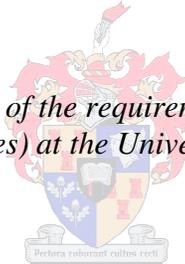


Social Capital and Political Participation in South Africa: The Relationship between Membership in Voluntary Associations and Formal Political Participation

by

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(International Studies) at the University of Stellenbosch*



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March 2012

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Empirical research on the impact of membership in voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital on political participation has been conducted in a number of countries in Europe as well as North America. With the aid of quantitative analysis of survey data, these studies found that members of voluntary associations were more likely to participate both formally and informally in their country's political processes than those who were not members. This was due to the role played by voluntary associations in the generation of human capital in the form of self-efficacy and participatory skills or values, as well as bridging social capital in the form of increased networking and trust. Existing research by Marion Keim, Cora Burnett and others have indicated that social capital, and particularly the voluntary association of sport, can have a profound societal impact on South African communities. However, no quantitative study has been conducted on the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and the level of formal political participation in the South African context.

Therefore, this study applied the social capital theory as developed in the literature on European and North American studies to the South African context in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables of membership in voluntary associations, membership in multiple associations, membership in sports as a voluntary association and the level of formal political participation. Using quantitative methodology, a cross-section of 2006 World Values Survey data was analysed. The findings indicated that the social capital theory on political participation did not apply to the South African context in the same way as to the European or North American contexts due to explanatory differences in South Africa's socio-political climate. Questions were then raised over whether, due to South Africa's current political culture, membership in voluntary associations is conducive to encouraging informal channels of participation. The findings reached had implications for social capital theory by indicating its uneven application to the South African context. Moreover, the study highlighted the need for a more context-specific understanding of social capital and its impact upon South Africa's political processes.

OPSOMMING

Empiriese navorsing oor die uitwerking van lidmaatskap aan vrywillige verenigings as 'n dimensie van maatskaplike kapitaal op politieke deelname is in 'n aantal lande in Europa asook Noord-Amerika uitgevoer. Met behulp van kwantitatiewe analise van opname-data het hierdie studies bevind dat lede van vrywillige verenigings op beide formele en informele wyse meer geneig was om aan hulle land se politieke prosesse deel te neem as diegene wat nie lede was nie. Dit kon toegeskryf word aan die rol wat vrywillige verenigings speel by die ontwikkeling van menslike kapitaal in die vorm van selfwerkzaamheid en deelnemende vaardighede of waardes, asook tussentydse maatskaplike kapitaal in die vorm van groter netwerkvorming en vertroue. Bestaande navorsing deur Marion Keim, Cora Burnett en ander het daarop gedui dat maatskaplike kapitaal, en in die besonder die vrywillige verbintenis van sport, 'n diepgaande uitwerking op Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskappe kan hê. Geen kwantitatiewe studie is egter nog oor die verhouding tussen lidmaatskap aan vrywillige verenigings en die vlak van formele politieke deelname in die Suid-Afrikaanse opset uitgevoer nie.

Hierdie studie het dus die maatskaplike kapitaalteorie soos in die literatuur oor Europese en Noord-Amerikaanse studies ontwikkel, op die Suid-Afrikaanse opset toegepas ten einde te bepaal of daar 'n verhouding tussen die veranderlikes van lidmaatskap aan vrywillige verenigings, lidmaatskap aan veelvuldige verenigings, lidmaatskap aan sport as 'n vrywillige verbintenis en die vlak van formele politieke deelname bestaan. Met behulp van kwantitatiewe metodologie is 'n dwarsnit van data uit die 2006- Wêreldwaardes-peiling geanaliseer. Die bevindinge het daarop gedui dat die maatskaplike kapitaalteorie ten opsigte van politieke deelname nie op dieselfde wyse op die Suid-Afrikaanse opset as op die Europese of Noord-Amerikaanse opsette van toepassing is nie weens verklarende verskille in Suid-Afrika se sosio-politieke klimaat. Vrae is toe gevra of lidmaatskap aan vrywillige verenigings weens Suid-Afrika se huidige politieke kultuur bevorderlik is vir die aanmoediging van informele kanale van deelname. Die bevindinge wat bereik is, het implikasies gehad vir maatskaplike kapitaalteorie deur die ongelyke aanwending op die Suid-Afrikaanse opset aan te dui. Daarbenewens het die studie die behoefte aan 'n meer konteks-spesifieke begrip van maatskaplike kapitaal en die uitwerking daarvan op Suid-Afrika se politieke prosesse beklemtoon.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WVS – World Values Survey

ISSP – International Social Study Programme

CICP – Centre for International and Comparative Politics

SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Scientists

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

1.) Introduction

In order for democracies to endure it is necessary to maintain a high level of active voter participation in elections and indeed, interest in electoral processes as a whole. However, the problem of maintaining this level of voter activity and engagement is becoming increasingly relevant in the current geopolitical context where the level of participation in political processes is generally low, especially in South Africa (Mattes, 2008:134). The ending of Apartheid and a changing global political climate in the 1990s saw the arrival of new ‘third wave’ democracies such as South Africa (Huntington, 1993:21). That said, South Africa’s young democracy has a number of unique characteristics whose origins need to be fully assessed. This relatively new democracy is one that has struggled with the problem of engagement, as community and formal political participation has declined, along with a belief in democratic values as a possible result of the failure to ameliorate the country’s crippling economic inequalities (Mattes, 2008:116).

Although formal political participation may have declined, previous studies have indicated that a high level of social capital in a society may encourage political participation (Quintelier, 2008:356). A major source of social capital in societies is that of voluntary associations, which in turn influence the level of formal political participation. A significant body of theory on the topic has been generated, with strong links being drawn between membership in voluntary associations and the level of formal political participation. However, most of this literature focused upon the European and North American contexts, with minimal research on the impact of social capital being conducted in South Africa. This dissertation seeks to apply the existing social capital theory to the South African context by using a quantitative methodology to assess whether or not membership in voluntary associations has an impact upon the level of formal political participation in the country. However, before commencing the discussion, it is necessary to firstly provide a thorough account of the current context as well as an introduction of the key theoretical concepts that will be utilised through the course of this dissertation.

1.1.) Background to the Study

During the Apartheid era, the presence of robust social networks of engagement proved crucial in organising and carrying out resistance activities against the regime, and in post-Apartheid South Africa these networks remain significant in ensuring the consolidation and survival of the country's comparatively new democracy (Mattes, 2002:29). In South Africa, as in other new democracies, the presence of a robust civil society post-1994 has been deemed especially important in order for democracy to endure, as various civic associations provide a crucial counterweight to the power of the state, as they did during the Apartheid era (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:400). From a position of relatively high civic participation immediately prior to the ending of Apartheid and democratic elections in 1994, the involvement of South Africans in forms of civic engagement has declined over the years, and this decline has been coupled with reduced levels of political engagement in the form of party involvement (Klandermans *et al.*, 2001:117; (Mattes, 2008:116). While the proportion of registered voters taking part in presidential and municipal elections in South Africa since 1994 has fluctuated, the total number of South Africans going to the polls has consistently fallen since the 1994 elections, with only the recent 2009 national ballot seeing a relative increase in voter turnout (IDEA, 2009). Nonetheless, the proportion of eligible South Africans remaining interested in politics and finding their way to the polling stations has fallen since the elections of 1994, and the reasons for this have proven difficult to pinpoint (Mattes, 2008:117). However, previous World Values Survey research has indicated a common downward trend in formal political participation with increasing levels of informal participation in new democracies; as disillusionment with democracy has tended to follow a "honeymoon period" (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002:3).

The decline of networks and formal affiliations which make up civil society in South Africa since 1994 has resulted in a correlating decline in popular participation and voter turnout. This has weakened South Africa's prospects for democratic consolidation (Corrigan *et al.*, 2011:154). At the same time civil society remains the vanguard of democracy against undemocratic governmental trends (Corrigan *et al.*, 2011:176). Civil society's importance cannot be understated as it is made up of a plurality of interests, memberships, and areas of involvement, particularly in the form of "autonomous voluntary organizations" (Corrigan *et al.*, 2011:169).

From a theoretical perspective, these voluntary associations are closely tied to the broader concept of social capital, which have been found to have an effect on the functioning and performance of a democracy, including political participation (Quintelier, 2008:356). It has been posited that there is a relationship between voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital and formal political participation; however this is an area which requires further study (Veenstra, 2002:548; Teorell, 2003:50). On the topic of voluntary associations, some studies have indicated that sports membership as a form of voluntary association has had a positive impact on political participation, although other memberships have had a greater effect on participation in this context (Quintelier, 2008:358). In South Africa, studies have indicated the sport has proven to be an effective vehicle for generating social capital which has had a social as well as political impact (Keim, 2003; Burnett, 2006). However, most empirical studies on social capital have been limited to Europe and North America, with only minimal research conducted in an African or specifically South African context as no South African study has attempted to link social capital with the level of formal political participation. As a result, existing social capital theory has accordingly been shaped by its historical focus on the North American and European context.

1.1.1.) The Role of Social Capital

As noted previously, social capital is a key component of civil society that supports the ongoing functioning of a democratic society through the creation of networks of voluntary associations, social trust, and engagement (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001:1). Social capital in this context refers to “connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000:19). Social capital is often manifested in membership in “voluntary associations”, which is a key concept that will be fully conceptualised later in the study. The presence of high levels of membership in voluntary associations has shown in the past to lead to cooperative and collaborative attitudes in a society as well as increased participation in formal political processes, rather than destabilising protest (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001:2). Therefore, it is apparent that a high level of social capital is beneficial to a society. An important element of social capital and by extension civil society that it supports is

the voluntary associations and networks which are usually not created to form any political purpose, yet they end up impacting upon the quality of democracy (Foley & Edwards, 1997:554). Extensive studies have come to show that the existence of an engaged society in the form of extensive networks of voluntary association has a positive impact upon the performance of representative government and the quality of life in said society as a whole (Putnam, 1995:66; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Zmerli & Newton, 2008; Letki, 2006).

Studies in both Italy and the United States have shown how beneficial civic engagement can be, however research on the nature of social capital in South Africa has been limited to social development or reconciliation (Keim, 2006; Burnett, 2006; Burnett, 2009; Maluccio & Haddad, 2000; Campbell & Williams, 2002; Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). Outside of South Africa, a Belgian study found that young people who are members of voluntary associations, including sports, are significantly more likely to formally participate in politics in their country, due to the norms and practices established within these associations (Quintelier, 2008:357). In brief, voluntary associations positively impact upon political participation in three main ways. Firstly, through involvement in voluntary associations young prospective voters become socialised with political processes and decision-making (Quintelier, 2008:356). Secondly in such a context prospective voters develop participatory attitudes (Quintelier, 2008:356). Thirdly, membership in voluntary associations builds the skills which individuals will use as politically active members of society (Quintelier, 2008:356). It is also important to note that these studies have indicated that the more voluntary memberships an individual joins, the better for the generation of social capital and the promotion of political participation. Before assessing how social capital can impact the level of political participation however, the nature of South Africa's civil society should be explored.

1.1.2.) The Dichotomy of South Africa's Civil Society

South Africa's civil society is manifested in the formal and the informal. Although these topics will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two, a brief summary may be provided. After the

inequalities that defined the Apartheid era continued to pervade post-Apartheid South African society, as critical services and equitable economic growth remained undelivered, discontent grew (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:398). As a result, the type of broad based social movements that ultimately brought down white minority rule began to manifest in post-Apartheid South Africa in the form of widespread protest and striking action (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:398). Largely informal community networks have grown out of this context, coming together to raise awareness of their problems publically instead of resorting to traditional and more formal channels of engagement which have essentially failed these communities (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:403).

Having witnessed the populist struggle against Apartheid being taken over by elites serving their own interests in the post-Apartheid era, a large proportion of these groups remain informal in order to avoid capture by elites or political ideology (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:405). Meanwhile, the level of unemployment has remained very high along with income inequality, causing further dissatisfaction in civil society (Mattes, 2008:24). Therefore, in the South African context, informal forms of civic and political engagement have become increasingly significant. The increase in informal patterns of engagement is the result of South Africa's prevailing political culture, however since social capital has positively impacted upon the level of formal political participation in other countries, it is worth determining whether it has the same effect in South Africa despite the popularity of informal participation.

1.1.3.) Sport as a Dimension of Social Capital in South Africa

While the nature of social capital and its political value in South Africa is an area in need of further study, the unique position of sport as a form of voluntary association in South Africa is also worthy of attention. Sport has played a prominent role in post-Apartheid South Africa; however this impact may also be seen at a grass-roots level. Sport was initially significant in the Apartheid era as it was a prominent arena in which controversial segregationist policies were implemented, creating an early focal point of resistance against these policies and the formation of non-racial sports unions (Keim, 2003:31). After being isolated from international sport in the Apartheid era due to South Africa's racial policies, the new South African government headed

by Nelson Mandela used sport firstly as a critical nation-building tool to help unify a highly divided society, and also as a means of showcasing South Africa's new position in the global political economy by earning valuable prestige (Nauright, 1997:177). In terms of South Africa's political economy, sport, with particular mention towards the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, has been a source of major governmental expenditure and has gained political relevance as a result (Cornelissen, 2008:490). Additionally, after it was decided that the FIFA 2010 World Cup would be held on African soil, there was an increased focus upon the developmental benefits of sports programmes in the South African context (Burnett, 2009:1193).

Domestically, the voluntary association of sport has also been of significance to South Africa in encouraging civil engagement and integration, as studies by Keim (2003) and Burnett (2006) have shown. The social capital generated by sports programmes in South Africa have played a role in social integration as well as, on a personal level, creating feelings of efficacy and empowerment which may encourage civic and ultimately political engagement (Keim, 2003:176). In this regard, the feelings generated by participation in sport can serve to create a political space where persons who are marginalised or disconnected from their community may feel freer to express themselves in a public context and thus extend this to the political. Building on theories over sport as a vehicle of social capital, pilot studies have shown how sport has helped ameliorate a number of social problems while generating networks of tolerance and trust which may also translate to increased civic and political engagement (Keim, 2006:3; Levermore, 2008; Burnett, 2009; Höglund & Sundberg, 2008).

A prominent study in a rural South African town showed that involvement in sport created the aforementioned sense of efficacy and empowerment among participants and created meaningful social networks of trust and reciprocity, generating social capital to the overall benefit of the community as a whole (Burnett, 2006:290). In South Africa, the promotion of sport, along with other broader voluntary associations within a community, has shown to increase the level of social capital by encouraging civic engagement as well as promoting trust among the members of the community (Burnett, 2006:294). Having established the relationship between sport as a form

of voluntary association in South Africa and social capital, it thus remains to be seen whether or not this social capital translates to political participation in South Africa. Additionally, the above studies are somewhat dated, prompting a need for an update in the field.

1.2.) Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is grounded in social capital theory, while also linking strongly with existing political science theory on the nature and importance of political participation. In order for democracies to succeed and become consolidated it is necessary for the population to support democratic norms and participate informally as well as formally; to create a democratic environment, voice their concerns, as well as provide the government with a crucial mandate with which to govern (Diamond, 1999; Lijphart, 1997; Gardner, 1990). In the African context, where a number of variables are responsible for ensuring the health of relatively new democracies, formal participation in elections is a basic starting point for maintaining democracy; although governments have struggled to maintain high levels of political participation in a continent without an established legacy of widespread participation in democratic processes (Lindberg, 2006; Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997). The South African context shares some elements in common with other African democracies while, given its historical background, it is a democracy characterised by socio-economic inequality and the domination of a single party over electoral politics, bringing about the rise of social movements (Alexander, 2003; Heller, 2009).

As a result, South Africa's political context has undergone a shift in civil society away from the formal to more informal broad social movements as a manifestation of civil society intended to draw attention to governmental failures. This phenomenon indicates a shift away from the usage of formal channels of participation in South Africa (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009; Ballard *et al.*, 2006). However, previous studies have shown that both informal and formal political participation are encouraged by a high level of social capital in a society, where social trust and networks create the circumstances for high levels of civic engagement which also translate to higher levels of formal political participation (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Zmerli & Newton,

2008; Letki, 2006). Social capital has been linked in prominent studies to higher levels of trust in democracy and democratic processes, which encourages citizens to become more actively involved (Veenstra, 2006; Uslaner, 1999).

One major dimension of social capital which generates high levels of trust and a sense of efficacy is membership in voluntary associations, which has been linked to increased participatory attitudes which can also lead to higher levels of formal political participation (Veenstra, 2006; Teorell, 2003; McFarland et al., 2006). It has been suggested by these authors that involvement in voluntary associations, as a dimension of social capital, creates an increased chance of formally participating in political processes, however these concepts need to be fully conceptualised. The importance of cross-cutting memberships has also been established in the literature, supporting the internal validity of this study by indicating that the generation of social capital requires involvement in multiple voluntary associations. Furthermore, having established the value of sport as a form of voluntary association in the North American and European context, this form of voluntary association warrants further study as a vehicle of social capital in the South African context. Previous studies have suggested that there are links between sports involvement and increased political participation; however these links have not been adequately explored as the depth of research on the topic is still relatively shallow (Anderson, 2004; Coalter, 2007; Keim, 2006; Seippel, 2008; Quintelier, 2008).

A wide variety of research has been conducted on sports participation as a measure of social capital. For instance, Fred Coalter (2007:27) has assessed a number of longitudinal studies in this field; providing support for the rationale of conducting a more narrow study in a South African context. Research by Marion Keim has indicated that social capital is important to South African communities, while sport itself is both popular and meaningful to South Africans who use it as a space to express themselves (Keim, 2006:184). Therefore, the theoretical framework of this study lies most strongly in social capital theory, with specific focus upon voluntary associations. Furthermore, existing theory on political participation as well as the role of sport in society also falls under the theoretical framework. These theories are thus applied to the South African

context narrowly, in terms of the prescribed variables, in order to provide insight into how social capital theory applies to South Africa. At this stage, it may be hypothesised that due to differences between South Africa and Europe, the theory may also apply in a different manner. Given this foundation of international as well as South African research, the expectations of the existing theory are established.

1.3.) Rationale

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital and formal participation, expressed through voting, in South African politics. The findings of the study hope to deliver insight into whether or not this aspect of social capital has a measurable political value beyond qualitative assertions regarding empowerment and communal bonds. Given the fact that most previous studies on social capital have been conducted in a European or North American context, this study seeks to determine whether the theory derived from these studies may also be applied to the South African context. Furthermore, none of the existing social capital studies in South Africa have had a strong political focus, highlighting a gap in the literature that this study seeks to help fill. Given the characteristics of sports participation as a space which encourages self-efficacy, trust, and participatory values, the isolation of this variable from the other voluntary associations will hopefully determine whether ongoing programmes encouraging involvement in sports can achieve political as well as social goals.

Therefore, using a quantitative and deductive research methodology, this study will measure the level of formal political participation among members of voluntary associations, and by extension assess how the existing social capital theory applies to the South African context. The replicability of any findings reached in quantitative studies, among the other merits of quantitative research, helped to guide the decision to use a quantitative research methodology for this study (Bryman, 1984:77). This positivist approach relies upon survey data which makes it easier to determine causality and correlation between the variables, as well as remaining objective throughout the study (Bryman, 1984:77). Given that the study intends to test existing

social capital theory, with regards to certain variables, in the South African context, it is to the benefit of prospective future research that a fixed quantitative methodology is used. Therefore, other studies may replicate the methodology used on different sets of variables in order to contribute to a greater body of literature on social capital in South Africa. The methodological transparency offered by quantitative research in this study will thus hopefully make it of greater use to the limited theory on social capital in this context. Ultimately, it is hoped that through the use of transparent methodology more studies on social capital in South Africa may be conducted.

1.4.) Research Question

Using quantitative and deductive research methods, the study will explore the relationship between membership in voluntary associations through the use of a general research question and a null hypothesis. The research question is as follows:

- *“Is there a relationship between membership in voluntary associations and participation in formal political processes through the act of voting?”*

In this question, the independent variable is membership in voluntary associations while formal political participation represents the dependent variable. Since the intention of the study is to explore the level of formal political participation among members of voluntary associations, making membership in voluntary associations the independent variable serves this objective. Essentially, the study will explore the impact of this independent variable upon the dependent variable of formal political participation, as the output for the dependent variable is expected to vary accordingly.

Furthermore, a sub-question is also asked:

- *“Does sports participation as a form of voluntary association and measure of social capital have a positive relationship with formal political participation?”*

The sub-question is based upon the following hypothesis:

- H^1 : *“Sports participation as a form of voluntary association and measure of social capital has a relationship with the level of formal political participation.”*

The second sub-question, derived from the social capital theory on cross-cutting, or multiple memberships, is as follows:

- *“Does the number of voluntary associations joined have an effect upon the level of formal political participation?”*

For this question, it is hypothesised that:

- H^2 : *“The more voluntary associations an individual joins, the more likely he or she is to formally participate in political processes through active voting.”*

This sub-question will be tested through the use of two null hypotheses which are as follows:

- N^1 : *“There is no relationship between membership in sports as a voluntary association and formally participating in South Africa’s political processes.”*
- N^2 : *“There is a relationship between membership in sports as a voluntary association and formally participating in South Africa’s political processes.”*

1.5.) Summary of Research Methods Used

The study is conducted within a positivist research paradigm, deterministically implying that one variable will impact upon the other while empirically testing to see whether or not this is the case. In terms of the research design, the survey will test a causal hypothesis by exploring the implied positive relationship between the variables of membership in voluntary associations and political participation. Additional sub-hypotheses regarding cross-cutting memberships and involvement in sports will also be tested. By positing that those who participate in voluntary associations are more likely to participate in formal political institutions, the causal relationship will thus be probabilistic. This study will employ a quantitative research approach, empirically testing the hypotheses.

1.5.1.) Conceptualisation

Chapter three of this study provides a conceptualisation section in order to determine precisely what variables are measured in the study. Voluntary associations are classified as church, social, musical or educational, labour unions, political parties, environmental organisations, professional associations, charitable bodies, consumer associations, and sporting groups while formal political participation are conceptualised as active voting; measured by ‘intention to vote’.

1.5.2.) Operationalisation

The methodology chapter continues with an operationalisation of the key variables, by indicating precisely how they were measured. The original survey used for this study asked particular questions which provide a full operationalisation of the variables of membership in voluntary associations, sports involvement, and formal political participation. Although the variable of membership in multiple voluntary associations was not explicitly asked in the WVS questionnaire, it was still operationalised in this study through a simple recoding of the survey data. By providing detail of how each of the variables are measured, the operationalisation section of chapter three follows the conceptualisation to help make the data analysis process fully transparent.

1.5.3.) Data Sources and Collection

The empirical testing of the hypothesis is based upon the analysis of secondary data in the form of World Values Survey, while the collection methods used by the WVS are also elaborated upon. The relationships between the variables are measured through the use of descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS 19 software. Since the focus of the study is South African non-state groups, the study is also conducted at the micro level of analysis, with the voluntary associations and their membership representing the units of analysis.

1.5.3.1.) The World Values Survey

Drawing from the 2006 wave of WVS data, the study is thus cross-sectional as it assesses the levels of voluntary association and the political attitudes of South Africans across at the present time. By assessing this wave of survey data, the study is able to provide a recent account of the state of voluntary membership, interest in politics, and sports participation in South Africa.

1.5.3.2.) Sampling

The sampling techniques used by the World Values Survey are of great significance in ensuring the validity, and generalisability of any findings. The significance of these sampling techniques for this study becomes apparent through further analysis. Therefore, a more comprehensive discussion of these aspects, with particular detail regarding WVS methodology, follows in chapter three.

1.5.4.) Data Analysis

Having become familiar with the variables, the data, and how the data was gathered, it becomes possible to analyse the data and provide a graphical presentation of the findings. Chapter three of this study concludes by detailing the statistical methodology used for the data analysis. The statistical methodology used provides a detailed account of how, if at all, the independent and dependent variables are related. By firstly gaining access to World Values Survey data it is possible to analyse this data accordingly; with the World Values Survey being favoured due to its scope, methodology, and low margins of error. The data is analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software, in order to identify any relationships between the variables quantitatively before determining whether or not these relationships are statistically meaningful.

1.6.) Significance of the Study

Due to the decline in voter participation since South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the quality of its liberal democracy has been negatively affected. This is reflected by people turning increasingly to informal institutions in order to communicate their grievances instead of through formal channels. Having concluded from studies conducted in Europe and North America that social capital increases the level of trust in and willingness to interact with formal institutions, it is worth determining whether or not this is also the case in South Africa.

Studies by Keim and Burnett in South Africa have established the value of social capital to social development, manifest in the voluntary membership of sport, to South African society, while Burnett's study in particular highlighted the role sport plays in generating networks of trust and efficacy. Studies by Putnam (1995), Teorell (2003), Zmerli & Newton (2008), Newton (1997) and others have stressed the participatory merits of membership in voluntary associations and specifically cross-cutting memberships. Existing studies have thus shown that there are indications that membership in voluntary associations and sports participation in particular generate social capital which may encourage political participation; however this has not been empirically tested as yet.

Therefore, this study will contribute to this existing knowledge by quantitatively testing to see whether there is a relationship between the variable of membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, while also assessing the impact of sports membership on formal political participation in South Africa. The quantitative nature of the study is also significant, since previous studies on social capital's political significance in South Africa have been qualitative in nature or have employed a mixed-methods methodology (Keim, 2003; Burnett, 2008). Therefore, the significance of this study is that it will go beyond qualitative discussions by attempting to forge a direct and measurable link between voluntary associations as a measure of social capital and voting. Ultimately, the study will determine whether or not the participatory attitudes and trust generated by membership in voluntary associations, as previous studies have indicated, has a measurable effect on the political sphere.

1.7.) Limitations and Delimitations

In terms of the limitations, the study will only have data taken from World Values Surveys which may not prove to be representative of South Africa as a whole, making it troublesome to generalise the findings. Although the sampling techniques of the WVS are satisfactory, it is difficult to be completely confident that the size of the sample, at 26968, provides an adequate representation of all South Africans. Upon a more comprehensive exploration of the WVS's sampling techniques however, these concerns may be alleviated. More importantly, there will be a number of variables which impact upon the outputs yet will not be isolated as the variable of sports involvement will be. The study is narrowly analysing the impact of voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital and thus by not taking other aspects of social capital and focusing only on its relationship with formal political participation there is a risk of disregarding other variables which impact upon formal participation. This limitation may be diminished through a discussion of the existing literature on political participation. Through a comprehensive analysis of the literature on social capital and political participation in chapter two as well as chapter five, the position of membership in voluntary associations *vis-à-vis* the other variables becomes clearer. With regards to the delimitations, the study will be focused upon social capital only as far as voluntary associations are concerned, and although it may be considered a limitation above, this will ensure that the study remains close to its original objectives and does not discuss broader elements of social capital and South Africa's democracy. Additionally, by using a single wave of WVS data from 2006, the study will be delimited in terms of its duration. Regarding South Africa's democracy, the overall position of democracy and consolidation in South Africa also remains well beyond the scope of the study, which will be focusing solely on formal participation as related to the variable of voluntary association. Furthermore, a full conceptualisation of each of the variables is also provided in chapter three in order to understand precisely what each of the variables entails; placing clear delimitations on the scope of the study.

With regards to the methodology used, there are distinct advantages and disadvantages of qualitative versus quantitative research, imposing further limitations and delimitations on the study. Quantitative research was favoured for the purposes of this study since it is replicable and

it relies on survey data which is readily available and accords the opportunity to apply similar methods to varying contexts in future studies (Bryman, 1987:77). The negatives of this approach include its inflexibility and fewer opportunities to go into as much depth that qualitative research allows (Bryman, 1987:78). Ultimately, quantitative studies are far more empirical and fixed whereas a qualitative study would be better suited for in-depth analysis of the context. While the depth provided by a qualitative study would be valuable to any study of social capital in the South African context, the ability to replicate the transparent methodology used in quantitative research is particularly useful. A quantitative approach is useful as this study seeks to assess how social capital theory applies to the South African context in terms of the selected variables as well as other variables for future study.

1.8.) Thesis Outline

This dissertation consists of five complete chapters. In addition to the introductory chapter, chapter two contains a literature review of existing research on the broader topic in order to provide the appropriate literary foundations for the study and establish the expectations of the theory on social capital as derived from previous studies. Chapter three details the research methodology further and the reason for choosing the methodology used, the research question and most importantly the conceptualisation and operationalisation of key variables, to elaborate further on the theory on how it will be employed. Once these theoretical and methodological foundations have been laid, the study may proceed with the fourth chapter. Chapter four contains the analysis of the data as well as a final graphical presentation of the data; ultimately discussing the findings reached and possible explanations for these findings. Chapter five summarises the study's main findings before going on to indicate any further gaps in the research that ought to be pursued in order to develop the body of social capital literature in the South African context. Therefore, this presents findings on how social capital theory applies, if at all, to South Africa in terms of the impact the selected forms of social capital have had on formal political participation in South Africa. Ultimately, this study provides an improved understanding of how social capital theory, as developed in European and North American studies, may be applied to political participation in the South African context.

Chapter Two: Review of the Existing Literature

2.) Introduction

The following chapter presents a review of the existing literature which provides the theory surrounding the variables detailed in chapter one. In order to commence the dissertation with the adequate theoretical backing, it is necessary to provide an overview of some of the previous research which will be used over the course of the study to indicate the present state of knowledge on the topic. The study focuses on social capital concepts and how they relate to formal political participation, with specific emphasis upon post-Apartheid South Africa, with some historical background provided for context. Existing studies on social capital and specifically voluntary associations will be explored to gain insight into the current state of knowledge as well as identify any gaps in the literature that warrant further study. The patterns of formal participation will also be discussed through the literature. In seeking to explore a posited relationship between membership in voluntary associations, within the theoretical framework of social capital theory, and formal participation, within the framework of elections, the study will touch upon three research topics. After establishing the role elections play in the functioning of a country's political discourse, this review will go on to discuss the origins and shifts in South Africa's democracy with specific mention of post-Apartheid social movements which have become especially prominent as informal manifestations of civil society in South Africa's current socio-economic climate.

After a review of more general background literature on electoral democracy, close attention is paid to the functioning of South Africa's civil society, focusing also upon the elevated role social movements have played in its development since the end of Apartheid. The main aim of this section is to illustrate how South Africa has witnessed a shift from formal to more informal manifestations of political participation. Having provided this background, based on the chapter one rationale, this review goes on to discuss the broader concept of social capital, how it has been studied in the past, and what these previous studies have found. Therefore, the foundations

established by the more general literature will be reinforced by an assessment of specific studies. The initial focus shall be upon Western states where most prominent studies have been conducted in order to become more familiar with existing social capital theory. Upon an assessment of these previous studies and their findings it will become clear that existing research supports the chapter one rationale in terms of the role social capital plays in societies. Voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital may then be discussed, as this concept, related to social networks in a society, is deeply significant as it is the main variable being studied. The reported effect of membership in multiple voluntary associations will also be discussed. Additionally, the relationship between sport, as a voluntary association, and social capital will also be discussed through the existing research on this relatively narrow topic in order to gain an idea of the current state of knowledge and identify the relevant gaps in the literature. To conclude this chapter, an overview of the existing literature on sport in South Africa is provided, in order to link this concept to the above theory and thus support the rationale for this study and the specific focus upon this form of voluntary association. Therefore, the main theoretical foundations for this study will be laid down by analysis of European, North American and finally some South African studies on social capital and specifically voluntary associations.

2.1.) Background: Elections and Democracy

Before exploring the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, it is necessary to establish precisely why formal political participation is necessary. This is done through an in-depth review of the relevant literature on democratic theory and electoral politics. The importance of participation to electoral democracy is evident in the literature on the topic.

The maintenance of a successful electoral democracy depends upon the continued participation of citizens in political life; be it in the form of formally voting or participating in the development of a lively civic culture which acts as a counterbalance to state power, according to prominent democratic theorist Larry Diamond (1999:171). Diamond's work is of value with

regards to the broader topic of the study since his work in this field is held in high regard and helps to provide useful background on the topic. Diamond also details how elections in which a large proportion of the population participates, although they are not the only requirement for a functioning democracy, are essential in order for a country to be considered a democracy in the first place (1999:59). Low levels of political participation is a reoccurring problem in many countries, as voter apathy and a lack of efficacy result in a poor turnout at the polls, a phenomenon which undermines representative, and especially new democracies according to Diamond (1999:147).

This concept ties into that of popular sovereignty, as established by theorists such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau who argued that a government's legitimacy comes from a mandate from its people, as manifested in formal elections (Gardner, 1990:213). Gardner provides useful background into how the act of voting therefore represents the consent of citizens to be ruled by their governments. Without this mandate, a government loses its legitimacy and ultimately the right to consider itself democratic, stressing further the importance of political participation. This article's summary of the role of popular sovereignty, is significant in illustrating the importance of political participation not only to the voters but also to the government as it seeks to exercise its authority.

Arend Lijphart's theories on the basis of a functional democracy are also of interest, as he outlines the consequences of low levels of voter participation in elections; which is an important variable in this study. Lijphart (1997) highlights the general global trend towards lower levels of formal political participation and provides some suggestions as to how to combat this, emphasising that addressing this problem should be a major policy concern all for democracies. Although this source is somewhat dated, it does provide valuable data on global trends in voter behaviour following Huntington's Third Wave during the early 1990s.

Staffan Lindberg (2006) also provides valuable background to the nature of democracy and electoral politics in the continent. Lindberg's work details the importance of elections to democracy, as well as the relationship between them in the African context. Lindberg describes the role elections play in the development of African democracies, finding that electoral competitiveness, fairness, and legitimacy are essential for the consolidation of democracies. A high level of formal political participation is essential for these variables to endure, as any democracy requires the involvement of its citizens in political processes. His book outlines the importance of formal participation to new democracies which is a major factor in their continued democratic survival and path to consolidation.

Therefore, this literature underlines the importance of elections to democracy, especially in the context of relatively new democracies as found in Africa, including South Africa. While elections themselves do not deliver democracy, as is evident by existing African regimes which hold regular elections yet remain far from democratic, the process of democratic consolidation is unlikely to be successful in countries whose electoral politics is weakened by low levels of formal participation. The literature also suggests that low participation is problematic for governments as it weakens their legitimacy and can in some instances be seen as a form of boycott and unwillingness to submit to their authority, to the detriment of the country's democratic culture. Therefore, understanding what variables impact upon the levels of formal participation in a country looking to strengthen its democratic institutions remains an important area for study.

2.1.1.) Origins and Shifts in Political Participation in South Africa

South Africa's democracy and transition, although a part of Huntington's (1991) Third Wave, has a number of unique characteristics which contemporary literature has detailed. The circumstances which brought about South Africa's transition from the Apartheid state to representative democracy have resulted in the post-Apartheid context characterised by socio-economic inequality which has in turn shaped civil society towards broader social movements (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:398).

Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle (1997) provide the most comprehensive overview the role of elections, and participation in political processes in Africa. Bratton & de Walle explain the origins of Africa's democracies, including that of South Africa, and how they have been shaped since independence. The authors describe how the nature of independence movements in African countries has shaped their political discourse, often resulting in corruption, uncompetitive party politics, and illegitimate elections which impact upon the desire of citizens to participate. By analysing democratic trends during the Third Wave, their seminal work holistically accounts for South Africa's democratic transition within the broader African context, providing valuable information on the origins and nature of South Africa's democracy, as well as detailing some shifts since 1994. Although South Africa's democratic transition differed from those of other African countries, it still shares some of the above characteristics with other African democracies.

Patrick Heller's (2009) work provided further context by focusing on South Africa itself, as well as comparatively assessing another developing democracy, India. Firstly describing the current position of democratic consolidation in South Africa, Heller explains how the dominance of the African National Congress has resulted in the creation of an elite which is detached from the day to day concerns of the poorer masses in South Africa. This level of domination by a single political party has proven detrimental to South Africa's political climate, as opposition parties have been weakened and electoral politics undermined as a result (Southall *et al.*, 2005:36). This phenomenon creates the circumstances for the rise of social movements. Heller's 2009 article accounts for the shift in South Africa's democracy as this dominance has become challenged through informal actions on the behalf of civil society, rather than through traditional electoral means only. Heller also explains how South African civil society, historically dominated by political resistance to Apartheid, had to undergo major changes since 1994. Since civil society had been aligned against the government in the Apartheid era, the elections of 1994 brought about a shift in state-civil society relations (Habib *et al.*, 2003:230). The election of the ANC to power created an imbalance between political and civil society; resulting in a civil society which had minimal experience with interacting with the state and state-based institutions such as electoral politics.

Neville Alexander (2003) provides a further contextualisation by highlighting how South Africa's socio-economic inequalities have shaped its post-Apartheid democratic development. In a neoliberal economic context, post-Apartheid South Africans have experienced a number of socio-economic ills, resulting in civil society adapting to deal with these challenges (Habib *et al.*, 2003:238). Additionally, Alexander describes the nature of the relationship between South Africans and the South African state, and how this relationship has been shaped by the transition from Apartheid to electoral democracy in 1994. South Africa's highly unequal society, characterised by the presence of wealthy elites and a large population lacking basic services, has impacted upon the overall health of the democracy where the economically marginalised have come to be politically marginalised also (Alexander, 2010:25). Due to the failure of the South African government to deliver basic services to a large proportion of the population, many of the networks of opposition to the government during the Apartheid era have been renewed to organise mass protest against the lack of service delivery (Alexander, 2010:26). This state of affairs has reduced the desire of many South Africans to formally participate in electoral politics and positively interact with the state (Southall *et al.*, 2005:40). These post-Apartheid developments are possibly responsible for the shift from formal to informal patterns of participation, as South Africans have grown frustrated with the existing system. Therefore, Alexander further establishes the grounds for the rise of informal networks of participation as seen in social movements.

2.1.2.) Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa

South Africa's post-Apartheid civil society has undergone pronounced changes over the course of its ongoing development since democratic elections in 1994. South African civil society has witnessed a shift away from formal spaces of civil engagement toward informal channels of participation in the form of social movements (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:398). Diamond (1999:242) details how a major function of civil society is to support democracy by encouraging political participation, illustrating how civil society institutions are expected to fulfil this role. Political participation, be it formal or informal, is thus aided by a strong and lively civil society. South Africa's civil society however has come to take on a more informal dimension as the population appears to have grown disillusioned with the political system as it stands (Mattes, 2008:116).

Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper (2009) define and describe the nature of the alternative forms of political participation many South Africans are turning to through social movements. Social movements have a rich history in South Africa and globally as different means of achieving political ends beyond the ballot. In detailing the theoretical background of this concept, it is illustrated how social movements have been increasingly turned to globally as an alternative means of exerting pressure on governments beyond merely voting. The research found that in an increasingly globalised world, more and more people are using “extra institutional” means to achieve their goals, as the institutions themselves are viewed with distrust (Goodwin & Jasper, 2009:4). The relevance of social movements in mobilising South Africans against the Apartheid regime was also discussed, underscoring the South African tradition of mobilising to participate informally due to either being denied access to formal institutions or not trusting them at all. Goodwin and Jasper’s work provided insight into social movements and how they have been used as a political space. Therefore, the prominent historical role of social movements worldwide, and specifically in South Africa, is established, allowing for more detailed analysis of this phenomenon.

Researchers Richard Ballard, Adam Habib, and Imraan Valodia compiled the book *Voices of Protest: Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* in 2006 to assess the development of this informal aspect of South Africa’s civil society, with particular focus upon the post-Apartheid era as the title indicates. This study found that there is an ongoing shift of attitudes among a large proportion of South Africans towards social movements, resulting in protest action against the failures of their government in delivering a better standard of living, among other grievances. Although relations between the state and civil-society had been initially collaborative, the research found that a growing number of South Africans had mobilised against their government and continue to do so through mass protest. Due to perceived failures of the current political system to represent the interests of many South Africans, the study found that informal channels of participation have been increasingly favoured since the existing institutions are failing to meet the basic needs of a large number of people. Social movements were thus found to be a useful alternative to formal political participation for achieving social and political goals, as formal engagement with the government has fallen. This book is of significance to this study since it

details the rise of informal forms of political participation over formal political practices, as South Africans have elected to protest against their government rather than vote against the incumbents. Therefore, social movements in South Africa are shown to encourage popular participation rather than formal political participation.

Regarding political participation in South Africa, research by Robert Mattes (2008) explored the motivations for participation in politics by South Africans. Mattes's quantitative study, with the aid of Afrobarometer survey data, found that while many South Africans are highly dissatisfied with their local government, they tend not to communicate their dissatisfaction by means of the ballot. Instead, Mattes found that South Africans are on the whole reluctant to vote in elections, as a result of a political culture which historically favours the use of informal channels of participation. The study found that, out of the 18 countries surveyed in Africa, South Africans had some of the lowest levels of formal political participation and the highest level of informal participation, providing valuable insight into a political culture which encourages informal political participation (Mattes, 2008:137).

While there is further literature on the nature of social movements, these sources provide the necessary background for the topic, establishing the role played by social movements in South Africa, from the Apartheid era to the present day. Additionally, these sources illustrate how this manifestation of civil society favours informal political participation as participation in elections becomes a less favourable alternative to an increasingly discontented population. Providing an historical account of the nature of civil society in the Apartheid era, the manner in which civil society has responded to socio-economic inequality and marginalisation in the post-Apartheid context through social movements and protest is also brought to light. As a result, the shifts in the nature of South Africa's electoral democracy and significantly civil society can be accounted for as a result of the country's socio-economic inequality, the government's failure to address this problem, and the rise of social movements as a form of informal participation. These social movements also require a degree of social capital and networking in order to take form, prompting a discussion of this significant theoretical concept.

2.2.) Social Capital Studies in Western Countries

The amount of literature on the broader topic of social capital and quantitative studies of its effect is extensive. Although it is a relatively new topic of study, its popularity has increased swiftly as a number of studies on social capital have been conducted. By far the largest volume of social capital literature is derived from North America and Western Europe, highlighting a gap in the literature where only very recent and relatively smaller-scale studies in this area have been conducted in Africa. However, the existing research on the topic needs to be discussed.

Although the term ‘social capital’ may have been in use in various forms for some time, it was first fully conceptualised by James S. Coleman (1988). Through a low-level study of students who had left high-school as units of analysis, Coleman introduces the concept in a basic form and explores the nature of social capital and its impact upon individuals and their immediate community. Coleman studied a sample of high school students who had dropped out of school before graduation alongside the availability of social capital in these students’ personal lives, households, communities, and schools (Coleman, 1988:95). Specifically, Coleman found that organisations formed for a particular purpose often ended up generating valuable social capital which could be used for other purposes; such as a church group providing a mobilising space for political activism (Coleman, 1988:108). By closely assessing the drop-out rates of a large number of students, it was discovered that students who were members of certain voluntary associations and enjoyed a high level of social capital in their communities were significantly less likely to drop out of high school than those who were not (Coleman, 1988:115). The study serves as a relevant starting point for subsequent research as it outlines the positive effect social capital can have on communities; a theoretical area explored extensively by other researchers whose findings have generally concurred with those of Coleman and expanded state of knowledge on social capital accordingly (Putnam, 1993; Putnam, 1995; Zmerli & Newton, 2008; Uslaner, 1999; Letki, 2006). Furthermore, Coleman’s work illustrates how the generation of networks of social capital serves the public good and aids in the creation of human capital which is clearly beneficial. As a result, Coleman’s study established empirically that social capital can have a profound societal impact.

Arguably the most prominent modern researcher on the concept of social capital is Robert D. Putnam, whose 1993 book, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, detailed a seminal study on the effect social capital has on society. Putnam (1993) lays down the foundations of social capital theory, indicating how networks of civic engagement increase the institutional performance of regional governments and deliver benefits to communities. Putnam thus established that the presence of social capital in a society is highly beneficial at higher levels than Coleman's study through the use of larger units of analysis, and that these benefits can also, importantly, be isolated and fully measured. Putnam's book, having established that social capital does play a visible role in societies, thus paving the way for more detailed studies in this field.

Putnam (1995) went on to conduct further research of the nature and effect of social capital, particularly the consequences of low levels of social capital. Studying what he perceived to be a decline in social capital, Putnam's follow-up study measured the effects of this decline on democracy in the United States, as formerly strong networks of civic engagement in America have been eroded over recent decades to the detriment of political participation. By studying voter turnout statistics as well as a large body of survey data, Putnam was able to link a decline in membership in voluntary associations and social capital in general with Americans becoming increasingly detached from politics over an extended period (Putnam, 1995:67). Membership and active involvement in a number of forms of voluntary associations fell drastically in the United States from the 1960s onwards, while Putnam found that this was accompanied by a decline in all forms of political involvement (Putnam, 1995:70). Significantly, this longitudinal study highlights how, from a sporting perspective, social capital has fallen in America through the increase in the number of Americans bowling and the simultaneous decrease in social bowling league membership; hence the title of the article. Therefore, the importance of the social interaction sports groups and other voluntary associations usually provide is underlined. Putnam concluded by recommending further study into the specific dimensions of social capital, and what effects each of these have on society, emphasising that social capital is a concept that comes in a number of forms which also vary in their impact upon society.

Sonja Zmerli and Ken Newton (2008) conducted an extensive quantitative study in European and the United States which firmly links social capital theory with democratic theory. Their study illustrates how social trust, as a dimension of social capital, impacts upon the attitudes of the population towards democracy, and ultimately their level of trust in democratic institutions and practices; including voting. Through the analysis of secondary data surveys in twenty three European countries and the United States, Zmerli and Newton found that social trust, as developed through networks of social involvement and reciprocity, resulted in a higher level of trust towards politics and democracy as a whole, establishing quantitatively that social capital does have a political, as well as social, impact (Zmerli & Newton, 2008:706). Using the World Values Survey and Eurobarometer as data sources, this study empirically linked social capital with political variables through quantitative research methods (Zmerli & Newton, 2008:710). Significantly, the study hints that there may be a relationship between membership in voluntary associations and the levels of trust in political process and confidence in democracy, although Zmerli & Newton go on to state that this relationship still needs to be quantitatively studied through the analysis of survey data (2008:719)

Social trust as a dimension on social capital has been studied further by Eric M. Uslaner (1999). Uslaner describes how social trust ties into the concept of social capital, and comes in the form of in-group particularised trust and broader generalised trust; with the latter being of more value to a society. Extending the discussion to democracy, Uslaner argues how democratic societies are inherently more trusting and the decline in trust is to the detriment of democracy, in a self-perpetuating relationship. Importantly, Uslaner goes on to describe how increased trust is found within voluntary associations, which as a dimension of social capital increases the level of generalised trust to the benefit of democracy. Similar to Putnam, Uslaner briefly assesses survey data from an extended period in the United States in order to conclude that social trust has fallen along with participatory values, while maintaining that voluntary associations in America remain spaces where the level of trust is high (Uslaner, 1999:18). Also of relevance to this study is Uslaner's assertion that persons who participate in or attend sports events are ultimately more socially trusting than others. This study contributes to the extensive state of knowledge on social

capital in Western countries while paying particular attention to the generation of trust within voluntary associations which are an important dimension of social capital.

2.2.1.) Voluntary Associations as a Dimension of Social Capital

Having established from previous studies that voluntary associations are an important element of social capital, as they are areas rich in social trust and networking, it is necessary to study this concept in greater detail in order to underscore its relevance to this study. As a dimension of social capital, voluntary associations come in many forms themselves, most of which have been studied in detail as they have varied effects on society, depending on their objectives. On the whole however, voluntary associations are significant forms of civic engagement which encourage participation. Individuals who are members of one or more voluntary associations have, after a number of studies conducted in Western countries, been shown to have participatory attitudes which naturally make them more likely to participate in formal political processes. Voluntary associations therefore come to represent a space where individuals can be mobilised into taking political action themselves, while gaining trust in the system and processes in place that allow them to formally participate. Therefore, the theoretical link between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation is established.

Gerry Veenstra (2002) is one author on social capital who has paid close attention to how voluntary associations have helped to generate valuable social trust in societies, as detailed in his study on trust and participation conducted in Saskatchewan, Canada. Through empirical testing of survey data, the study sought to establish whether or not there is a relationship between membership in voluntary associations among other forms of civil participation and social or political trust (Veenstra, 2002:549). The study reaches the conclusion that involvement in voluntary associations creates a high level of social trust which can by extension impact upon political concerns. Furthermore, the study elaborates upon the role of voluntary associations as a “civil space” in which networks of civic engagement are reinforced, strengthening democracy. Veenstra illustrates how involvement in voluntary associations generates co-operative

participatory attitudes as well as a sense of self-efficacy among members who accordingly gain an increased sense of their self worth and ability to impact upon their communities; hinting at the possibilities of voluntary associations increasing the desire to participate in political processes. However, although mentioning how different forms of voluntary association may have varied impacts on the level of social or political trust, the author does not delve any deeper into why this may be the case (Veenstra, 2002:567).

A prominent study on the impact of voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital on political participation was conducted by Jan Teorell (2003). Through a quantitative study of a survey carried out among 1460 Swedes, compelling findings were reached to support the assertion that membership in voluntary associations increases the level of political participation (Teorell, 2003:53). Depending on the level of activity of the member, the study indicates how voluntary associations provide a space for “recruitment” and or learning “civic skills”, both of which encourage political participation among the membership (Teorell, 2003:61). Therefore the mobilising role performed by voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital is highlighted in the study’s findings. This is evident as members become accustomed to providing their input and engaging with other members while gaining increased confidence in their ability to impact their surroundings; encouraging political participation as they gain a sense of empowerment conducive to exercising their right to vote or express their views through other formal channels. Importantly, the study also found that being involved in a number of voluntary associations is preferable, in terms of encouraging participation, than being involved in one or a few, as greater networks of trust are generated by multiple memberships (Teorell, 2003:52). This latter point was emphasised as one of the main findings of Teorell’s study.

Daniel A. McFarland and Reuben J. Thomas (2006) explored the effect of youth participation in voluntary associations and political participation later in life. Through an analysis of two longitudinal sets of survey data, the study found that young people who were members of voluntary associations during their years at school were more likely to participate politically later in life (McFarland & Thomas, 2006:401). The study is significant in that it establishes the

relationship between voluntary associations and political participation empirically. Building on the theory of Putnam, McFarland and Thomas quantitatively measured the difference in levels of formal participation between individuals who were members of voluntary associations during their school years and those who were not. The longitudinal study indicated that individuals involved in voluntary associations were indeed more likely to participate in formal political processes than those who were not, however the type of voluntary association was meaningful as according to the study involvement in sports programmes in American schools had less of an effect on later political participation than other forms of voluntary association (McFarland & Thomas, 2006:418). Therefore, this study contributes to the theory that involvement in voluntary associations does have an effect on political participation.

In another country with a rich tradition of high levels of membership in voluntary associations, Australia, a survey was conducted in 2003 to assess the social attitudes of Australians; with the results being analysed by Passey and Lyons (2005). The survey concluded that Australia enjoys very high levels of membership in voluntary associations and civic participation; however most of these associations serve no political purpose. That said, it was determined that membership in voluntary associations created higher levels of social trust among participants; indicating trust not only in each other but also of the political system as a whole. Higher levels of political efficacy and the subsequent desire to participate were measured in the 2003 survey among members of voluntary associations despite these associations lacking any political focus of their own. However since voting is compulsory in Australia, other forms of participation needed to be measured. Even so, this study contributes greatly to the state of knowledge on the topic due to the methodology used and variables assessed. Passey and Lyons conducted regression analysis to determine empirically that there is a positive relationship between the independent variable of “membership in voluntary associations” and the dependent variable of “political activity” (2005:75). The study found that membership in voluntary associations, of particular interest since this is especially high in Australia, has a profound effect on multiple forms of political participation, irrespective of the non-political nature of most of the associations. It is also noted that sport as a form of voluntary association enjoys higher levels of membership in Australia

than in most other countries, reinforcing the findings of other studies which focus more specifically on the role sport plays in the generation of social capital.

2.2.2.) Sport and Social Capital

The relationship between sport and social capital has also been the subject of some study. Since sport represents a prominent form of voluntary association, the concept ties in with social capital theory with relative ease. As is the case with broader studies of social capital, most existing research on sport and social capital has been focused upon Western countries, with particular emphasis upon Europe. Upon assessing the literature on sport and social capital it appears that sports participation in particular has proven to generate trust, communal bonds, participatory attitudes, and self-efficacy among individuals. Sports participation has also been linked to feelings of empowerment among individuals, encouraging them to take positive action in their communities (Donnelly, 1993:428). Globally, sports programmes have been initiated to pursue developmental as well as political goals, with a many governments and Non-Governmental Organisations dedicating resources to the use of sport to promote development and social cohesion (Kidd, 2011:604). Almost all of the goals set out for existing sports programmes may be achieved through the generation of social capital; grounding this form of voluntary association in social capital theory. This background supports the theory that those who participate in sports as a voluntary association are more likely to participate in political processes than those who do not, as they are more likely to believe in their own ability to change their environment. While sports associations may not be as mobilising as religious or overtly political associations, its social value in South Africa as established by Keim and Burnett supports the theory that it may have a noticeable relationship with the level of formal political participation.

Fred Coalter (2007) is one of the most prominent researchers in this field who studied the relationship between sport and social capital extensively. Coalter (2007) explores the impact sports involvement has on civic participation, political participation, development, generation of social capital, education, and crime. Coalter explains how sport generates increased civic-mindedness among participants, generating social capital for the broader benefit of the

community. Providing the broader background for research on sport and social capital, Coalter reinforces the idea that sport does have a measurable impact upon society in a number of varying ways.

Ellen Quintelier (2008) conducted a quantitative study in Belgium on the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and political participation. Through an analysis of survey data on young Belgians, the study engages closely with social capital literature in order to explore this relationship (Quintelier, 2008:355). The study indicates that sports involvement does indeed generate social capital, and Quintelier goes on to firmly establish that membership in voluntary associations, including sport, do in fact lead to higher levels of political participation. The study did find however that different forms of voluntary association have varying impacts upon the levels of formal participation, finding that sport, in comparison to other forms of voluntary membership, actually has less of an effect on political participation. Nonetheless, the overall finding of the study, that people spending time together in voluntary associations generates social capital which results in higher levels of political participation, is highly relevant. Therefore, the rationale established in chapter one of this study on voluntary associations in South Africa is strengthened by the findings of Quintelier; while the fact that this quantitative study was carried out in Belgium increases the interest in conducting a similar study in the altogether different South African context.

Drawing closer attention to sports involvement as a voluntary association, Ørnulf Seippel (2008) details how sports membership in Norway represents the largest form of voluntary association and is thus a significant source of social capital in that country. From a quantitative and longitudinal analysis of three waves of survey data from Norway over a 20 year period, the study highlights how involvement in sports creates networks of interaction and affiliations which aid the generation of social capital, and by extension, civil society and democracy also (Seippel, 2008:69). Having analysed a large quantity of data over an extended period, the study also asserts the importance of cross-cutting memberships which create multiple networks of communication and involvement (Seippel, 2008:71). By comparing the links between various

voluntary associations with the aid of World Values Survey and European Social Survey data, the study was able to measure the number of voluntary associations joined and discuss what effect these multiple memberships, with particular focus upon sport, had on civil society (Seippel, 2008:74). Importantly, the study found that sports memberships in Norway are spaces in which a large amount of social capital is generated between members, however due to the introverted nature of sports as a form of voluntary association, sport did not generate as much “bridging” social capital with other associations (Seippel, 2008:78). Reaching these findings, Seippel’s article reinforces the strong relationship between sports and social capital, positioned in civil society; strengthening the theoretical foundations of this study; although the relevance of sport as a focal point of civil society networks is questioned. However, although this study provides a useful addition to the existing theory on social capital, voluntary associations, and sport, it remains somewhat limited by its strictly Norwegian context; supporting the rationale for further study.

2.2.3.) Studies on Sport in South Africa

It has been established in the previous chapter that sport has played a prominent role in South Africa, and as a result there is extensive literature in this field. Although research on voluntary associations in North America and some European studies have indicated that sports involvement is a weaker form of voluntary association in terms of encouraging political participation, the position of sport in South Africa is different as it has long held political meaning beyond that found in more homogenous Western states. At present, studies of the role of sport as a voluntary association under the umbrella of social capital theory in South Africa is limited to a small number of researchers (Keim, 2003; Burnett, 2006; Burnett, 2009). Nonetheless, this theory is valuable in providing the foundations for the study on the whole, as a detailed discussion of the role of sport in South Africa’s political economy and society in general provides the basis for further research in this field.

Connie Anderson (2004) has provided an overview and background of the role sport has played in South Africa, from the Apartheid era to the post-Apartheid context. From an anthropological perspective, sport has historically been a prominent source of identity in South Africa, as rugby, cricket, and soccer has played a role in shaping Afrikaans, English, and African identity respectively (Nauright, 1997:22). Rugby, in particular, was highly significant in the creation and maintenance of a nationalist Afrikaner identity during the 20th century (Grundlingh, 1994:430). In the post-Apartheid context, sport has been used as a vehicle to help forge a new unified national identity (Nauright, 1997:216). Additionally, research has been conducted on using sports programmes to initiate reconciliation in South Africa's divided society, with sports programmes having been utilised in community building and trust generation (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008:815). Having been, in some instances, a space for multiracialism during the Apartheid era as multi-ethnic soccer and cricket teams were formed in opposition to segregation in sport, it is unsurprising that sport be used as a tool for reconciliation since 1994 (Odendaal, 2003:257). Therefore, sports participation in South Africa has historically taken on political significance. Anderson (2004) establishes the position of sport as a political, and not merely social or recreational, space, while also detailing how sport has come to hold an elevated meaning to South Africans. Therefore, this research is of significance to the rationale of the study, as it establishes the position of sport as an effective vehicle for social capital in South African society. As a result, further justification for the exploration of the relationship between sport as a voluntary association as well as a political instrument and participation is provided.

In addition to sport's domestic socio-political impact in South Africa, sport has also impacted upon the country's political economy since 1994. In terms of the role of sport in shaping South Africa's political economy, Scarlett Cornelissen's (2008) research illustrates how sport, on a higher level, has impacted upon South Africa's domestic as well as international political processes. From a more economic and state-based perspective, this article indicates how the right to host the sporting mega-event of the 2010 FIFA World Cup was justified along the grounds of helping to address global inequality, injustice, and marginalisation in the global political economy vis-à-vis Africa. To pursue this line of thought further, it can be seen that sports have been used as a political tool in the form of an equaliser at the state level, shaping foreign policy,

illustrating how it may be used similarly at lower levels as a political space. This article establishes how influential sport in South Africa has been, in terms of the politics of reconciliation, symbolism, prestige, and social cohesion.

Marion Keim is one of the more prominent researchers to discuss the practical role of sport in South Africa on a grass-roots level. Historically, sport has proven to be a useful vehicle for promoting social inclusion among marginalised groups of people, encouraging further research of its value to South African society in this regard (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002:14). Keim's study empirically highlights how sport has been used in South Africa at the lowest levels as an instrument of reconciliation to counter marginalisation also. After Keim had unsuccessfully attempted to integrate black, white and coloured school children in the classroom the author noticed that in physical education the children began to naturally interact with one another at play, providing the starting point for her study (Keim, 2003:15). By creating the circumstances for increased interaction among South African minors in a sporting context by commencing pilot studies, this survey-based quantitative study opens up the possibility of these psychological benefits spreading to the broader South African society. Keim gathered survey data over an extended period from the students who attended the schools in which the study was carried out, while supporting her findings with qualitative research. The study found that sport, if used correctly, provides a valuable tool for integration and social transformation in South Africa, underlining its political as well as value (Keim, 2003:143). It should however be noted that most studies on sport in South Africa have focused upon the youth; prompting concerns over how data on youth participation can be transferred to the political. However, in South Africa, the "youth" is a category which extends to the age of 35 years. Keim's research further supports the position of sport in South Africa as a political space, making further research in this area possible. The fact that sport has thus been used in South Africa as a space for integration and interaction between different groupings reinforces the idea that sport, as a voluntary association, may create networks of trust and participation in South Africa. The justification for further research in this area is strengthened by the fact that Keim's study dates back to 2003 and is thus in need of an update.

Cora Burnett (2006) combines the theory on social capital, voluntary associations, and sports involvement in South Africa in order to describe its impact empirically through a study of a community club. With the support of a Non-Governmental Organisation, community clubs were established in small and underdeveloped Eastern Cape towns, as this study focused upon a single club which was established to support the development of sport in the community (Burnett, 2006:286). Combining case studies and questionnaires, the study sought to assess the impact of the community club and previous voluntary associations on the broader community (Burnett, 2006:288). Through the training of coaches and promotion of sports programmes, it was found that the community club helped to generate human capital by empowering the participants while also promoting volunteerism (Burnett, 2006:288).

On a social level, the study found that the young participants were more trusting of one another while avoiding the usage and sale of drugs or alcohol (Burnett, 2006:289). These benefits to the community ultimately resulted in the generation of social capital. Additionally, a comparison of questionnaire data gathered prior to the establishment of the sports club and after found that networks of trust and reciprocal engagement were significantly stronger than before, indicating that sports involvement in this community promoted “social engagement and cohesion” (Burnett, 2006:292). Linking the literature on social capital and sport to South African challenges, Burnett provides theory on how social capital in the form of sports involvement and other voluntary associations can have a noticeable impact upon South African communities, further supporting the notion that social capital theory might be applied in the South African context. In addition to Marion Keim’s research, this study illustrates how sport as a dimension of social capital has had a measurable impact upon South African communities and thus encourages additional research and generalisation of its findings. This study is useful in that it adds to the rather limited state of knowledge on voluntary associations in the South African context. However as in the case of previous research on the topic it does not make any assertions with regards to linking voluntary associations with political participation as studies on social capital in Western countries have done.

2.3.) Gaps in the Literature and Summary

In concluding this review it can be seen how these concepts, when combined, provide a thorough theoretical foundation for the study on voluntary associations and formal political participation. The state of knowledge on the topic is thus fairly extensive; however there is a distinct lack of very recent quantitative research and an even more pronounced shortage of studies conducted in the African or specifically South African context. At a glance, it can be seen that the majority of the social capital literature and studies on voluntary associations are concerned with North America and Europe, with few studies being conducted on the role social capital plays in Africa. Additionally, it may also be noted that most of the previous studies have favoured a quantitative methodology, further supporting the decision to use similar quantitative methods for this study. Having assessed this literature and previous studies on the broader topic it becomes clear that there are some prominent gaps in the literature that support the justification for further study. Studies by Keim (2003) and Burnett (2006) in South Africa have concurred with European and North American studies on the positive participatory impact of membership in voluntary associations, and specifically sports associations, on communities. Significantly, the majority of these studies have favoured the use of a quantitative research methodology, providing support for the decision to use similar quantitative methods for this study.

However, these studies are firstly somewhat dated and secondly no South African study has assessed the relationship between social capital and formal political participation, highlighting a prominent gap in the literature in this regard. Although previous quantitative studies have shown that membership in voluntary associations may increase formal political participation, no such study has been conducted in South Africa, prompting interest in analysing how this theory applies to the South African context in this regard. Likewise, the studies by Keim, Burnett, and Coalter have all indicated the positive effect sport has on the generation of social capital and participatory norms. However, none of these studies have quantitatively tested the hypothesis that participation in sports can be linked to formal participation in political processes.

These gaps in the literature are worth noting when considering the original rationale for the study. Given the nature of democracy in general, and the need for new democracies such as South Africa to consolidate and endure, the importance of formal participation in elections has been indicated. This is especially relevant in terms of granting the government legitimacy and the development of an engaged civil society. In terms of strengthening civil society and participation, increased social capital has been found to have a positive effect. Particularly, social trust generated by involvement in voluntary associations has been shown to increase levels of participation in political processes. Voluntary associations have thus come to represent a crucial form of social capital which serves to create and deepen social networks and trust.

While there is evidence of increased social capital and networking due to the aforementioned rise in social movements in South Africa, this has led to informal rather than formal forms of participation. These developments support the need for further study of the nature of social capital in South Africa in order to determine what dimensions, if any, encourage formal political participation. Although sports involvement as a voluntary association has had varied impacts upon political participation when compared to other forms of voluntary association, its unique role in South Africa's political economy and post-Apartheid development make it worth determining whether or not this form of voluntary association has a different impact upon participation in the South African context; generating interest in the outcome of the proposed null hypothesis. Having laid these foundations, it is now possible to progress with the more detailed methodology as well as the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the key variables that provide the basis for analysis.

Chapter Three: Research Design & Methodology

3.) Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to provide a summary of precisely how this study has been conducted. As a quantitative study, selecting the appropriate research design and methodology are particularly important in order to arrive at meaningful conclusions on the relationships between the variables. Therefore, precisely what the relevant variables are needs to be discussed before progressing with the study. Once these variables have been conceptualised and placed into context, they need to be operationalised in accordance with survey research. This chapter then discusses the quantitative methodology used in this study in more detail, providing the relevant hypotheses as well as detailing the manner in which statistical analysis was used for the purposes of the dissertation. Furthermore, the sources of the secondary data used for this study are discussed before detailing exactly how this data was used to generate valid findings. The chapter concludes with a review of what it achieved, having provided an adequate basis for commencement of the statistical analysis of the data.

3.1.) Quantitative and Deductive Research Design

As noted, the study employs a quantitative research methodology; attempting to answer the research question and test a null hypothesis through statistical analysis of secondary survey data provided by a reliable academic source. By making use of a single set of data, the study were cross-sectional, while employing the relevant statistical methodology and sampling techniques within the secondary survey data which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter in separate subsections. In addition to being a quantitative study, this research also used a deductive or top-down approach. Having commenced this study with a discussion of existing social capital theory, a research question and null hypotheses were posed in the introductory chapter. Following the deductive approach to study, this chapter details how the research question was answered and the hypotheses tested. Finally, the study concludes with either a confirmation or

rejection of the original theory as applied to the South African context. Before the statistical methodology can be discussed however, the research question needs to be elaborated upon, followed by a brief discussion of the null hypothesis which was used to test for the impact, if any, of the intervening variable on the dependent variable. This research question and the hypotheses have however been structured around the relationships between some key concepts which need to be discussed further.

3.1.1.) Key Concepts

The broader theoretical concept of social capital is relevant in so far as it provides the background theory upon which the assumptions going into this study are based. Within this theoretical framework lies the concept of membership in voluntary associations, which serves as the focus of this study and a key variable. Further, participation in sports as a form of voluntary association represents another key concept for this study. The theoretical background of political participation and its importance also support the rationale for this study, while the key concept of formal political participation provides the second variable to be measured against membership in voluntary associations when the study commences its bivariate analysis. The implied relationships between these variables can be elaborated on once again in the research question, hypotheses, and the accompanying diagram.

3.2.) Research Question and Hypotheses

The starting point for the study, as mentioned in the opening chapter, is the following research question:

- *“Is there a relationship between membership in voluntary associations and participation in formal political processes through the act of voting?”*

In this question, the independent variable is membership in voluntary associations while formal participation represents the dependent variable. The decision to arrange the variables in this way is based on the need to determine how social capital, in this regard, impacts upon the level of

formal political participation. As formal political participation is thus the factor that is expected to change, it is appropriate that it be designated the dependent variable accordingly. In addition to the research question, two sub-questions are also asked:

“Does sports participation as a form of voluntary association and measure of social capital have a positive relationship with formal political participation?”

The following hypothesis is used when approaching this sub-question:

- H^1 : *“Sports participation as a form of voluntary association and measure of social capital has a relationship with the level of formal political participation.”*

The second sub-question, derived from the social capital theory on cross-cutting, or multiple memberships, is as follows:

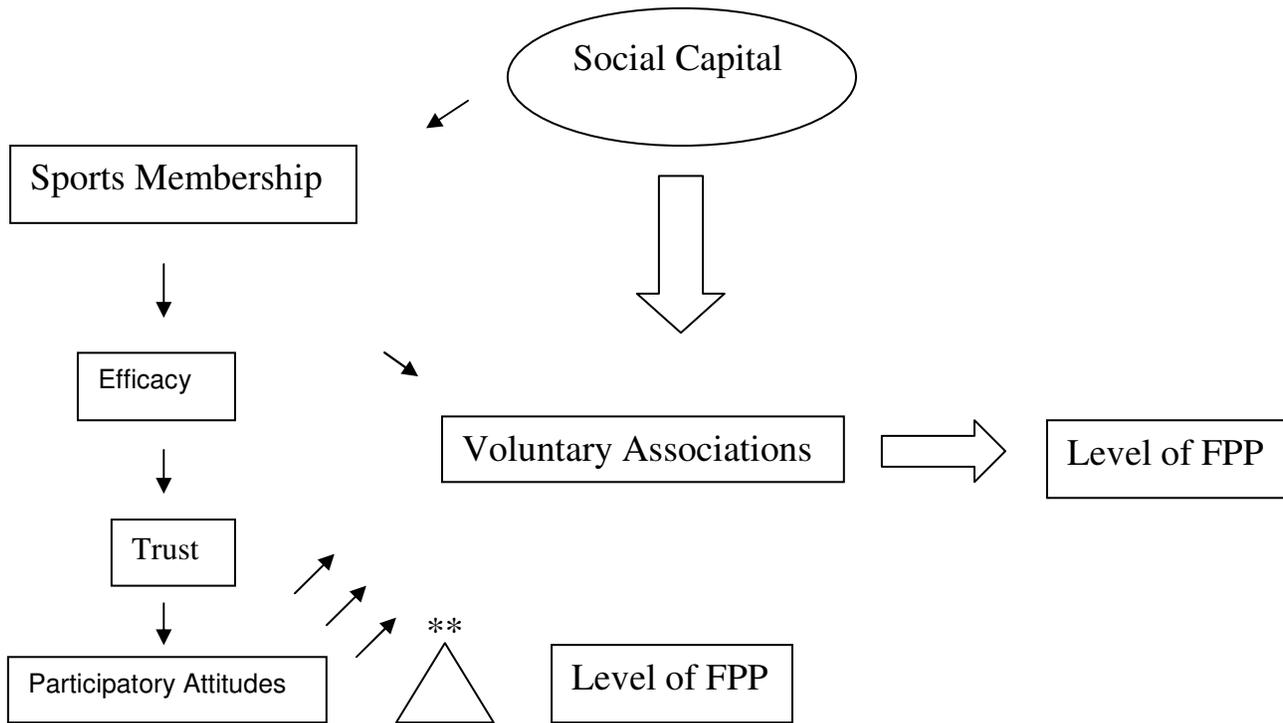
“Does the number of voluntary associations joined have an effect upon the level of formal political participation?”

For this question, it is hypothesised that:

- H^2 : *“The more voluntary associations an individual joins, the more likely he or she is to formally participate in political processes through active voting.”*

Figure 3.1 illustrates the implied relationship between the variables, with voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital having an implied positive relationship with the level of formal political participation. In figure 3.1, the aim of the null hypotheses as well as the key concepts, showing how the variable of membership in sports as a form of voluntary association has an impact, or no impact, on the level of formal political participation is shown.

Figure 3.1. Anticipated relationships between the variables.



*FPP = Formal Political Participation.

**△ = “Change in”.

3.2.1.) The Null Hypothesis

The use of a null hypothesis is ideal for testing the impact of an intervening variable after analysing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables contained in the research question. In order to determine if participation in sports as a form of voluntary association has any impact upon formal participation, distinct from the other forms of voluntary associations, the following null hypotheses (N1 and N2) are posed:

- N¹: “There is no relationship between membership in sports as a voluntary association and formally participating in South Africa’s political processes.”
- N²: “There is a relationship between membership in sports as a voluntary association and formally participating in South Africa’s political processes.”

3.3.) Conceptualisation of Key Variables

With the assistance of the established literature on the topic, it is possible to adequately conceptualise the relevant variables before progressing with the remainder of the study; meaning that it is necessary to clarify and analyse what these variables mean before investigating them (Mouton, 2002:109). The variables of membership in voluntary associations, formal political participation, and participation in sports was conceptualised accordingly.

3.3.1.) Membership in Voluntary Associations

Membership in voluntary associations may be conceptualised extensively with the support of existing literature. According to Putnam (1995:65), civic engagement is a critical part of social capital which is characterised by involvement in a wide range of voluntary associations which are set up independent of the state in order to meet their own secondary goals. Voluntary associations thus come in a number of forms, from religious bodies, labour unions, arts and cultural associations to sports and recreation, environmental, professional, consumer, charitable associations and political parties themselves (Letki, 2006:314). Levels of membership in voluntary associations vary greatly from country to country, be it due to a lack of a participatory culture or the availability of these associations (Letki, 2006:314).

Additionally, the form of voluntary association varies considerably from country to country, although on the whole liberal democracies or countries with a lasting democratic tradition tend to boast higher levels of voluntary association; supporting the notion that voluntary associations may be linked to the health of democracy (Curtis *et al.*, 2001:799). Veenstra (2002:553) describes the relationship between involvement in voluntary associations and the generation of trust which supports the generation of social capital and by extension a more participatory political culture. The relationship between involvement in voluntary associations and increased levels of trust is a reciprocal one, as more trusting individuals are more likely to join voluntary associations which in turn reinforce networks of social trust; to the benefit of participatory norms of collective action (Veenstra, 2002:554). Ultimately, it is established that the increased contacts

between different people within the umbrella of voluntary associations creates and reinforces networks of co-operation and civic involvement; networks which may in turn be used to organise collective action and raise the desire to participate politically (Veenstra, 2002:567).

By connecting the formerly isolated individual to broader networks of participation, membership in voluntary associations forms a key dimension of social capital (Teorell, 2003:50). Within the framework of voluntary associations, individuals learn the skills needed to become politically active citizens; as well as gaining a sense of efficacy, knowing that their input can have an effect on their surroundings (Teorell, 2003:62). Therefore, an environment is created in which political involvement is encouraged and promoted; creating a valuable participatory atmosphere (Teorell, 2003:62). Teorell's study also found that being involved in multiple voluntary associations increased the likelihood of political participation; stressing the need to have a number of cross-cutting memberships rather than being fully devoted to one or two associations (Teorell, 2003:62). Therefore, from the above it can be seen that the type of voluntary association and the number of associations a citizen is involved in will be reflected in the likelihood of their civic participation extending to political participation.

The idea that involvement in voluntary associations leads to greater political involvement is further explored by McFarland and Thomas (2006) who quantitatively studied the impact of voluntary associations on political participation in the United States, a country with a strong historic tradition of civic engagement. The authors showed how the skills used to participate formally and informally in political processes, or "political socialization", can be learned in the processes of voluntary associations, thus establishing their value in a democratic society where participation is a requirement (McFarland & Thomas, 2006:402). This is supported by the notion that individuals who are members of voluntary associations gain an increased feeling of self-efficacy or empowerment and reinforces the member's belief in their ability to impact their surroundings; although this varies depending on the nature of the association (McFarland & Thomas, 2006:403).

3.3.2.) Formal Political Participation

Formal political participation is not particularly difficult to conceptualise, as it can be simplified to a single basic requirement. Political participation in general can come in a number of forms, be it informally boycotting or protesting as a part of a broader social movement, or directly engaging with political representatives through the use of formal channels (Lijphart, 1997:1). In South Africa, the post-Apartheid socio-economic climate has brought about a rise in broader social movements which challenge the state through alternative channels such as mass protest rather than formally engage with it in traditional ways, illustrating how many South Africans have lost faith in electoral politics and seek to participate and challenge state power with civil society (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:405). Although much of this involvement is positive as an indication of the state being open to alternative forms of democratic engagement, many social movements protest without permission and lead to violence which undermines the state (Ballard *et al.*, 2006:406). Therefore, it is important that formal political participation is maintained as the new South Africa has the democratic institutions to support it. The most measurable form of formal participation is the act of voting itself, by directly participating in electoral politics as an eligible citizen (Lijphart, 1997:1). As a rational choice, voting is an option not all citizens exercise, as formal participation is often unequal as some sectors of society feel that their vote is able to have an influence while others may believe that voting is simply not worth their time (Lijphart, 1997:2).

Ultimately, the act of voting is clearly the basis of electoral politics; which cannot be carried out unless there is a certain level of formal participation in elections on the part of citizens. It has been indicated that the act of repeatedly voting, or formally participating, in consecutive free and fair elections reinforces the legitimacy of the state; ensuring that the state is able to exercise its power in accordance with its mandate (Lindberg, 2006:99). The mandate any government needs to govern, with legitimacy, is derived from the support it receives in elections (Gardner, 1990:213). Formal political participation is thus encouraged when citizens believe they are able affect political outcomes and have interpersonal as well as institutional trust, underscoring the importance of citizens developing this belief in the benefits of participating through networks of civic engagement (Diamond, 1999:206). Since elections require voting, formal political

participation is thus conceptualised as an eligible citizen choosing to cast their ballot in their local or national elections.

3.3.3.) Participation in Sports

As is the case with political participation, participation in sports can come in a number of forms, be it formal or informal. Sports participation may be conducted at amateur and professional levels, from playing in small groups to being more organised and formally playing as a member of a sports club. Sports may be played in the street or in a more formal capacity, for an amateur club or even on a professional level. However, as an example of a voluntary association, informal sports participation is difficult to quantify and it is therefore preferable to conceptualise participation in sports by membership with a sports club, while the number of people playing sport professionally is too small to sample. Sports clubs are often found under the broader umbrella of “community clubs” which provide an important platform for civic engagement in communities, allowing for individuals to participate in sporting activities and other areas of social capital generating involvement (Burnett, 2006:287). Since this study is quantitative and dependent upon survey data, and is concerned with involvement in voluntary associations and linking these with formal participation, participation in sports can thus be conceptualised by an individual being an active member of an existing amateur or non-paying, sports club.

3.4.) Operationalisation of Key Variables

Operationalisation entails detailing the techniques that were used to measure the relevant variables for the study; specifically through the use of a questionnaire from an existing survey (Mouton, 2002: 66). Before quantitative statistical analysis can be commenced, it is important to first detail precisely how and on what grounds each variable was measured; in order to explore the posited relationship these have with one another.

3.4.1.) Membership in Voluntary Associations

Due to the reliance on survey data in this study, membership in voluntary associations has been operationalised by providing a list of voluntary associations and asking participants in the questionnaire whether or not they were members of the given voluntary associations; and if they were, to distinguish between being active or inactive members. The holistic World Values Survey questionnaire thus accounted for a range of voluntary associations people may be members of, providing an appropriate indicator of membership in voluntary associations which may be measured and compared accordingly. A further variable was also developed by counting the number of voluntary associations the respondents were members of, in order to also test the theory on cross-cutting memberships. With regards to being a member of each of these voluntary associations, the question was asked as follows:

- *“Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?”*

The answers were coded as follows:

- *‘Active Member’, ‘Inactive Member’, and ‘Don’t Belong’.*

3.4.2.) Formal Political Participation

As mentioned in the conceptualisation section, a good indicator of formal political participation is voting directly in elections. The WVS questionnaire covered voting in the most recent elections as a barometer of political activity, thus providing a clear and easily measured indicator of the level of formal political participation in South Africa. The question was asked as follows:

- *“Did you vote in South Africa’s 2004 Elections to the National Parliament?”*

The answers were coded simply as follows:

- *“Yes,” or “No”.*

3.4.3.) Participation in Sports

Sports participation is measured under the same criteria as other voluntary associations, and is thus operationalised under the umbrella of voluntary associations with the same question. A straightforward yes or no answer is provided to determine whether or not there is a high level of sports participation; with the results in relation to formal participation to be tested against the other forms of voluntary association. The question was asked as follows:

- *“Could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of...[a] Sport or recreational organization?”*

The answers were coded as follows:

- *‘Active Member, Inactive Member’, and ‘Don’t Belong’.*

Using a limited conceptualisation of sports participation as membership in a club or recreational organisation, the above indicator of sports participation becomes relatively straightforward to test for.

3.5.) Data Sources and Data Collection

All data for this study is derived from the secondary source of survey data in the form of the World Values Survey (WVS). The Centre for International and Comparative Politics (CICP) at Stellenbosch University along with market research firm Markinor were tasked with distributing and administering the questionnaires used in the surveys in South Africa. Having drawn a probability sample, face-to-face interviews were conducted with respondents to ensure that the responses would be accurate and without misunderstandings or miscommunications. Once this data was collected according to established methodological and sampling guidelines it could be added to the WVS and be of use to researchers.

3.5.1.) The World Values Survey and Its Limitations

In terms of large scale data gathering, the World Values Survey is one of the most holistic, cross-nationally encompassing nearly 100 countries in five waves dating back from 1981 to an ongoing sixth wave in 2011-2012. Commissioned to assess cultural and political changes across an extended period of time in as many countries as possible, the WVS provides a thorough and general account of the prevailing attitudes in contemporary society. The WVS is very broad, covering a multitude of topics and questions; however the main foci of the survey are political and social attitudes, along with values regarding religion, family, economics, and leisure activities. This study made use of a single wave of WVS data from 2006, in order to provide an analysis of the position of voluntary associations in South Africa at this advanced stage of its post-Apartheid democratic development. WVS surveys have been conducted by eminent social scientists from a number of prominent research institutions, and data gathering is carried out by trained experts and the data is later re-checked for any errors; while standardised sampling techniques are used to ensure all-important uniformity. The data was gathered through the administration of face to face interviews with the participants, which in South Africa were conducted in the six largest official languages to ensure that there would be no misunderstanding. However, relying on WVS data alone creates certain limitations. Firstly, any errors which may have occurred during the original collection of data are unknown and thus could affect this study; although the WVS was administered carefully and professionally in order to limit the chances of error. Secondly, each of the consecutive surveys varies slightly, which poses some methodological problems which stress the need for a cautious approach to reaching final conclusions.

3.5.1.1.) Sampling

In any study, the sampling used is of great relevance to the overall strength of its findings. The sampling techniques employed determine the validity of the results of the data analysis, and it is thus critical that any survey use appropriate methods which will result in a high level of generalisation; or the ability to apply the answers of a relatively small group of people to the collective. The survey data employed a probability sample, in order to ensure that the sample

was drawn from persons with a random and equal opportunity to participate so that the findings could thus be generalised. Random sampling is ideal for ensuring greater generalisability of the overall findings. The sample was also a stratified one, dividing the relevant groups into strata from which a representative sample could be drawn from South African adults aged 16 years or more. In accordance with WVS methodology, the sample was fully profiled and placed under certain delimitations so as to ensure that any conclusions drawn from the sample would be accurate. In order to bring this about, the greater sample was divided into smaller homogenous and proportional sub-groups, while remaining representative of urban as well as rural population groups. Additionally, it was required that all participants live in residences, squatters included, although domestic workers and migrant labourers residing in hostels were excluded from the survey. In order to represent the universe, each sub-grouping in the sample was weighted statistically to bring about a less than 2% likelihood of error, with regards to representativeness, and 95% confidence level. Finally, the size of the sample (S) for the South African wave is weighted appropriately in order to be generalised.

- 2006 - 26968 Respondents.

3.5.1.2.) Cross-sectional Study with WVS Data

As mentioned previously, the study employed a cross-sectional strategy of inquiry with regards to the data analysis. Although a major attribute of WVS data is its longitudinal nature, previous data sets from 1995 and 2001 were either lacking some of the key variables relevant to this study or the questionnaires were coded differently rendering comparative analysis problematic if using these variables. In the case of the 1995 survey, some of the variables concerning political participation were not included; specifically formal political participation conceptualised as active voting. The 2001 survey, on the other hand, contained the variables necessary for this study; however the variables regarding membership in voluntary associations were coded differently from the 2005 wave, making combining the data derived from these two waves difficult.

3.5.2.) Other Surveys – Limitations

Beyond the World Values Survey, there are some other prominent surveys which, although potentially useful, are not ideal for the purposes of this study. The Afrobarometer surveys, assessing the attitudes of Africans by country towards their government and society, are a broad collection of surveys conducted in four waves dating back to the year 2000. Of particular interest in Afrobarometer surveys is the holistic study of political participation and the range of questions asked on the topic. However, the questionnaire lacks the focus on the other key variables pertaining to this study, namely sports participation as a form of voluntary association. Therefore, the Afrobarometer survey data cannot be used to test the intervening variable in the original research question, justifying the decision to make use of WVS data. Another highly regarded survey was conducted by the International Social Study Programme (ISSP), providing an in-depth assessment of the respondents' leisure time activities as well as their interest in politics. However, this survey is limited since it fails to make the distinction between interest in politics and formal political participation, further limiting its application. Due to the limitations of the Afrobarometer and ISSP surveys, the decision to use the WVS as a source of data is justified as it contains all of the variables relevant to this dissertation.

3.6.) Data Analysis

Having established how the data used in this study was collected, as well the merits of using WVS survey data over other data sets, it is necessary to elaborate on how this data is going to be used and with what tools it was analysed.

3.6.1.) Use of SPSS

This research made use of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), a computer program which is favoured by social scientists for quantitative research, for the most effective form of statistical analysis while using the appropriate methods to analyse the data. SPSS is useful since it provides graphic and tabular output for the data that is tested, making analysis

easier for researchers who do not have to conduct time consuming and error-prone calculation on their own. The software is invaluable in that it can be used to conduct multiple tests of correlation and significance in order to reassure researchers and their audience that their conclusions are meaningful. SPSS provided the basis for further analysis and conclusions in this study, as the hypotheses were tested through graphical output. That said, the accuracy of SPSS output is obviously dependent upon the quality of the data that is uploaded into the program as well as on the consistent methodology of the researcher. For this reason it is essential to detail precisely what statistical methods were employed when the WVS data was processed with SPSS.

3.6.2.) Statistical Methodology

Descriptive statistical methods were used in this study, as they are the most appropriate for assessing the relationship between sets of variables. Firstly, however, it is important to assess the measures of central tendency for determining the overall levels of political participation and membership in voluntary associations, in order to gain an overview of their positions in South African society. Therefore, as a starting point for the statistical analysis the frequencies of each of the variables were provided, in order to provide an overview for each of the variables alone.

As bivariate analysis, the variables of formal political participation, membership in voluntary associations and the number of voluntary associations joined for each wave of data were assessed through the usage of cross-tabulations. It is necessary however to measure how these variables may relate to one another by accounting for the measures of relationship with SPSS 19. This is done by measuring the level of correlation through the use of an Eta coefficient in order to determine whether the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and the level of formal political participation is a correlational one or not. Once this step was completed, the null hypothesis, or the implied lack of relationship between the independent variable of sports participation and the dependent variable of formal political participation, was tested through the use of an Eta and Eta-square test of effect size to ensure the accuracy of any assumptions regarding the output. Furthermore, an independent t test was conducted in order to test the null

hypothesis further with a thorough comparison of means. Additionally, the size of the effect for each of the variables and their relationship with the independent variable was also tested. Once these tests were conducted, it was possible to draw meaningful conclusions with regards to the original research question, sub-questions, and the null hypothesis also; as any relationships or correlations can be graphically displayed and analysed in some detail. Therefore, the manner in which the existing theory on social capital applied to these variables became clear.

3.7.) Conclusion

The technical framework for this study has thus been laid down in some detail. With a full conceptualisation and operationalisation, the relevant variables have been elaborated upon and how these variables were measured has been explained. Moving on from this background, the essential technical methodological characteristics of the study have also been detailed; establishing the research question as well as the null hypothesis was tested for the impact of the intervening variable of sports participation. The longitudinal strategy of inquiry to be used in this study has proven to be valuable in providing a thorough account of voluntary associations and formal political participation in a South Africa which appears to be favouring informal channels of participation; detailing any shifts which will need to be explained as the study draws to its conclusion. Through the use of statistical analysis with SPSS software, the study tested the relationships between the variables across in order to provide a picture of the recent position of membership in voluntary associations and the levels of formal political participation in South Africa. The next chapter will commence with the presentation of the data and measurement and will provide a graphical as well as textual representation of its findings which can be analysed and hopefully explained.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis & Discussion

4.) Introduction

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have established the theory behind the research and the methodology used in this and previous studies, making it possible to commence with the final data analysis to confirm or reject the hypotheses. In order to fully assess precisely how the existing theory on social capital and political participation applies to the South African context, in terms of these variables, a thorough analysis of the data needs to be carried out. The data analysis, completed with the aid of SPSS software, was conducted through the use of descriptive statistics in order for the findings to be presented graphically. This was done firstly through the use of cross-tabulations to display the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and the level of formal political participation. Having completed these steps, a comparison of means was then conducted in order to test the hypotheses. To commence the comparison of means, eta and eta squared tests were conducted to measure the strength of association and effect size of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables respectively. This step was taken for the variables of membership in voluntary associations and number of memberships vis-à-vis formal political participation.

Upon the completion of these early statistical tests it was found that the expectations of the original hypotheses regarding the positive impact of membership in voluntary associations, and multiple associations, would not be met as they did not appear to have a significant impact upon the level of formal political participation. Therefore, the nature of social capital's impact on South Africa could be discussed further. In order to assess the position of sport as a voluntary association, the same tests were then conducted again for the intervening variable of sports participation. Moving on from this preliminary comparison of means, the independent t test was carried out to compare the means between the variables, while the effect size was measured based upon the output of this test before the same procedure was repeated to test the intervening

variable of sports participation. Having graphically displayed the output of these tests, it was found that the theory on social capital, as elaborated upon by European and North American studies, does not apply to the South African context with regards to formal political participation, prompting further discussion over why this is the case.

4.1.) Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were firstly used to provide an overview in order to become familiar with the data. Before commencing more detailed and comprehensive statistical analysis, it is important to fully introduce the variables of membership in voluntary associations, the number of memberships joined, sports participation, and formal political participation and how they will be used in the data analysis. Additionally, some of the variables from the WVS data set needed to be transformed with the aid of SPSS in order to make them more applicable to this particular study. Transforming or recoding variables is commonly used by quantitative researchers who wish to make the data analysis more presentable and tailored for their study. However, in order to avoid any manipulation of the variables which significantly alter the output, a full and literature supported explanation of all of the recoding conducted needs to be provided. For descriptive purposes, and to ease analysis, the distinction between “inactive” member and “active” member was removed, essentially recoding the variables into those who said they were members of a voluntary association and those who said they were not a member. This was done since the distinction between active and inactive members was not made in the previous literature on voluntary associations. Another action taken to ease analysis was to recode the questions for “Did you vote in the 2004 Elections?” to “0” for “No” and “1” for “Yes”.

Before carrying out the recoding however, a more detailed discussion needs to be had on the reasons for recoding these variables in quantitative studies. The primary reason for recoding variables is to make the analysis easier and less confusing, as standardising all of the “yes” and “no” answers for each variable on the questionnaire into fixed values of “1” and “0” diminishes the chances of making an error during analysis (Huizingh, 2007:11). Transforming the data in

this way also allows for the removal of outliers which are not relevant to the study and can skew the final output, allowing the researcher to focus on the important aspects of the data (Field, 2009:153). Therefore, these changes were made in order to make the output more meaningful and relevant to the study, before providing a graphical introduction of the variables.

Having completed these steps, a brief overview of the frequencies of the variables was conducted in order to familiarise oneself with the data and the output it provides before analysing it in more detail. For the South African survey, 26968 respondents indicated whether or not they were a member of each of the nine listed voluntary associations, providing an overview of the level of membership in each association as is depicted in percentages by the following table which eases the rest of the analysis:

Table 4.1. Level of membership in voluntary associations.

<i>Voluntary Associations</i>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Religious	82.4%	17.6%
Sporting	35.5%	64.5%
Art/Music/Educational	27.1%	72.9%
Labour Union	19.6%	80.4%
Political Party	35.2%	64.8%
Environmental	19.7%	80.3%
Prof. Association	17.7%	82.3%
Charity	19.1%	80.9%
Consumer	17.5%	82.5%

From the above it is clear that by far the largest form of voluntary association is that of religion, with sport and political associations coming a distant second and third respectively. This finding is in accordance with the expectations of the literature, as in the North American context religious associations represented the largest form of voluntary association also (Putnam, 1995:68). Membership in sporting and political associations is also illustrated to be relatively high, although these two associations have disparate objectives. Another observation that may be made is that the level of membership in voluntary associations in South Africa beyond religious groups is generally low, also echoing the decline in membership in voluntary associations which is evident in other countries. For the other main variable relevant to this study, that of formal political participation, the output was as follows:

Table 4.2. Political participation.

<u>Formal Political Participation</u>	<u>Voted</u>
Yes	68.5%
No	31.5%

Therefore, among respondents to the South African wave of the 2006 World Values Survey, the level of formal political participation was generally high, with 68.5% of respondents saying that they had voted in the 2004 elections and only 31.5% declaring that they had declined to vote. It is worth noting however that 249 respondents refused to answer the question, while 29 didn't know whether or not they had voted in the election. Cumulatively, these two categories amount to 1% of the total respondents and since their responses are of no use to the study, in addition to being statistically insignificant, these outliers as mentioned above have been removed from the output. Finally, it was also necessary to measure the level of membership in voluntary associations as a whole. Since the original research question concerned membership in voluntary associations, it was necessary to recode and collapse all of the different voluntary associations into a single scale variable entitled "Voluntary Associations". The following table displays the percentages for the level of membership:

Table 4.3. Membership in voluntary associations.

Membership in Voluntary Associations:	
Yes	89.3%
No	10.7%

Therefore, it could be seen that, along with the level of formal political participation, the level of membership in voluntary associations in South Africa is on the whole high, however it still needed to be established whether or not these variables were linked; and if so, to what degree.

4.1.1.) Membership in Voluntary Associations and Formal Political Participation

While the frequencies for the variables were provided in order to become more familiar with the data, the relationship between the variables needed to be assessed according to the objectives of the study. To assess the relationship between these variables, the recoded variable of “Voluntary Associations” was placed into a crosstabulation against the variable of “Voted” in order to preliminarily assess the relationship between these two variables with descriptive statistics. The crosstabulation provided an overview of the relationship as follows:

Table 4.4. Membership in voluntary associations and voting.

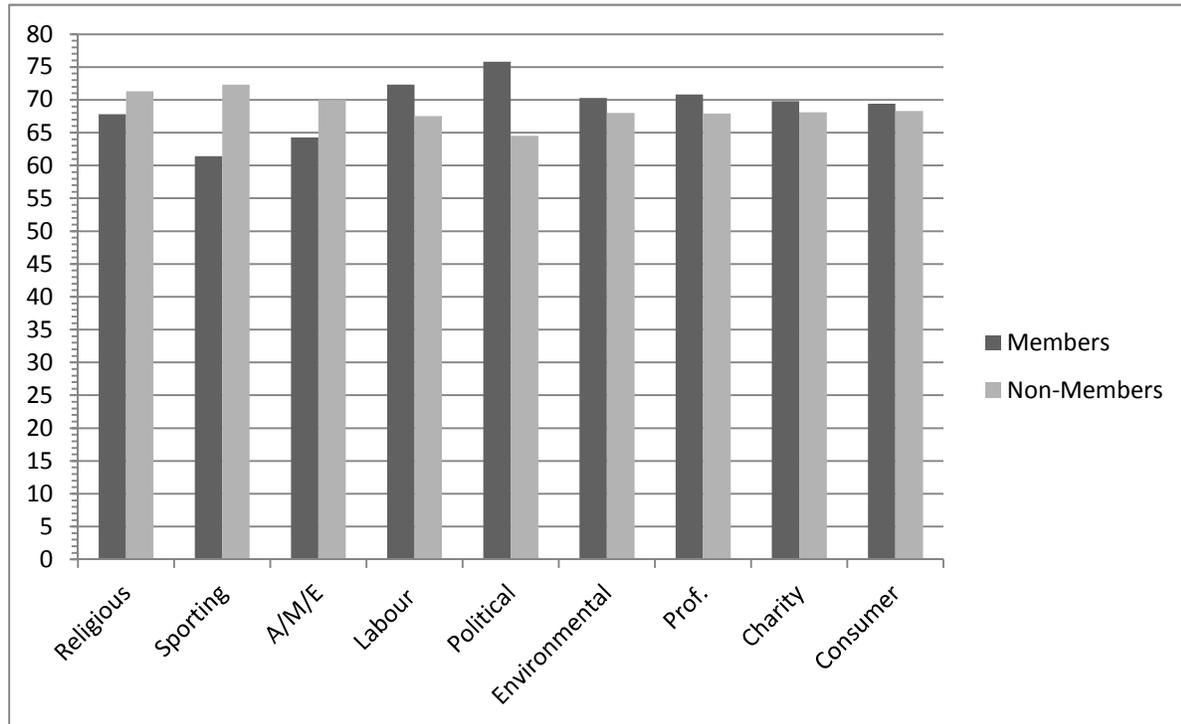
		<u>Members of Voluntary Associations</u>		Total
		No	Yes	
<u>Voted?</u>	No	757 26.4%	7664 32.2%	8421 31.5%
	Yes	2106 73.6%	16171 67.8%	18277 68.5%
Total:		2863 100.0%	23835 100.0%	26698 100.0%

The percentage of those who voted and did not vote among members and non-members of voluntary associations did not appear to vary significantly. In fact, from the above table, it seemed that the level of formal political participation actually dropped slightly from non-members to members of voluntary associations. This goes against the expectations of the study, as previous studies by Putnam (1995), Teorell (2003), McFarland & Thomas (2006) and others had indicated that membership in voluntary associations does indeed influence the level of political participation. Therefore, at this stage of the study it seemed that the existing theory did not apply to the South African context to the same degree that it did in the European or North American contexts.

There are many possible explanations for the impression that the theory does not apply as expected to the South African context. These explanations range from the nature of South Africa's civil society and level of democratisation compared to these countries, to South Africa's heterogeneous society as opposed to the more homogenous societies in which the previous studies were conducted. However, although the various voluntary associations had been grouped together to ease analysis, it was also necessary to ascertain whether or not the level of formal political participation varied across the different voluntary associations. This step was taken as the existing theory had indicated, as expected, that different voluntary associations have a varied impact upon the level of political participation.

Both Quintelier (2008) and McFarland & Thomas (2006) had posited that different forms of voluntary association have different impacts upon the level of formal political participation, however it needed to be determined empirically whether or not this was the case in the South African context. To this end, a graph (Figure 4.1.) was created which indicated that with different types of voluntary associations the level of formal political participation varied considerably, conforming with the expectations of previous literature. Figure 4.1. also provided an initial graphical representation of the relationship between membership in voluntary associations conceptualised by active membership and formal political participation conceptualised as active voting.

Figure 4.1. Percentage voted among active members and inactive and non-members of voluntary associations.



The above figure was created to provide a visual overview of how the different forms of voluntary associations impact upon the level of formal political participation. With the aid of this table, the expectations of the remaining statistical analysis have been grounded. It has thus become clear that the different forms of voluntary associations do indeed have a varying impact upon the level of formal political participation. Significantly, previous studies had indicated that religious associations had the most profound impact on informal as well as formal political participation due to its status as an “instrumental” association with objectives which lie “outside of the group” (Quintelier, 2008:358). Sporting associations in South Africa, on the other hand, appear to conform to the expectations of the previous literature on voluntary associations and political participation as the level of formal political participation among members is noticeably lower due to the status of sport as an “expressive” association with internal objectives (Quintelier, 2008:358).

Therefore, at this early stage of the data analysis, it would appear that the existing theory on membership in voluntary associations and political participation only applies in a limited capacity to the South African context. However, these findings did not take into account the existing theory on the importance of cross-cutting memberships; namely the assertion that the more voluntary memberships an individual has, the better (Teorell, 2003:49). Past studies had established that the level of political participation is directly influenced by the number of memberships joined, rather than by being a member of a single voluntary association. In terms of the overall rationale of the study, it was necessary to apply this theory to the South African context through quantitative analysis. However, the number of memberships joined was not a variable listed on the WVS data set, requiring some further recoding in SPSS before any statistical analysis could be conducted. Therefore, in order to assess the impact of multiple memberships on the level of formal political participation, it was necessary to group and recode the variables according to the number of voluntary associations the respondents were members of. Having recoded the variables accordingly, the following table simply illustrates how many groupings the respondents were members of, if any, again making the data easier to analyse when its distribution is graphically displayed:

Table 4.5. Number of memberships.

<u>No. of Memberships</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
None	2912	10.8
1-2	14882	55.2
3-4	3916	14.5
5-7	1998	7.4
8-9	3260	12.1
Total	26968	100.0

At a glance, the majority of the respondents were active members of one to two voluntary associations while 2912, or 10.8% were not members of any voluntary associations at all. Therefore, it is clear that most South Africans are a member of at least one voluntary association while a significant number of the respondents are members of more than one association. Having established that over 80% of the respondents were members of one or more voluntary

associations, the impact of these cross-cutting memberships on the level of formal political participation needed to be assessed in order begin answering the research sub-question on whether or not being a member of multiple voluntary associations may result in a higher level of formal political participation in the South African context. To this end, a cross-tabulation was created to graphically display how the level of formal political participation varied depending upon the number of voluntary associations the respondents were members of. Since explaining these findings textually would be complicated and lengthy, the following cross-tabulation was created to ease analysis and depict this relationship by focusing on the column percentages:

Table 4.6. Cross-cutting memberships and formal political participation.

	Number of Memberships Joined					Total:
	None	1-2	3-4	5-7	8-9	
<u>Voted?</u> No	757	4796	1371	537	960	8421
	26.4%	32.4%	35.2%	28.1%	29.6%	31.5%
Yes	2106	9989	2527	1373	2282	18277
	73.6%	67.6%	64.8%	71.9%	70.4%	68.5%
Total:	2863	14785	3898	1910	3242	26698
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A preliminary assessment of this data also does little to confirm the theory that the more voluntary associations an individual is a member of, the more likely he or she is to participate in politics. This is illustrated in the above table, as the level of formal political participation does not rise noticeably with the number of memberships making it difficult to identify a trend. Therefore, preliminary analysis of the data with the aid of descriptive statistics has indicated that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of membership in voluntary associations and the level of formal political participation respectively is relatively weak. This is of particular interest as it goes against the expectations of the hypotheses and original theory as established by previous studies, as North American survey data for example had found that multiple memberships has a direct and positive impact upon the level of formal political

participation (McFarland & Thomas, 2006:420). Nonetheless, it was necessary to empirically test the statistical significance of this output through a comparison of means in order to characterise the relationship, or lack thereof, in more certain terms.

4.2.) Comparing Means

To discuss the relationship between the all the variables with more confidence requires a thorough comparison of the means, or averages for each variable. This was conducted through rigorous statistical testing in order arrive at any meaningful conclusions. Before carrying out this analysis however, it was necessary to provide an overview of the means for the relevant variables in the study. Starting with the number of voluntary associations and the level of formal political participation, the means were 2.73 and 0.68 respectively. 2.73 represented the average number of voluntary associations joined and 0.68 represented the average between 0 and 1 with 0 coded as “did not vote” and 1 as “voted”.

Furthermore, the output for the mean number of voluntary associations yielded a relatively high standard deviation of 2.69, indicating a fairly wide dispersion of memberships, while the mean for formal political participation had a low level of standard deviation at 0.464. indicating that the data remained close to the mean with minimal distribution (Field, 2009:39). These results are unsurprising considering the number of voluntary associations respondents may have joined compared to the two possible responses of “voted” or “did not vote” for the dependent variable. With regards to the intervening variable of sports participation, the mean was 0.35, reinforcing the findings that sports participation alone is not particularly common as most of the respondents were members of other voluntary associations. Having acquired and briefly discussed these means, it was possible to draw up a comparison of means and analyse the findings through the use of eta, eta squared, and independent t tests.

4.2.1.) Strength of Association and Variance

Although the descriptive statistics had provided a preview of the findings gleaned from the data, more precise statistical tests needed to be conducted in order to gain the confidence to analyse the findings with more statistical certainty. The first test that needed to be conducted was the *Eta test*, designed to measure the “degree of association” between the independent and dependent variables used in a study (Huizingh, 2007:264). With the aid of SPSS 19 the strength of association between the independent variables of membership in voluntary associations and the number of memberships joined, and the dependent variable of formal political participation was measured. With the same variables, the second test of *Eta squared* was also conducted in order to measure the level of variance in the effect size of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Field, 2009:389). It should be noted that effect size simply means the magnitude of any observed effect, which determines how meaningful any apparent relationships between the variables really are (Field, 2009:56). As a result, it is possible to ascertain whether or not any findings regarding the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation represent a significant proportion of the overall sample. With this empirical backing the nature of the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation may be understood with more statistical support and clarity.

4.2.1.1.) Membership in Voluntary Associations

Through the use of the aforementioned eta and eta squared tests, the strength of association and variance between the independent variable of membership in voluntary associations, as a dimension of social capital, and the dependent variable of formal political participation was measured. The output for these tests resulted in scores of .038 and .001 respectively. For the eta, the coefficient of .038 indicated a weak level of association and a very small effect size also. Nonetheless, the relationship was still statistically significant despite being relatively weak. This data seems to confirm, to an extent, the hypothesis that membership in voluntary associations may impact upon the level of formal political participation, however this impact appears to be marginal. At this stage of the analysis it appeared that the theory on social capital and participation did not apply to the South African context in the same way that it did to the North

American and European contexts in the previous studies by Quintelier (2008), Teorell (2003), Veenstra (2002) and McFarland & Thomas (2006). The reasons for this may be traced to the prominent differences in South Africa's political culture, level of democratisation and nature of civil society compared to the countries in which the previous studies were conducted. The differences between the South Africa's socio-political climate and that of the United States and Scandinavian countries are many, and these may be used to explain why the theory does not apply to South Africa in the same way.

4.2.1.2.) Number of Memberships Joined

For the scale variable of number of memberships in voluntary associations, the eta coefficient was a moderate to high .091 while the eta squared score was rather low at .008. This eta score indicates a moderate level of association between the number of voluntary memberships joined and the level of formal political participation. Meanwhile, the percentage of variance in effect size as measured by the eta squared test indicated that although there was an effect, it was very small. Existing literature had suggested that the more voluntary associations an individual joins, the greater the level of trust and ultimately social capital (Veenstra, 2002:553). With this knowledge in mind, it is expected that membership in more than one form of voluntary association would make the respondent more likely to participate as networks, trust, and participatory values are reinforced by joining more associations.

However, the output of the data indicates that the expectation of existing theory on cross-cutting memberships increasing the level of participation does not apply to the South African context to the same extent. However, the presence of a moderately strong association between the variables of membership in multiple voluntary associations and formal political participation indicates that the theory on cross-cutting memberships does apply in some degree to the South African context. Nonetheless, the size of the effect remained very small, indicating that membership in voluntary associations only influenced the level of formal political participation for a very small percentage of respondents.

4.2.1.3.) Testing the Intervening Variable of Sports Participation

Having tested the measures of association for the main variables of the study, it is worth determining whether or not the intervening variable of sports participation will yield significantly different output. Answering the original research sub-question and assessing the hypothesis that the political value of sport in South Africa would result in a noticeably different output in comparison to the other forms of voluntary association thus required further statistical testing. Comparing sports participation and the dependent variable of formal political participation, the eta coefficient was .113 while the eta squared, for effect size, measured .003. The strength of association between sports participation and formal political participation was thus moderate to strong, while the size of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable remained as a low level as the effect accounted for a small percentage of the variance between the variables. Although the relationship is more prominent, the descriptive statistics determined that it was a negative rather than positive one, which also went against the earlier expectations of the study. The explanatory reasons for these findings may be found in the nature of sport as a form of voluntary association. While it was theorised that the participatory values, efficacy, and trust generated by sports participation may result in increased political participation, it is possible that the inwardly focused nature of sports participation has reduced its impact as a variable which influences political participation (Quintelier, 2008:358). Although research by Coalter (2008), Keim (2003) and Burnett (2006) have indicated that sports participation may have a pronounced societal impact, this data seems to indicate that this impact does not formally extend to the political. However, before these findings may be discussed further, they needed to be reinforced through further statistical analysis.

4.2.2.) Difference in Means and Effect Size

The eta and eta squared tests were of use to the study in that they provided an indication of how the variables impacted upon one another. To deepen this analysis however, it is worth comparing the means of the variables, instead of the variables themselves, to determine whether the differences in mean scores for the variables is statistically significant. To this end, a t-test was carried out in order to determine how significant the differences between the means are, and thus

forms a critical part of this quantitative study (Field, 2009:795). For these variables, an independent t test was chosen in order to establish whether the means for membership in voluntary associations, the number of memberships joined, and for the intervening variable of sports participation differed noticeably through a measure of significance, P (Field, 2009:787). An additional step was also taken in this regard to measure the effect size, known as R, of the differences gleaned from the independent t test through the use of a formula commonly used to calculate effect size after a t test¹.

4.2.2.1.) Membership in Voluntary Associations

Having established that membership in voluntary associations does have an impact on the level of formal political participation, the independent t test was conducted to determine whether or not the difference in the means for these two variables was statistically significant. Within the confines of the t-test, significance, or P, is measured on either side of the value .05; where P's value is less than .05 the differences between the means are significant, while if P is greater than .05 the differences are insignificant (Field, 2009:332). For the means of membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, P equalled .000, indicating that the differences were highly significant. However, although these differences may have been significant in and of themselves, the size of the effect was small, at 0.10, essentially accounting for 1% of the total variance. These findings reinforced those discussed earlier in the chapter, confirming that, in South Africa at least, being a member of a voluntary association has almost no impact upon the respondent's decision to vote or not. By testing the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, it was found that there was only a very weak relationship between these variables at an almost negligible effect size. Having conducted a number of statistical tests on the variables as well as their means it could be said with confidence that although there is a relationship, statistically, it is not strong or broad enough to confirm the theory that members of voluntary associations are more likely to vote than those who are not members.

¹ The formula, as detailed in Andy Field's "Discovering Statistics Using SPSS" (2007) is as follows: $r = \sqrt{\frac{t^2}{(t^2 + df)}}$

The discovery that membership in voluntary associations has almost no noticeable impact upon the level of formal political participation in South Africa may be explained by the differences between South Africa and the so-called “first world”. South Africa’s status as being a multi-cultural and relatively recent third wave democracy sets it apart from the established and economically homogenous Northern democracies such as Sweden, Norway, and the United States in which some prominent social capital studies have been conducted (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005:178). High levels of development, modernisation, and liberal values are a requirement for a fully functioning liberal democracy, and the highly unequal South African society does not meet these criteria (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005:272). Inequality notwithstanding, there are indications that South Africans in general lack a strong democratic political culture, deeming regular voting to be a fairly unimportant part of their duties as citizens (Mattes, 2008:129).

Therefore, it is clear that South Africa’s democracy and society in general share little in common with highly developed Western societies discussed in the literature. The fact that previous studies had been conducted in a different environment had supported the rationale for conducting this study in the South African context while also helping to explain some of the findings. These explanatory factors may have all contributed to the findings that membership in voluntary associations does not appear to increase the level of formal political participation in South Africa. Considering these findings, it was then decided to test the theory on multiple, or cross-cutting memberships with the same statistical methodology.

4.2.2.2.) Number of Memberships Joined

The differences in means for membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation were found to be significant, and in the case of cross-cutting memberships, the relationship was also significant. Recoded so as to make the variable for the number of memberships joined dichotomous, the independent t test was carried out once again. Since P equalled .000, a number less than .05, it was clear that between the means of the two variables

the differences were highly significant (Field, 2007:340). The size of the effect however, was very small, numbering .091. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the number of memberships in voluntary associations does not have an impact upon the level of formal political participation could not be confirmed as the relationship was found to be both significant, albeit very small in size, despite the expectations to the contrary.

Studies by Putnam (1995), Teorell (2003), Zmerli & Newton (2008), Newton (1997) and many others have purported and confirmed the theory that membership in multiple voluntary associations, or cross-cutting memberships, generate social capital which may increase the level of formal political participation as networks of communication, participation and trust are broadened. However, the findings of this study in the South African context did not support this theory at all. Comparing the variables of the number of memberships joined and formal political participation the level of participation did not increase at all when the number of memberships increased. This was confirmed firstly by descriptive statistics and then reinforced by the comparison of means which indicated an extremely weak measure of association between the variables and an effect size of zero; indicating that there was essentially no effect at all. Therefore, it could be conclusively stated that there is no relationship between the number of voluntary associations joined and the level of formal political participation in South Africa.

The possible explanations for this output are similar to those for the variable of membership in voluntary associations. Furthermore, research by Ballard et al. (2006) has indicated that South Africa has witnessed an increase in informal channels of participation, which may support the theory that while cross-cutting memberships and networks may increase the level of participation, this is limited to mobilising informal forms of political participation. This hypothesis is in accordance with the notion that although joining multiple voluntary associations helps to create and support networks of interaction, this networking encourages the usage of informal rather than formal channels of participation (Teorell, 2003:52). If this is the case, then the existing social capital theory may apply to the South African context, only to differ on the forms of participation encouraged by multiple memberships given the nature of South Africa's

civil society. Therefore, the prevalence of informal participation in South African society may explain why this dimension of social capital has had no impact upon formal political participation in South Africa. With this in mind, social capital theory may be adapted when applied to South Africa in order to account for the largely informal nature of the country's civil society and its relative lack of democratic development. Although research by Putnam (1993) may have indicated that social capital increases institutional performance, in the South African context where these institutions are newer and consequently weaker the impact of social capital will vary accordingly.

4.2.2.3.) Testing the Intervening Variable of Sports Participation

Once the independent t tests were conducted and the effect size measured for the independent and dependent variables in the study, the same process was repeated in order to confirm or reject the null hypothesis with regards to the intervening variable of sports participation. For sports participation, P numbered at .000, meaning that the difference between the means was highly significant. However, although the findings were significant, the effect size remained small, at 0.133, accounting for roughly 1.3% of the total variance. Although the effect was small, it still represents a substantive finding. Therefore, the null hypothesis that membership in sports as a form of voluntary association has no impact upon the level of formal political participation is rejected. The study sought to determine whether sport had a positive or potentially different impact from the other forms of voluntary associations, and this was done by testing sports participation as an intervening variable. An overview of the data with descriptive statistics found that the respondents who classified themselves as a part of sporting organisations actually had a lower level of formal political participation than those who were not members. This was then confirmed by the output which indicated that the relationship between the variables was significant and strong, although the size of the effect remained relatively small. Consequently, it was clear that sport as a form of voluntary association had a negative effect on the level of formal political participation, and that these findings were statistically sound.

Although sports participation seemed to have a significant negative impact upon the level of formal political participation, the size of the effect remained very small, making it difficult to make any strong theoretical assertions regarding sports participation's apparent negative impact upon formal political participation. Nonetheless, possible explanations for this should still be discussed. Sports participation as a form of voluntary association may remain too detached from the political, despite the earlier expectations to the contrary, to influence formal political participation. Significantly, sporting associations tend to have no external focus or objectives, making them essentially introverted associations which are thus less likely to promote formal political participation despite the expectation that sport would play a different role in South Africa in this regard (Seippel, 2008:78).

Although sports participation has been proven to generate social capital in South Africa by Keim and Burnett, this social capital does not appear in turn to promote formal political participation. However, while sports participation alone may not increase the level of formal political participation, European studies have found that the positive impact of sports participation is magnified when combined with another form of voluntary association (Quintelier, 2008:358). As in the case of the other variables, it is also possible that sports participation lends itself to more informal areas of participation, providing the opportunities for networking and participatory values which simply do not extend to the formal. An alternative explanation could be that participation in sports may be seen as a more satisfying outlet than participation in other areas, as the participatory values reinforced in this space are not applied to political areas. However given the findings of the study, discussions surrounding the relationship between sport and political participation remain highly speculative at this stage, prompting the need for further study in this field.

4.3.) Assessing Political Participation in South Africa

Ultimately, if social capital theory, with a specific focus upon voluntary associations, does not appear to have a measurable impact on formal political participation in the South African context, these findings warrant a brief discuss of what variables actually do influence formal

political participation. An assessment of Afrobarometer survey data found that South Africa's political culture is not conducive to high levels of formal participation and engagement with government as most South Africans do not believe that they have a duty to vote with the majority of respondents also believing that their vote would have little to no impact upon the status quo (Mattes, 2008:129). Significantly, South Africa ranked in the bottom third of all Afrobarometer countries for believing in the merits of formal political participation (Mattes, 2008:130). The study did however find that South Africans who were poor or living in rural areas were more likely to formally participate than those who were not, while the respondents of the Afrobarometer survey who were members of certain voluntary associations were found to be more likely to informally participate through protest or boycott action (Mattes, 2008:134). Therefore, as an explanatory factor, membership in voluntary associations in South Africa appears to indeed generate networks of trust, promote self-efficacy and participatory values in accordance with the expectations of social capital theory. However, due to the differences in South Africa's somewhat unique political culture in which the majority of the population lack a tradition of formal engagement with government due to prohibitive Apartheid legislation, the output of this social capital appears to be directed towards informal channels of participation. If political decisions in South Africa may become less centralised as local government becomes more sensitive to the needs of its community, then the prospects of increasing the level of formal political participation will improve significantly (Mattes, 2008:138). Therefore, if South Africa's political culture develops accordingly the role played by social capital in promoting and mobilising different forms of participation may ultimately shift to one of encouraging formal political participation.

4.4.) Conclusion

To conclude, upon detailed statistical analysis of the World Values Survey data from 2006, the findings went against the expectations of the original hypotheses, indicating that the established theory on social capital may not apply to South Africa in the same way that it does to the European or North American contexts. Although these hypotheses were grounded in theory derived from previous studies, the fact that this theory does not apply to South Africa in the same way is not altogether surprising, due to the many differences between South Africa's socio-

political context and that of Europe and North America. Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview as well as a graphical representation of the data. From the crosstabulations and other graphical representations of the data it became apparent that the findings were unlikely to conform to the expectations laid down in the chapter one hypotheses. However, according to survey methodology, it was necessary to conduct rigorous statistical testing through a comparison of means. After introducing the means for all of the key variables, the measure of association and variance between the independent and dependent variables was determined through the use of eta and eta squared tests, with the measures of association and effect size remaining weak and generally very small across the variables, with the exception of sports participation.

Interestingly, instead of having a positive impact upon the level of formal political participation, memberships in sports appeared to have the opposite effect, which may be due to the fact that sport represents an introverted form of voluntary association which is not created to change the status quo (Seippel, 2008:72). In order to further reinforce these findings, an independent t test was conducted for each of the independent and intervening variables against the dependent variable of formal political participation, thereby establishing whether or not the differences between the means for these variables were significant. The effect size was also measured by solving for R through the use of an equation which relied upon the output of the independent t tests. The t tests and subsequent equations determined that membership in voluntary associations had a minimal impact upon the level of formal political participation, while multiple memberships appeared to have no impact at all, with sports participation as an intervening variable having a very different relationship from what was expected; although the magnitude of these impacts remained small across the board. Ultimately, the statistical analysis conducted with the aid of SPSS for this study have provided a number of findings which, although somewhat unexpected, established the basis for further discussions and possible explanations as to why the data yielded these results. Therefore, having concluded the statistical analysis, the final chapter of this dissertation will introduce these discussions of the findings as well as provide recommendations for further study before bringing the dissertation to a close.

Chapter Five: Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

5.) Introduction

This study commenced with a number of expectations with regards to the political value of social capital to South Africa. Grounded in social capital theory, generated and established outside of Africa, this study sought to apply this theory to the South African context through deductive and quantitative research methods. These methods were used to assess the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation with the aid of WVS data. While conducting the data analysis process, some unexpected findings were reached. These findings were somewhat unexpected when considering the original hypotheses investigated, although they have accorded the opportunity for further discussion and analysis of the nature of social capital theory and how it applies to the South African context. Therefore, this final chapter shall conclude the study by revisiting the background, aims, and context of the study before discussing the main findings and their implications. Having discussed the findings generated by the chapter 4 data analysis, this chapter will briefly attempt to provide an explanation for why the data yielded these results. In bringing this study to a close and, in light of the analysis of the data, this chapter shall then provide some recommendations for areas of further study before reaching its final conclusion regarding the application of existing social capital theory to these variables.

5.1.) Background, Aims and Context of the Study

This study on social capital and political participation in South Africa sought to find an answer to the following research question: “Is there a relationship between membership in voluntary associations and participation in formal political processes through the act of voting?” This question was derived from preliminary investigations into the role social capital has played internationally before turning the focus of the study to South Africa. From a review of the literature on social capital, it was determined that voluntary associations represented a major dimension of social capital which has had an impact upon the political. Studies by Coleman

(1988), Putnam (1993; 1995), Zmerli & Newton (2008), Uslaner (1999), Veenstra (2002), Teorell (2003), McFarland & Thomas (2006), Passey & Lyons (2005), Quintelier (2008), and Seippel (2008), among others, had indicated that social capital, and specifically membership in voluntary associations, has had quantifiable impact upon a number of aspects of society. Having established the role played by social capital in the European and North American contexts, as well as its social role in South African communities, this study sought to improve the state of knowledge on social capital in South Africa by applying quantitative methods to answer the research question. With specific focus upon membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, conceptualised as active voting, the study explored the relationship between these two concepts in the South African context. Furthermore, due to the implied political value of sport as a form of voluntary association, the same methodology was applied to the variables of sports participation and formal political participation. Ultimately, the study's background lay in social capital theory, with the main aim of assessing how this theory applied to the South African context. With this in mind, the data analysis conducted in order to answer the research question yielded somewhat unexpected results.

5.2.) Main Findings and Implications

By subjecting the variables to a number of statistical tests with SPSS, this study reached its findings and depicted them graphically for each of the independent and dependent variables assessed. Based on the original hypotheses, these variables were membership in voluntary associations, number of voluntary associations joined, sports participation, and formal political participation respectively. The variables themselves were first assessed, before comparing them with one another. After completing this step, the means of the variables were also compared in order to provide further statistical support for any findings. The findings were varied for each of the three independent variables tested. For the main independent variable of membership in voluntary associations, the topic of the research question, it was found that it did have an impact upon the level of formal political participation, however the size of this effect was very small. Essentially, although the variables were related, this association did not account for a large enough portion of the sample to be particularly meaningful. Therefore, although membership in

voluntary associations significantly influenced the level of formal political participation in previous studies, this was not the case here. Having reached this conclusion, the same methodology was followed to answer the sub-question grounded in the social capital theory on cross-cutting or multiple memberships. Although there was a relationship, however small, to be found between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, this was not the case for the number of variables. Despite the literature which had indicated that cross-cutting memberships would promote and strengthen patterns of formal and informal political participation, it became clear that this was not the case in South Africa (Veenstra, 2002:553). These findings would indicate that in the South African context, the networking accorded by membership in multiple voluntary associations does not translate to increased formal political participation; however it is quite likely that this increased networking will help to mobilise informal participation.

Finally, given the effectiveness of sports participation as a vehicle for social capital in South Africa as established by Keim (2003) and Burnett (2006), a further sub-question was phrased. The sub-question in chapter one regarding sports participation was as follows: “Does sports participation as a form of voluntary association and measure of social capital have a positive relationship with formal political participation?” The findings derived from the data analysis indicated that the null hypothesis which stated that sports participation had no impact upon the level of formal political participation was rejected; although the size of the effect remained small. What was not expected however was that this impact would be a negative one. Possible explanations for this lie in the nature of sport as a voluntary association which is created to achieve internal objectives within its membership, rather than as an association which would encourage external participation (Seippel, 2008:78). Although some of the previous studies had indicated that sports participation alone did not tend to promote formal political participation, its effectiveness in the South African context in achieving political goals and as a vehicle of social capital resulted in the expectation that it would have a positive impact upon formal political participation. However, the data indicated that this was not the case. Having provided statistical backing for the accuracy of the SPSS output, it is necessary to speculate and provide possible explanations for why this was the case for the variables tested.

5.2.1.) Possible Explanations for the Findings

The reasons for why these findings ran contrary to the expectations, as derived from the literature, are many, although most lie in the differences between the European and North American versus the African context. Some qualitative research by Goodwin and Jasper (2009) had found that South Africans have a history of resorting to informal channels of political participation due to the historical lack of access many had to formal political processes. Bearing this historical context in mind, the continued tendency of South Africans to favour informal forms of political participation in the current context may be understood. Furthermore, South Africa's socio-economic conditions and the level of democratisation have also influenced the political culture of the country, as many dissatisfied South Africans believe that their vote will have little to no impact upon the status quo (Alexander, 2003; Heller, 2009).

More contemporary research has reinforced the assertion that South Africans tend to favour political participation beyond voting, as evidenced by the rise of broad-based social movements (Ballard *et al.*, 2006). Considering this context, the role played by social capital and voluntary associations in creating networks of trust, participation and interaction is significant. While membership in voluntary associations in European or North American countries may promote formal political engagement, in South Africa the data has indicated that this is not the case. However this does not justify any statements that social capital theory on the whole does not apply to the South African context, as research by Keim (2003) and Burnett (2006) has indicated it does indeed have an impact upon South African society. It would thus be premature to argue that the theory does not apply considering that extensive research has shown that it can have a profound impact. Rather, certain elements of social capital theory, namely the implied correlational relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, need to be adapted to take consideration of the South African context. Afrobarometer surveys have provided some insight into the impact social capital has had in this regard as it was found that members of voluntary associations were in fact more likely to favour informal political participation when compared to non-members who were generally less likely to participate at all (Mattes, 2008:134).

It can therefore be stated that membership in voluntary associations in South Africa appears to indeed generate networks of trust, promote self-efficacy and participatory values in accordance with the expectations of social capital theory; however this effect of social capital lends itself to more informal channels of participation in accordance with South Africa's political culture. Nonetheless, the full extent and nature of this impact is not yet known. This study attempted to build in this by quantifying the impact of social capital, in terms of membership in voluntary associations, on formal political participation in South Africa. Ultimately, this was a step too far. The findings from the data analysis indicated that in this regard the expectations of previous studies would not be met in the South African context; however that is not to say that the theory does not apply to the South African context at all. Simply, South African society and democracy does not have the highly developed institutions as yet that would allow this particular impact of social capital to become visible in a quantitative study, although social capital and membership in voluntary associations has been shown to impact upon other variables.

5.3.) Recommendations for Further Study

There are a number of areas of potential further study in the fields of social capital and political participation in South Africa. As mentioned in the chapter 1 rationale, there are few quantitative studies on the nature of social capital as it applies to the South African context at present, providing many possibilities for further study. Importantly, there is minimal study on the impact social capital has had on South Africa's political climate. In this regard, studies on the other aspects of social capital, such as social trust which is contained in the WVS questionnaire, and trust in the political system or South Africa's democracy would contribute to the existing literature on social capital in South Africa. It would be worth determining what effect trust, as a key component of social capital and in turn voluntary associations, has on the individual's desire to engage formally with political institutions. Using similar methodology to that used in this study, further research on the relationship between trust and institutional performance, as studied by Putnam (1995), in the South African context would also be of value. Moreover, as research by Mattes (2008) and others has indicated that trust, in different forms, has strongly influenced South African politics, further quantitative research on the topic would be welcomed.

Having determined from this study that membership in voluntary associations does not have a significant effect on the level of formal political participation in South Africa, it would be worth conducting further study on how, and at what level, social capital impacts upon informal forms of political participation. Although other studies, including one done by Mattes (2008) with Afrobarometer survey data, have indicated that social capital encourages informal political participation it would be to the benefit of the field if a thorough and dedicated study on the topic was conducted. The World Values Survey contains a number of variables on informal participatory spaces, from staging a protest to signing boycotts, and it would be worth determining whether the social networks and participatory norms generated by membership in voluntary associations has an impact upon these variables or if this theory is once again difficult to apply to South Africa's current socio-political context.

Considering how the theory of Ballard *et al.* (2006) has assessed the rise of social movements in South Africa, further study exploring how social capital has impacted upon these other forms of political participation would be of particular interest as it is likely that this is an area where social capital has had a significant impact in South Africa, given its role in generating networks as established by Burnett (2006). Similarly, a study into what forms of participation in South Africa are encouraged by sports involvement would also contribute to the existing theory on sport and social capital, as sport has been studied both internationally and in the South African context as a vehicle of social capital. Ultimately, with the state of knowledge with regards to social capital in South Africa remaining relatively limited, there should be many more studies on social capital and its value. At present, the majority of studies on social capital have simply alluded to its possible impact on South African society, stressing the need for more empirical research in the field in order to start building a holistic and context-specific body of theory. In the long term, a greater theoretical understanding of social capital's impact on South Africa could ultimately influence policy making as the role social capital may play in the country's ongoing development becomes clearer. Hopefully, this area will in time attract more attention from researchers in different fields in order to build a larger and more comprehensive body of literature on the topic.

5.4.) Conclusion: Social Capital's Varied Impact

Although the research conducted by Marion Keim and Cora Burnett, among others, has highlighted the benefits of social capital to South African communities, these benefits cannot be translated to increasing the level of formal political participation despite initial expectations to the contrary. Even though the output of the data did not support the original theory, in terms of deductive research, it still provided findings worthy of discussion. Although it became clear that membership in voluntary associations as a dimension of social capital had no meaningful effect on the level of formal political participation, it would be unwise to conclude that social capital theory cannot be applied to this variable and others in South Africa. Simply, the nature of South Africa's current political culture and context has resulted in social capital's impact being limited to other areas besides formal political participation. As is the case with other areas of study, the established theory derived from studies in Western countries will often not apply the same way to a significantly different South African context.

This is not to say that this theoretical framework should not be utilised for future research on the topic in South Africa, rather, it underlines the need for further research which anticipates this disparity and seeks to explain it from the outset. In time, a revised approach to social capital theory may be able to make further discoveries regarding the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and formal political participation, among many other variables. To conclude, although present social capital theory remains a foundation for studies in South Africa, there is a distinct need for the creation of an alternative model of social capital which is sensitive to the South African context. The true nature and value of social capital to South African society may only be fully known once such a model is developed; a model which accounts for the unique demographic, socio-economic, and political climate of South Africa.

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