education affect the level of awareness and understanding of the project with impacts on project efficiency and participation in other participatory events. In developed countries literacy and education rates are much higher however there is also the role of information overload and its impact on project awareness.

The information dissemination methods used in the case study resulted in little opportunity for social capital benefits to be realized. Alternative methods could mobilize and strengthen existing social capital and provide opportunities for new social capital building. The local extension people could be utilized to pass information on through their daily business within the village. Traditional leaders could also contribute to this word of mouth spread of information while strengthening existing traditional networks. Another possible avenue is the use of culturally appropriate extension methodologies such as song, role play, puppetry or dance. These opportunities would be limited in developed countries however there may be context specific circumstances where existing networks could be mobilized for information dissemination.

#### 5.2.4 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were administered to 100 people in each project area. The project team designed the questionnaire and a random stratified sampling procedure was used to select the questionnaire recipients. The questionnaire was administered by counter-part staff who were located outside to the project area. The result was a very low level of participation; just information extraction; and no social capital building opportunities. It is recommended that design input be sought from key local stakeholders to improve the efficiency and validity of the questionnaire. Social capital building opportunities could also be maximized if local extension personnel administered the questionnaire. Depending on their capacity some training may be required to ensure the questionnaire is administered rigorously and they should receive some pay to supplement the time away from other activities. The social capital building opportunities from this are significant. The local extension staff

represent an important existing link between a variety of different members within the community and cross social groups. The networks and linkages established through administering the questionnaire are likely to last and contribute to community level social capital.

The biggest advantage for project level social capital occurred as a result of linkages between the separate project teams. The personnel shared identification with each other and this strong belonging led to almost immediate generation of norms of reciprocity. The team members saw themselves a 'whities in a black land'. The collaboration between the projects increased significantly with regular meetings, sharing of materials, help and this is likely to continue.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has identified numerous recommendations from the synthesis of social capital and participation theories and from application of this integration to the case study participatory methodologies. These are listed below and discussed in more detail in the following section. Project methodologies should:

» **take account of the importance of 'events' in major social capital outcome**

An 'event' such as a participatory project does not necessarily result in more or less social capital but changes in the nature of the social capital for better or worse. It is vital to take into account the significant and lasting impacts of an event such as changed project objectives or the end of a project on social capital – these impacts can influence all future activities with the community with unknown results, again, positive or negative.

» **involve repeated interaction in**

### **participation methodologies**

Repeat interactions lead to formation of weak ties between individuals that are often members of different network groups. When coupled with similar interests, motivations, membership or proximity, these ties can provide significant and lasting benefits to the individuals and the community in general. Examples could be holding repeat focus groups with informal interaction encouraged, design of a questionnaire by stakeholders over a period of time or bring the group back together to analyse the data.

#### **» take into account other factors influencing social capital changes**

Other factors such as social stratification, gender, family, religion, and general interest can influence participation and also social capital changes. An understanding of these issues can lead to increased participation and significant benefits for the individuals and the community in general.

#### **» maximise interaction through group dynamics theory**

There are many factors of group dynamics theory that are useful to application in social capital sensitive participation methodologies including reason for group formation, seating patterns, group size, and facilitation processes.

#### **» adapt social capital sensitive participatory methodologies to local context**

Any existing participatory methodology must be adapted to the local context for which it will be applied to take into account the numerous important factors.

#### **» include disadvantaged groups by ensuring participation is possible**

Disadvantaged groups are often limited in the timing, means and types of methodologies. The

importance of their participation is often overlooked or their exclusion considered 'unavoidable'. These groups have the potential to significantly benefit from changes in social capital from appropriately designed participation methodologies.

#### **» maximise social capital building opportunities for the poor through careful design of participation methodologies**

It is often said that social capital is poor people's biggest asset, yet participatory methodologies often preclude their participation. It is vital not to limit their involvement by taking time away from work activities or providing suitable compensation for doing so.

#### **» carefully select focus group participants when including different social groups to maximise structural hole benefits**

Given the opportunity to hear the views and perspectives of different social groups develops a two way understanding that reduces the perceived gap, thereby initiating the process of forming norms of reciprocity. This process also allows for greater collaboration through identification of opportunities for individual or mutual benefit. Factors such as the standing of the individual within the social group, personality, gender, and age are all important in selecting the most suitable participants – to ensure meaningful participation.

#### **» hold focus groups for each social group and share outcomes between groups**

In the case study, participation could have been maximized by holding separate, small, focus groups for different social groups. This would separate disadvantaged groups who are inhibited by power differentials,

enabling effective participation of all groups. The project background data identified gender power imbalances, which represents a need for separate focus groups. Although not carried out, it is acknowledged that the project may have been constrained by time or resources. Holding separate focus groups would limit social capital building opportunities in situations with high levels of participation but as discussed above, the project suffered from a lack of participation and thus holding separate focus groups would have little impact on the overall opportunities for generating social capital. It is recommended that providing feedback on issues that were identified to the whole group could enhance social capital building. This could be either through a public meeting or a meeting of all focus group participants. If further social capital building was an objective of the project, a further round of focus groups could then be help, mixing key individuals from different social groups, identified from observation. The familiarity of the topic and process, and increased empathy, should enable more even participation of all focus group members and allow for tie formation and establishment of group norms. Cooperation could be enhanced with benefits for project effectiveness and general civil society. The key recommendation for the developed country context is that holding a number of focus groups with ample opportunity for networking could maximize social capital building. Although not as significant as in developing countries, giving feedback by way of a public meeting would increase understanding between stakeholder groups. This may have benefits for project effectiveness and social capital through enhanced community cohesion and understanding.

» **maximise informal networking opportunities at public meetings**

Public meetings can hold little opportunity for social capital change, however the biggest benefit occurs through informal interaction, before and after, the formal public meeting. This is the best time to get bonding and bridging interactions.

» **utilise existing or traditional information flows for information dissemination**

Information dissemination methodologies can be designed to have social capital benefits by using existing or traditional information flows and methods. For example, traditional leaders can often contribute to the word of mouth spread of information and other possible avenues include culturally appropriate methods such as song, dance, role play or puppetry. This again highlights the importance of designing context relevant methodologies.

» **seek questionnaire design input from key stakeholders**

Obtaining input for key stakeholders, often with different views and opinions and often from very different social groups allows for the development of empathy, understanding, compromise and places the stakeholders at structural holes.

» **administer questionnaire by local extension personnel**

Although capacity may need to be enhanced in some cases, local extension personnel could have the opportunity to build and strength ties with members of the community and this may also have advantages for project outcomes with improved data from locally knowledgeable and culturally sensitive data collectors.

» **hold opportunities for within- and cross-project interaction of project staff**

There is often a significant opportunity for project level social capital change as a result of linkages between the separate project teams and between personnel from different projects. The personnel are likely to share identification with each other and this strong belonging, which leads to almost immediate generation of norms of reciprocity.

Further research is needed into the role different variables play in the interaction of participation and social capital in designing participatory methodologies anywhere along the participation continuum. Further research is also required into the role of unaccounted for factors such as political society and structure, optimism, satisfaction, perceptions of government institutions, political involvement, and participation setting and the built environment.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This study analyses participation methodologies through the lens of social capital. The integration of these two theories provide numerous insights into the design of participation methodologies and opportunities for them to perform much better. The findings of this integration were then applied to the case study participation methodologies with numerous important findings. Despite the efforts of the project development team, there were numerous oversights or missed opportunities where the project and community could have benefited from variations to the methodology used. It was found that by providing opportunities for repeat interaction in the participatory methodologies, social capital benefits could be maximised. It was also stressed that any social capital sensitive participatory methodology is by definition local context specific and application of such methods

require careful analysis of the local context in which it is being applied. Further research is required in this area to identify opportunities and pitfalls across the breadth of participation methodologies.

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