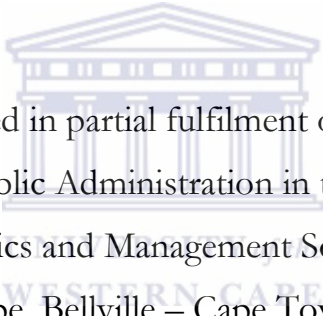


Community Participation in Poverty Reduction Interventions: Examining  
the Factors that impact on the Community-Based Organisation (CBO)  
Empowerment Project in Ghana

Isaac Bayor



A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master in Public Administration in the School of Government,  
Faculty of Economics and Management Science, University of the  
Western Cape, Bellville – Cape Town, South Africa

Supervised by: Professor Michelle V. Esau

June 2010

Community Participation in Poverty Reduction Interventions: Examining  
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Empowerment Project in Ghana

**KEY WORDS**

COLLECTIVE ACTION

COMMUNITY

COOPERATION

EMPOWERMENT

GENERALISED RECIPROCITY

GHANA

NETWORKS

NORMS

PARTICIPATION

SOCIAL CAPITAL

SOLIDARITY



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBO(s)	Community-Based Organisation(s)
CDD	Community Driven Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation



## **ABSTRACT**

Community Participation in Poverty Reduction Interventions: Examining the Factors that impact on the Community-Based Organisation (CBO) Empowerment Project in Ghana

Isaac Bayor

Mini-thesis, School of Government, University of the Western Cape

In spite of several decades of transfers of financial aid from industrialised countries to developing countries, the numbers of the poor continue to increase and many peasant rural poor communities still grapple with the repercussions of inadequate potable water, lack of electricity, poor health care, insufficient education and poor agricultural production. These realities, therefore, raise questions key to understanding the failure of interventionist strategies towards alleviating poverty in the developing world. Moreover, it raises awareness that financial aid in and of itself is insufficient to confront the challenges in poor communities.

These realities call for development managers and practitioners to re-examine development strategies and to find new approaches and strategies in development. International, governmental and non-governmental agencies therefore, realised more and more that the main reason of many unsuccessful development projects was (and still is) the lack of active, effective and lasting participation of the intended beneficiaries. Consequently, several agencies started to promote the participation of people, in particular the intended beneficiaries. From available literature it became clear that community participation is crucial for any development project to be successful and sustainable. What is often less discussed in the literature of community participation is what makes it work.

Hence, in this mini-thesis I argue that community participation does not automatically facilitate gains for the poor. My main assumption is that internal rigidities in communities, such as weak social capital, culture, trust and reciprocity,

affect mutual cooperation towards collective community gains. I used two communities, where a community empowerment project is implemented, as a case study to demonstrate that the success of community participation is contingent on the stocks of social capital in the community. The results show that the responsiveness of the two communities to the project activities differs with the stocks of social capital. I found that trust among community members facilitates information flow in the community. The level of trust is also related to the sources of information of community members about development activities in the community. I also found that solidarity is an important dimension of social capital, which determines community members' willingness to help one another and to participate in activities towards collective community gain. The research also demonstrated that perception of community members about target beneficiaries of projects– whether they represent the interest of the majority of the community or only the interest of community leaders – influences the level of confidence and ownership of the project.

From my research findings, I concluded that, in order for community participation to work successfully, development managers need to identify the stocks of social capital in the community that will form the basis to determine the level of engagement with community members in the participatory process.

June 2010

## DECLARATION

I declare that “*Community Participation in Poverty Reduction Interventions: Examining the Factors that impact on the Community-Based Organisation (CBO) Empowerment Project in Ghana*” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Isaac Bayor

Date

.....



Signature

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UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

# DEDICATION

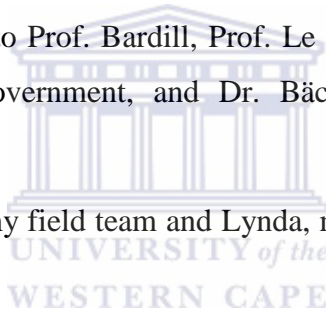
To my family



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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1. Introduction

Issues of poverty have become common or almost mandatory on the agendas of many development agencies. It is commonplace to find many development programmes and projects aimed at improving the conditions of the poor. The efforts of these development organisations have produced mixed results; while some projects have led to some improvement in the conditions of the poor, others have not yielded the desired results. Poverty is still widespread in many parts of the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The World Bank, for example, projected that there are approximately 1.1 billion people who live in absolute poverty (Sachs, 2005). On average, 45 to 50 percent of sub-Saharan Africans still live below the poverty line – a much higher proportion than in any region of the world, except South Asia. The depth of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is also greater than anywhere else in the world (World Bank, 1996). These staggering levels of poverty in the world are obviously sources of concern to many international and multilateral development organisations to re-ignite their efforts and commitments in combating poverty.

The declaration of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 represents a key milestone in the global fight against poverty. In adopting the Millennium Declaration in the year 2000, the world pledged to spare no effort to eradicate poverty and extreme hunger by 2015. Recent progress reports showed that halving poverty is likely to be achieved globally. However, a lot of sub-Saharan African countries are lagging behind, if not being completely off track (MDG report, 2008). The slow progress by the continent and its imminent failure to reduce extreme poverty by 2015 was declared a “development emergency” by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the UN in July 2007 (BBC, 2007).

The perpetuation and aggravation of poverty and the apparent inability of many people in Africa to break the vicious circles of poverty visibly calls for new approaches and enhanced efforts in tackling poverty. The World Bank proposed a three-pronged strategy to poverty reduction: “promoting opportunities, facilitating empowerment and enhancing security of the poor” (Thirlwall, 2006: 41).

These mutually self-enforcing and complementary strategies of the World Bank highlight the multi-dimensional nature of poverty (*inter alia* economic, social and political). Thirlwall (*ibid*) remarked that poverty not only means low income, consumption and low levels of human development in terms of health and education, but also feelings of powerlessness, vulnerability and fear. The World Bank’s proposed strategy of facilitating empowerment seems adequate in addressing the dimension powerlessness and vulnerability of poverty, which is indeed high on recent development approaches. Empowering poor people means strengthening the participation of poor people in decision-making (*opt cite*, 43); thus, ensuring participatory planning, implementation and management of interventions meant for the benefit of the poor.

It would, therefore, be safe to say that productive participatory dialogue with communities and empowering them to take their development into their own hands could be one of the most cost-effective and discerning mediums for breaking the barriers of chronic poverty. Eradicating poverty requires concerted efforts of development agencies, including governments, and the beneficiaries as well.

## **1.2. Problem statement**

Community participation, in Wolfensohn’s view, is seen as far more than just a requirement. It is a condition for success in poverty alleviation programmes and projects. As opined by Marone and Kilbreth (2003), involving communities in the planning, monitoring and evaluation process of development interventions would decrease alienation among socially excluded groups and re-orient healthy power relationships with decision-makers and duty bearers. Bakhit (1996) stressed that participation is essential in overcoming deprivation, inequality and impoverishment.

Nicole (1996: 56) underscored the importance of participation in poverty reduction when he stated:

*It is virtually unanimously accepted these days that the endemic nature of world-wide poverty can only be altered and the lot of the poor alleviated if they themselves can become part of the process more than until now.*

Hickey and Mohan (2007: 2) supported this view when they noted that “evidence so far in the new millennium suggests that participation has actually deepened and extended its role in development”.

Seemingly, the call for greater participation of beneficiaries has resulted in development organisations working hard to involve communities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects intended to benefit the poor. However, and in spite of four decades of transfer of financial aid from industrialised countries to Africa, the numbers of poor continue to increase. Many peasant rural poor communities still stand on the threshold of being excluded from making any dignified living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These realities, therefore, raise questions key to understanding the failure of interventionist strategies towards alleviating poverty in the developing world. Moreover, it raises awareness that financial aid in and of itself is insufficient to confront the challenges in poor communities.

Therefore, while claim is made that communities are consulted with, evidence suggests that decision-making processes exclude the views of the poor. Ultimately projects are designed and implemented that do not meet the development needs of the poor, thus creating a vacuum and atmosphere of apathy, which distances people from development interventions (Miller, 2005). More specifically, communities that are fragmented, either by a lack of trust or weak social capital, are vulnerable to community participation being captured by the local elite.



### **1.3. Guiding assumptions of the study**

In the light of the aforementioned context, this study assumes the following:

- Community participation does not automatically facilitate gains for the poor.
- Internal rigidities in communities, such as weak social capital, affect mutual cooperation towards collective community gains.
- The form and nature of participation has an impact on the realisation of project gains by communities.
- Informal institutions, such as customs, norms and values, affect communities' ability to cooperate towards their mutual benefit.
- The failure of development projects to benefit the poor resonates in exclusionary processes of participation.

### **1.4. Purpose of the study**

The study aims to do the following:

- explore the relationship between social capital and mutual cooperation;
- examine some of the customs, norms and informal sanction mechanisms present in communities that negatively or positively affect their ability to cooperate for mutual benefit;
- examine some of the processes of participation that impacts on project gains for the poor; and
- identify the level or form of participation that is likely to increase project gains for the poor.

### **1.5. Related studies and debates**

#### ***1.5.1. Arguments for community participation***

Various scholars and development managers have undertaken myriad of studies to explore the relationship between community participation and the poor, social capital and mutual cooperation, and also the role of informal institutions, such as community norms and informal sanction mechanisms, in fostering trust and mutual cooperation in communities.

Scholars, in their studies, have found empirical evidence that revealed the value of community participation in reducing poverty. For instance, in a study examining the relationship between community participation and the efficacy of interventions designed to reduce poverty, Hoddinott *et al.* (2001) suggested that community participation offers the prospects of lowering the cost of antipoverty interventions and it is likely to produce a set of outcomes actually desired by the community. They (*ibid*) analysed the impact of community participation on public works projects in South Africa and found that increasing participation lowers the ratio of project to local wages, increases the labour intensity of projects that provide community buildings, roads or sewers, and lowers the cost of creating employment and transferring funds to poor individuals.

The main argument often put forward to support community participation as having the potential of reducing poverty is that, since community members often live within a narrowly defined geographic proximity and do interact very frequently, they know the prevailing local conditions, such as who is poor and deserved to be helped, better and they are also better able to monitor interventions within the community. For this reason, communities are usually considered to possess informational advantages that are often unavailable to outsiders.

There is ample evidence from academia and development practitioners to substantiate this argument. First, there may be projects where knowledge of local conditions is especially important for the success of the intervention and where the cost of acquisition of such knowledge by outsiders is very high. For instance, Manikutty (1998) noted that in the context of water and sanitation projects, community involvement is important in ensuring that projects are sited where they are most likely to be used. Adato (1999b, cited in Hoddinott, 2001) found that in public works projects in South Africa, communities had knowledge about local conditions, such as safety hazards and vandalism, with relevance for road design. Also, the conservation of natural resources, such as wildlife, watersheds, local forests, and grazing lands are examples where scholars emphasised the importance of local knowledge in their management. For example, Hoddinott *et al.* (2001:11) cited Gibson (1999), Ashby, Knapp and Ravnborg (1998), and Caldecott and Lutz

(1998), that the maintenance of natural resource requires considerable local knowledge and that ongoing monitoring is also needed to ensure that rules regarding the use or protection of these resources are enforced.

Secondly, frequent interaction of community members facilitates information flow of each others' strengths, weaknesses and characteristics that is necessary to reduce adverse selection or moral hazards. Adverse selection, in this context, is the possibility of community members or individuals in the community to hide or manipulate information about their characteristics in a way that will hide their true characters in order to be assigned responsibilities where they will ultimately act against the interests of the whole community. Moral hazards may also occur in this context when, after an individual or group of persons in a community has accepted a responsibility to act in the whole community's interest, they deviate from the original instructions or purpose, and carry out tasks in such a way that may advanced their own interest.

Eventually, when adverse selection and moral hazards are reduced, the possibility of entrusting responsibilities of the development of the community to community members, who are likely to shirk those responsibilities, will be reduced. For example, for a public works project in which a daily wage payment is made, involvement by the community in the hiring of labour may increase the likelihood that the deserving poor receive employment, while those with a propensity to shirk are excluded (Hoddinott, 2001). Adato *et al.* (1999) also reported that South African local communities had their own ideas about who was the most deserving poor, or otherwise deserving of jobs, which did not coincide with more generally accepted criteria of targeting suitable skills in antipoverty programmes.

It is, however, important to note that, though scholars have illustrated that community participation has the potential of reducing poverty, there are also studies that point to the fact that these benefits are not guaranteed through community participation. Hence, the ability of communities to have increased gains from participation is dependent on other factors: first, on their ability to work

together for their collective gain and second, on the form and nature of participation.

For example, in communities dissipated either by a lack of trust or weak social capital, there is a risk that community participation may result in the capture of benefits by the local elite to the detriment of the poor. Thus, gains from community participation are to some extent contingent on the extent of social capital in the community. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) observed that social capital contributes to economic, social and political development by enabling information-sharing, mitigating opportunistic behaviour and facilitating collective decision-making. Narayan (1997), in an earlier study, observed that communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations have a high sense of moral obligations and commitment to participate in community development activities. Therefore, such communities will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, solve common problems, resolve disputes and take advantage of opportunities.

Isham and Kahkonen (1999, cited in Hoddinott, 2001: 151), also noted that “in Indonesia in villages with high levels of social capital – in particular with active village groups and associations – household participation is likely to be high and monitoring mechanisms are more likely to be in place”. Hence, in projects like microcredit, the trust in groups serves as a monitoring mechanism that ensures that beneficiaries invest the money in productive activities, which would lead to improvement in their livelihood.

In discussing the relevance of social capital in determining mutual cooperation towards collective community gains, it would be pertinent to also note, however, that the impetus for community members to trust one another and have strong networks is to some extent conditional on the norms, value systems and informal sanction mechanisms present in the community. Therefore, informal institutions, unwritten codes of conduct, social norms, value systems and informal sanction mechanisms affect the stock of social capital and, as such, the community’s ability to cooperate towards their collective gain. Hayami and Kawagoe (1993: 167)

observed that cooperation in small groups or communities is made possible by the “assumed presence of a social ostracism and informal sanction mechanisms”. They note further that (*ibid*: 167):

*In the village community everyone is watching everyone. Gossip about one’s misconduct is circulated by word of mouth faster than any other means of communication. In such an environment a significant cost would be incurred to a person who would violate a contract with a fellow villager, since not only would he lose benefits from the present contract, but the resulting bad reputation would deprive him of future opportunities to enter into contracts with other villagers as well.*

Another crucial dimension, which academia and development practitioners have explored in the discourse of community participation and anti-poverty reduction programmes, is the nature and form of participation. Two related guiding assumptions of this study are that: *the form and nature of participation has an impact on the realisation of project gains by communities* and that *the failure of development projects to benefit the poor resonates in exclusionary processes of participation*. These two important assumptions are concerned with, firstly, who and which categories of people are involved in the decision-making in participation process and, secondly, what kinds of decision-making powers or authorities are delegated to communities?

Hoddinott (2002: 146) subscribed to the above two assumptions when he argued that “the failure to delegate true decision-making authority (allowing for *de jure*, but not for *de facto* participation), may result in beneficiaries being reluctant to act, because of concerns that they will be subsequently overruled”. In this regard, the kind of decision-making authority delegated to communities has an influence on the success of the intervention. For instance, Manikutty (1998), in a case study of experiences of water and sanitation projects in five different Indian states, found that the most successful projects, in terms of utilisation and maintenance of facilities, were those in which *de facto*, or real, decision-making authority was delegated over decisions, such as the physical location of water standpoints and

latrines. Formal (*de jure*) decision-making authority is defined as the right to decide; while real (*de facto*) authority is the effective control over decisions (Aghion and Tirole, 1997). Hence, whether communities really have effective control over decisions and do make decisions about the direction and execution of development projects in their communities, or community members do not really have control over decisions concerning development projects, significantly impacts on their benefits.

### ***1.5.2. Arguments against community participation***

As earlier stated, community participation does not guarantee success and there is no clear methodology for meaningful community participation. Some scholars have, therefore, expressed their reservations about community participation. For example, Tataleni (2005) observed that in some cases there are no clear goals and objectives of participation and its approach is *ad hoc* and unsystematic. Garcia-Zamor (1985) also noted that community participation can be time-consuming in terms of ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are adequately involved. Taylor (1994) was also of the opinion that community participation needs specialised skills and a lot of resources, such as cash, in order to organise and provide the spaces for participatory process to take place. For these reasons, community participation can delay project start-up, because the required personnel, who will facilitate the process, need to be recruited, resources need to be gathered and a lot of planning needs to be done.

It can also be the case that participants communicate a wrong interpretation, because of a diversity of languages in a community. This can be problematic, as findings can be interpreted wrongly. Authentic and empowering community participation can slow down the planning and implementation of a project. When this happens, local authorities can become impatient, thereby ignoring the processes underlying community participation (Meyer *et al.*, 2002, cited in Tataleni). Meyer, Cupido and Theron (2002) also noted that illiteracy is an inhibiting factor in community participation. This is because illiterate people may be marginalised by professional and technical communication during the community participation process.

In communities where people live in absolute fear of their leaders, community members may still fear to openly express a different opinion, because of adverse consequences thereafter (Integrated Environmental Management Information, 2002).

These disadvantages have to be taken into account whenever a development project is to be implemented in a particular community. This can contribute to the sustainability of the project. Being aware of the disadvantages can help people to find ways to deal with such disadvantages and to minimise them in the future.

### ***1.5.3. Community participation and social capital***

Development practitioners and researchers in academia have conducted a myriad of studies to examine the relationship between stocks of social capital and levels of community participation. For instance, Esau (2008), in a study to assess the impact of social capital in Bonteheuwel community in Cape Town, South Africa, posited *inter alia* that stocks of social capital influence the extent to which communities participate in the decision-making process of the state. She (*ibid*) found that the levels of social capital in the community are insufficient to foster participation. However, she suggested that horizontal networks and associations do exist in the community and that the networks will be more useful and “effective *vis-a-vis* participation to the extent that they permeate vertical networks and associations” (Esau, 2008: 11).

It will be prudent to note in this argument that the importance of social capital in participation is not in doubt, it will be more effective especially when the discourse is about community participation in decision-making of the state and the role of intermediary actors are required. For instance, in an earlier study, Esau (2007) found that the activities of ward committees as intermediary actors between the state and communities were limited, partly because of limited social capital. Hence, horizontal networks and associations existing in communities are necessary for participation in project activities within communities, which is the focus of this thesis.

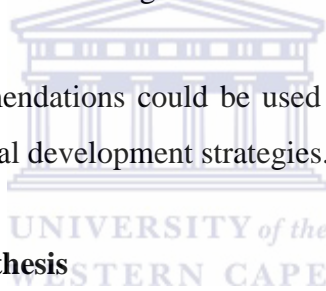


## **1.6. Development significance of the research**

Wilcox (1996) had noted that, though community participation has virtually moved to mainstream development since the mid-1980s, many attempts at community participation have not yielded much success, because development practitioners are often unclear about where and which level of participation is feasible. However, it suffices to say that bringing communities to discuss a project is necessary, but not sufficient for communities to realise project gains. Therefore, participation is most likely to be effective when the different interests groups in a project are satisfied with the level at which they are involved.

This research is aimed at exploring this gap to obtain the opinions of communities about what participation means to them – where and at what level participation should occur? This will then be useful to ascertain conditions that might promote or inhibit communities from achieving the full benefits of participation.

The findings and recommendations could be used in rural development planning and implementation of rural development strategies.



## **1.7. Organisation of the thesis**

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter gives a background to the study. It highlights the problem statement and why the stated problem is worth investigating. The main assumptions of the research and the research purpose are also highlighted in this chapter. The chapter ends with an overview of related studies in the area of the study.

### **Chapter Two: Literature and theoretical framework**

In this chapter theoretical approaches to participatory community development are discussed. I start by tracing the historical development of participatory development. The chapter also introduces conceptual definitions of key concepts and variables in the study. These are mainly participation and social capital. It concludes by drawing the link between social capital and development.



### **Chapter Three: Research methodology**

This chapter discusses the main research instruments used to collect and analyse data. It explains the sample design, sampling techniques and the criteria for the choice of sample size. I conclude this chapter with some ethical considerations of the research and limitations.

### **Chapter Four: Research descriptive background and context**

Chapter Four is organised into two parts. The first part describes in detail the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the research setting. The second part presents a detailed context of the CBO empowerment project that is the case study for the research.

### **Chapter Five: Presentation of findings**

The primary focus of this chapter is to present the research findings in quantitative form without any in-depth analysis. The findings are presented in percentages, tables and graphs.

### **Chapter Six: Analysis and discussion of research findings**

This chapter is descriptive in nature and presents an analysis of the research findings. It discusses the findings in detail *vis-a-vis* the research assumptions. It establishes whether the research assumptions have been confirmed or rejected.

### **Chapter Seven: Conclusions and recommendation**

Chapter Seven draws together the main findings of the research and relates them to the literature and theoretical background. In this chapter I discussed whether my research findings discussed, are contradictory to the literature. It concludes with one practical recommendation, which can be adopted by development managers in project planning and implementation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews relevant literature on approaches to participatory community development. I start by tracing the historical development of participatory development. The chapter also presents conceptual definitions of key concepts and variables in the study. These are participation and social capital. It concludes by drawing the link between social capital and development.

#### 2.1. Historical development of community participation

Citizens in the post-colonial era in many third-world countries were at the receiving end of development activities from government and development agencies. Cornwall (2002) observed that colonial authorities had put in place forms of decentralised governance to administer indirect rule and to implement government development agendas mostly designed from the top. In the opinion of Jennings (2000: 1), colonial authorities and most development agencies in the post-colonial era maintained that “big was always better”, and thus the ‘big’ centralised hierarchies were the nuclei of development planning and implementation. Crook and Jerve (1991) argued that these centralised development strategies were perceived to be non-sustainable, marginalising and impoverishing, which were characterised by growing divisions within society, the differential capture of benefits and growing bureaucratic ineptitude.

Midgley *et al.* (1986), therefore, stated that ideas about community participation emanated from criticisms of the top-down approaches to development practice and the subsequent demand of citizens for political space and citizenship rights to shape their development paths. These criticisms and the citizens’ quest to gain political space saw the emergence of humanist movements, which argued for a people first development approach. One of the earliest scholars, who saw the need to shift from seeing the poor as objects of exploitation in development to seeing them as subjects of their own development, was Paulo Freire (Mansuri and Rao, 2004: 4). In his seminal work, the “*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*”, Freire argued that the oppressed needed to unite to find a way to improve upon their destinies (*ibid*).

Another significant milestone in the study of participatory development was the cooperative movement of Gandhian notions of village self-reliance and small scale development, which he saw as an antidote to the corrosive effects of modernisation and colonial rule (Gandhi, 1962).

This realisation of the human factor, or people first approach, necessitated a paradigm shift in development practice. The new school of thought maintained that “big outcomes may be born of small inputs and that more heads are better than one” (Jennings, 2000: 1). Development practitioners, therefore, realised more and more that, in order to ensure durable change, there should be effective and lasting participation of the people who are intended to benefit from the development activity.

Scholars then focused new development efforts on building the local institutional capacity and encouraging self-reliance of the hitherto excluded. Proponents of this new approach of development was of the assumption that, if progress is to be achieved, it cannot be imposed from outside, but must be built on small, locally based knowledge and sustainable initiatives.

In the 1960s and 1970s, community participation became central to development projects as a means to seek sustainability and equity, particularly for the poor. The fresh breath of local self-reliance and the inclusion of the previously excluded resulted in development approaches, such as community development and integrated rural development in the 1970s. Van Heck (2003) noted that international, governmental and non-governmental agencies then realised more and more that, if progress is to be made in development, effective and lasting participation of the intended beneficiaries and the utilisation of indigenous knowledge are essential. By the 1980s participation has gained roots into mainstream development. As noted by Botes and Van Rensburg (2000: 58), some scholars even called the 1980s the “decade of participation”. They observed that, to a large extent, the current decade of social movements, non-government organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) are manifestations of organised community participation (*ibid*).

## 2.2. Conceptualising community participation

The meaning of community participation is often a rendition of the organisational culture, or the author defining it. For that matter, community participation has been variously described by scholars. For instance, the concept has been broadly conceived to embrace the idea that all stakeholders should take part in decision-making and it has been more narrowly described as the extraction of local knowledge to design programs off-site (Jennings, 2000). Participation is also sometimes defined as a means or an end, and sometimes both a means and an end, which actually emphasises the term's context specificity.

In the opinion of Van Heck (2003: 7), participation is considered as a means in “production-oriented projects”, where beneficiaries are often involved in the implementation of pre-designed projects to achieve certain objectives. Conversely, participation is also seen as an end in less conventional projects, where the rural poor may have been consulted on their needs, aspirations, potentials and willingness, and may also be involved somehow in project implementation and sharing the benefits accrued thereof (*ibid*).

In simple terms, the Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary defined participations as “the act of taking part in an activity or event”.<sup>1</sup> On one hand, this definition undoubtedly connotes much of the logic in the concept's everyday usage, thus “taking part in an activity”. On the other hand, there are essential elements missing, if viewed from a development perspective. In my view, and for the purposes of this research, participation will be regarded as both a means and an end. The definition by Jennings (2000: 1) would, therefore, suffice:

*Participation is involvement by a local population and, at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives. Built on a belief that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future, participatory development uses local decision-making and capacities to steer and define the nature of an intervention.*

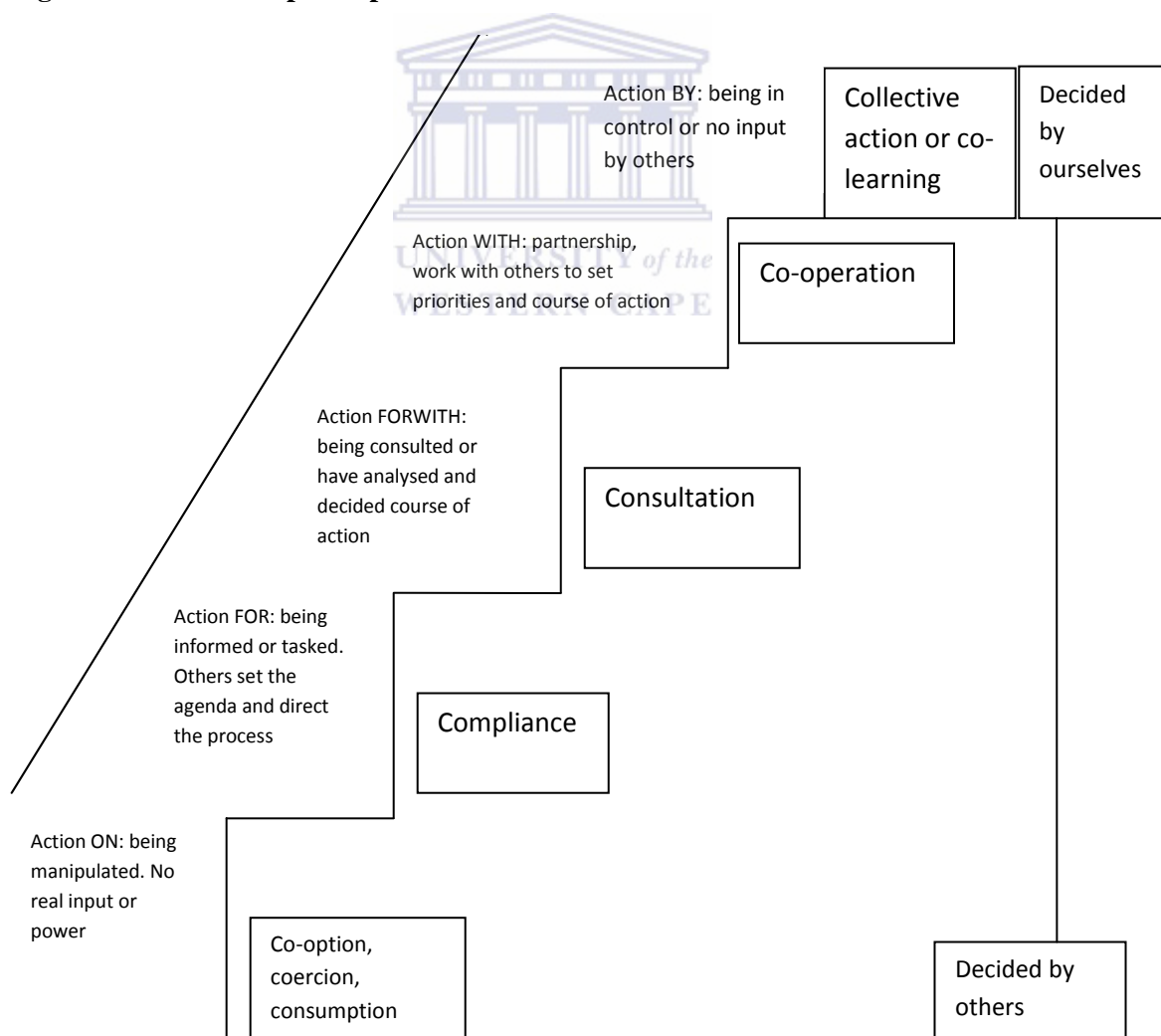
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<sup>1</sup> Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, International Student's 7<sup>th</sup> Edition.

The essential characteristics of this definition that are noteworthy, are the elements of participant's ability to drive projects to meet their needs and well-being. Participation in this regard is more than just receiving an invitation to take part (Cornwall, 2002), but being empowered to have the capacity and the judgement to consciously influence the direction and execution of development projects with the aim of improving one's well-being.

Differences in definitions and methods aside, there is some common agreement among development practitioners concerning what constitutes authentic participation. One of the most cited is the ladder of participation, which describes the various levels of participation by communities relative to the amount of power and decision-making authority they possess.

**Figure 2.1: Ladder of participation**



Source: CIDT, University of Wolverhampton, cited in *Tools for Development*, DFID, 2002: pg 7.5

The bottom of the ladder represents non-participation, where citizens are manipulated and do not take part in any decision-making. The apex of the ladder is when communities have full control of decisions and are able to act on their own, with little or no input from outsiders – Van Heck called this self-reliance (Van Heck, 2003). In the view of Van Heck (*ibid*: 6), the latter type of participation of self-reliance and self-development should, in fact, be an outcome of participation, where the poor are empowered to have bargaining power to obtain resources for sustained development.

Interestingly, however, while an argument is made for the efficacy of community participation as having the potential of increasing project benefits for the poor, involving people in decision-making itself does not automatically lead to communities benefitting mutually. It is imperative to note that collective benefits from participation are contingent on other factors, such as the stocks of social capital in communities and the process of participation itself. In other words, the level of trust among community members and in community leaders, solidarity in the community, generalised reciprocity, the presence and effectiveness of community norms, and the decision-making authority, are factors affecting community participation exercises positively or negatively.

### **2.3. Community participation in the context of pro-poor development projects**

Reasoning from the forgone discussion regarding the historical development of community participation, which advocated for the inclusion of the poor and marginalised in their development activities, led to a paradigm shift in development thinking that invariably influenced the direction of development projects, which became known as pro-poor, or people centred, development.

The concept of pro-poor development occupies a central place in recent development agendas of governments in many developing countries. The basic premise for the pro-poor development entails that, if development is meant to fulfill people's needs and aspirations, it cannot be imposed from above and transplanted from outside, which often have extensive, counterproductive consequences on the harmonious functioning of the rural communities (Berreman, 1994). The idea here is that people live in specific social, cultural, economic and

ecological settings with their own indigenous circumstances and, therefore, development projects meant for their benefit should be customised to suit their specific needs and culture. This will determine their levels of willingness to participate, which will in turn determine whether or not the specific project will benefit the intended beneficiaries. According to Wangoola (1993), pro-poor development projects should be “indigenously inspired, selected, guided and evaluated”. This means the project should be identified, nurtured and built on the culture and institutions of a particular community.

Community participation in the context of pro-poor development assumes further that villagers know a great deal about the causes and consequences of what they do in their everyday life, and that community members are also capable to handle problem-situations by making optimum use of cultural, social and human resources available within their village communities. Therefore, involving rural people in the design of projects will increase the chances of the project to meet their specific needs (Korten, 1992).

According to the Commonwealth Expert Group on Development and Democracy, a pro-poor development project is one that strengthens human capabilities, capacities, and expand opportunities that enables the poor to have access to basic necessities of life, in order to live a fulfilling life, as defined by the socio-cultural milieu in which the person lives (Commonwealth Expert Group on Development and Democracy, 2003). They also argue that pro-poor development concerns those projects that are specifically designed to enhance the quality of the lives of the poor, which also ensures that current and future generations are able to meet their basic capabilities (*ibid*). It is pertinent to state that, in order to achieve pro-poor development as discussed above, the poor themselves should be given the chance to participate and be empowered so as to be able to take active and conscious control of their development.

#### **2.4. The link between community participation, empowerment and community development**

There is an obvious link between community participation, empowerment and community development and it will, therefore, be useful and practical to consider them together as a complementary process. Development practitioners have realised the relationship between community development and building the capacity of communities as a practical means of ensuring sustainability of development projects. Empowerment is building the capacity of people by harnessing their skills, knowledge, abilities, making them committed and giving them the opportunities to access the needed recourses to do what has to be done. When people are empowered, there is a significant impact on many aspects of their life. Emphasis is placed on existing strengths and abilities, rather than being overwhelmed by problems and feelings of powerlessness. Empowerment also ensures that communities become active and interested in participating in what is going on. They may also be questioning, challenging and debating – they will be debating what should be done or supposed to be done, in which way and how, rather than complaining that nothing will ever change. Communities will be more aware of their rights and responsibilities, as well as of government policies and programmes.

It is also significant to note that empowerment promotes community participation, which is a necessary condition for community development. Empowerment builds people capacity and increases their awareness to realise the importance of participating in issues concerning their development. According to Manfred (1990), participation is the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in decision-making with regard to setting objectives and goals, formulating policies, implementing and evaluating social and economic programmes, as well as contributing to development efforts and sharing the benefits of development.

Empowerment also promotes efficient mobilisation of communities to undertake development projects. The general, lukewarm attitude of people towards their development will also be bridged and each one will be more interested in contributing his or her quota for the development of the community.



In general, the process of empowerment laid bare the principles of community development, thus: involvement, information sharing, common ideas, interest, knowledge, ownership, responsibility and accountability. Communities will, therefore, be achieving significant results in their development efforts if they are empowered to be able to live up to these principles, among others.

There are, however, some factors that are responsible for the promotion of information sharing, common ideas, interest, responsibility and accountability for the development of a community. These include the level of trustworthiness among community members, reciprocity, networks, community norms and effectiveness of informal sanction mechanisms in the community. All these factors put together may be referred to as social capital. The following section discusses these in detail.

## **2.5. Processes of participation**

It is also noteworthy to mention that the propensity for participation to result in greater gains for beneficiaries also depends on the processes and the degree of engagement of communities in decision-making. As already discussed, there are various levels and degrees at which participation occurs – that is, from manipulation, or pseudo-participation, to citizens being in control of decisions. Most community participation exercises are largely pseudo-participation, where ordinary people have mostly become endorsees of pre-designed projects. In other words, community participation is seen more as a mere ceremonial presence of participants in local institutions without their active involvement in any decision-making process (Williams, 2006).

Research has showed that the degree and nature of participation by local communities very much influences the outcome of participation. Hoddinott (2002), for instance, reported that failure to delegate true decision-making authority, where citizens have real control over decisions, may result in beneficiaries being reluctant to act, because of concerns that they will be subsequently overruled. Social capital in communities builds relationships and networks necessary to ensure meaningful participation in development projects. Hence, in order to ensure the success of development projects through meaningful participation, it is prudent to involve

various groups in the community, such as women, youth groups and the like, in the decision-making process.

## **2.6. Conceptualising social capital**

Social capital, as a relevant factor of development at individual, family and community levels, has been actively dealt with in the literature over the last decade. In simple terms, social capital is a concept used to describe the features of social life, such as how involved we are in our community, how much we trust each other and our institutions, how connected we are to our communities and families, and how much we help each other. In a more broad sense, social capital may refer to the internal social and cultural coherence of society, the trust, norms and values that govern interactions among people, and the networks and institutions in which they are embedded. Social capital can be studied both at the individual or aggregate (community) level (Anneli and Eve, 2007). At the individual and family levels, social capital has been seen as a resource embedded in the social structure, which is useful for achieving a higher reputation, power and material welfare. At the community level social capital, in the form of networks, constitutes a powerful information channel, while trust and norms can help to discourage opportunistic behaviour in the presence of risk and uncertainty (*ibid*).

Portes (1998) observed that social capital is an analytical tool employed by social scientists to describe the resources available to individuals through their membership in community networks. He (*ibid*: 24) stated that:

*Whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships. To possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is these others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage".*

Bourdieu and Wacquant, (1992)<sup>2</sup> also defined social capital as “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”.

Social capital is perceived to encompass tangible features, such as formal rules, procedures and networks, and intangible characteristics like trust and norms of reciprocity (Grootaert, Krishna and Uphoff, Coleman in Ahmed Alia, 2003)

For understanding and explaining the different aspects of social capital, it is crucial to understand the determinants, or sources, of social capital.

### ***2.6.1. Determinants of social capital***

The determinants are numerous and varied. Several influential studies have suggested that social capital's roots are buried in centuries of cultural revolution (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam *et al.*, 1993). 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; 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.

For the purpose of this study, I find the determinants of social capital suggested by Anneli and Eve (2007) very relevant. They suggest that the sources of social capital in individuals and community levels emanate from religiosity or culture, town size, gender and age.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mapl.com.au/socialcapital/soccap1.htm> (accessed on 04/08/2009)

#### 2.6.1.1. *Culture and ideology*

Anneli and Eve (2007) argued that social capital has some of its roots in culture and related ideology. In general, an ideology – for example, religiosity – can create social capital by making its followers to act in the interests of something or someone other than themselves. Religiosity, in general, has been found to have a positive impact on both formal and informal networks, norms and institutional trust (Putnam, 1993). However, different religious denominations have often different impacts on social capital. Even though empirical evidence are not clear, it will be palpable to state, for example, that in communities where there are dominant religious groups and where the value of sharing and caring for one another is practiced, there is the likelihood of high solidarity and reciprocity. It is believed that trust is likely to prevail in communities with dominant religions, like Orthodox Christian, Moslem and Protestantism (Portes *et al.*, 1993).

#### 2.6.1.2. *Town size*

Some studies have also tested the impact of town size on the elements of social capital. Fevre (2000) observed that living in a small communities increases both formal and informal participation, while people have less informal social contacts in larger settlements. This is very relevant for the current study, because it will be an interesting exercise to see whether the size of the two communities have any influence on the level of participation in the project under study.

#### 2.6.1.3. *Age*

With regard to the impact of age, there are varying empirical results. Most linear models show positive impact of age on trust and formal networks. Another basic hypothesis says that the relation between formal networks and age is concave – with ageing the networks first increase and later decrease (Glaeser *et al.*, 2002). This result is supported by theoretical argumentation of White (2002), who suggested that older people are more cooperative and trusting, because they were raised and socialised in less secure circumstances, where they had to rely on each other.

#### 2.6.1.4. *Gender*

Concerning gender, research has shown that as regards informal social networks, it is easier for women to find consolation when depressed, and financial relief when in need of money, than their male counterparts (Fidrmuc and Gèrxhani, 2005). Furthermore, they (*ibid*) reported that women have more family-based social capital as well, and they are more trustworthy (i.e. with higher norms) than their male counterparts. Concerning the effect of gender on general trust, Halman and Luijkx (2006) had found that women possess a bit more social trust than men.

#### 2.6.2. *Indicators and measurements of social capital*

The measurement of social capital is still at its infant stage and, as a result, there is not much literature available on its measurement. Falk and Harrison (1998) noted that 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. They (*ibid*) noted that measurement attempts are often flawed with the problem of separating form, source and consequences. An example is trust, which is commonly seen as a component of social capital. Some authors equate trust with social capital (Fukuyama, 1995), some see trust as a source of social capital (Putnam *et al.*, 1993), some see it as a form of social capital and some see it as a collective asset resulting from social capital construed as a relational asset (Lin, 1999).

Due to these difficulties in the measurement of social capital, Collier (2002) observed that social capital is difficult, if not impossible, to measure directly and that, for empirical purposes, the use of proxy indicators is necessary. This is mainly because social capital has elements that are naturally conceptual and require subjective interpretation in their translation into operational measures. For example, the concept of trust may be quite difficult to operationalise and develop indicators for measurement that might be applicable in most circumstances. The situation becomes more problematic, because different communities and researchers may have different interpretations of concepts, such as trustworthiness, solidarity, social values and norms, and that make it difficult to develop concrete, tangible evidence of social capital that lends itself to quantitative analysis.

Despite the difficulty in measuring social capital, some authors have developed a measure of social capital that I find useful and applicable in my study. Onyx and Bullen (2000) developed such a measure of social capital. They (*ibid*) observed that social capital can be expressed through attitudes and expectations; through reported, recorded and observed actions and activities; and by comparing people's interpretations of how things happened or were expected to happen. Relating this in the framework of my study, I will measure social capital by recording community members' interpretation of how they perceive things around them and in their community. For example, some indicators I will use to measure networks and civic associations will include number and type of associations or local institutions, extent of membership in community associations, and extent of participatory decision-making (this will be observed during focus group discussions).

### ***2.6.3. Elements of social capital***

Social capital has several dimensions and elements. These may include: participation in local community, neighbourhood connections, family and friends' connections, work connection, trust and safety, tolerance of diversity, proactively in the social context, value of life and generalised reciprocity (Gemechu, 2006).

Two seminal issues have emerged that are very important for the purpose of this thesis. The first is the impetus for people's participation in networks or community activities that is a direct result of neighbourhood, friends and family connections, and the second is the mutual utilisation of common community good derived from participation. It will be imperative to discuss in detail the following, which are relevant for my study: participation in networks, social norms, generalised reciprocity, trust and solidarity.

#### ***2.6.3.1. Participation in networks***

A key concept of social capital is the notion of more or less dense interlocking networks of relationships between individuals and groups. People engage with others through a variety of lateral associations in a community, which are indeed voluntary. The key mobilising forces for people to participate for their common

good are interpersonal ties present in community networks. Hence, communities with strong networks and interpersonal ties will be in a better position to mobilise themselves for development activities. Thus, the propensity for communities to participate for their mutual gain depends on the sociability and capacity to form new associations and networks.

#### *2.6.3.2. Social norms and informal sanction mechanism in fostering participation*

Social norms provide a form of informal social control that remove the need for more formal, institutionalised, legal sanctions. Social norms are generally an unwritten, but commonly understood, formula. They determine what patterns of behaviour are expected in a given social context, and define what forms of behaviour are valued or socially approved.

Social norms are relevant for the building of social capital and, for that matter, fostering participation in the sense that, where norms are high, there is little crime, and little need for formal sanction mechanisms. On the other hand, where there is a low level of trust and few social norms, people will cooperate in joint action only under formal rules and regulations, sometimes by coercive means, leading to expensive legal transaction costs (Fukuyama, 1995).

#### *2.6.3.3. Generalised reciprocity*

Generalised reciprocity occurs when one person shares goods or labour with another person without expecting anything in return. It is said to be the same as virtually uninhibited sharing or giving (Sahlins, 1972). What makes this interaction reciprocal is the sense of satisfaction the giver feels, and the social closeness that the gift fosters (*ibid*). Reciprocal relationships can occur at various levels, this may be between parents and children, or married couples. It can also occur among family members, neighbours and among general community members. Sahlins (*ibid*) also noted that, between people who engage in generalised reciprocity, there is a maximum amount of trust and a minimum amount of social distance. Reciprocity is considered relevant in this study, because it will be pertinent to investigate whether there is reciprocal relationships in the two research



communities and whether it has any impact on community members' collective action behaviour in terms of participating in project activities in the community.

#### 2.6.3.4. *Trust*

According to Gemechu (2006), trust involves a willingness to take risks in a social context, based on a sense of self-assurance that others will react as expected and will act in mutually supportive ways, or at least that others do not intend to harm. It is argued that trust and mutual commitment can reduce transaction costs and enhance the flow of information and knowledge with outcomes of clear benefits. It can also encourage savings, risk-taking and investment (Cote, 2001). Trust exists when members of a group believe that other members act in a manner of integrity, consistency and dependability (Tadesse, 2004). In this current study, trust will be an important element of social capital to consider, because in the implementation of interventions in rural communities, trust is an important factor that determines how community members are assigned certain responsibilities.

#### 2.6.3.5. *Solidarity*

Solidarity may be said to be the spirit of communal responsibility in the welfare of community members and the community in general. It is the general care, togetherness and concern for one another that exist in the community. Solidarity can take the form of group formation for the purpose of helping one another in times of need. These may include solidarity lending groups through solidarity funds and labour sharing. In any community, networks of organised reciprocity and solidarity form the basis for individual trust and cooperation (World Bank Participation Source Book). Gemechu (2006) also noted that solidarity may be demonstrated by a strong communal responsibility in correcting children when they go wrong and/or other community members taking care of neighbours' children in their absence as well. This is also relevant for my study, because community members' willingness to participate and cooperate for their collective benefit to some extent may be dependent on the extent to which community members care for each other and take collective responsibility for one another's welfare.



#### **2.6.4. Mutual benefit (the commons)**

The combined effect of trust, networks, norms and reciprocity creates a strong community, with shared ownership over resources known as ‘the commons’. The commons refers to the creation of pooled community resources, owned by no-one and used by all. As long as a community is strong, it removes the problem of opportunist or elite capture of benefits. Hence, communities with a strong ethos of trust, mutuality and effective informal social sanctions are better able to gain mutually from benefits accrued from participation (Putnam, 1993)<sup>3</sup>.

Another determinant of the community’s ability to gain from participation is the existence of informal institution present in the community. Indeed, these informal institutions are part of the elements of social capital and the two are inescapably linked.

Informal institutions are defined as social norms that represent evolved practices with stable rules of behaviour that are outside the formal system. Acceptable behaviour may be governed through a set of known sanctions or through powerful processes of internalisation without recourse to formal processes, like the law courts (OECD)<sup>4</sup>.

#### **2.6.5. Social capital as sufficient cause**

This school of thought holds the belief that the development performance of a particular community can be explained directly by the stocks of social capital in the community. They contend that “social capital is essential for development and sufficient on its own account” (Krishna, 2002: 2). It is conceptualised as an independent variable that finds its roots in historical and cultural heritage (*ibid*). However, this assumption has not remained without criticism. They contend that the argument is valuable, but seriously incomplete. Their main argument is that social capital does have some “conceptual validity and therefore its explanatory value for development is partial” (*opt cite*: 23). Rather than being the principal

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mapl.com.au/socialcapital/soccap1.htm> (Accessed 04/08/2009)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/document/> (Accessed 04/08/2009)

cause explaining results in the performance in development, social capital should be considered as one of many independent variables (*ibid*). Regardless of these criticisms, the fact that social capital can be a sufficient cause for wellbeing and development is not disputed. This, therefore, leads us into the discussion of other scholars, such as Carroll (2001) and Townsend (1994), who believed that social capital is sufficient to explain household wellbeing of community members.

#### **2.6.6. Social capital and household wellbeing**

In recent years, econometric studies show that social capital has a positive impact on wellbeing of households (Carroll, 2001). For instance, work in India has revealed that such social capital on the local level enhanced the ability of the poor households to “allocate resources efficiently and increased their resilience to hazards” (Townsend, 1994: 542). A Tanzanian participatory research project also found that some communities in Tanzania with high stocks of social capital have been able to increase their household income by 20-30 percent through labour sharing activities, credits groups and small loans (Narayan and Pritchett, 1997: 21-24).

The positive impact of social capital on household wellbeing is enormous. Social capital is found to impact on other aspects of household wellbeing beyond income or economic indicators. For example, Putman (1993) observed strong correlations between social capital and performance in education, child welfare, lower crime, neighbourhood vitality, health, happiness and in a variety of different areas.

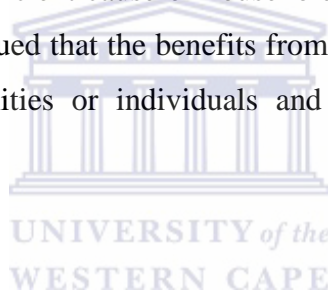
Households with high social capital are better able to accumulate physical assets and savings, and to obtain credit. In some cases the benefits of social capital to household wellbeing are primarily the result of exchanges in knowledge, which are maximised among members of different economic backgrounds (Grootaert, 2001).

#### **2.7. Chapter summary**

It is imperative to note the salient issues discussed in this chapter. First and foremost, I endeavoured to explain the concept of community participation, beginning with the paradigm shift from top down planning to a focus on people

first approaches to development. The rationale for the shift is due to the failures of central development planning, where people are seen as objects and passive recipients of developmental handouts. In the quest to ensure durable change in the lives of poor rural citizens, development managers, governments and international development agencies therefore saw the need to involve local communities in activities meant for their benefit.

I continued by examining the determining factors that are relevant for participation to yield the desired results. The main argument I put forward is that participation itself is necessary, but not sufficient, to produce the desired results for beneficiaries. Stocks of social capital, as well as the process of participation, are some of the factors I identified as having impacts on community's ability to cooperate for their mutual gain. The chapter ends with arguments that social capital can be explained as a sufficient cause of household wellbeing, though, with some criticism. However, it argued that the benefits from the stocks of social capital can flow to benefit communities or individuals and impacts on the wellbeing of households.



## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological practices that are used to collect and analyse the data. It first describes the key concepts and variables in the research, and tools used in collecting data, which is followed by a description of how the data is analysed.

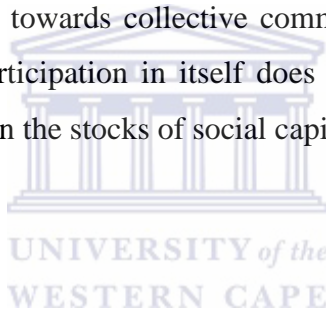
#### 3.1. Key research concepts and variables

The key concepts and variables in the research are community participation and social capital. The main assumption of the research is that community participation does not automatically facilitate gains for the poor. Therefore, I argue that internal rigidities, such as weak social capital, culture, trust and reciprocity in communities, affect mutual cooperation towards collective community gains. In other words, I argue that community participation in itself does not necessarily yield desirable results, but is contingent on the stocks of social capital present in communities.

#### 3.2. Data collection

##### 3.2.1. Location

The geographic location of the study is northern Ghana. The Community-Based Organisation (CBO) empowerment project based in northern Ghana is selected as the case study. The reason for selecting the CBO empowerment project is because it is a project that adopts a bottom-up approach to empower poor communities to lift themselves out of the poverty trap through participatory processes. It is not a direct service delivery project. The project ensures social and gender inclusion, equity and local stakeholders' ownership of the decision-making in the development process (see Chapter Four for a detailed description of the research setting and context).



### **3.2.2. Instruments for data collection**

#### *3.2.2.1. Survey questionnaire*

Two main methodologies were used to collect primary data, one of which was the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of both structured (closed) and open-ended questions. A question was closed or open-ended, depending on the variables that it measured. Questions about the demographic characteristics of respondents were all closed. Such questions included the age, gender, residential status and status of the respondent in the household. Other closed questions also included variables in which I think it is necessary to restrict the answers to some options. Open-ended questions were used as well, because these allow respondents to explore issues and give them the opportunity to give their opinion on issues in depth: in this case respondents are likely to give some in-depth information relevant to the research, which the research may not have envisaged.

#### *3.2.2.2. Focus group discussion*

A qualitative method, such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), was used to collect data about community members' opinion on participation. This method was adopted to specifically seek information and to discover the respondents' ideas and thinking on what constitutes participation, some reasons that might encourage them to participate and what they think prevents them from active participation. The advantage here is that it will enable me to get in-depth knowledge and opinions on the theme under investigation. FGDs also offered me the opportunity to observe how discussions are carried out in the community, especially between men and women.

#### *3.2.2.3. Secondary data sources*

I also used secondary sources of data to validate some of the primary information I collected from the field. The introduction and theoretical background were both based on published and unpublished literature. The main sources of my secondary data included published books, journal articles, periodicals, conference papers, government policy documents, as well as published and unpublished theses.

### **3.3. Sampling**

I used a comparative study approach in this research. Data was collected from two communities where the CBO empowerment project is operative. I took special care to make sure that the two communities are similar in their socio-economic characteristics. These communities were, therefore, purposely selected. The criterion I used to select the community is based on expert (CBO project managers) knowledge of the performance of the communities in the project. Hence, one community, Fuo, is considered better in terms of taking positive advantage of the project and benefitting from the project, while the other community, Tampe-Kukuo, is considered to be less responsive to the project. This approach is adopted because I want to ascertain why one community is performing better than the other, while both communities have been subjected to similar project activities and almost at the same time (June 2005). I then made use of accidental sampling to interview 70 respondents in each community – based on availability and willingness to take part. My research team and I moved from household to household to administer the questionnaire. The primary target respondent is the household head. However, I made efforts to keep a balance between male and female respondents. This is essential, because it is important to keep a balance between male and female respondents in order to ensure that data collected does not only represent the views of one sex. Also, since I assumed that internal rigidities in communities, such as weak social capital, culture, trust and reciprocity, affect the abilities of the communities to cooperate toward mutual benefit, it will be important to get ideas and responses from both males and females (see research assumptions). The participants of the FGDs were selected from women and men beneficiaries of the project. This was made possible through the help of village leaders in both communities. In Fuo community, for example, the participants were six women and eight men. And in Tampe-Kukuo there were nine women and eleven men. These are different from the questionnaire respondents (i.e. 70 from each community).

### **3.4. Data analysis**

#### ***3.4.1. Survey questionnaire analysis***

First of all, I glanced through all the completed questionnaires to be sure they were properly answered, since I personally did not administer all the questionnaires. The open-ended questions were thoroughly read-through and similar responses were categorised and coded. A spread sheet was developed in SPSS, where both the close and open-ended questions were entered for analysis. Only descriptive statistics are used in the analysis; i.e. frequencies and cross tabulations. Tables and graphs are used to display outputs from the analysis.

#### ***3.4.2. Focus group discussion analysis***

The information obtained from the FGDs was organised and analysed manually. I picked out the important themes and their degree of emphasis that underlie participants' comments with regard to the study.

### **3.5. Ethical consideration**

Strong ethical rules were adhered to throughout the research. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research in detail, and they were asked for permission to record the responses. Respondents were assured that information provided is only for academic purposes and will not be disclosed to any other person. In case where the respondent could read, he or she was allowed to see that the responses given are those recorded. Even if the respondent could not read, but has a ward available who could read, they were allowed to sit with the interviewer to see what he records. Furthermore, respondents were assured of confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation. No name or house number was associated with any questionnaire. This was done to assure respondents of anonymity. Finally, respondents were allowed not to answer any question they deemed intrusive.

### **3.6. Research limitations**

I did not face any major challenge in the research process. The only hindrance was the inability of my research team and me to get the time and attention of target respondents in households for interview. This was because the research period

coincided with farming season in the study area. Therefore, the ideal time to get respondents was in the evening when they return from their farms. However, during this time some people felt they needed rest and were unwilling to participate. But since our sampling technique was accidentally based on respondents' willingness and availability, it did not affect the quality of our data in any way. However, we used two additional days to complete data collection.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. RESEARCH DESCRIPTIVE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This chapter is organised into two parts. The first part describes in detail the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the research setting. The second part describes in detail the background of the CBO empowerment project, which is the case study for the research.

#### 4.1. The Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo communities in Ghana

The study was conducted in Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo communities in the Tamale metropolis in northern Ghana. The metropolis lies between longitudes 0° 45.1' and 0° 59.3' west of the Greenwich Meridian and between latitudes 9° 15' and 9° 32' north of the equator. It has a monomodal rainfall pattern, which builds up gradually from little rain in April to a maximum in August and declines sharply to start the dry season (Tamale metropolitan profile). The metropolis has a population of 293,881 (Ghana statistical service, 2002). It is bound to the north by Savelugu Nanton District, East Gonja District to the south, West Gonja District to the southwest and Tolon Kumbungu District to the east. Fuo is a suburb community, which is approximately 10 km to the east of the metropolis. Tampe-Kukuo, on the other hand, is also a suburb of the metropolis, which lies approximately 8 km north. The total population of Fuo is 6,157 people with males numbering 3,987 (64.8%) and 2,170 (35.2%) females. There are 389 houses and 800 households. Tampe-Kukuo has a total population of 4,503 with 2,612 (58%) males and 1,891 (42%) females. There are about 349 houses with 697 households (Ghana population and housing census, 2000).

#### 4.2. Water, sanitation and climate

##### 4.2.1. Water

Even though Tamale is an urban district, it is still vulnerable in terms of inadequate potable water supply. The metropolis has two main water systems. The urban water system and peri-urban and rural water systems based on the location of the facilities. During the dry season, most of the water bodies dry up, while the already

poor underground water level falls, causing boreholes and wells to dry up. The capacity of the Tamale water supply system is 4.3 million gallons per day, while the daily demand is 12 million gallons. Coverage in terms of numbers is about 450,000 people (Metro planning office). This figure includes a little over 42 communities in the rural area, who use treated water from the Tamale water treatment plant, and which includes the Fuo community. According to the Metro planning officer, plans are still underway to extend portable water to Tampe-Kukuo.

#### ***4.2.1. Sanitation***

Liquid Waste Management takes care of the public toilets, household toilets and institutional toilets within the metropolis. There are about 95 public toilets within the metropolis, of which 23 are being managed by private contractors. The remaining toilets are being managed by Unit Committees, Assemblymen or some group of people within the community. The Assembly is privatising these toilets in phases. Under the Urban IV project, the Metropolitan Assembly assisted households to construct 980 household toilet facilities. It will be important to note that currently Fuo community has no public toilets. Tampe-Kukuo had one public toilet. A few of the houses have toilets. About 90% of the people in the community use the bush or rubbish dumps sites. This results in insanitary conditions in the community. Unfortunately, the communities also have no clinic or health centre. Both communities depend on the health centres located in the metropolis.

#### ***4.2.2. Climate***

The metropolis experiences a mean annual rainfall of 1,100 mm within 95 days of intense rainfall.

The dry season is usually from November to March. It is influenced by the dry north-easterly (Harmattan) winds, while the rainy season is influenced by the moist south-westerly winds. The mean day temperatures range from 33°C to 39°C, while mean night temperatures range from 20°C to 22°C. The mean annual day sunshine is approximately 7.5 hours.

The climate conditions have to a greater extent influenced the vegetation of the area. The metropolis lies within the Guinea Savanna belt of northern Ghana. Apart from the preserved natural colonies of vegetation at fetish groves, forest reserves and community woodlots, the whole metropolis exhibits tall grass interspersed with drought-resistant trees, such as neem, shea nut, dawadawa and mahogany. During the rains the metropolis becomes green, making the vegetation more luxuriant. In the dry season, however, water becomes scarce as a result of poor vegetation cover, serious run-off, and evapo-transpiration and leaching. The grasses dry up and the accompanying bush fires destroy the soils' nutrients and even expose the soils to serious erosion.

The Tamale metropolis area is underlain by sandstone, mudstone and shale, which over time have been weathered to different degrees. The main soil types that have resulted from the above natural phenomenon include sand, clay and laterite ochrosols.

#### **4.3. Economic activities and poverty in the research area**

The economy of the metropolis and its surrounding villages, such as Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo, was basically agricultural until the 1980s. During this period, over 70% of all indigenous people in the metropolis and its suburb communities were farmers. During the period before the 1980s, production of primary commodities in the metropolis was very high. This was a result of government policies towards agriculture. The introduction of subsidies on agricultural inputs raised production of both domestic and industrial crops. Significant among these were rice, maize, sorghum, groundnuts and beans (Metro profile, 2009).

However, the trend of agricultural growth started declining as a result of the removal of subsidies on agricultural inputs, rapid population growth, declining soil fertility and erratic rainfall.

Currently, it is estimated that 60% of the people are engaged in agriculture in the metropolis. The major crops cultivated include maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cowpea, groundnuts, soya bean and yam.

Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo currently engages about 70% of the economically active population (18-54 years) into farming of staple food crops. The major food crops include maize, rice, yam, groundnut, cowpea and soya beans. The absence of storage facilities poses a problem of storage of produce to sell in the lean season. Farmers thus have no alternative than to sell at whatever price after harvest. As a result, food prices are low in the harvest period, but high in the lean season. Agricultural practices are also dependent on rainfall, which is erratic. As a result, there is great seasonal unemployment. The actions that have been adopted in some nearby communities are small scale irrigation projects to boost agriculture, which are unavailable in any of the research communities.

Crop yields have decreased mainly due to climatic changes, decreasing rainfall and poor farming practices. The harsh farming conditions enumerated above and its associated risk in the community, drive vulnerable smallholder farmers, like those in the research communities, to find alternative sources of livelihoods. Therefore, the remaining 30% of the economically active population are into petty trading, such as buying and selling foodstuff and soup ingredients in the market in small quantities. Petty trading is also common in the communities because of their nearness to the metropolitan centre (about 10 km and 5 km).

Given the current economic situation described above, poverty has a firm grip on rural areas, especially in northern Ghana where the study was conducted. About 51 percent of the poor people in Ghana live in rural northern communities. It is estimated that about five out of ten people in northern Ghana live on an income of less than two United States dollars a day (World Food Programme, 2009)<sup>5</sup>. Many poor rural people in northern Ghana face chronic food insecurity. This is mainly because many people in the communities do survivalist farming due to a lack of skills and inputs, such as fertiliser and improved seeds. The small food that is produced is also sold to meet the cash needs of the household. Members of the community have limited access to education, health, water and electricity due to the high costs of these services. Poverty is also deepest among women food crop

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.wfp.org/countries/ghana>

farmers. It is estimated that about six out of ten small-scale women farmers are poor (IFAD, rural poverty in Ghana).

#### **4.4. Background and objective of the CBO empowerment project**

The northern region of Ghana is the third on the national poverty table with up to 69%, as compared to the national average of 40% of the people being considered poor, according to the Ghana Social Living Standards survey conducted in the year 2000 (GLSS-4). Poverty in this context has been described as the inability to afford both food and non-food needs. More than 80% of the region's population are illiterates, who are largely rural dwellers engaging in subsistence agriculture. Several reasons account for the high poverty levels in the region with the key ones being high rates of illiteracy and poor capacities among the people to demand accountability from state social institutions and structures, which have the responsibility to provide basic social services.

Rural communities, therefore, often remain helpless as far as their development is concerned and depend on charitable handouts either from central government or philanthropic organisations. This situation has influenced the mindset of people towards development and service provision. Communities have come to believe that the development of their communities lies at the mercy of government and NGOs and they have no control over it. The development process in such communities becomes stalled if the supposed service providers (government and NGOs) fail to provide them with the services they need. And indeed many communities have not seen any form of development projects in the past decade. This may be because such communities are not within the operational area of NGOs, or they might not have caught the attention of government.

It is as a result of the above situation that the management of Ghanaian Danish Communities Association (GDCA) developed the project proposal of the CBO empowerment project. This project received its initial funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The overall objective of the project is to empower and strengthen the capacity of civil society through training in the project area to take responsibility for their community development. Community

development in the context of the project refers to the ability of community members to be conscious of their living conditions so as to be able to identify their needs, find solutions to their problems and be able to lobby government and duty bearers for the provision of services. It is envisaged that, at the end of the project, period target communities would have established a practice of engaging with duty bearers (local government and traditional authorities) and other development partners to demand that their rights to resources for development are met. The main strategies in the project design are networking, training, monitoring and supervision.

#### ***4.4.1. Networking, training and monitoring as main strategies of the project***

The project sought to firstly identify all CBOs<sup>6</sup> in the project communities and network them to create a common platform (space for participation) where the various community groups come together to discuss the development of the community. The CBOs or community groups are networked by bringing all identifiable associations within a community to one group. The network expands into a cluster of communities and up to the level of area union. These groups and networks are then taken through intensive training in various leadership, negotiation, lobbying and management skills that will be necessary to empower them and build their capacities so that they can represent the interest of their communities in issues that concern their development. The networks also create a platform for peer learning and experience sharing on issues of common interest.

Essential to the project activities is that adequate structures are put in place to ensure that project managers and facilitators frequently visit the communities and networks to assist them with technical knowledge in prioritising community needs, writing of proposals, fundraising and helping them remain focused as long as the development of their communities are concerned.

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<sup>6</sup> CBO is defined by the project to include all identifiable community groups, including farmers' group, women groups, youth groups, credit union groups, water users associations, etc.

#### 4.5. Target groups of the CBO empowerment project

The primary target groups of the project are all identifiable groups or associations in the operational area of the project. The networking of the CBOs is done starting from the community level to the regional level. The first level of the network is the Community Grouping (CG), which is made up of representatives of all the CBOs in the communities of the project area. Each community group sends five representatives to the next level to form an Area Union (AU). Area Unions in turn send five representatives to form a District Federation (DF) at the district level. The District Federations send five representatives to the Regional Assembly. The primary functions of the various levels are presented in the table below.

**Figure 4.1: Levels and functions of CBO networks**

Level	Primary functions
Community Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake the community level planning and implementation of programmes</li> <li>• Identify and discuss issues affecting individual CBOs and the community at large</li> <li>• Decide what measures to take to address community issues</li> <li>• Identify and work with partners at the community level</li> </ul>
Area Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with local area/town councils, local agents of Ministry of Agriculture (MoFA) in Ghana, Ghana Health Service (GHS), Ghana Education Service (GES), Department of Community Development, NGOs and other development agents operating in the area</li> <li>• Collate development needs of various CBOs and communities in the area</li> </ul>
District Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with District Assembly, Decentralised departments, such as MoFA, GHS, GES, Department of Community Development, NGOs and other development agents operating in the district</li> <li>• Collating development needs of various CBOs and communities in the district</li> <li>• Advocacy and lobbying on behalf of member CBOs at the district level</li> </ul>

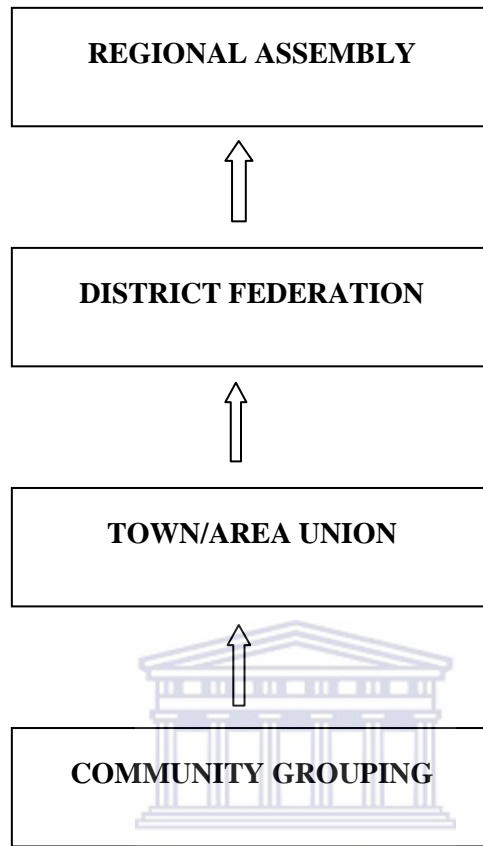
Regional Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate views and concerns of CBOs for the purpose of advocacy and lobbying at a higher level</li> <li>• Collate plans from District Federations for the purpose of making proposals for projects</li> <li>• Provide legal and political support to the network</li> <li>• Organise the Annual General Meeting of the network</li> </ul>
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*Source: CBO empowerment project document, 2006*

It is important to note that the last two levels: District Federation and the Regional Assembly, only focus on lobbying and advocacy for policy influence. Therefore, they do not inhibit the operations of the Community Grouping and the Area Union. It is pertinent to also state that the Community Group and the Area Union are autonomous in their operations and, therefore, the views and ideas of ordinary residents are reflected in the community groups. Each community group is responsible to identify and discuss issues affecting them. The proposed solution is determined within the community as well, without any interference from any of the levels. Hence, the nucleus of the work of the CBO empowerment project is in the community groups where the ideas, opinions and voices of the ordinary citizens are found. The rest of the levels become necessary when issues of policy advocacy and lobbying of higher authority, either at the district level or regional level, are concerned. Representatives at higher levels only serve as the mouthpiece of the community groups. The structure is shown in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2: Diagrammatic representation of the levels of networks of the CBO empowerment project**



*Source: Project proposal of the CBO empowerment project*

#### **4.6. Implementation strategy of the CBO empowerment project**

##### **4.6.1. Empowerment as overall strategy**

The overall strategy is that of empowering the CBO network at the community, area, district and regional level. The empowerment comprises capacity building of the network to become aware of their rights, policies and issues that affect their development, and to use the increased awareness to act for the improvement of the living conditions in the communities. In particular, the empowerment is also aimed at changing the mindsets of members of the CBO network to understand that they can take control of determining their own development, and not to be passive recipients of development interventions.

In conclusion, the CBO empowerment project is not a direct service delivery project. It uses participatory processes to organise communities into viable groups and networks, to train them to be conscious of their own environment, and to be able to identify on their own what the community needs are. Hence, communities that are active participants of the project, have been able to move ahead to identify some problems they face and also find solutions for them.

#### **4.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter primarily puts the research setting and background in context. It described the socio-economic and demographic characteristic of the two communities, and then explained the CBO empowerment project that is being implemented in the two communities under investigation.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. DESCRIPTION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the empirical results of the study with a view to establishing whether the research assumptions have been confirmed or rejected. The chapter starts by describing the demographic characteristics of respondents, which is followed by a general description of the research findings.

#### 5.1. Description of findings

##### 5.1.1. Socio-demographic background of respondents

The survey was conducted in two rural communities in the Tamale metropolis of northern Ghana (Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo communities). In total, 140 rural household heads were interviewed: 70 from each community. The primary target respondent in the household was the household head<sup>7</sup>. In the absence of the household head, the wife or husband was interviewed. The mean age of respondents in both communities is 44. However, in Fuo the minimum age is 28 and the maximum age is 70, whilst the minimum and maximum ages in Tampe-Kukuo are 22 and 85 respectively.

In Fuo, 42.9% of the respondents are females, while in Tampe-Kukuo females made up 55.7% of the total respondents. The status of respondents in the household is shown in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1: Status of respondents in households**

Community	Headship of household		
	Yes	No	Total
Fuo	46 65.7%	24 34.3%	70 100.0
Tampe-Kukuo	41 58.6%	29 41.4%	70 100.0

*Source: Author's field survey 2009*

<sup>7</sup> Household head is used to mean the person (either, or the couple) who provides for the upkeep of the household - provision of food, payment of medical bills, schools fees, etc.

The results from Table 5.1 show that in both communities more than half of the respondents (65.7% for Fuo and 58.6% for Tampe-Kukuo) are heads of households. This gives an indication that the responses provided reflect the household situations in the community, since the household heads are often knowledgeable about the economic and social conditions in the household. Also, the household heads are often the main contact persons or entry points into the community by many development agencies.

## **5.2. Measuring community participation in Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo**

The central thrust of the research is on the participation of communities in developmental projects or initiatives affecting these communities. Hence, it is imperative to measure participation or non-participation of the study communities in the CBO empowerment project, as well as the general activity level of the communities.

The indicators used to measure community participation and/or the processes of participation in the research, among other things, are: the frequency of respondent's attendance of community development meetings, awareness of activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the community, and knowledge of the community's general contribution to development interventions. Other intervening variables used to measure participation included soliciting respondents opinion on whether it is even necessary, or at what stage they think communities should be involved in their development activities. Other indicators include how meetings are organised, who facilitate meetings, categories of participants, and how decisions are made.

The results showed that respondents in both communities attend meetings where they often discuss the development issues of their communities. However, a greater percentage of respondents in Fuo is found to be attending meetings more often than those in Tampe-Kukuo. In Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo, 94.1% and 68.6% of respondents respectively reported that they regularly attend community development meetings. The rate of attendance also differs significantly between the two communities. Fuo recorded a mean value of four, while Tampe-Kukuo

recorded a mean value of two times in a month. This means that, on average, respondents attend community development meetings four times in a month in Fuo, while respondents in Tampe-Kukuo attend community development meetings two times on average.

Both communities also acknowledged the importance of communities being involved with external partners in so far as development issues are concerned. In Fuo, 88.6% of respondents answered in the affirmative and 11.4% respondents in the negative about community's involvement in their development issues. For Tampe-Kukuo, 74.3% respondents answered in the affirmative, while 25.7% respondents responded in the contrary.

Given the results above, it is clear that Fuo community can be said to be more active participants in development projects than their counterparts in Tampe-Kukuo. This assertion is confirmed by the fact that a greater proportion of respondents in Fuo (97.1%) are aware of the activities of the CBO empowerment project activities or other interventions by NGOs and government, while only 58.6% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo are aware of development interventions in the community. Information gathered from the CBO empowerment project managers, however, indicated that the project took off in the two communities in the same month (June 2005) with sequence of community sensitisation and animations held in the communities. For this reason, it would have been expected that the difference of awareness level about the project activities in the two communities should not have been as great as observed above. Hence, these differences may be attributable to the extent the two communities participate in community activities.

### **5.3. Measuring stocks of social capital in Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo**

The dimensions of social capital the research focuses on are networks, trust, solidarity and generalised reciprocity. These dimensions are chosen, because they promote or determine interaction among members in a community, which in turn influence community members' collective behaviour. In other words, the levels of networks, trust and solidarity present in communities determine the level of

participation in mutual support in normal situations<sup>8</sup> or in situations an individual cannot act alone. Membership of networks and associations is the indication of an individual's ability and willingness to establish social trust within that specific community. The degree of membership to networks and social organisations may also indicate how important interaction is and to what extents these networks and associations impact on the life of individuals.

### ***5.3.1. Networks and group membership***

It is very common to find in many rural communities in northern Ghana, such as Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo, different community groups where their membership is often made up of people of similar interest. Such groups may include women associations. These may be single mothers association, widows associations and women labour sharing association. The rest include farmers associations made of different groups producing same food crops, credit union groups, youth groups, water users associations and so on. Basically, the main objective of such groups is to help one another and foster the general development of their communities. Hence, in many rural communities membership of such groups are indications of how the community members interact, share ideas and help one another towards the development of their communities.

The research findings show that the 140 respondents in both communities belong to one or more community groups. In order to assess the level of interaction among community members, a list of various sources of information about what the government is doing (new policies, development issues or general issues that affects the villages) was presented to them and respondents were asked to tick their three most important sources of information. The results show a marked difference between the two communities about their sources of information. While Fuo considers friends, relatives and neighbours as their most important source of information in the community, respondents in Tampe-Kukuo chose radio as their most important source of information. This suggests that respondents in Fuo associate and interact more with each other in the community than those in Tampe-

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<sup>8</sup> Normal situation is used to mean a condition in which an individual can act alone for his or her own benefit, or for the benefit of many.

Kukuo, even though they may be associating or socialising in other matters outside of issues that concern the development of the community. I, however, chose these indicators concerning source of information, because my interest is to find out whether issues of government policies and the general development of the community are often discussed among community members or if they depend on other sources to get such information. This will give me an indication of the kind of interaction among community members, which could be an indicator of the kind of networks present in communities, as well as the kind of issues they will be willing to participate in: whether issues of community development or outside of community development matters.

**Table 5.2: Sources of information of respondents**

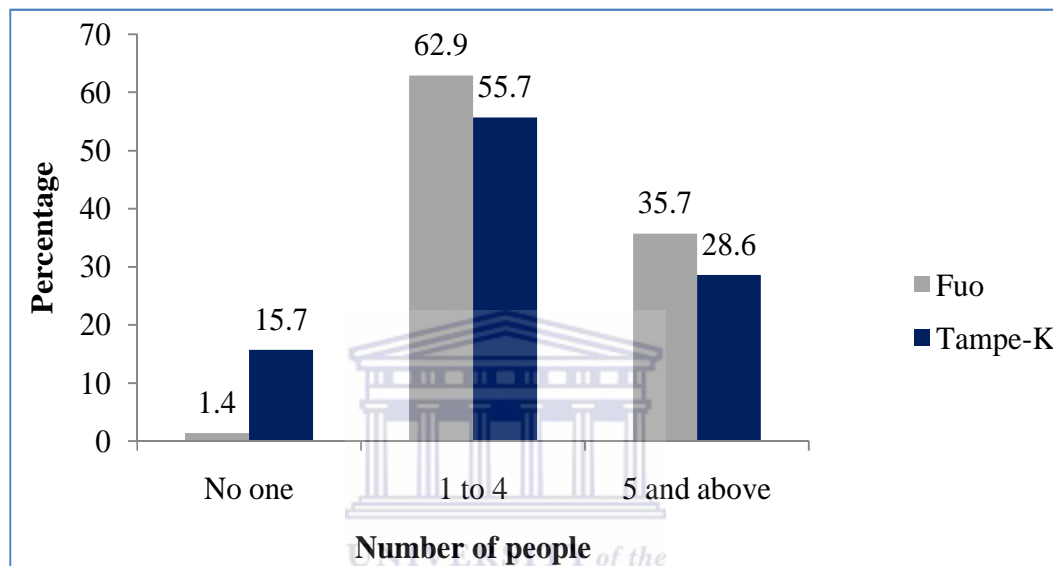
Community	Three important sources of information of respondents					
	Relatives, friends and neighbours			Radio		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Fuo	74.3	25.7	100	30.0	70.0	100
Tampe-Kukuo	37.1	62.9	100	71.4	28.6	100

Source: Author's field survey, 2009

From Table 5.2, 74.3% of the respondents in Fuo get information about what government is doing from their relatives, friends and neighbours, while only 37.1% of the respondents in Tampe-Kukuo get their information from relatives and friends. On the other hand, while 71.4% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo depend on the radio for information about government and NGOs activities in the community, only 30% of respondents in Fuo used radio as their source of information. It is essential to note that contacts and interaction among community members or households in sharing information among other things is an indicator of the kind of networks in the community. It is important to also note that interaction among community members also presents the opportunities for them to discuss common problems, exchange ideas and experiences for their mutual benefits.

In order to further determine the strength of networks existing in the two communities, I posed questions to find out how many close friends or people in the neighbourhood one can get help from, or be willing to offer help to, when the need arises. Figure 5.1 below shows the numbers of people respondents think they can easily get help from when they are in need.

**Figure 5.1: Number of people in community respondents can get help from when in need**



Source: Author's field survey, 2009

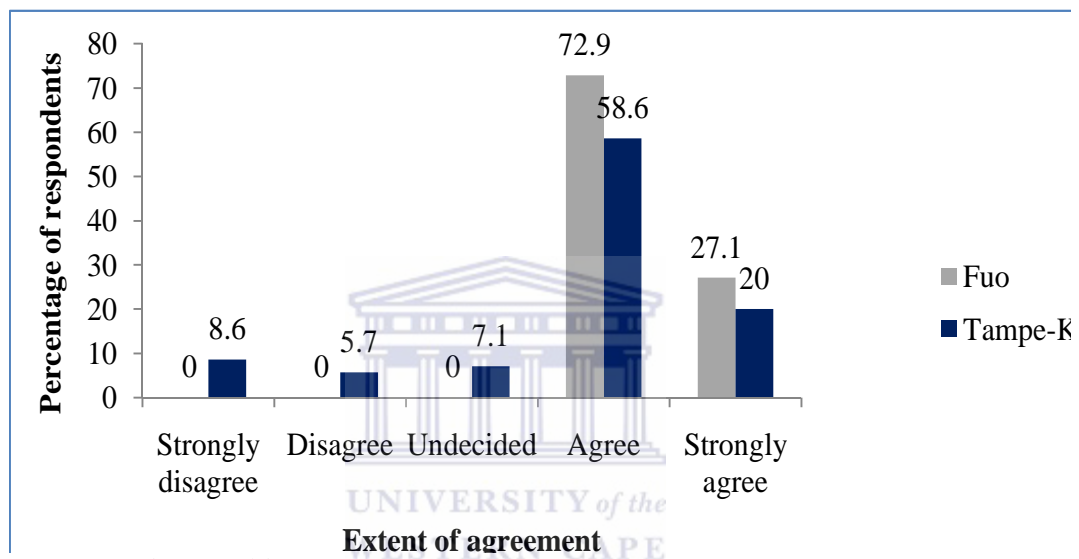
The graph shows that the percentage of respondents having either one to four, or five and above people to get help in Fuo is more than that of Tampe-Kukuo. It is also evident from the graph that whereas, only 1.4% of respondents in Fuo do not have any one to go to when in need, 15.7% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo have no one to go to for help. This again suggests that Fuo community members have more dense associations than those in Tampe-Kukuo.

Furthermore, on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, I asked respondents whether their neighbours will take care of their children if they have to suddenly travel out of the community for a short period. The results were treated as ordinal level data, where 1 is the lowest score and 5 is the highest score. Hence, respondents with higher level responses (say 5) are considered to be in agreement to the statement than those with lower level responses (say 1). The mode of the responses is then taken



in each community. In both communities the mode value is 4, which means both communities agreed that their neighbours will take care of their children if they suddenly have to travel. However, there are disparities in the spread of the responses in the two communities. Whereas there are no responses recorded for values of 1, 2 and 3 in Fuo, Tampe-Kukuo recorded responses for all values. The percentages of responses are graphically displayed below.

**Figure 5.2: Respondents’ view whether their neighbours will care for their children in their absence**



Source: Author’s field survey, 2009

From the graph and similar analysis above, it suffices to state that in so far as the care of neighbours’ children in the absence of their parents is concerned, Fuo community can be said to have higher stocks of networks and personalised relations than Tampe-Kukuo.

### 5.3.2. Trust

The role of trust in development has been proved to be positive and several empirical field researches have confirmed that the level of trust and development outcomes is positively correlated. Fukuyama, for instance, explains that trust is a very important variable in the determination of socio-economic life of a society. A nations’ wellbeing is conditioned by a “single persistent cultural feature”, which he termed as trust (Fukuyama, 1996: 9).

In every community some people may get along with others and trust each other, while others do not. The level of generalised trust can be assessed among specific communities by addressing the overall perception among the villagers. So, on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, I asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they trust some categories of people in the community. These are: people from their own ethnic or linguistic group, people from other ethnic group, village elders, working groups and government officials.

When asked whether most people in the village or neighbourhood can be trusted, 92.9% of respondents in Fuo community agree, while 74.3% in Tampe-Kukuo agree. Again there were differences in the level of trust among the different categories of people (that is, people from their own linguistic or ethnic group, people from different linguistic group, government officials in the community, village elders, traditional and working groups or associations). While the majority of respondents in Fuo (95.7%) agree that they will trust people from their own linguistic and ethnic background, 65.7% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo agree to the same statement. See Table 5.3 below.

**Table 5.3: Extent of trust of different categories of people in the community**

Trust of different categories of people	Fuo			Tampe-Kukuo		
	Disagree %	Undecided %	Agree %	Disagree %	Undecided %	Agree %
General trust of people in the village	0.0	7.1	92.9	7.1	18.6	74.3
People from one's own ethnic and linguistic group	2.9	1.4	95.7	22.9	11.4	65.7
People from different ethnic group	37.1	21.4	41.4	4.3	1.4	94.3
Trust of local government officials in the community	0.0	5.7	94.3	30.0	22.9	47.1
Trust of village elders and traditional authorities	0.0	0.0	100.0	27.1	15.7	57.1
Trust of working groups and associates	0.0	0.0	100.0	31.4	17.1	51.4

*Source: Author's field survey, 2009*

It is also clear from Table 5.3 that respondents in Fuo trust people from other linguistic or ethnic group less (41.4%) than respondents Tampe-Kukuo (94.3%). This to some extent may suggest why Fuo community members depend on one another for information about development activities in their communities, while Tampe-Kukuo depends on radio and people outside of the community for the same information. This could be due to the fact that Fuo trust their own people more and have confidence in what they tell them than people in Tampe-Kukuo.

### ***5.3.3. Solidarity and generalised reciprocity***

Solidarity and generalised reciprocity in the communities are assessed in relation to what extent the community maintains team spirit and depend on each other for help in situations of need. Community members are often willing to associate with one another, particularly to respond to needs that require collective action, for instance, defending members' interest. A total of five items were developed and also scored on a Likert scale from very likely (5) to very unlikely (1) to measure stocks of solidarity in the two communities.

The results suggest general solidarity and reciprocity in the two communities. However, the majority of respondents in Fuo, 85.7%, are likely to lend things to their family and friends as compared to 54.3% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo who are likely to lend things to their neighbours. Also, while 88.6% of respondents in Fuo are very likely to get help and support from their neighbours, only 22.9% are very likely to get help from their neighbours in Tampe-Kukuo. In terms of visiting of neighbours, respondents in both communities stated they are likely to visit their neighbours, though with percentage difference. In Fuo, 98.6% of respondents and 87.1% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo are likely to visit their neighbours.

The above findings illustrate that Fuo community members are more willing to help one another than those in Tampe-Kukuo. This, therefore, suggests that Fuo community members will be more willing to associate with one another, particularly to respond to one another's needs and participate in situations that require collective action than Tampe-Kukuo community members.

#### 5.3.4. *Informal institutions (community norms and values)*

In most rural communities informal institutions, such as social norms and community values, play a key role in governing the behaviour of individual members, regulating their interaction and monitoring community order, peace and tranquillity. These unwritten rules and regulations are commonly understood codes of conduct that determines and guides every member of a community in their daily interaction and communication. Violation of these common norms and shared principles involves a subsequent and an equivalent punishment as a response to maintain these desirables and common standards. Quite considerably, the importance of social norms in community participation in enforcing collective action cannot be overemphasised. Basically, community norms and shared values promote cooperation and mutual support; strengthen solidarity, fosters team spirit and reduces free-rider behaviour among the village members.

There are various forms of community norms and values, but for the purpose of this study, questions were developed that have relationship with community participation and collective action of community members. The findings show that both communities acknowledged the existence of social norms and sanction mechanisms in their communities. See Table 5.4 below.

**Table 5.4: Existence of community norms and sanction mechanisms**

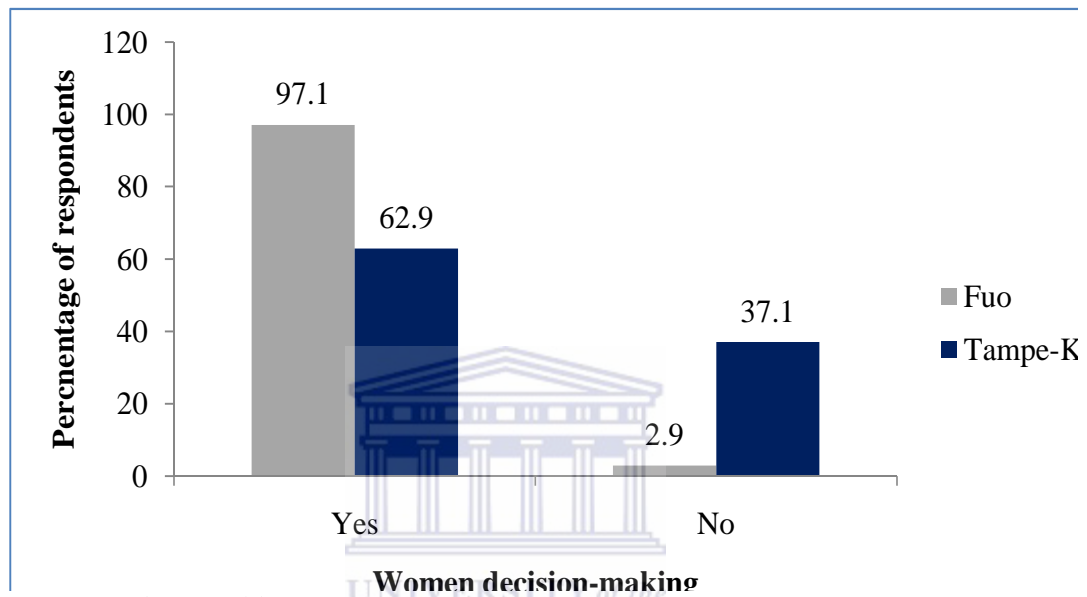
Community	Existence of community norms and sanction mechanisms		Ways of sanctions	Women participation in community meetings	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Summon offender before community elders (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Fuo	95.7	4.3	91.4	100	0
Tampe-Kukuo	94.4	5.7	52.9	100	0

*Source: Author's field survey 2009*

The findings suggest that misappropriation of community funds and deviant behaviour in both communities are solved by summoning the offender before village elders. In both communities, 100% of respondents also agreed that women are allowed to attend community development meetings. Importantly, respondents were asked whether women are allowed to freely make decisions and put their

views forward during meetings. This question is very necessary, because in many rural communities in northern Ghana (the research area) women are often relegated to the background, which invariably affects their participation in development projects. Figure 5.3 shows respondents' opinions as to whether women are allowed to express their views in meetings.

**Figure 5.3: Decision-making of women during community meetings**



Source: Author's field survey, 2009

From the figure above, 97.1% of respondents in Fuo stated that women are allowed to make decisions during community meetings, as compared to 62.9% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo. These results, especially those of Tampe-Kukuo, are indications that the process of decision-making in many communities, especially in northern Ghana, does not include the opinions and ideas of women. One would have expected that there should not have been much difference in the level of participation of women in decision-making in the two communities, because the two communities are within the same geographic zone and share similar socio-cultural characteristics. However, in the researcher's opinion, the difference occurred due to the level of exposure of the communities to external influence in terms of the presence of activities of NGOs. It was noticed during the research – though not part of the research focus – that Fuo had a lot more NGOs presence than that of Tampe-Kukuo. Some of these NGOs are into advocacy activities and

lobbying for the rights and voices of women, both at the household and community levels.

From the research findings, it suffices to say that, despite the fact that Tampe-Kukuo and Fuo are located in the same geographical zone and have similar socio-demographic characteristics, the level of participation and stocks of social capital differ.

#### **5.4 Chapter summary**

In summary, this chapter presented the research findings in percentages, graphs and tables. It described the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents of the two communities. The level of participation, network, trust, solidarity and generalised reciprocity that exist in the two communities were also explored. It emerged from the findings that members of Fuo community interact more and share information especially on issues concerning the development of their communities than those in Tampe-Kukuo. It became clear also that members in Fuo trust their community people from their own ethnic and linguistic background than respondents in Tampe-Kukuo.

The next section will focus on the relationship between participation and social capital in the two communities. The discussion is built on the basis that the two communities have been subjected to similar treatment – the CBO empowerment project. In order to ensure consistency, the analysis is done in relation to the research assumptions mentioned earlier in Chapter One.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter is qualitative in nature. It discusses the research findings presented in Chapter Five. This section explores the relations between social capital and community participation. It also looks at the processes of participation, such as the decision-making authority in the two communities.

#### 6.1. Trust and community participation

Trust is an important dimension of social capital, which impacts on mutual cooperation towards collective community gains. As I noted earlier in Chapter One, in communities where there is a lack of trust, there is a risk that community participation may result in the capture of benefits by local elites to the detriment of the poor. In such circumstances, community members may be reluctant to work together for their collective gain. The trust of village elders, traditional leaders and working groups is essential in determining the collective action behaviour of people. This is because it is these people who are likely to capture group benefits for their personal gain.

As the results in Chapter Five indicate, no respondents in Fuo express a neutral opinion or distrust of their village leaders and traditional authorities. Some respondents in Tampe-Kukuo, on the other hand, either expressed a neutral opinion or do not trust village leaders and traditional authorities. See Tables 6.1 and 6.2 below.

**Table 6.1: Trust of village elders, traditional authorities and community religious leaders**

Communities	Extent of trust					Total
	To a very small extent	To a small extent	Neutral	To a great extent	To a very great extent	
Fuo	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	29 41.4%	41 58.6%	70 100.0%
Tampe-Kukuo	6 8.6%	13 18.6%	11 15.7%	27 38.6%	13 18.6%	70 100.0%

Source: Author's field survey, 2009

**Table 6.2: Trust of working groups /associates**

Communities	Extent of trust					Total
	To a very small extent	To a small extent	Neutral	To a great extent	To a very great extent	
Fuo	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 5.7%	66 94.3%	70 100.0%
Tampe-Kukuo	4 5.7%	18 25.7%	12 17.1%	29 41.4%	7 10.0%	70 100.0%

Source: Author's field survey, 2009

From the data presented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 above, it is evident that some community members in Tampe-Kukuo will be reluctant to entrust responsibilities to their working colleagues or their village elders, because of a lack of trust in these groups. Invariably, this affects their behavioural attitudes in cooperation towards the community's collective benefit.

In order to further determine the effect of trust on community participation, I recoded the data into nominal dichotomous level variables (trust or no trust). Hence, respondents who indicated to a very great extent and great extent of trust are grouped together as *having trust*, while those who indicated to a very small extent and small extent as *lack of trust*. Those who indicated a neutral position were treated as missing data. I then cross tabulated this with respondents' opinion about whose interest development projects often represent in the community. The results are shown in the Table 6.3.



**Table 6.3: Persons' interest development projects reflect and the level of trust in the community**

Community	Trust	Whose interest development project represent					Total
		The whole community	The majority of the community	Only small portion of the community	Opinion leaders and elders of the community		
Fuo	Lack of trust	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
	Trust	56 80.0%	11 15.7%	3 4.3%	0 0.0%	70 100.0%	
Tampe-Kukuo	Lack of trust	2 10.5%	3 15.8%	3 15.8%	11 57.9%	19 100.0%	
	Trust	24 61.5%	11 28.2%	1 2.6%	3 7.7%	39 100.0%	

Source: Author's field survey, 2009

It is evident from Table 6.3 above that out of the total of 19 respondents, who are categorised to have lack of trust in their village leaders and traditional authorities in Tampe-Kukuo, only 10.5% of them think that development projects reflect the preference of the whole community, while 57.9% of them think that development projects reflect the preference of opinion leaders and community elders. No respondent fell within the 'no trust' category in Fuo. On the other hand, of those who were categorised to have trust in Tampe-Kukuo, 61.5% think that development projects reflect the preference of the whole community, while 7.7% think that development project reflect the preference of opinion leaders. In Fuo, 80% of those who have trust say projects reflect the preferences of the whole community, while 0% says projects reflect preference of opinion leaders and elders.

The point that is being made here is that the level of community members' trust in their village leaders and traditional authorities influences their perception about development projects in the community. Naturally, community members will be willing to participate in development projects towards collective community gains if they think the project fairly represent the interest of community members than

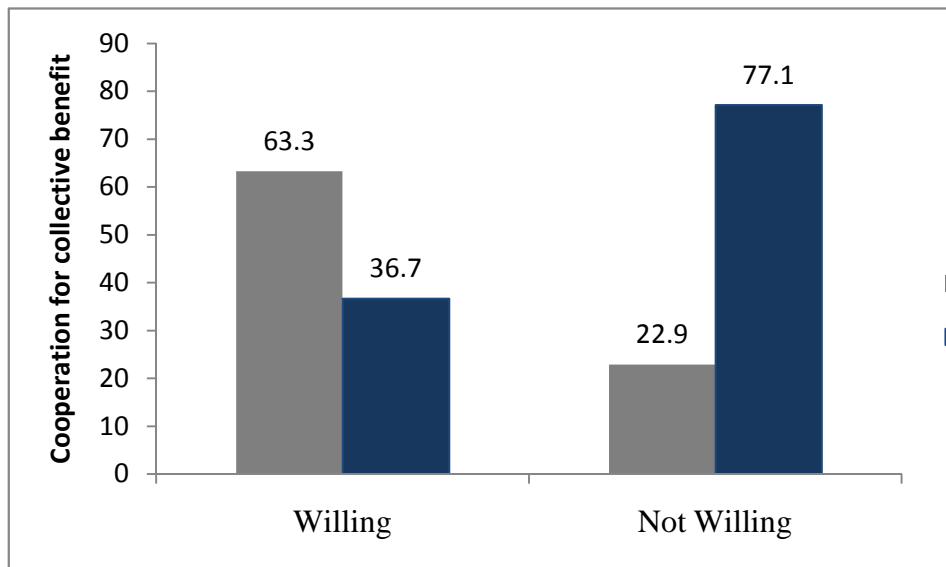
those projects they think only satisfies the interest of some opinion leaders in the community.

### ***6.1.1. Solidarity and generalised reciprocity***

Solidarity and generalised reciprocity are very pertinent, especially when it comes to community participation and mutual cooperation. Members of a community with high solidarity and generalised reciprocity will be willing to help one another in times of need without hesitation. And in such a situation community members are often willing to associate with one another particularly to respond to needs that require collective action, for instance defending members' interest and taking part in activities that will result in the benefit of many. On the contrary, in a community where there is no solidarity and reciprocity among members, such a community would be best described as an individualistic community. Individualistic society is used in this context to mean a society where people do not have the incentive to lend things to their neighbours or borrow things from their neighbours.

In order to give an obvious depiction of the store of reciprocity in the two communities, I recoded the data about respondents' willingness to lend things to their neighbours. Responses of *very unlikely* and *unlikely* are grouped into a one category as respondents who are unwilling to lend things to their neighbours and another category – *very likely* and *likely* as those willing to lend things to their neighbours. The middle category is those who are undecided. The results show that only 5.7% of respondents in Fuo are unwilling to lend things to their neighbours while 44.3% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo are unwilling to lend things to their neighbours. The 44.3% in Tampe-Kukuo represent 31 respondents out of a total of 70 respondents, which in my opinion is quite a significant number. And so, to further determine if there is any impact of the findings on participation, I did a cross-tabulation of the results with the collective action behaviour of community members. Figure 6.1 below shows the results

**Figure 6.1: Willingness to lend things compared with willingness to work for the collective benefit of their communities**



Source: Author's field survey, 2009

The horizontal axis represents the willingness of community members to lend things to their neighbours when they are in need. In this instance, it shows how members in the community care about one another and respond to one another's needs. The vertical axis represents the willingness of community members to cooperate for the collective gain/benefit of the whole community. Respondents were asked to answer yes or no as to whether they will be willing to work for the collective benefit of their communities. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, 63.3% of respondents, who are willing to lend things to their neighbours, answered yes to the question whether they will cooperate for the mutual benefit of the community. On the other hand, respondents who are not willing to lend things to their neighbours, only 22.9% answered yes, with 77.1% saying no.

As a check, respondents were asked a similar question whether they often participated in communal work that is aimed at the benefit of the whole community. The result of this question is again cross-tabulated with a different question, which also measures level of reciprocity in the community. That is

respondents general opinion about whether people in the village or neighbourhood are willing to help others<sup>9</sup>. Table 6.4 below shows the results.

**Table 6.4: Willingness to help others compared to willingness to participate in communal work**

Community members willingness to help other people	Respondents willingness to participate in communal work		
	Yes	No	Total
Not willing	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	6 100.0%
Willing	70 59.3%	48 40.7%	118 100.0%

*Source: Author's field survey, 2009*

From Table 6.4, a total of 6 respondents (1 in Fuo and 5 in Tampe-Kukuo) believe that generally, people in the community will not be willing to help others. Out of this only 1 (16.7%) will be willing to participate in communal work. Also, of those who are undecided about the general community's willingness to help others, only 5 will participate in communal work. As expected, a greater percentage (70%) of those who think people in the community will be willing to help others, will participate in communal work. It suggests in Table 6.4 that people's decision to participate in collective work is influenced by the way they perceive other people's willingness to help others.

Following the findings above, it will be logical to note that, in communities where there is high reciprocity is where people care about one another and are willing to help one another. Members of such a community will be more willing to cooperate and participate in activities for the collective gain of the community than communities where people are not willing to help one another in times of need.

<sup>9</sup> This question is about respondents' opinion of whether the people in the village are willing to help others, as opposed to the earlier question, which asked about respondents' own willingness to help others.

### 6.1.2. Community norms mutual cooperation

Another objective of the research is to *examine some of the customs, norms and informal sanction mechanisms present in communities that affects their ability to cooperate for mutual benefit.*

In most rural communities informal institutions, such as social norms and community values, regulate the interaction and behaviour of community members. Community norms and values are, therefore, important in participation and in enforcing collective action in communities. In order to assess the informal sanction mechanisms in communities, a question was asked on how to deal with community leaders who misappropriate community development funds. See Table 6.5 below.

**Table 6.5: Mechanisms for settling issues of misappropriation of community funds by leaders**

Community	Mechanisms				Total
	Summon before village elders	Settled within immediate family	Report to the police	Do nothing	
Fuo	64 91.4%	6 8.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	70 100.0%
Tampe-Kukuo	37 52.9%	1 1.4%	29 41.4%	3 4.3%	70 100.0%

*Source: Author's field survey, 2009*

It is evident from Table 6.5 that respondents in Fuo have more confidence in their internal mechanisms for solving community problems than respondents in Tampe-Kukuo. Whereas 91.4% of respondents in Fuo will choose to solve community problems through village elders, 52.9% of respondents in Tampe-Kukuo will solve community problems through village elders. In Tampe-Kukuo, 41.4% of respondents will use the police to solve community problems. It could be said that communities that choose to use external mechanisms to solve their problems could be an indication of a fragmented community or a community of low social capital. Undoubtedly, the level of confidence people have in their community leaders determines their level of trust, which in turn determines community members'

willingness to entrust community development activities to the hands of other community members.

Hence, communities with inadequate informal sanction mechanisms have a higher likelihood of community members to shirk their responsibilities and do not cooperate for the benefit of the collective gain of the community than those with adequate informal sanction mechanisms.

The last assumption in the research states that *the failure of some development projects to benefit the poor resonates in exclusionary processes of participation*. For the purpose of this research I limited the processes of participation to the decision-making authority and those who participates in decision-making in the community. I find this to be very important, because, in many rural communities in Africa, women are often relegated to the background when it comes to decision-making, either in the family or outside of the family, as a result of some cultural and traditional norms. And yet, women are often the most affected in poverty stricken areas in rural Africa. Since the CBO empowerment project works with various community groups, which include women groups, the ideas and opinions of women are often incorporated in community decision-making. As a result, both communities acknowledged the fact that women are allowed to attend community meetings and present their views and opinions. However, respondents in Tampe-Kukuo were divided as to whether women are allowed to openly share their opinions and ideas during open gatherings in the community.

Indeed, I observed major differences between women and men participation during focus group discussions in the two communities. While in Fuo, women were freely raising their hands and making inputs to discussions, the situation was the opposite in Tampe-Kukuo. Midway into the focus group discussion, I observed that no women had spoken. Despite several efforts I made to alert the women that they should freely make their views known, only one woman, who is in fact a woman leader, spoke briefly. After the discussion I had a short, informal conversation with some of the women. I was told they dare not make any decision, because their husbands will query them at home. This observation suggests that women are not

allowed to make decisions, 26 respondents out of 70 (37.1%) in Tampe-Kukuo stated that women are not allowed to make decisions. This could suggest partly why the CBO empowerment project in the Tampe-Kukuo community has not been considered to be very successful, when compared to other communities, like Fuo.

This has repercussion on the success of development intervention. It is pertinent to note that many development projects that ‘claim’ to have used participatory methods in arriving at their projects, usually end up with only the opinions of men or community leaders.

## 6.2. Participation and ownership of project

Given the different levels of participation and social capital in Fuo and Tampe-Kukuo, I deem it necessary to find out how respondents perceive the success or failure of development projects in their communities. Respondents answered questions about who they will attribute the success or failure of a development project to. See Table 6.6 below.

**Table 6.6: Categories of people success of development project is attributed to**

Community	Categories of people				
	Community leaders	General community	External partners	Partners and community members	Total
Fuo	13 18.6%	42 60.0%	5 7.1%	10 14.3%	70 100.0%
Tampe-Kukuo	44 62.9%	9 12.9%	5 7.1%	12 17.1%	70 100.0%

*Source: Author's field survey, 2009*

It is apparent from Table 6.6 that respondents in Fuo expressed general ownership of development projects and, therefore, take responsibility for its success (60%). On the contrary, respondents in Tampe-Kukuo will attribute the success of a community development project to community leaders (62.9%). This finding may be due to the fact that respondents in Tampe-Kukuo think that development projects reflect the preferences of community elders (see Table 6.3 above) and so, if the project succeeds or fails, community elders and opinion leaders should be

responsible. In addition, Tampe-Kukuo is distrustful of community elders and, therefore, believed that they 'hijack' community development projects and if they succeed or fails, it is the responsibility of their leaders. This is contrary to Fuo, where respondents think the projects reflect the preference of the whole community (see Table 6.3 above) and, as such, the success should also be attributed to the whole community. A similar analysis about the failure of development projects also revealed that respondents in Fuo again take general responsibility. Of the respondents, 75.7% stated that the failure of a project is attributable to the general community members, while respondents in Tampe-Kukuo (62.9%) attribute the failure of a development project to community leaders.

The analysis in Table 6.6 above relates to the earlier analysis on respondents' opinion as to whose interest development project often represent in the community. It is clear that while majority of respondents in Fuo think development projects in the community represent the interest of the general community, respondents in Tampe-Kukuo think development projects often represent the interest of community leaders. It is important to note, however, that the success of development projects to a large extent depends on the extent to which community members feel that they have the power to influence decision-making about the project. Projects in which community members have ownership and feel that they have made the decision regarding the project, are more likely to be successful than projects where beneficiaries feel alienated and distant from them.

The final objective of the study is find out what constitutes participation in the view of respondents and also to find out some of the things that might encourage them to participate or not to participate in development projects. It emerged from the focus group discussions that community members used the terms participation and consultation interchangeably. It was understood that community members recognised the need for them to be involved in the planning and execution of development interventions meant for their benefit. In simple terms, they explained that community participation, in their view, is when they are asked to tell



development organisations or development managers what their problems are and are also involved in finding the solutions to those problems.

While it was unanimously agreed that their participation was necessary, there were quite different views concerning at which point communities should be involved in their development process. While others believed that communities should only be consulted to identify the problems and leave the solutions to development organisations, others believed it is also important to be involved in finding the solution to the problems.

The results of the questionnaire regarding which stage communities should be involved in their development process are shown below.

**Table 6.7: Respondents opinion on which stage community should be involved in their development process**

Stage of involvement	Responses	
	Frequency	Percent
Project identification	95	31.0
Project planning	78	25.5
Project implementation	84	27.5
Project monitoring and evaluation	49	16.0
Total	306	100.0

*Source: Author's field survey 2009*

This was a multiple response question and respondents had the option to choose more than one. Hence, the frequencies and percentages showed above are not based on total cases, but on the total responses. As shown above, problem identification accounted for 31% of the total responses. Project monitoring and evaluation did obtain only 16% of the total responses. This is quite expected, because it is rather difficult for rural communities to understand the essence of monitoring and evaluation of development projects and why they should even be involved. Monitoring and evaluation is a concept even many Community-Based Organisations, which are the mouthpiece of communities, do not spend much resources on.

The following are some of the things respondents mentioned during the open discussion as some of the things that might encourage or discourage them to participate in community meetings.

Respondents expressed the concern that they will be encouraged and willing to attend community meetings when meeting times and venues are very convenient and too much time is not spent on meeting grounds. Indeed, I had the opportunity to observe meeting proceedings organised by the chief. I realised that after 45 minutes, participants started leaving the meeting ground. Even during my focus group discussion, some people started leaving after almost one hour of discussion.

Respect of peoples' views and no one commandeers meetings, fairness, tolerance and transparency are the hallmarks of fruitful and genuine discussion. It was unanimously agreed that more often some few people dominate in meetings. Hence, they noted that they will be willing to attend meetings when they have the assurance that they will be allowed to make their points without being shut down. An elderly man mentioned that any time people visited the community from the city to have meetings with the community, they (the old) are not always allowed to talk, because they think they will say things that will put the community into disrepute. Such things may include community leaders embezzling community development funds (if there has been any) and negligence of duty by people in authority in the community. He noted, therefore, that he does not attend community meetings, because he knows they will not allow him to raise his ideas. This opinion was raised only in Tampe-Kukuo. In the researcher's opinion, Tampe-Kukuo is such a community where a few people, the so-called literates, take charge of every development activity in the community without the involvement of the whole community. It may be described as a fractionalised community, as compared to Fuo, given the analysis above. And so there is the possibility for some people in the community to think that the ideas of the aged are nonessential.

It also emerged from the focus group discussion that very often ideas and decisions taken during meetings are not implemented by the appropriate authorities. This, they say, is also a source of discouragement from participating in community fora. Participants observed that implementation of decisions taken in community meetings will be enough motivation for them to actively participate and present their concerns during community fora.

Another point that was raised, but contested by a section of the participants in the focus groups, is about discrimination against women in the community concerning attendance of meetings. Some believe that women are often not allowed to attend or even make suggestions in general community meetings, which is also a source of discouragement to attend meetings. The women contested that they will be willing to attend meetings if they are allowed to make decisions.

### **6.3. Summary of findings**

It is comprehensible from the discussion in this chapter that community members in Fuo trust one another more than those in Tampe-Kukuo and, therefore, are willing to help each other in times of need. The trust among community members facilitates information flow in the community, which is necessary to raise the awareness of community members about their development activities. This obviously explains why more than 90% of respondents in Fuo are aware of the activities of NGOs in the community, as compared to 58.6% in Tampe-Kukuo.

The above findings also illustrate that Fuo community members care about one another more than those in Tampe-Kukuo. It is apparent, therefore, that Fuo community members will easily respond to one another's needs and cooperate in activities towards the collective community gain. The findings also suggest that the level of trust in community elders influences community members' opinion about development projects success or failure. It showed that, where community members do not trust their elders, they think they think whatever project being implemented in their community is the choice of the elders and so whether the project succeeds or fails, it is the responsibility of the elders. As the findings indicate, there is also less consultation and participation of women and other

marginalised groups, such as the aged, in decision-making of the community as in the case of Tampe-Kukuo.

Given this brief summary, the following chapter will focus on a detailed conclusion pointing out areas where the findings converge or diverge with the literature and theory in Chapter Two.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1. Conclusions

Undeniably, there are sufficient evidence from various researches that suggest that the socio-economic conditions of a lot of the poor can be ameliorated if they themselves can become part of the process that affects their lives more than until now. However, getting the poor involved in their development process is a lot more than a mere rhetoric or the use of the word 'participation', which of late is the buzzword of many development organisations.

This study has demonstrated and made evident that community participation can only be successful if organisations recognise the fact that each community has a unique socio-cultural milieu and, therefore, requires different techniques in implementing participatory processes. So far, as participatory processes are concerned, this uniqueness between communities is not only evident among communities of different geographic locations, but among communities in close proximity within the same locality.

The research communities of this thesis are approximately 15 km away from each other, separated by the Tamale metropolitan city. Yet I found differences in the community's socio-cultural structures, which invariably impacts differently on their ability to respond to the CBO empowerment project.

According to Hoddinott (2001), involving communities in the implementation of community development projects may increase the likelihood that people, who are likely to shirk responsibilities, are not entrusted with duties. This assertion is confirmed in the study and the determining factor according to my research finding is the level of confidence people have in their community leaders and other community members. This trust is an element of social capital and falls under norms and informal sanction mechanisms. It emerged from the study that

communities with inadequate informal sanction mechanisms, as in Tampe-Kukuo, have a higher likelihood of community members shirking their responsibilities and do not cooperate for the benefit of the collective gain of the community (see pg. 25). Therefore, it is conclusive to state that, before decision-making authorities, such as choosing community members to manage project activities, are delegated to communities, it will be imperative for the facilitator of the participatory process to know first of all the level of trust and strength of informal sanction mechanisms in the community.

Again, the research findings confirmed the assertion by Narayan (1997), that communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations have a high sense of moral obligations and commitment to participate in community development activities and will be in a stronger position to solve common problems, resolve disputes and take advantage of opportunities. It is apparent from the findings that members of Fuo community are more interconnected to one another by virtue of the fact that they belong to more community associations than those community members of Tampe-Kukuo. Consequently, Fuo has more confidence in their internal mechanisms for resolving common community problems than respondents in Tampe-Kukuo (see section 6.1.3). As a result, community members in Fuo have the moral duty to cooperate towards collective community gain, unlike those in Tampe-Kukuo.

Suffice to say that the primary mobilising force for people to participate for their common good are interpersonal ties, which is found in community groups, civic associations and networks. Hence, development organisation and practitioners of participatory development have to bear in mind that communities with strong interpersonal ties will be in a better position to mobilise themselves for development activities than those with weak personalised relationships.

Finally, in my theoretical background, I also cited Putman (1993) as having noted that communities with a strong ethos of trust, mutuality and effective informal social sanctions are better able to gain mutually from benefits accrued from participation. Though the remit of the thesis did not assess how project benefits are

shared among beneficiaries, the findings can, however, confirm that in Fuo community, where people care about one another and are willing to help one another in times of need, members of such a community are more willing to cooperate and participate in activities towards the collective gain of the community than in Tampe-Kukuo, where people are not willing to help one another in times of need. It is, therefore, fitting to ultimately conclude, that in order for practitioners of participatory approaches to minimise opportunistic behaviour and elite capture and to improve mutual sharing of project benefits, the culture of trust, mutuality and informal social sanction mechanisms in communities have to be determined.

In order to give significance to the above findings and conclusions, it is necessary to make recommendations that are pragmatic in development practice. Hence, the following are some proposals.

## **7.2. Recommendation**

It is more or less mandatory in development practice that, before a project starts in a community, a baseline survey is often undertaken to collect data relevant to provide benchmarks for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, I recommend that during baseline data collection, development managers should not only focus on data that will provide benchmarks to measure achievement of project objectives, but should include a comprehensive assessment of the dimensions determining the stock of social capital in the community (thus: civic associations, networks, trust, norms, and solidarity, among others). When the stocks of social capital in the community are determined, development managers will then be in a position to appropriately determine the level of involvement of community members.

This is essential, because social capital, community norms, networks, trust, solidarity and generalised reciprocity, among other things, impact on the general development of a community. This recommendation is backed by the findings of Putman (1993), cited in Chapter Two, that social capital has strong correlation with the performance of people in education, child welfare, lower crime, neighbourhood vitality, health, and happiness, among other things.

### **7.3. Suggestions for further research**

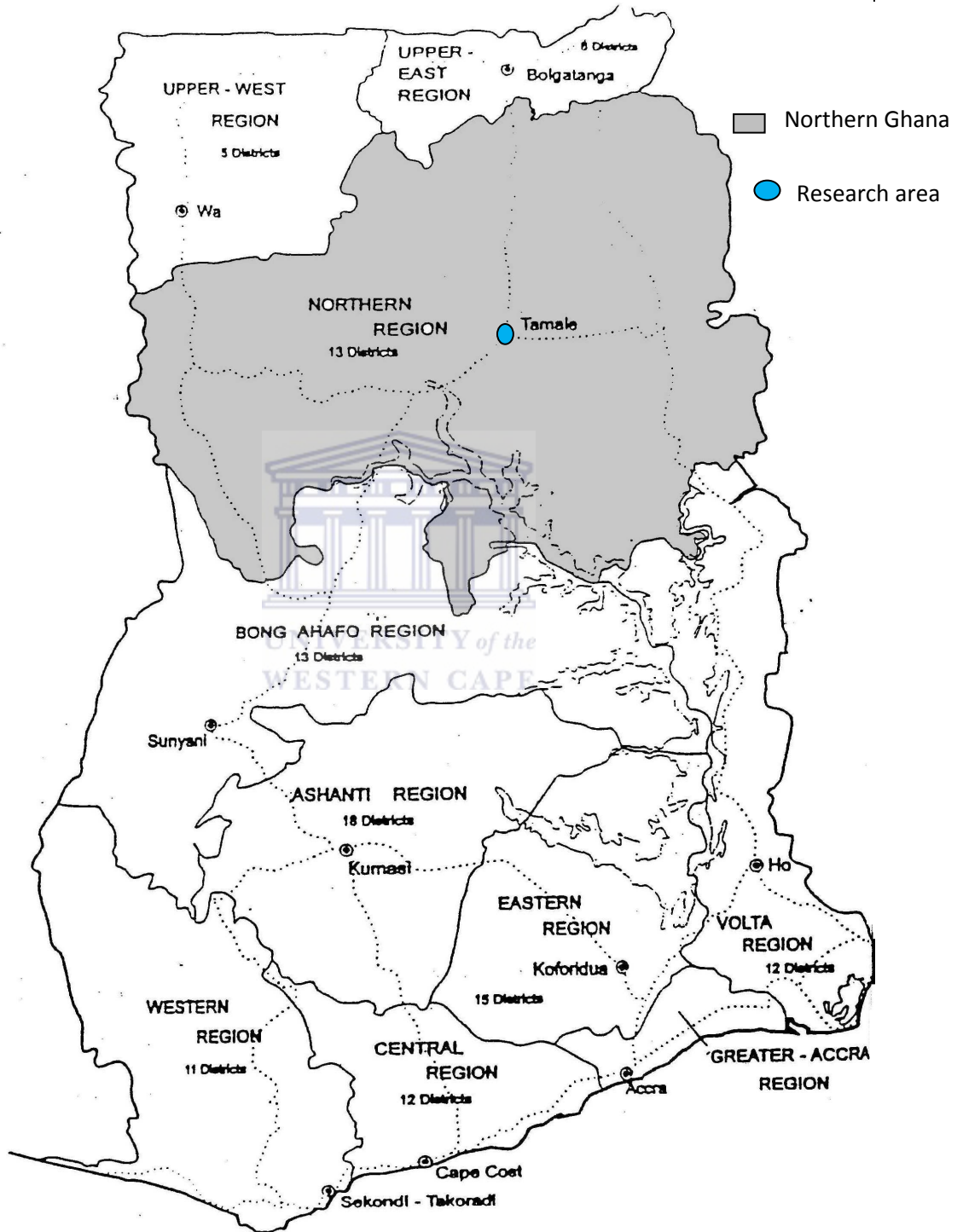
This thesis has made a modest contribution to the understanding of the influence of social capital on community participation in community development projects. My experience in the field and in writing this thesis has given me some ideas for further research towards an enhanced understanding of the subject matter under discussion. It will, therefore, be of development and academic relevance to specifically investigate the *impact of social capital on the success of community development projects in general – whether they adopt participatory approaches or not*. I deem this to be relevant, because social capital is one thing that strengthens relationships and networks needed to advance participation in development projects.





# APPENDICES

Map of Ghana, showing northern Ghana and the research area



SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



**HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE: THESIS FOR MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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**A. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Name of community \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you the Household Head (HHH)?

Yes (1)                       No (2)

2. If no, what is your relationship with the HHH? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your HHH size? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Age of respondent \_\_\_\_\_

5. Sex of respondent                       Female (1)                       Male(2)

**B. MEASURING & PROCESSES OF PARTICIPATION**

6. Do you live in this community?                       Yes (1)                       No(2)

If answer is no, stop the interview and go to the next respondent.

7. Do you belong to any community group?                       Yes (1)                       No(2)

8. Do you often attend community meetings to discuss development issues of the community?

Yes (1)                       No (2)

9. Name three things that encourage you to participate in meetings to discuss development issues of the community.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Name three important things that might discourage you from participating in meetings to discuss development issues of the community.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think it is necessary for external development partners to involve community members about development initiatives of the community?

Yes <sup>(1)</sup>

No <sup>(2)</sup>

12. At what point do you suggest is necessary for external development partners to involve community members? **(multiple answers possible)**

Project identification phase <sup>(12a)</sup>

Planning phase <sup>(12b)</sup>

Implementation phase <sup>(12c)</sup>

Monitoring and evaluation <sup>(12d)</sup>

13. Do you think development intervention by NGOs or government in the community usually reflect the preference of:

The whole community <sup>(1)</sup>

Majority of the community <sup>(2)</sup>

Only small portion of the community <sup>(3)</sup>

Some opinion leaders and elders of the community <sup>(4)</sup>

External partners <sup>(5)</sup>

14. Do you know about any intervention by an NGO, government, etc. in this community?

Yes <sup>(1)</sup>

No <sup>(2)</sup>

15. If yes, mention the type of intervention:

\_\_\_\_\_

16. State whether it is NGO or government intervention.

NGO <sup>(1)</sup>

Government <sup>(2)</sup>

17. Where did you **first** hear about the intervention? (**only one answer**)

- In a community meeting <sup>(1)</sup>
- From an individual in the community <sup>(2)</sup>
- From an individual outside of the community <sup>(3)</sup>
- From a local radio <sup>(4)</sup>
- Cannot remember <sup>(5)</sup>

Other source (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

18. What do you think is the general contribution of the community in such **interventions** (**multiple answers of 1,2,3 are possible, but not in combination with 4 and 5**).

- Labour <sup>(18a)</sup>
- Funds <sup>(18b)</sup>
- Advice and suggestions about how activities should be ran <sup>(21c)</sup>
- No contribution at all <sup>(18d)</sup>
- No idea <sup>(18e)</sup>

19. About how many times in a month do you meet to discuss development issues of the community? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Who do you think should take responsibility of the success of development interventions in this community? (**only one answer**)

- Community leaders <sup>(1)</sup>
- All community members <sup>(2)</sup>
- External partners <sup>(3)</sup>
- Both partners and community members <sup>(4)</sup>

21. Give reasons for your answer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

22. Who do you think should take responsibility for the failure of development interventions in this community? **(only one answer)**

- Community leaders <sup>(1)</sup>
- All community members <sup>(2)</sup>
- External partners
- Both partners and community members <sup>(3)</sup>

23. Give reason for your answer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**C. MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

**NETWORK:**

24. Which of the following groups in the community are you a member of:

- Labour sharing group <sup>(1)</sup>
- Credit union <sup>(2)</sup>
- Women group <sup>(3)</sup>
- Youth group <sup>(4)</sup>
- Church association <sup>(5)</sup>
- Farmers' group <sup>(6)</sup>
- None <sup>(7)</sup>

Other specify \_\_\_\_\_

25. Do you benefit from these groups?

- Yes <sup>(1)</sup>
- No <sup>(2)</sup>

26. Give reasons for your answer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

27. If you suddenly had to travel for some days, do your neighbours take care of your children apart from your immediate family?

- Yes <sup>(1)</sup>
- No <sup>(2)</sup>

28. About how many close friends do you have these days? (These are people you feel at ease with, can talk to about private matters, or call on for help).

1. No one       2. One or two people       3. Three or four   
4. Five or more

29. Suppose you or your household members suffered a serious economic setback, health illness, and/or other problems. How many people do you think you could turn to for help beyond your immediate family?

1. No one       2. One or two people       3. Three or four   
4. Five or more people

30. In the past month, how many people with a personal problem have come to you for help?

1. No one       2. One or two people       3. Three or four   
4. Five or more people

31. If you suddenly had to go away for some days, do your neighbours take care of your children?(Answer is based on the following scale) \_\_\_\_\_

Use this scale: **1 = definitely not**      **2 = probably not**      **3 = Not sure**      **4 = probably yes**  
**5 = definitely yes**

32. What are your **three main** sources of information about what the government is doing?

- Relatives, friends and neighbors <sup>(1)</sup>  
 Groups or associations <sup>(2)</sup>  
 Business or work associates <sup>(3)</sup>  
 Community leaders <sup>(4)</sup>  
 An agent of the government <sup>(5)</sup>  
 NGOs <sup>(6)</sup>  
 Radio <sup>(7)</sup>

#### **TRUST AND SOLIDARITY AND GENERALISED RECIPROCITY:**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? On a scale of 1 to 5, where:  
**1 = Strongly disagree**      **2 = disagree**      **3 = neither disagree or agree**      **4 = agree**  
**5 = strongly agree**

33. Most people who live in this village/neighbourhood/groups can be trusted. \_\_\_\_\_

34. Most people in this village/neighbourhood/groups are willing to help if you if you are in need.  
\_\_\_\_\_

To what extent do you trust the following categories of people? On a scale of 1 to 5, where:  
**1 = to a very small extent 2 = to a small extent 3= neither small nor great extent**  
**4= to a great extent 5= to a very great extent**

- 35. People from your ethnic or linguistic group/tribe \_\_\_\_\_
- 36. People from other ethnic or linguistic groups/tribes \_\_\_\_\_
- 37. Local government officials, village councils or government representatives \_\_\_\_\_
- 38. Village elders, religious and traditional leaders \_\_\_\_\_
- 39. Working groups or associations (e.g. credit and saving, irrigation groups, women groups, \_\_\_\_\_)

**Rate the following issues as: 1= very unlikely 2= unlikely 3= not sure 4 = likely 5= very likely**

- 40. Visiting people living close to you \_\_\_\_\_
- 41. Lending things to people living close to you \_\_\_\_\_
- 42. Borrowing things from people living close to you \_\_\_\_\_
- 43. Having informal discussions about community development issues with people living close to you  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**D. INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION**

44. Suppose someone from this community breaks group or community norms, what will happen to him/her?

- He/she will be summoned before elders of the community for sanction (1)
- The case will be settled within his/her immediate family (2)
- He/she will be reported to the police (3)
- Nothing will happen (4)

45. Are you aware of any traditional rules in this community that are supposed to punish people who break community norms or by-laws?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

46. Are women allowed to attend community development meetings?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

47. During meetings, are women allowed to make decisions?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

48. If a chief or community leader misappropriates community development funds, what will happen to him?

- He will be summoned before elders of the community for sanction <sup>(1)</sup>  
 The case will be settled within his immediate family <sup>(2)</sup>  
 He will be reported to the police <sup>(3)</sup>  
 Nothing will happen <sup>(4)</sup>

49. Are you willing to work for the collective benefit of this community?

- Yes <sup>(1)</sup>                       No

50. Do you often participate in communal work for the benefit of the whole community?

- Yes <sup>(1)</sup>                       No

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Open the discussion by introducing the purpose of the focus group.
2. For how long is the project operating in the community?
3. What do you think are the main services the project is offering?
4. How was the community coping without the project?
5. What do you think would have been the situation without the project in terms of the development of the community?
6. Do you think the project would have been able to benefit the community without the active involvement of the community? Why or why not?
7. Who would you attribute the failure or success of the project to? The community or external organisation? Why?
8. What plans do you have to keep the project running if funding stops?
9. What would you describe as a good collaboration between community and external development partners?
10. What are some of the things that might discourage from taking part in community activity for the benefit of all?
11. Haven't talked about what might discourage, what are some of the things that will also encourage you to do work for the collective gain of the community?
12. Any other comments.

**Thank you**



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