PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

IN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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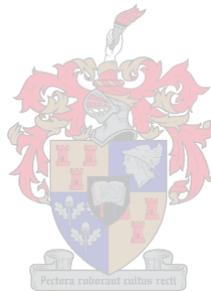
THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the use of participatory research in community development settings. Participatory research, which is normally referred to by the abbreviation PR, is a relatively new social research methodology that arose out of a general sense of dissatisfaction with the way that traditional research was being conducted in development. Participatory research consists of a large variety of related research methodologies that emphasize participation, social learning and action.

Epistemologically it is founded on the metatheories of critical theory and to a lesser extent phenomenology and feminism. It is primarily based on the idea of allowing people to participate as full researchers in their own research process so as to create knowledge about their own social reality with which they can initiate change. By creating their own social knowledge, which they use to address and change their social reality, participants become part of a continuous cycle of analysis – action – reflection. By participating as full co-researchers, participants become part of their own dialogical process of social praxis that allows them to enter into a continuous cycle of social learning, capacity building and conscientisation that gives them an increased sense of empowerment which in turn makes them able to engage in their own self-reliant sustainable development initiatives.

Both community development and participatory research are grassroot level development initiatives. They both form part of the people-centered, participatory and social learning process approaches to development. Both share a commitment to: realizing concrete and abstract goals, a social learning process, participation, empowerment, conscientisation, and sustainability. Both these development initiatives are orientated around operating in small homogenous groups as opposed to working with the whole community. In both participatory research and community development the person from outside the community who is initiating the development is required to fulfil the role of guide, advisor, advocate, enabler, and facilitator.

Community development and participatory research share a similar research cycle that consists of the following stages: contact making, formal need identification, planning or analysis, implementation or action, and evaluation or reflection. Both research cycles are also committed to the same objectives namely: creating a community profile and need and problem profile, to draw up strategies to address some of the needs and problems, and to monitor and evaluate the strategies that were implemented.

Both community development and participatory research therefore share a number of similarities in their objectives and goals, the most important of which is their shared commitment to development in which participation leads to an increase in social learning, capacity building and conscientisation that in turn results in participants experiencing an increased sense of empowerment which allows them to undertake their own self-reliant, sustainable development initiatives. Consequently this study concludes that participatory research is suitable for and beneficial to the practice of research in community development.

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OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie fokus op die gebruik van deelnemende navorsing in gemeenskapsontwikkelling. Deelnemende navorsing, wat al om bekend staan as PR, is 'n relatief nuwe sosiale navorsings-metodologie wat ontstaan het uit 'n algemene gevoel van ongelukkigheid met die beoefening van tradisionele navorsing in ontwikkeling. Deelnemende navorsing bestaan uit 'n wye verskeidenheid navorsingsmetodologieë wat klem lê op deelneming, sosiale leer en aksie.

Epistemologies is dit gebaseer op die metateorieë van kritiese teorie en tot 'n mindere mate fenomenologie en feminisme. Dit is primêr gebaseer op die idee dat mense volledig moet deelneem as navorsers in hulle eie navorsingsproses sodat hulle, hul eie kennis kan skep van hul eie sosiale realiteit waarmee hulle dan sosiale verandering kan meebring. Deelnemers in hierdie proses word deel van 'n aaneenlopende kringloop van ontleding-aksie-refleksie. Deur hulle plek vol te staan as navorsers word deelnemers deel van 'n proses van eie dialogiese sosiale praxis wat hulle toelaat om deel te hê aan 'n aaneenlopende siklus van sosiale leer, kapasiteitsbou en psigologiese bewuswording wat hulle 'n groter gevoel van selfbemagtiging gee wat hulle dan toelaat om hul eie selfonderhoudende ontwikkelingsinitiatiewe te loods.

Beide gemeenskapsontwikkeling en deelnemende navorsing vind plaas op grondvlak. Dit vorm altwee deel van die mensegesentreerde, deelnemende en sosiale leerprosesse van ontwikkeling. Beide is gemik op die realisering van konkrete en abstrakte doelstellings, 'n sosiale leerproses, deelname, selfbemagtiging, psigologiese bewuswording, en selfonderhoud. Beide hierdie benaderings tot ontwikkeling geskied in klein homogene groepsverband. In beide deelnemende navorsing en gemeenskapsontwikkeling is dit 'n persoon van buite die gemeenskap wat die proses inisieer en 'n rol speel as voog, adviseer, advokaat, daarsteller en fasiliteerder.

Gemeeskapsontwikkeling en deelnemende navorsing deel 'n navorsing siklus wat bestaan uit die volgende stadiums: kontak maak, die identifisering van behoefte, beplanning of ontleding, implementering of aksie, en evaluering of samevatting. Beide hierdie ondersoeksiklusse deel die volgende doelstellings, naamlik: die opstel van 'n gemeenskapsprofiel sowel as 'n behoefte en probleem profiel, die optrek van 'n strategieë om behoeftes en probleme aan te spreek, en laastens om die strategieë wat geïmplementeer is te monitor en evalueer.

Beide gemeenskapsontwikkeling en deelnemende navorsing deel 'n verskeidenheid ooreenkomste in terme van hulle doelstellings, waarvan die mees belangrikste 'n gedeelde toewyding tot ontwikkeling is waarin deelname lei tot 'n toename in sosiale leer, kapasitieitsbou en psigologiese bewuswording wat tot gevolg het dat deelnemers 'n toenemende sin van hulle eie selfbemagtiging kry wat hulle toelaat om hulle eie selfonderhoudende ontwikkelingsaksies te loods. Hierdie studie kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat deelnemende navorsing geskik is en bevorderend is vir die proses van navorsing in gemeenskapsontwikkeling.

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I would like to thank Francois Theron for being my study leader and more importantly for the patience he has displayed with me. I would also like to thank my family but especially all three my parents who despite how long it took and how hopeless it looked never once wavered in their conviction that I was going to get it. Well, I did get it and I am still getting it and I know I will always get it in the future, I just don't always know where you get the capacity to give me so much. Thank you. Finally, to my girlfriend Petra Preuss, without your support I would never have gotten this far. Thank you.

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"Participatory research attempts to break down the distinction between the researchers and the researched, the subjects and the objects of knowledge production by the participation of the people - for - themselves in the process of gaining and creating knowledge. In the process, research is seen not only as a process of creating knowledge, but simultaneously, as education and development of consciousness, and of mobilisation for action." (Gaventa, 1988 in Hall, 1993:xiv-xv)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The **research problem** in this study has its origin in the fact that participation has become a buzzword in development circles the world over. From often painful experience, development practitioners have come to the seemingly obvious conclusion that it is impossible to assist people to help themselves if those people do not participate meaningfully in the activities aimed at doing this. This realisation has in turn created a new problem, namely, what strategies can be used to assist people to participate meaningfully in their own development process?

In terms of this question, one of the strategies that has been developed is participatory research. In its purest form, participatory research entails getting people to participate as co-researchers in a cyclical research process regarding their own circumstances, thus allowing them to identify their own problems and their causes and then take action to alter their circumstances on the basis of their new found knowledge. What has caught the eye of many development practitioners is that once people are participating in a social learning process about themselves they are also engaged in a capacity building process which leads to increased levels of conscientisation and empowerment which in turn form the basis for self-reliant sustainable development.

One of the areas of development in which participatory research can play a part is community development. For instance, Swanepoel says the following of community development and participation:

> "There is no other stage for people to begin to participate than right at the start of a project. People should not only do, but their right and ability also to think, seek, discuss, and make decisions should be acknowledged. The people should therefore participate in the very first survey action to establish their needs and resources, and thereafter never again stop doing so." (Swanepoel, 1993: 3)

These facts have resulted in the development of a **research question** that asks: **Is participatory research able to fulfil the research needs of community development?**

This research question is based on the fact that both community development and participatory research share a similar underlying development philosophy. Both these development strategies endorse a view of development in which strong transformational participation forms the basis for participants engaging in a social learning process. This results in increased levels of capacity building and conscientisation which in turn leads to an enhanced sense of empowerment that forms the foundation for participatory, self-reliant, sustainable development.

This study will also attempt to address the following **subsidiary questions**:

1. How has the concept of development evolved and what is its present position?
2. What is traditional research in development and what is its impact on participatory research?
3. What are the main metatheoretical research paradigms that have influenced participatory research?
4. What is participatory research, and what are its aims and objectives?
5. What are the different types of participatory research?
6. What is the history and origin of participatory research?
7. How does the research process in participatory research work?
8. Is participatory research valid?
9. What is community development, and what are its aims and objectives?
10. What are the research requirements of community development projects?
11. What organisational strategies can be implemented in institutions that support participatory research and community development to improve the viability of these initiatives?

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Methodologically this study is predominantly based on an extensive, comparative literature survey. This was supplemented by personal interviews that the researcher conducted himself and the review of numerous case studies, both in the literature and on the internet as well as on video.

The researcher made use of the library facilities of the University of Stellenbosch. The researcher conservatively estimates that he over three hundred books and articles related to the subject were studied. Almost all books were sourced through the SABINET system, which together with inter-library loans proved more than adequate for research purposes. An attempt

was made to use the HSRC source system but this proved impractical since the bibliography that they delivered contained over two hundred pages.

The review process took on the nature of the method set out by Brynard and Hanekom (1997:12-14), though this was more by default than design. It is the researchers opinion that the literature review provided the most insightful, meaningful and rewarding educational experience he has ever had.

The personal interviews that the researcher conducted were all held with researchers in the field of development. The initial interview was conducted using a semi-structured format, however this was abandoned after it became obvious that the respondent was manipulating his answers. Subsequently all interviews were conducted along the lines of an unstructured interview with the researcher making small cryptic notes. It is the researchers opinion that not many researchers appreciate being subjected to research themselves.

About half the case studies have their origin in the literature while the other half are sourced from the internet. While the internet holds an extraordinarily large amount of relevant information it was regarded with some suspicion after discovering several instances of plagiarism that could not be attributed to innocent mistakes.

The study itself was inter-subjective since both participatory research and community development form part of both the sociology and development management disciplines.

1.3   PROCEDURE

This study is based upon a comparison of participatory research with community development to determine whether participatory research is suitable for use in community development settings (see Figure 1).

The second chapter of this study will begin by addressing the changing concept of development in an attempt to clarify both the past and present positions of development. The third chapter will examine traditional research in development, as well as the main metatheoretical paradigms in research that have contributed to participatory research. It will also compare quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

Figure 1:   **The Model of this Study**

Introduction Hypothesis **1** Methodology	Development **2**

Traditional research
in development   **3**

Participatory research
                              4

Participatory research
and community   **5**
development

The organisational
requirements for
community   **6**
development and
participatory research

Conclusion
                              7
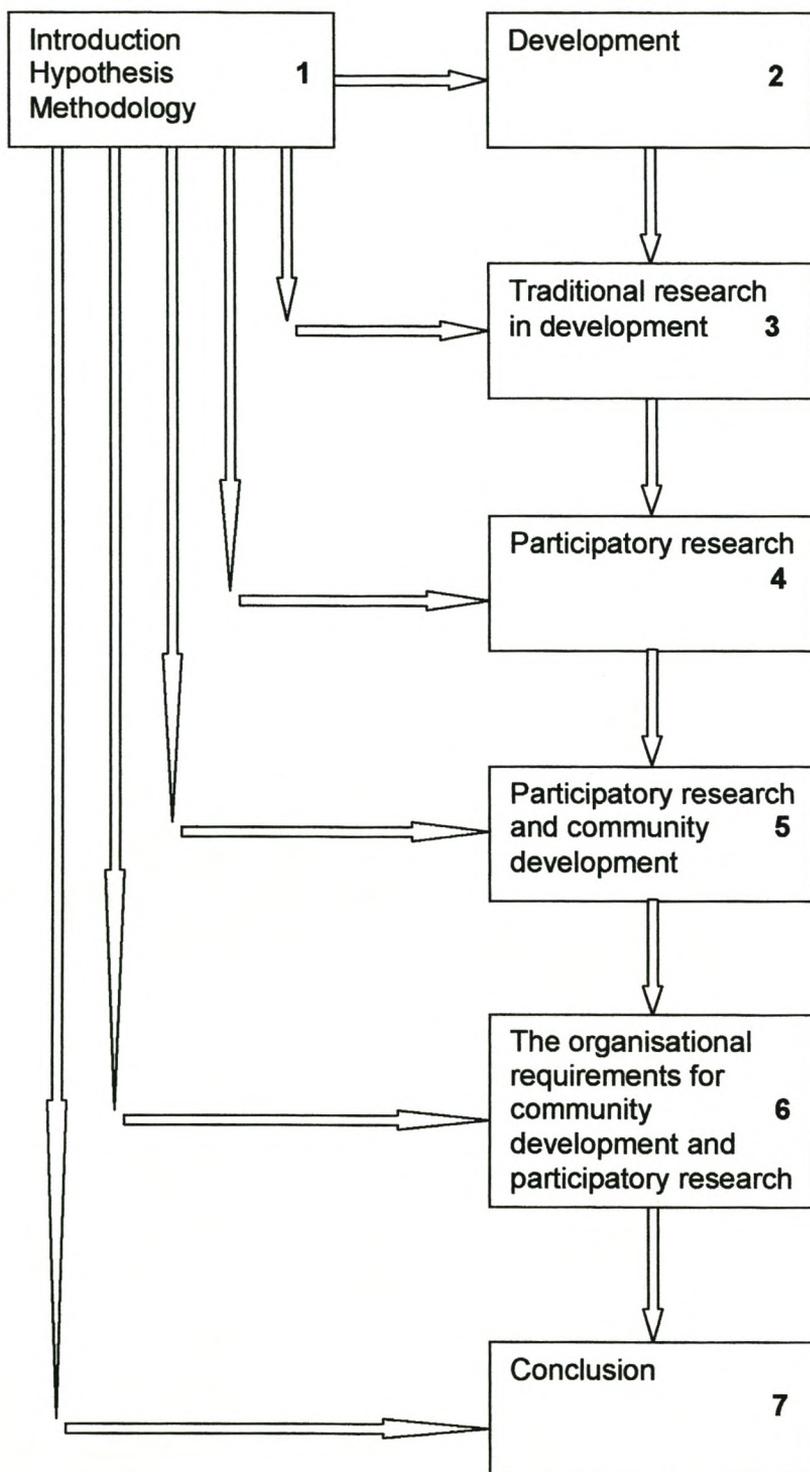
The fourth chapter, which will start the comparison, will begin with a description of participatory research. On a general level the description will pay attention to the main aims, objectives and philosophy of participatory research.

On a specific level, attention will be given to how participatory research works. This will entail looking at the way knowledge is regarded within the participatory research paradigm, what different types of participatory research exist, what specific research techniques are utilised to make this research process participative, as well as what analytical techniques are used in this field of research.

The fifth chapter will comprise a comparison between participatory research and community development in which specific attention will be given to what the research requirements of community development are. This will entail not only determining what type of information must be gained, but also what type of human interactions must be achieved by the research process.

The sixth chapter will look at what organisational strategies can be implemented in institutions that support community development and participatory research that will make these development initiatives more successful.

The seventh and final chapter will comprise the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT

2.1 THE EVOLVING CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

The term development denotes change. In the context in which we use it, it usually denotes positive change in 'underdeveloped' people's lives (Coetzee, 1996: 136). What constitutes underdevelopment? Who decides what is positive change? Do the people want their circumstances to be changed? How is this change going to be brought about and who is going to do it? These questions often remain either raging academic debates far removed from the squalid reality or mute points glibly glossed over. (Stewart, 1997: 1)

While the study of development can be traced far back in history the term itself was not widely used before the Second World War. Up until that time most Third World Countries had been subjected to colonial rule by the Western European nations. The relationship between the Western colonial powers and their colonies was characterised by domination with the intent to extract as much as possible natural materials. The Westerners regarded the indigenous inhabitants of their colonies as primitive. At the same time the indigenous inhabitants of the colonies were unaware of the possibilities for change that existed. (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 23-24; Todaro, 1989: 20-21)

The Second World War, however, ushered in a new era in development thinking namely, **modernisation theory**. The shared suffering that both developed and underdeveloped nations had experienced during the war had brought about an awareness of both peoples common humanity as well as the disparity that existed between their various standards of living (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 24). Initial attempts to alleviate this situation concentrated on economic growth as the solution to the problem. This laid the foundation for the modernisation approach, which equated economic growth with development and as a consequence with industrialisation and increased economic productivity. (Bryant and White, 1982: 5; Burkey, 1993: 27)

The new found interest in the poor nations of the world caught most Western economists unprepared since they did not have the conceptual apparatus with which to examine the process of growth in underdeveloped countries at that time. However, they did have the recent experience of the Marshall Plan in which America had been instrumental in getting Western Europe back on economic track by supplying them with large amounts of aid. (Todaro, 1989: 64)

At the same time there was the realisation that previously, the now developed nations, had also been underdeveloped peasant societies. Consequently, the question was asked whether the experience of their transition could not be of use to the underdeveloped nations. As a result of this, development was seen as a continuum with traditional (underdeveloped) societies on the one hand and modern (developed) societies on the other. Development was now being conceptualised as a transition in which an underdeveloped nation moved through a set number of economic stages, assisted all the way by Western economic aid, culminating in the final stage when the developing nation became a mass consumption society replicating the societies in the West. (Todaro, 1989: 64; Coetzee, 1989: 9-10)

The early development debates were dominated by economists. Unlike all the other social sciences, economics has a metric, money. This allowed the economists to use figures very persuasively since they could measure and quantify where other social scientists struggled to do so (Bryant and White, 1982: 6). Initially modernisation's preoccupation with economic growth was taken for granted, however by the late 1960's there was growing disenchantment with the idea that development only amounted to a state of high mass consumption. (Conyers and Hills, 1984: 25)

It had become apparent in the instances where there was growth that the wealth had failed to 'trickle down' to the poor (Bryant and White, 1982: 8). At the same time there was a realisation that indices like per capita income and gross national product were not good indicators of development. The increasing difference between the percentage of national income that the poor and the wealthy were receiving was resulting in hidden poverty and growing inequality. (Kotze, 1997: 8-9)

Combined with this was a growing disillusionment with the side effects that instituting modernisation brought with it. Ecologically industrialisation brought about a lot of damage to the environment. Socially, modernisation created a situation where traditional culture and attitudes were viewed as obstacles to development that had to be changed with force if necessary (Bryant and White, 1982: 6). Ultimately though the major criticism that was levelled at the modernisation approach was that it amounted to a form of Western cultural imperialism or Westerncentrism (Coetzee, 1989: 9-11). As a consequence of this modernisation was rejected. Despite this, economic growth is still regarded as an important benchmark against which a country's development progress is judged. (Kotze, 1997: 8)

The **dependency theory** of underdevelopment or 'dependencia' was the next evolvement in the concept of development. This theory, which has strong neo-Marxist origins, was created by

Latin American economists and social scientists who were disillusioned by the lack of development brought about by modernisation in their respective countries. (Voster, 1989: 53)

Dependency theory viewed underdevelopment as the result of an unequal and extractive relationship between a strong center and a weak periphery. This created a condition of socio-economic dependency, which in turn resulted in the center developing at the expense of the periphery, which became more underdeveloped. This relationship replicated itself both internally to underdeveloping countries and internationally. Within the developing nation there was often an extractive relationship between the relatively wealthy urban center and the poor rural periphery. Internationally the wealthy northern nations or center maintained unequal and extractive trade relations with the poor southern nations or periphery. (Voster, 1989: 53-80; Burkey, 1993: 28-29; Selener, 1997: 22-23)

While attempts to practically implement dependency theory using import substitution were not successful the theory itself had a profound impact on the way development and underdevelopment are perceived. Dependency theory served as a useful critique of modernisation dispelling many of the ideas central to that theory. It has also highlighted many relations that affect development and it has also brought home the complexity of development. (Burkey, 1993: 28-29)

After dependency theory's decline the next trend in development thinking emphasised the increasing tendency towards **global interdependence**. This gave rise, in the late 1970s and early 1980s to efforts to effect global reform. The most note worthy of these were the New International Economic Order and the Brandt Commissions report 'North-South: A Programme for Survival' (Burkey, 1993: 29-30). While these attempts at global reform were not successful, they did serve to highlight the interdependence of our world and its effect on development and can therefore be seen as the forerunners of the present trend towards globalisation.

The **basic needs approach** also grew out of the failure of modernisation to deliver. By the early 1970s the realisation that economic growth was not going to trickle down to the poor led to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Bank formulating the basic needs approach (De Beer, 1997a: 26). Definitions vary as to what exactly are basic needs, however the need to fulfil the basic needs is widely recognised in development planning (Burkey, 1993: 31). Unfortunately although the theory emphasised the importance of basic needs it did not ever really develop a methodology to achieve them. As a consequence the theory fell away in the early eighties, however it still forms the basis of many development theories (De Beer, 1997a: 27). (see also Max-Neef, 1991; Ghosh, 1984)

The shift to basic needs theory of development represented a change to a more human or people centred approach to development away from modernisation's emphasis on economic growth:

> "Human Scale Development, geared to meeting human needs requires a new approach to understanding reality. It compels us to perceive and assess the world, that is people and their processes in a manner which differs completely from the conventional one. Likewise, a theory of human needs for development must be understood precisely in those terms – as a theory *for development*." (Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn, 1991: 14, their emphasis)

This approach, which is commonly called the **humanistic approach** to development, represents a shift in the emphasis in development away from the narrow focus on modernisation's economic growth with its concentration on objects and production to a broader view which includes people and the enhancement of their capacity to participate in the process of development. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 27; Kotze and Kellerman, 1997:36).

The next major trend in development thinking, **sustainable development**, arose out of a concern for the environment. This concept, which forms part of the humanistic approach, also has its origins in the excesses of modernisation. Modernisation did not pay much attention to the environment and tended to regard it as an exploitable resource. The shock realisation in the late 1980s that phenomena like acid rain, global warming, the loss of ozone, and excessive pollution was the result of human intervention in the environment brought sustainability issues home. Since then sustainability has evolved into the major development paradigm.

It became evident that for sustainable development to succeed the intended beneficiaries of development have to actively participate in their own development and that this **participation** should in turn lead to the **empowerment** of these participants. It was this evolution to a more humanistic approach to development with its emphasis on the building blocks of development: sustainability, participation and empowerment that formed the atmosphere which nurtured **participatory research (PR)** (see Figure 2) during its germination and is now allowing it to grow to fruition. (see Mouton, 1996; Chambers, 1997; Kotze and Kellerman, 1997; Selener, 1997; Wetmore and Theron, 1998). These development theory's, namely sustainability, participation and empowerment will be treated in more detail in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 respectively.

From the above one can see how the concept of development has changed. While the above list is by no means complete it broadly illustrates how the ideas and trends in development thinking have evolved over the past few decades.

2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Human beings have been utilising and manipulating their environment to stay alive and satisfy their basic needs since time immemorial. People often, although not always, took the environment for granted and regarded the earth's resources as unlimited. The environment was also sometimes seen as a separate entity that was removed from people and as a consequence could be exploited by them with little regard for the harm they were doing.

The Industrial Revolution combined with the population explosion ushered in an era of increasing pressure on the environment. The earth's resources, various species and even peoples way of life was placed under pressure. Industrialisation brought with it a value system in which strong individualistic and materialistic norms were prominent. These values, combined with people's attitude of taking the environment for granted, resulted in people losing touch with the environment.

During the colonial era local indigenous knowledge (see also sections 4.3 and 4.4.2) was destroyed by the colonisers. This imperialistic attitude destroyed information that had been accumulated over thousands of years. This information was often crucial for the maintenance of local social systems, which in turn played an important role in conserving the environment. The information systems that replaced the destroyed local indigenous knowledge systems were often not relevant to the area or conditions that prevailed and consequently had an adverse effect on the environment. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 28-29; Treurnicht, 1997b: 84)

This practice of cultural imperialism and its adverse impact on the environment was continued by the process of modernisation. However as the effect of modernisation began to be felt by people its impact on the environment began to be considered. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a gradual questioning of whether development could be equated with westernisation. It was during this time that the realisation started to dawn that the high economic growth that was being striven for was achieved at a high environmental price. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 29-30; Treurnicht, 1997b: 84)

While there had been a gradual questioning of developments impact on the environment in the 1960s and 1970s it was during the 1980s that the magnitude of human impact on the

environment became dramatically clear. Events like the loss of ozone, the loss of biodiversity, global warming, acid rain, and the effects of pollution pushed environmental issues to the forefront of the development agenda. People had started to realise that the objective of economic growth was coming at an high price. The question was also being raised as to whether those societies which had achieved high mass consumption might not be less developed than those societies which were poorer in the conventional sense but at the same time where having a less damaging effect on their environment. Modernisation's main objective of unchecked economic growth had been questioned and found wanting. Since then sustainable development has become a buzzword in development circles. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 29-30; Treurnicht, 1997b: 84-85; Kotze and Kotze, 1997: 62)

With the advent of sustainabilitys popularity some discernible trends in sustainable development thought have become apparent. The first encompassed a broader definition of what sustainable development is about. This new interpretation included not only concerns with the sustainability of the environment but also with the sustainability of the economy and culture. (Treurnicht, 1997b: 85)

At present authors like Swanepoel and De Beer (1996: 6-11) divide the development environment into the following: the natural environment, the social environment, the political environment, the economic environment, the psychological environment, and the cultural environment. All these are regarded as having a sustainability dimension. Seen holistically, by maintaining the sustainability of each of these sub-environments it is possible to maintain the sustainability of the whole development environment. Therefore at the moment almost every sphere of development has a sustainability dimension whether it is on the micro level or on the macro level. This means that sustainability is a buzzword in development with a whole host of meanings.

The second trend, which has tended to be more dominant, has emphasised the importance of development firstly being ecologically sustainable and other issues being secondary to this requirement. Up to now the most common definition of sustainability has been the following:

> "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland, 1987 in Treurnicht, 1997a: 31)

While on the face of it this definition seems reasonable, it is not precise. Firstly, there is no clear indication how to achieve this type of development. Secondly, there is no clear indication

of what 'needs' are. As a consequence of the ambiguities contained in this definition, it is for instance possible to interpret it as allowing the present generation to live excessively so long as the needs of the future generations can be met, possibly by technology. This in turn raises the ethical and moral consideration of whether it is permissible for the present generation to use resources on the gamble that the as yet unknown needs of future generations can be met by as yet unknown technology. While this is not the only definition of sustainable development it illustrates the difficulty in defining and operationalising the concept. (see also Meadows, Meadows and Randers, 1992: 209-210)

Liebenberg and Theron (1997: 126) identify two dimensions of sustainable development. The first dimension deals with the continuous flow of benefits. Thus for development to be sustainable the resources used may not be depleted. This means that development in which permanent resource degradation takes place cannot be regarded as being sustainable development. The second dimension is that sustainable development takes place over time and therefore has a long-term concern. This implies that for development to be sustainable resources have to be managed so that they are continually available for a development process that can be regarded as never ending.

Treurnicht (1997a and 1997b) raises a number of issues concerning sustainability. The first issue addresses the link between social disequilibrium and consequent environmental decay. Poverty creates a situation in which social disequilibrium exists that tends to limit people's choices. In an effort to survive people may ignore the checks and balances and over utilise their environment in an effort to stay alive. This does not mean that people who have more choices will not abuse the environment. At the same time we cannot conclude that social disequilibrium is solely the result of poverty, it can be brought about by a number of diverse social and infrastructural factors. What is apparent, is that social sustainability is important in an effort to maintain the sustainability of the environment. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 32-33 Treurnicht, 1997b: 86-87; Serageldin, 1993: 7-10; Mink, 1993: 8-9; Cernea, 1995: 7-9)

The next issue that Treurnicht (1997a and 1997b) addresses is economic sustainability. Economic growth is important to many developing societies because they are struggling with high population growth rates and at the same time are trying to increase the quality of life of their people. The traditional view of economic sustainability which emphasised the ability of the market to regulate the allocation of scarce resources using the laws of supply and demand was partly based on the assumption that the supply of natural resources had no limits. This view also created an idea that economic growth would improve technology, which would in turn replenish the natural resources that were lost in the process. The opposing view sees the

natural environment as having a limited ability to supply natural resources to the economic process. This naturally means that consumption patterns will have to change and that people will have to find other ways of improving their quality of life. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 34; Treurnicht, 1997b: 87; Serageldin, 1993: 6-10; Munasinghe, 1993:16-19)

The third issue that Treumicht (1997a and 1997b) touches on is environmental sustainability. As has been illustrated above, environmental sustainability is partly dependent on cultural sustainability. At the same time, environmental sustainability is important for the maintenance of economic sustainability. Besides the economic reasons for maintaining the environment there are ethical and moral considerations. Humans share the earth with many other species of life, all of which have a claim to continued survival. At the same time, the state of our environment has a large impact on our psychological well being. To maintain our environment we will have to make sure that our consumption rate of renewable resources is within regeneration rates, this includes keeping waste emissions within the capacity of the environment to assimilate it. At the same time we will have to manage the use of non-renewable resources carefully. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 34-35; Treurnicht, 1997b: 87; Serageldin, 1993: 6-10; Rees, 1993: 14-15)

The final set of issues that Treurnicht (1997a and 1997b) addresses deal with the institutional aspects of sustainable development and the environment. The implementation of sustainable development requires institutions that are capable of measuring the impact people are having on the environment. At the same time sustainable development requires individual institutions to reassess their way of operating so as to manage their impact on the environment. There is also a need for an institutional framework that will provide guidance on how to operate sustainably. This framework should provide guidance on both local and international level. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 35-36; Treurnicht, 1997b: 87-88; Serageldin, 1993: 10; Rees, 1993: 14-15; Steer and Lutz, 1993: 20-23)

Often ecologically sustainable development is regarded in economic and technical-ecological terms. The idea is created that once these components have been achieved everything else should theoretically fall into place. However this view fails to note the crucial and determinant roles that social actors play in any effort to attain any form of sustainable development. As Cernea has stated:

> "The environment is at risk not from extraterrestrial enemies, but from human beings, including both local and distant resource users. Thus the call for ~ putting people first ~ in policies and investment programs for inducing development, or for assistance in

spontaneous development, is not a radical call: it is a realistic one. It simply means recognising the centrality of the social actors and their institutions in sustainable development." (Cernea, 1995: 7)

Sustainability has to therefore be a socially constructed process in which everybody gets a chance to participate. By doing this:

"Sustainable development is seen as a process of holistic transformation of the society for self- reliance and the well being of all. This holistic transformation can take place by minimising the gap between the existing level of knowledge and knowledge needed for appropriate sustainable society. The knowledge gap can be decreased by importing appropriate training facilities at all levels. The process is essentially related to all spheres of human existence. As such the process of transformation will have to ensure social, cultural, economic and political sustainability together with ecological and environmental sustainability. This is expected ultimately to lead to a holistic development of society." (CCDB, 1991 in Bloem, Biswas and Adhikari, 1996: 142)

Sustainable development therefore needs to be a process in which the people participate at all relevant levels. Ultimately people are the experts on their own ecology and environment and they therefore have the right and the obligation to assess it and then determine the possibilities it holds (see sections 4.3 and 4.4.2). They must also provide the solutions to the problems that are posed. These solutions must emanate from the people's own cultural, social, economic and political reality. PR is one way for people to assess their own reality and provide their own solutions to the problems they pose and thus provide a foundation for sustainable development (see Figure 2). (Bloem, Biswas and Adhikari, 1996: 142-143; Serageldin, 1993: 10)

2.3   PARTICIPATION

Participation is a buzzword in development circles. But like most catchwords in development it can have various meanings and connotations. Here are some of the more common meanings:

-    "Participation is the voluntary contribution by people in projects, but without their taking part in decision-making.
-    Participation is the sensitisation of people to increase their receptivity and ability to respond to development projects.

Figure 2:   Participatory Research and the Building Blocks of Development

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

EMPOWERMENT

CONSCIENTISATION

SOCIAL LEARNING

CAPCITY BUILDING

REFLECTION → ANALYSIS

PR

ACTION
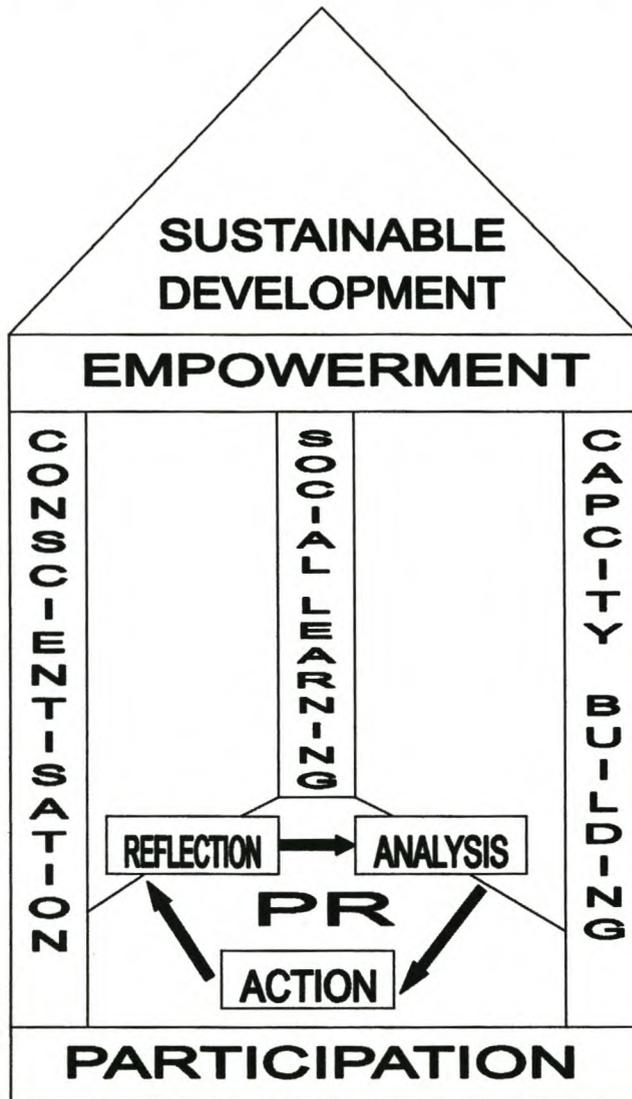
PARTICIPATION

- Participation is an active process, meaning that the person or group in question takes initiatives and asserts his/her or its autonomy to do so.
- Participation is the fostering of a dialogue between the local people and the project preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation staff in order to obtain information on the local context and on social impacts.
- Participation is the voluntary involvement of people in self-determined change.
- Participation is involvement in people's development of themselves, their lives, their environment."
    (FAO, 1989 in Mikkelsen, 1995: 62)

From the above it is apparent that participation is part of development jargon and can have a variety of meanings in different contexts.   Different interpretations are to be expected since

participatory development is a relatively new frontier. A precise, global definition may not emerge for some time, nor may one even be desirable. (FAO, 1989 in Mikkelsen, 1995: 62; Roodt, 1996: 313)

The participatory paradigm has its roots in community development. The colonial powers aimed to bring about national integration to achieve an effective administration and create a tax base and thus avoid having to pay for their colonies. At the same time they tried to foist the cost of development onto communities by getting them to take responsibility for their own development. They did this by emphasising self-help in a process that became known as community development. (Roodt, 1996: 313) (see also De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998)

A typical definition of community development at that time reads as follows:

> "Community development is the conscious process wherein small, geographically contiguous communities are assisted by the more developed community to achieve improved standards of social and economic life. This is done primarily through their own local efforts and through local community participation at all stages of goal selection, mobilisation of resources, and execution of projects, thus enabling these communities to become increasingly self-reliant." (The Tenth International Conference of Social Work, 1958 quoted in Jeppe, 1980 re-quoted in Roodt, 1996: 313)

With the advent of modernisation theory and the resulting emphasis on urban development the rural poor were expected to develop themselves while they waited for modernisation's benefits to 'trickle -down'. Often the people were co-opted to participate by government to legitimate unpopular policies and validate the processes by which they were implemented. Thus the participatory rhetoric that was being expounded and the reality on the ground were in fact far removed from one another. (Roodt, 1996: 314)

The next variation on the community development theme was the basic needs approach (BNA) developed by the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation in the mid-seventies. While the approach in itself was not very successful, it did make a contribution to the debate on participation by creating a distinction between weak and radical participation. (De Beer, 1997a: 26-27)

The third variation on the community development theme, participatory development, originated from the radical view of participation created by the BNA. Participatory development was defined as: "... the self-sustaining process to engage free men and women in activities that meet

their basic needs and, realise individually defined human potential within socially defined limits ..." (Gran, 1983 in De Beer, 1997a: 27)

However, despite all the good intentions behind the participatory development approach, at heart it still remained a interventionist approach in which an external agent was required to 'get the community to involve themselves' in a project that was not of their own making or design. Therefore the participatory development approach can be regarded as similar to the previous community development approaches that were essentially system maintaining. (De Beer, 1997a: 27)

The next strategy of participatory intervention is known as the social learning process approach (see section 6.3). The social learning process approach is essentially a bottom-up approach that is aimed at avoiding the restrictions that blueprint planning and top-down decision making have on development settings and the people in them. As the name states, development is viewed as arising out of a mutual learning process in which local people and the programme staff share their knowledge and resources equally to establish a programme. This is the same view upon which PR is based. (De Beer, 1997a: 28)

Unfortunately a lot of these conditions are often absent in Third World countries and development settings. At the same time donor and funding agencies are also not always willing to comply with these conditions. This then explains the relatively few successful case studies in which the social learning process approach has featured. One must therefore see the value of the social learning process approach for development in the principles that it expounds. It was these carried over principles which helped establish PR as one of the dominant research methodologies in the newly evolving participatory development strategy, people -centred development. (Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 44) (see also Korten and Klauss, 1984)

People -centred development or empowerment strategy is the current paradigm in participatory development. It encompasses and builds upon both the participatory and social learning process approaches to participation and at the same time it also contains elements of the basic needs approach. The manifesto of the people-centred development approach is the Manila Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development that was drawn up in June 1989 by 31 NGO leaders. Korten, who is the founder and the president of the People-Centred Development Forum, is considered to be one of the leading spokespersons for the approach. (Roodt, 1996: 317)

The primary components that are integral to the people-centred approach are: population participation in development; sustainable development; and support by the bureaucracy and other development organisations of peoples role in development (De Beer, 1997a: 29-30). These also form some of the mainstays of PR. (see sections 4.3 and 4.5.3)

As with PR, the people-centred development approach regards the participation of the majority of the benificiaries as being the bottom line for the success of any development project or programme. At the same time it also lays emphasis on getting the previously excluded components of society, like for instance women; the youth; and people who are illiterate, to participate in the process of development. (Roodt, 1996: 317)

In both PR and people-centred development by participating people become part of:

> "...a process by which the members of a society increase their potential and institutional
> capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly
> distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations."
> (Korten, 1990 in De Beer, 1997a: 30)

By following this definition, in both PR and people-centred development the decision rests with the community as to what development will amount to. Outsiders can therefore not prescribe to a community what to do or how to do it. By being part of this process people gain the capacity to manage and utilise resources to their own benefit. Participation then moves away from being a means and becomes an end in itself where:

> "...the objective is not a fixed, quantifiable development goal but a process whose
> outcome is increasingly 'meaningful' participation in the development process." (Moser,
> 1983 in De Beer, 1997a: 30)

Characteristics of the people-centred development approach, all of which are compatible with PR, include inter alia, the following:

-       "the optimal use of human resources
-       the conservation of environmental and natural resources
-       small-scale production units that would benefit the individual
-       the spread of ownership of productive assets
-       acceptance of the responsibility for the social support of those members of society who
        may need it

- acceptance of mental and physical welfare as an indicator of success
- recognising that social groupings could bring support and stability to development action
- establishing an adaptive and responsive administration within which both officials and participating groups may learn and adapt
- taking human and individual values into consideration in the decision-making process
- integrated rather than functional, and thus fragmented, development practice." (Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 36)

As has been stated previously participation is a jargon concept in development with a variety of meanings that vary according to the context in which it is being used. However, generally speaking the two major alternative uses of participation centre around participation either being viewed as an end in itself or as a means to development. (Mikkelsen, 1995: 63; Burkey, 1993: 58)

This distinction is representative of the difference between transformational and instrumental participation:

> "**Instrumental participation** is when participation is viewed as a way of achieving certain specific targets - the local people participate in the outsiders' project. **Transformational participation** is when participation is viewed as an objective in and of itself, and as a means of achieving some higher objective such as self-help and/or sustainability." (Kruks, 1983 in Mikkelsen, 1995: 63, my emphasis)

The differentiation between instrumental and transformative participation is often characterised in the literature as respectively **the weak and the strong interpretation of participation** in development. In the weak interpretation, participation is equated with involvement where involvement implies participation of a limited nature in development plans and projects that have been determined by outsiders. This interpretation is often also regarded as being synonymous with co-option of the people into action that they did not initiate themselves. Usually the weak interpretation of participation is seen to be aimed at improving efficiency within the programme or project context in which it is being used. As a consequence of this, the weak interpretation of participation is often regarded as being **a system maintaining process**. (De Beer, 1997b: 128-129, De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:20)

The strong interpretation of participation sees participation as being a process of empowerment. Consequently, in the strong interpretation the question of who controls development becomes important. In this view those who are effected by development initiatives need to be the main

role players. As a result of this, the strong view of participation is commonly regarded as **a system transforming process**. (De Beer, 1997b: 128-130; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 20; RSA Government Gazette, 1994: 39-41)

The two different strategies of participation can be characterised by Table1 on the following page. From Table 1 we may conclude that there can be a link between participation and empowerment, depending on which strategy is used. Burkey (1993: 59) is adamant that in this regard:

> "We are left in no doubt that meaningful participation is concerned with achieving power: that is the power to influence the decisions that affect one's livelihood." (Burkey, 1993: 59)

It becomes almost inconceivable to think of the creation of a state of empowerment in participants in any development effort without them engaging in meaningful transformational participation. In turn, all development efforts that seek to harness participants participation in an instrumental, system maintaining process, appear suspect. PR serves as a link between these two building blocks of development, participation and empowerment, since PR is committed to generating a, system transformational type of participation that leads to empowerment within participants.

2.4 EMPOWERMENT

Poor people often have a very low opinion of themselves and their abilities. This poor self-image makes poor people unable to assert themselves and consequently unable to influence situations in their favour. At the same time it makes them vulnerable to domination and exploitation and often leads them into relationships characterised by dependency. (Burkey, 1993: 51)

This lack of initiative and self-confidence can often be seen as a reflection of the low opinion that the poor's oppressors hold of them:

Table 1:   Two Logical Models Underlying Participatory Strategies

Strategy:	"Efficiency" State building through top-down partnership with local population / civil society/the poor ("inclusive reaching down")	"Empowerment" Alternative development defined by local popular movements and organisations ("integrative reaching up")
Normative assumptions:	The poor masses ought to have satisfied their basic needs (as they are defined by the state).	The poor masses ought to get the kind of development decided by themselves.
Deductive assumptions:	This presupposes their participation in the public development programmes. Therefore they must be made capable of participating more.	This presupposes an actively formulating and organising population having the ability and the rights to express their demands.
Causal theoretical assumptions:	1 "Development goals can be reached harmoniously and conflicts between social groups resolved through some kind of local democracy. Therefore people's participation is possible".	1 "Development goals can be reached harmoniously and conflicts between social groups resolved through some kind of local democracy. Therefore people's participation is possible".
	2 "People's participation has a positive effect on development".	2 Development is positive when there is 'people's participation'.
	3 "People's participation is an effective means to mobilise local (human and material) resources with the purpose of implementing (certain) development programmes".	3 "Empowerment of the masses is a necessary means to achieve people's participation, as no government will spend any resources on development and welfare decided by the masses unless these masses have the power to force the government".
	4a "Lack of participation is an expression of the population's inability to participate": lack of education, lack of funds and resources, low level of organisation.	4a "Lack of popular participation in development programmes is an expression of disagreement or resistance (internally amongst members of the local community or externally against the central government or the people in power)".
	4b Or it is an expression of the programme design being inappropriately adapted to the needs of the target group, i.e. inappropriate planning and implementing procedures, or inappropriate technology. (Operational barriers to participation) Thus, it is a technical, educational, administrative, or financial inadequacy needing to be corrected.	4b "Or it is an expression of the existence of social structures excluding the masses from participating". (Structural barriers to participation). Thus, it is a social conflict to be resolved through a compromise on conflicting policies and/or removal of the 'departicipatory' social structures (political reforms).

(Mikkelsen, 1995: 63-64)

"Self-depreciation is a characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their
internalisation of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that
they are good for nothing and are incapable of learning anything - that they are sick, lazy
and unproductive - that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness."
(Freire, 1972 in Burkey, 1993: 51)

Consequently it is easy to understand why the development efforts that solicit the most
opposition by the people who profit from the poor's situation are those efforts aimed at
empowering the poor. Ironically this is possibly one of the clearest indicators of the importance
of empowerment in achieving a state of development.

Essentially empowerment deals with power. The benefits of any development activity will not
automatically go to the people who most need it. The distribution of benefits becomes a political
issue that is usually settled in favour of those who have the most influence:

"Events have shown that benefits tend to go to those in power. The fact that those who
are poor are also the powerless has a great deal to do with the amount of inequity that
continues to exist." (Bryant and White, 1982: 16)

Therefore, empowerment is the process that makes power available to gain access to
resources and then to manipulate them so as to achieve development goals and then enjoy the
benefits that arise out of that achievement. (Liebenberg and Theron, 1997: 125)

At the same time the poor are often hamstrung by their lack of knowledge. This lack of
information keeps them from fully utilising the resources they have access and control over and
at the same time restricts their ability to gain access to new resources. (Burkey, 1993: 51)

As has already been stated there is a definite link between participation and empowerment in
development. Swanepoel (1993: 2) illustrates this link when he argues the following:

"When people are involved in a community development project, their objective is
always concrete. The objective can be precisely described and can quite often be seen
and touched. The peculiarity, though, is that while people are striving towards a concrete
objective, they at the same time reach abstract goals that they may not even have
thought of. While striving to get a clinic established (a concrete objective) they gain in
something abstract such as self-reliance, self-sufficiency (1, pp25), and human dignity.
These abstract gains are the enduring and permanent results of community

development which enable people to help themselves." (Swanepoel, 1993: 2) (see also De Beer and Swanepoel,1998)

Despite the fact that he does not name it by name, Swanepoel is referring here to the peculiar yet crucial link between two of the building blocks of development, participation and empowerment. Sometimes people do participate without gaining any empowerment but it is virtually impossible for people to become empowered if they do not participate in some way or another.

For a development initiative to be considered successful it has to amount to more than simply attaining concrete objectives. To be sustainable and therefore by implication to be "real development", development initiatives have to have a more profound impact on the people who are involved in them, as Burkey (1993:48) argues:

> "Development is more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. Development involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society. These changes must come from within the individuals and groups, and cannot be imposed from the outside." (Burkey, 1993: 48)

To be successful development has to have a strong element of human development in it. Human development involves individuals strengthening their personality by gaining and internalising knowledge and information leading to improved self-confidence, assertiveness, faith in their abilities and ultimately an overall improvement in their self-image. Empowerment means more than people just learning new skills. It also requires a transformation in peoples consciousness that leads to a process of self-actualisation that in turn allows them to take control of their lives and challenge both the structures and people that dominate them. PR allows people to do this and thus empower themselves. (Burkey, 1993: 51-52; Roodt, 1996: 315)

This transformation is often referred to as conscientisation, a term that was made famous by the Brazilian academic and author, Paulo Freire, in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Conscientisation is the process that builds a self-reflected critical awareness within people, both of their social reality and of their ability to transform that reality through their own conscious collective action.

"Conscientisation is a process in which the people try to understand their present situation in terms of the prevailing social, economic and political relationships in which they find themselves. This analysis of reality must be undertaken by the people who can decide what their important needs and experiences are, and not by experts. From this analysis the people themselves may be able to take action against the oppressive elements of their reality. This involves the breakdown of the relationship between subject and object, and constitutes the essence of true participation." (Burkey, 1993: 55)

PR is specifically aimed at helping and allowing people to analyse their own reality so that they can gain an understanding of the situation in which they find themselves and then take appropriate action to change it to suit their needs. Conscientisation is the essence of what empowerment is about, but it can only be achieved if people actively participate. Empowerment gives people the ability to maintain the concrete gains they have achieved through the development process. It also allows them to launch new projects aimed at objectives they themselves have identified as requiring attention. It also gives people the ability to shoulder responsibility of looking after their environment. Therefore we may conclude that empowerment leads to sustainable development. One can also conclude that participation, empowerment and sustainability are all essential and interlinked components in the development process and that PR is an excellent tool to induce and integrate them with one another.

At present the development strategy that combines these three components is the self-reliant participatory development strategy which can be viewed as a continuation of the people-centred development strategy. It is defined as follows:

"Self-reliant participatory development is an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with each other and with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilise resources, and assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon." (Burkey, 1993: 205)

The question which still remains to be answered however, is how to get self-reliant participatory development going, in which the poor actively participate in their own development and gain the benefits of empowerment which in turn leads to sustainable development. Often the first step in this process is PR.

2.5   CONCLUSION

From the preceding chapter it is clear that the concept of development has evolved substantially over the last five or six decades.   Development has moved away from modernisation's excessive preoccupation with economic and technological variables and has evolved a humanistic orientation that has allowed it to become a more people-centred endeavour. Ironically this increased humanism was partially sourced in a growing concern for the environment and its sustainability, which consequently led to the belated realisation of the central role individual people play in maintaining it.

In development at present there is a renewed commitment to active transformational participation which leads to empowerment amongst the participants. This is illustrated by the principles in numerous South African green papers, white papers and acts. It has become apparent that sustainable development will never succeed unless individual people are empowered enough to make their own choices. It is in the light of this humanistic view of development, with its concern for participation and empowerment that leads to sustainability, that PR has developed and found its place both as a research methodology and as a powerful tool in initiating and maintaining the impetus of development endeavours.

The following chapter will analyse traditional research in development more closely, since it was dissatisfaction with the way that research was being conducted in development that led to the initial attempts of PR. An examination will also be made of various metatheoretical research paradigms which contributed both positively and negatively to PR as well as the two 'competing' methodological research paradigms, quantitative and qualitative research.

NOTE:

(1.)   Burkey (1993: 51) differs with Swanepoel (1993: 2) regarding the desirability of regarding the attainment of self-sufficiency as an objective of development. Burkey contrasts self-reliance with self-sufficiency and points out that it is hard for anyone to be truly self-sufficient and that there are very few communities who are self-sufficient and definitely no states that can be called that in this era of global interdependence. Consequently he advocates trying to attain a state of self-reliance and not self-sufficiency and leaving those who are self-sufficient alone. (pp 22)

CHAPTER 3

TRADITIONAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   TRADITIONAL RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT

Traditional or conventional social research in development has been characterised by a general lack of rapport between the researchers and the respondents (1, pp45) who are being subjected to the research.   The comment that research 'is done on the relatively powerless for the relatively powerful' (Bell, 1978 in Hall and Hall, 1996: 13) perhaps best describes this situation.

While development theory has evolved over the years (see Chapter 2) there have been few corresponding changes or evolvements in conventional development research.   The theory, mindset and techniques that were employed in research during the heyday of modernisation still by and large form the basis of conventional social research today.   (Wetmore, 1996: 4; Van Vlaenderen and Nkwinti, 1993: 211)

This has had an impact on the overall effectiveness of conventional social research in the field of development.   Traditional social research has a dismal record in terms of its ability to enhance the goals of development.   Traditional social research in development is characterised by an almost complete control of the process by the researcher and with a concurrent lack of control on the part of the respondents.   This phenomena has its roots in the subject - object relationship which in turn can be traced back to the theoretical underpinning of traditional research namely positivism. (Wetmore, 1996: 4; Park, 1993: 5)

Gaventa (1993:29-30) illustrates the dilemma that arises from conducting research in this manner:

> "In practice, objectivity is translated in scientific method to mean a sharp bifurcation between expertise, based on the study of a problem, and experience, the subjective living of that problem. Scientists produce by objectifying others, making them data, who, as the objects of another's inquiry, are denied the position of subjects who can act, create, and observe for themselves. The bifurcation is a rigid one: The experts may study the powerless, but must not experience the problems they face, or identify with them, for fear of losing their objectivity. On the other hand, the non-experts may experience a problem, and through that experience gain valuable knowledge and

insights, but when it comes to political debates, their knowledge is given little weight because it is not scientific."

The unilateral control that the researcher has over both the research enterprise and the respondents in the research process create a striking parallel between traditional research and Freires (1983, 57-74) banking form of education. The only difference being that in research, unlike education, a withdrawal is being made instead of a deposit, leaving the respondents bankrupt.

In traditional research the researcher and the respondents occupy separate roles which are both non-reciprocal and in an asymmetrical relation to each other. The respondents will have no input into the hypothesis and the research design and will invariably not be informed about it either. The researcher will however require them to answer questions based on it. In point of fact, the researcher usually neither requires or is interested in the intellectual views and opinions of how the respondents regard the research process. The researcher is not required to form any human relationship with or get to know the respondent, indeed any relationship that amounts to more than common courtesy can be seen as a possible source of bias. The researcher has a commitment to knowledge and not to people. To this end the researcher is interested in extracting information from the respondent and not relating to or getting to know him or her. Therefore the researcher may influence and to a certain extent manipulate the respondent but has to avoid the respondent doing so to him or her. (Heron, 1981: 155; Park, 1993: 5; Selener, 1997: 16)

Chambers (1991: 516-517) has identified four interlocking defects that were (and still are) present in traditional social research in rural development especially in the sixties and seventies. The first one is that things have come before people. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that a lot of previous development theories, especially modernisation, placed greater emphasis on the creation of physical infrastructure than on social dimensions. Consequently the people who did the research (economists, engineers, and statisticians) tended, as they still do now, to concentrate on physical infrastructure and numbers. Social scientists were usually only called in to deal with the social problems that occurred due to the lack of participation in conception, design and implementation of the projects. (Chambers, 1991: 516; Kabeer, 1991: 1)

The second defect is that poor people were very easily neglected. This is usually because poor people occupy those positions in society that are both socially and geographically the hardest for outsiders (2, pp45) to gain access too. Chambers (1991: 518-519) has identified five

antipoverty biases that occur when the urban-based professional becomes a rural development tourist in search of quick social information:

- *Spatial* (urban, tarmac, and roadside). Poor people tend to live in inaccessible areas far from infrastructure like roads and cities. This is partly what contributes to their poverty. It also makes it difficult for outsiders to learn about them.
- *Project*. Outsiders tend to go where something is happening, namely projects. Unfortunately there are also a lot of poor people where nothing is happening who then go unheard.
- *Personal contact*. When outsiders are brought into an area they inevitably tend to meet and be brought into contact with the more powerful people in that community. Consequently they do not meet the poor, the women, the people who do not use services, the people who have not adopted projects, the people who are inactive, those who have migrated, and rather obviously those who have died.
- *Dry season*. Generally speaking when the weather is at its worst, things are at their worst. Development tourists tend to travel when the weather is better.
- *Politeness and protocol*. Development tourists may be deterred by convention or courtesy from meeting the poorest of the poor.
  (Chambers, 1991: 518-519)

The third defect that Chambers (1991: 516-517) identifies is that traditional research has not been very cost-effective. For information to make an impact on the decision making process it has to be: relevant, timely, true, and usable. Unfortunately this has not always been the case. Often the information gathering process has not been efficient. The cost of obtaining, processing, analysing, and digesting the information has been high. At the same time, inefficient information has been met with demands for more information and not with demands for better quality or less of it. As a result the information obtained has often been useless and/or late and consequently not very cost-effective. (Chambers, 1991: 516-517)

The fourth defect that Chambers (1991: 517) recognises is that most of the time the information that is gathered is both analysed and owned by outsiders. By not allowing the respondents to participate in the analysis of data pertaining to them, they are firstly, being disowned of something that essentially belongs to them and secondly, they are being deprived of a very insightful learning experience. At the same time by only allowing outsiders to participate in analysis the people with the greatest ability to see the data in context have been removed from the process. Because the new information is owned by outsiders they feel no obligation to share it with or disseminate it to the community who were the original source, their obligation is

to knowledge and not people. The research report, paper or thesis which contains the results of the research, is normally presented in such a way as to not only be inaccessible but also illegible to the community who contributed to it. (Burkey, 1993: 63; Dockery, 1996: 167; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 87-88; Feurstein, 1993: 9; Selener, 1997: 16)

Traditional development research is usually aimed at being experimental and descriptive. Respondents tend to be treated as static, the same way inanimate objects in research are treated. As a consequence traditional research tries to create as little social change as possible. The underlying reason for this is that if respondents changed it would draw into question the supposedly value free objectiveness of the research. On another level, if the respondents changed then the theories and generalisations that the researcher concluded from this static snapshot of reality would become invalid. (Rowan, 1981: 96)

Most traditional research studies make use of a questionnaire survey that is applied to a selected sample of the target population to gather data, which is then subjected to quantative analysis. The information that is derived from this process is assumed to provide a picture of the "social reality" of the society as a whole. The problem with this type of survey is that the researcher only sees a snapshot in time. Cyclical and periodic events as well as trends tend to be missed. Although this type of research can identify physical things and activities it struggles to identify social and cultural relationships i.e. the larger social context. Often though, social and cultural relationships as well as trends are more important in development than a static view of current conditions. (Chambers, 1991: 519; Burkey, 1993: 60-61; Mukherjee, 1993: 22-23; Selener, 1997: 16)

Chambers (1997: 131) sums up the overall picture when he says the following about traditional social research in development:

> "In data-gathering the outsiders dominate. 'We' determine the agenda, obtain and take possession of information, remove it, organise and analyse it, and plan and write papers and reports. We appropriate and come to own the information. We hunt, gather, amass, compile and process, and produce outputs."

One of the many consequences of this control exercised by the researcher in the data-gathering process is that it accentuates the people's already inadequate feelings about themselves and creates the impression amongst them that they are incapable of doing research themselves. Communities that have been subjected to 'hit and run' research, where the researcher has taken more from the community than he or she has given, tend to 'lock up' which makes it

difficult for more 'well intentioned' researchers to penetrate their ranks. This is borne out by researchers reporting that some communities are "sick to death of being researched" (FCR Interview, 2000). By taking away the peoples ability to generate knowledge it becomes hard for them to transform their environment through their own initiative. (Burkey, 1993: 61-62, Taylor and Marais, 1999: 21; Selener, 1997: 16)

Traditional research therefore:

> "...makes them wait upon elite researchers to come and find the facts about them, to write about them and make policy recommendations for outsiders to solve their problems. This helps perpetuate domination of the people not only because of their economic dependence, but also of their intellectual dependence on privileged elite's." (Rahman, 1983 in Burkey, 1993: 62)

3.2   CONFLICTING METATHEORETICAL RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Terms like metatheory, philosophy of science, metascience, and epistemology of science can all be used interchangeably and they all refer to the same thing, namely a critical reflection on the nature of scientific inquiry. Epistemologically this reflection addresses issues like the nature and structure of scientific theories, the nature of scientific growth as well as the meanings of concepts like truth, explanation and objectivity within those theories. (Mouton, 1996: 22)

Therefore the study of metatheory is motivated by the fact that it contributes to the health and well being of science by maintaining the integrity of the scientific endeavour. It does this by causing individuals to reflect upon the theoretical and methodological motivations and assumptions that they employ in the quest to construct good science.

However metatheories focus on more than just epistemological issues, they also take up a stance concerning the nature of human action within the social world and they also have specific views on how science relates to the social world. (Mouton, 1996: 22)

The following four metatheories: positivism, phenomenology, critical theory and feminism reflect only some of the many metatheoretical positions in the social science research tradition. However the first three are all clearly linked to the following methodological research traditions namely: quantitative research, qualitative research and participatory research (feminism was

included because it is at present starting to have an impact upon participatory research as well).

3.2.1 Positivism

The general principle upon which positivism is based is that the natural and social worlds are sufficiently similar to allow the use of the same general methodologies and principles in the study of phenomena in either world. The basis for the assumption that the natural and social worlds are sufficiently similar to allow the use of similar methodological approaches is an analogy in which human beings are compared to organisms.

Furthermore, the early positivists went so far as to draw an analogy between society and the human body. As a consequence of this analogy between the biological/medical sciences and society the conclusion can be drawn that the central aim of research is to provide an accurate diagnosis of the ills of society so that the resulting therapy will be successful. Therefore research is intended to generate knowledge so that the diseases of society can be both healed and controlled. (Mouton, 1989: 391; Mouton, 1996: 23)

In terms of epistemology and methodology the social scientists standing in the tradition of positivism have normally accepted the following theses:

- "An empiricist epistemology: the data for research must be obtained through (direct and indirect) observation and measurement of human behaviour.
- A naturalist interpretation of objectivity: as in the natural sciences, objectivity is understood to refer to the attitude of objectifying, i.e. making into an object or creating a distance between subject and object.
- A conception of causality that views causality as the regular relationship (co-variance) which obtains between observable events and which can be formalised in law-like statements (such as statistical generalisations).
- An instrumentalist interpretation of scientific theories: theories are understood as mere instruments of explanation and prediction which do not necessarily refer to any deeper underlying causal processes or structures."
  (Mouton, 1996: 24-25)

In terms of research methodology the positivist tradition stresses: "…experimental control; structured and replicable observation and measurement; quantification and generalisation;

objectivity understood as the objectifying and neutral attitude of an outsider." (Mouton, 1996: 25)

At the level of research this implies a preference for the following methods and techniques: experimental and quasi-experimental methods; survey methods and methods of structured observation; the use of measurement scales and indices; and quantative/statistical techniques of data analysis. (Mouton, 1996: 25)

Epistemologically positivism is the complete antithesis of PR. Almost all the early attempts at PR were as a result of some sense of disenchantment and frustration with insensitive traditional research techniques based on positivistic epistemology. Hence PR's creativity must be viewed as partly a reaction to the restrictions of traditional research methods against a backdrop of positivistic epistemology.

3.2.2 Phenomenology

In phenomenology a comparison is made between the human mind and the study of human beings and society. Therefore phenomenology is based on a mental analogy. Within this focus the human subject is conceived of as a conscious, self-directing, and rational human being. In terms of this theory the purpose of the human sciences is to understand human beings and not to explain or analyse them. (Mouton, 1996: 25)

Phenomenology's recognition of humans as cognitive beings leads it to place emphasis on people engaging in the process of making sense of their life worlds or social realities. Making sense of their life-worlds involves people trying to: interpret, give meaning to, define, explain, justify, and rationalise their actions. Therefore according to phenomenology people are continuously constructing, developing and changing both their worlds and their common-sense interpretation of those worlds and this should form the part of any conception of social science. (Mouton, 1989: 393)

For phenomenologists the only way to understand social reality is through the meanings that people give to that reality. As a result, phenomenologists try to see reality through their informants eyes (Bernard, 1994: 15). The reason for this is that phenomenology lays emphasis on the central role of human consciousness in all social practices. Consequently, any understanding of social reality must be seen in categories of consciousness: intentionally, rationality, meaning, and subjectivity. (Mouton, 1989: 394)

Consequently:

> "The aim of the social sciences is therefore defined as primarily directed towards understanding: understanding of human actors in terms of their own interpretations of reality, and understandings of society in terms of the meanings which people ascribe to the social practices in that society." (Mouton, 1996: 26)

In terms of epistemology, phenomenologists would normally accept the following epistemological theses:

- "An idealist epistemology: data collection should not be confined to observable behaviour, but should also include descriptions of people's intentions, meanings and reasons.
- An anti-naturalist conception of objectivity which lays stress on the idea of inter-subjectivity, engagement and empathy between researcher and research subject.
- A realist interpretation of scientific theories: theories are interpreted to be congruent and consistent with the common-sense concepts and interpretations of the social actors themselves."
  (Mouton, 1996: 27)

Because of the importance that is accorded to the cognitive metaphor in phenomenology it has been associated with the qualitative research approach. Mouton (1996: 27-28) maintains that phenomenology tends to emphasise the following methodologically:

- "Unstructured observation and open interviewing (in order to allow the research subject to define the agenda).
- Idiographic and 'thick' descriptions (detailed in-depth descriptions of small numbers of cases).
- Qualitative analysis.
- Objectivity defined as the inter-subjective and empathetic attitude of the 'insider'."
  (Mouton, 1996: 28)

In terms of data collection phenomenologists favour methods like participant observation, unstructured interviewing, life history methodologies, qualitative content analysis, and discourse analysis. They also use techniques like the grounded theory approach and analytical induction to analyse the data. (Mouton, 1996: 28)

Amongst other things phenomenology laid the basis for PR's appreciation of the fact that realities can and do differ and consequently for the need for individual people to examine their own reality and give it meaning.

3.2.3   Critical Theory

The term critical theory refers largely to the work initiated by the Frankfurt School of critical theorists.   The school originated in Frankfurt Germany in 1923 under the auspices of the Institute of Social Research.   However by 1937 most of the members of the school had moved to the United States to flee Hitlers Germany.   (Romm, 1996: 196; Webb, 1996: 141-142)

It was Max Horkheimer, who assumed leadership of the school in 1930, who coined the term critical theory.   This was partly a discretion on the part of Horkheimer since the Americans abhorred anything vaguely to do with Marxism.   However the name also signified a commitment to explore and develop some of Karl Marx's theoretical insights.   But at the same time, it also signified a commitment not to let Marxism become a dogma in so far as they rejected Marxism's ability to speak with authority on the basis of its supposed scientific status.   (Romm, 1996: 196; Webb, 1996: 142)

The early critical theorists expressed concern about the way science and its concurrent positivist view of the world had become accepted as the benchmark for thinking and acting. They found this trend particularly disturbing when it was applied to social problems and society. Science was defining rationality. Essentially they argued that what was happening was that while science was capable of considering which course of action would be more effective or efficient it was incapable of determining whether the end point was desirable and therefore just took it for granted.   Science was capable of producing the facts upon which social action could be based but the underlying values and the consequent questions about which direction society should be taking where out of its scope. (Webb, 1996: 142)

The critical theorists began to concentrate on the grounds of human thinking, in other words they began to concentrate on the grounds of all quests to arrive at knowledge.   They felt that unless such an exploration was undertaken reason could not be a liberative force in society. Reason as a liberative force could not be grounded in claims to have found a scientific method, which would guarantee the progressive discovery of truth.   They believed that scientific rationality obscured the nature of human truth and its link to the moral progress of humankind. Therefore the critical theorists launched their investigation into the nature of reason as a

liberative force to avoid humanity being regulated within a society administered along scientific lines. (Romm, 1996: 197-198)

At present Jurgen Habermas is the most prominent figure amongst the second generation of critical theorists. Habermas adopted the task of showing that scientific or instrumental knowledge is only one way of thinking and that it is not particularly valuable in giving direction to social action. Habermas felt that unless the quest for knowledge was guided by the human interest in emancipation it could be used to subvert the goal of human liberation. This is synonymous with PRs stated aim of achieving empowerment as a prerequisite for achieving real human development. (Webb, 1996: 142; Romm, 1996: 201)

According to Habermas all human knowledge is always produced for a particular interest or purpose. Basically knowledge is produced because people want to know something. Knowledge is not produced from disinterested enquiry but because people have certain basic needs or interests that need knowledge to be satisfied. Habermas recognises three of these interests, namely: the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory interest. On the basis of these interests he then distinguishes between three types of science, namely: the empirical analytic, the historical hermeneutic, and emancipatory science. (Webb, 1996: 142; Mouton, 1996: 28; Romm, 1996: 202)

The first interest, the **technical cognitive interest**, is the interest in being able to predict occurrences and then consequently to be able to subject them to control and manipulation. All quests to discover law-like regularities in the natural and social sciences are governed by this interest.

Most attempts to discover regularities and make consequent predictions on the basis of these regularities are motivated by an interest in exercising technical control in one form or another. Scientific enterprise that strive to discover regularities through their investigative procedures develop knowledge that will be used for the purpose of exercising technical control and have this purpose written into most of their procedures. Habermas feels that if this interest is concealed, it has dangerous consequences especially when the scientific model that is used to study nature and control it is applied to the social world. This is because the concealment of this interest leads to science being used to gain control over human beings. This is a charge that many PR practitioners level against traditional research in development. (Romm, 1996: 202-203)

The second knowledge-constitutive interest that Habermas recognised is the **practical interest**. The curiously named practical interest is concerned with effecting inter-subjective understanding between the acting participants in society (3, pp45). Therefore those researchers who do cultural science in society by being attuned to the participants meanings, are governed by the interest to encourage forms of inter-subjectivity based on mutual understanding. (Romm, 1996: 203)

Habermas identifies cultural scientific researchers by their claim that the model of the natural sciences cannot be applied to the study of social life. The task of cultural scientific research is the penetration of the minds of those people being researched to gain an understanding of their psychic life. Therefore the aim is to recreate the way the subjects who are being researched make sense of their own life experiences. (Romm, 1996: 203)

However, according to Habermas this approach falls prey to the objectivist illusion. This is the illusion that pervades when researchers get the idea that it is possible for them to gain an objective representation of peoples experiences an meanings without adding any of their own meanings to the process. Habermas believes that researchers cannot discover reality without adding to it from their own experience. It is virtually impossible for researchers to distance themselves from the process of doing research and gaining an objective view of peoples psychic lives, since the researcher needs to bring his or her own meanings to the process to gain understanding. To have understanding both the researcher and the person being researched have to be active participants in the process in order to make sense of one another's answers and reactions. This is very much in keeping with PR. (Romm, 1996: 204)

Habermas believes that the cultural scientific researcher is actually trying to attain a mutual inter-subjective bond that can lead to action between members in society when he or she strives to reach the psychic life of people. Thus the practical interest that Habermas recognises is the interest, "...in the preservation and expansion of the inter-subjectivity of possible action-orienting mutual understanding." (Habermas, 1972 in Romm, 1996: 205)

However, Habermas feels that it is necessary to first uncover areas of distorted communication before the goal of generating inter-subjective understanding can be reached. To do this a critique of current meaning construction in society has to be launched to see to what extent certain culturally accepted meanings are not the result of genuine discursive information but the result of coercion and domination. It is by asking these questions that an emancipatory interest is awakened. (Romm, 1996: 205)

The third interest that Habermas recognises is the **emancipatory cognitive interest**. This interest is concerned with achieving human autonomy and responsibility in the historical process. This interest is in the human species concern with achieving the goals that have been reflected upon through the medium of a universally practised dialogue. (Romm, 1996: 205-206)

However, Habermas warns that if goal setting is reduced to fulfilling the ends of administrators, whose aim is efficiently running systems or maintaining cultural patterns, it can become reductive. Science, which does not reflect upon itself and fails to recognise the interests it serves, can often contribute to this reductiveness in society. As a consequence of this Habermas pleads for a critically orientated science in which the goal:

> "...is to reveal the ideological dependence of theoretical statements which express invariant regularities of social action. The ultimate aim is to transform such relations of dependence." (Mouton, 1996: 29)

According to Habermas a critical orientated science is prepared to openly acknowledge the interest to which it is tied, namely the emancipatory interest. Therefore it recognises that the knowledge generated by this science is not an objective knowledge but one guided by the interest of human emancipation. This acknowledgement leads to a science that can create insights into the distorted interactive networks that pervade communities, thus allowing people to rethink their social practices. (Romm, 1996: 206-207)

The aim of a critical social science is to dispel the variety of ideological distortions that exist both on the level of the individual and on a societal level and in so doing liberate people from their state of alienation through a process of self reflection (Mouton, 1996: 30). In practical terms this means:

> "The critical model envisages that its theories will become part of social life ...through what I want to call the educative role of social theory. According to this educative conception, the function of the social scientist is not to provide knowledge of quasi-causal laws to a policy scientist who will determine which social conditions are to be manipulated in order to effect a particular goal, but rather to enlighten social actors so that, coming to see themselves and their social situation in a new way, they themselves can decide to alter the conditions which they find repressive."
> (Fay, 1975 in Mouton, 1996: 30)

This process is usually called immanent critique:

"An immanent critique compares a social reality characterised by domination with the ideology which legitimates and mystifies that domination. It gives priority to neither social reality nor ideology but focuses attention on the contradiction between them. It shows how that contradiction can be resolved only by consciously transforming the social relations of domination by applying existing progressive ideals."
(Comstock and Fox, 1993: 105)

Because the core concept of the critical paradigm is the idea of transformation through a critique of the alienating or repressive factors that create feelings of alienation, self-deception and false consciousness within people it follows that the vocabulary will contain terms like the following: praxis, action, production, labour, work, emancipation, transformation, liberation, enlightenment and critique. (Mouton, 1996: 30)

In terms of epistemology, critical science does accept some of the basic assumptions of positivism and phenomenology, like both, causal theories based on objective observation and interpretative descriptions based on inter-subjective observations. However the ultimate criterion of epistemic acceptability is not only if social science can explain the sources and nature of discontent but also whether it can demonstrate how to remove the structural contradictions that underlie such discontent. (Mouton, 1996: 30)

To be successful in the critical tradition a theory must not only lead to greater insight and self-reflection but must also help guide social actors to change those factors which oppress and alienate them. Therefore, to be successful, a theory must help social actors overcome their alienation. (Mouton, 1996: 31)

Because of the emphasis that critical theory places on the individuals need for understanding through reflection that leads to consequent action or praxis which results in emancipation it is methodologically most closely represented by the new research paradigm namely, participatory research (Mouton, 1996: 37).

3.2.4 Feminism

When defining feminism it is necessary to recognise that there is not one universal feminist perspective but that feminism consists of many, often conflicting, perspectives. However despite this diversity there are certain common ideas that can be identified in feminism.

- Most feminism's are based on the understanding that women are oppressed and or exploited in some form or another.
- Variables such as amongst other things race, class, culture, religion, sexual preference, age, physical abilities, and their nations place within the international order cause women to experience their oppressions, struggles and strengths differently.
- Feminism's are normally committed to uncovering and understanding the forces that both cause and sustain all forms of oppression.
- Feminism's usually require a commitment from their adherents to individually and collectively seek to end all forms of oppression as well as challenge and transform the systems, structures and relationships that sustain and maintain oppression in its various forms.

(Maguire, 1996: 27-29)

It is that last injunction that elevates feminism from a methodological perspective on how to do research and makes it into an ontology or way of being. Because feminism is an ontology, it leads the practitioners thereof to reflect very explicitly on the methodology that they are using. This reflection is what can elevate feminism into a metatheory.

What distinguishes feminism from 'malestream' research is its focus. Feminism tends to focus on:

- "The alternative origin of problems - raising problems and issues that are of concern to women rather than to men.
- The alternative explanatory hypotheses that are developed and the evidence that is used.
- The purpose of the inquiry - to facilitate an understanding of women's views of the world and to play a role in female emancipation.
- The nature of the relationship between the researcher and the 'subjects' of her inquiry."

(Abbott and Wallace, 1990 in Hall and Hall, 1996: 52)

Methodologically feminism is divided. This is almost predictable since there are so many different feminism's and it is almost inevitable that they will differ in terms of methodology. Some feminists reject positivism and the concurrent quantifiable methods out of hand, favouring qualitative research methods. However, there is a growing feeling that no research method is either explicitly feminist or anti-feminist but that it is the way in which research is carried out and the framework in which the data and results are interpreted that determine whether research can be regarded as feminist. (Hall and Hall, 1996: 52)

Because feminism has a different focus compared to most conventional research it raises issues that are relevant to applied social research. Feminists are concerned with the idea of informants being subjects and not objects of the research. They stress the need for reflexivity in understanding the data generated by research. They also highlight the power relationship that exists in conventional research and the ease with which the welfare of the informants can be ignored by those who have career interests at stake. (Hall and Hall, 1996: 54)

However the biggest contribution that feminism makes is the concern it has with empowerment. Feminists are interested in giving their informants control over the process of the production of knowledge.

Feminism makes a number of contributions to PR. Firstly, the fact that it highlights the plight of woman is significant, both because woman are often an unheard of population, even in PR exercises and because in this process alternative views are highlighted. Secondly, feminism's emphasis on the need for gaining insight that leads to emancipation is very similar to that of PR and makes PR a viable research methodology for feminists to use. Thirdly, similar to feminism, to be a good PR practitioner amounts to more than just applying research techniques but requires a commitment to PR ontology or way of being.

In terms of research methodology both critical theory and feminism make a contribution to PR in that they both recognise the need for qualitative and quantitative techniques in research where appropriate. PR tends to use appropriate research techniques that are 'people friendly'. That does not mean that quantitative techniques are not used. As with feminism, in PR, it is the way research is carried out and the framework in which the data is analysed that makes the difference.

3.3   THE 'COMPETING' METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH PARADIGMS

During the past there has been much emphasis placed on distinguishing between the two dominant paradigms of social science research methodology, namely **quantitative** and **qualitative** research. Often these two paradigms are contrasted as being diametrically opposed. (Silverman, 1994:22)

Mouton and Marais (1992) contrast the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms according to three components that they consider to be essential to scientific research, namely: **concepts**, **hypothesis** and **observation**.

Concepts can be regarded as the words we use to describe an experience. Usually in science an effort is made to be as specific as possible when using concepts. Ultimately there is not ever a true definition of a concept but there is rather the definition we choose to assign to it. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 161-162)

Generally, a hypothesis can be regarded as an anticipation that the researcher has about a phenomenon that he or she is going to study. However, we all have views and anticipations about a variety of things. What distinguishes a hypothesis in scientific research is the degree to which it can be subjected to testing and proven to be either right or wrong. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 162)

There is even a school of thought that in an attempt to be critical does not try to prove or verify a hypothesis but rather attempts to refute the assumed relationship between phenomena and so disprove or falsify the hypothesis (Silverman, 1994: 144-145). This view is known as falsification and is best described as follows:

> "What characterises the empirical method is its manner of exposing to falsification, in every conceivable way, the system to be tested. Its aim is not to save the lives of untenable systems but, on the contrary, to select the one which is by comparison the fittest, by exposing them all to the fiercest struggle for survival." (Popper, 1959 in Silverman, 1994: 145)

Observation can be described as the various ways in which a researcher obtains and records data about a phenomena under study. Again, however, everyone observes phenomena around themselves. What distinguishes observation in scientific research from casual observation is the amount of rigour or control that is exercised to insure that both valid and reliable data is obtained about the phenomena under study. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 162-163 and Silverman, 1994: 145)

Here follows a brief comparison of quantitative and qualitative research according to the main criteria as identified by Mouton and Marais (1992: 157-177).

3.3.1 Quantitative Research

As has been stated, quantitative research tends to form part of the positivistic methodology of social science. As the name states quantitative research is preoccupied with numbers.

Quantitative research can be defined as, "...daardie benadering in geesteswetenskaplike navorsing wat meer geformaliseerd, sowel as eksplisiet gekontroleerd is, met 'n reikwydte wat meer presies afgebaken is en relatief na aan die natuurwetenskappe se benadering geleë is." (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 159)

In terms of concepts and constructs the quantitative paradigm of research is characterised by a need for exactness and a lack of ambiguity. There is no room for double meaning within this paradigm and consequently everything is explicitly defined so that there can be no misunderstanding. After clearly defining a concept the quantitative researcher has to then operationalise it so that it can be measured. To do this, valid and reliable indicators of the concept have to be determined. These indicators are then measured and their incidence is used to prove or disprove the researchers hypothesis. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 163-164)

In quantitative research the hypothesis is usually formulated first. It plays the central role in determining what direction the research will take. Essentially, the hypothesis indicates what the researcher is trying to prove. However, it is important to note that the hypothesis can also be disproved or rejected depending on the results of the observations that have been made during the research. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 165)

In quantitative research observation is usually characterised by the need for objectivity. This implies that the researcher is strictly an outside observer and must minimise any involvement or impact he or she may have on the phenomena under research so as not to in any way jeopardise the outcome and consequently the objectivity of the research findings. To further insure objectivity all respondents are usually randomly selected and are usually required to fill out or are interviewed using a standard questionnaire that has been previously worked out. The observations that arise from this are coded into predetermined categories and then quantified. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 166-167)

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has become more and more dominant in the last few decades almost as a reaction to the erstwhile domination that quantitative research enjoyed in the field of social research. Mouton and Marais (1992) define qualitative research as, "...daardie benaderings waarvan die prosedures nie so streng geformaliseer en geëkspliseer is nie, terwyl die reikwydte meer grensloos is en op 'n meer filosoferende wyse te werk gegaan word." (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 159)

For the qualitative researcher concepts and constructs are terms with a variety of meanings that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Qualitative researchers can subject a concept to analysis to gain a broader understanding of the phenomena under study. The qualitative researcher uses sensitised concepts and extracts to illustrate the phenomena under study. Qualitative research will often rely on the intuitive experience of the researcher to categorise concepts in a study. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 164)

In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research can be vague about its objectives and consequently one often finds just a general research goal in the introduction. In other instances there is no hypothesis or research goal to start with at all. In these cases the hypothesis can often be seen to emerge as the research carries on and can sometimes even be described as the result of the research. Even when there is a hypothesis present in qualitative research one finds that it can often not be disproved or falsified. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 164-165)

In terms of observation the qualitative researcher has far fewer restraints than the quantitative researcher to freely observe and record actions as they occur. This is chiefly because qualitative research is more subjective than quantitative research. This allows the qualitative researcher to be much closer to the phenomena that he or she is studying, even to the point of active involvement. Qualitative research is relatively unstructured and open so that any unexpected occurrences can be accommodated in the research. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 166-167)

3.3.3 Conclusion

If one compares the fore going then it becomes apparent that quantitative and qualitative research are very far removed from each other. However it must be borne in mind that quantitative and qualitative research are not all or nothing options that a researcher has to categorically adopt or reject.

Firstly, there are very few social scientists who are wholehearted supporters of the positivist paradigm and its concurrent demands for quantitative research. Basically, this is because one would be hard pressed to find social scientists who do not subscribe to the view that the cultural world and the natural world have different properties and that it is virtually impossible to achieve total objectivity in social research. (Silverman, 1994: 21 &145)

Secondly, the question arises as to how possible it is for a qualitative researcher to draw comparisons between data without using even the most basic of quantitative terms like for

instance greater or lesser than. At the same time the question can be raised as to whether the quantitative researcher is not being qualitative when he or she starts to make interpretations and draw conclusions about the statistical information that he or she has gained while doing research. (Mouton and Marais, 1992: 159)

There are no real grounds why a researcher should have to adopt a specific qualitative or quantitative stance. The determining factors should be the nature of the subject and what the researcher wants to do. Therefore, it is conceivable that researchers should and could combine both approaches. Instead of seeing quantitative and qualitative research as polar opposites it may be more appropriate to see them as options on a continuum in which various combinations of methods are possible. (Silverman, 1994: 20-23; Mouton and Marais, 1992: 157-177)

However, both quantitative and qualitative research share a common trait. Both are to a greater or lesser degree extractive, in as much as researchers go in, get the information and then leave with it. This process often leaves the subjects of the research feeling disillusioned and disempowered. At the same time neither quantitative or qualitative research has any overt commitment to action or empowerment.

3.4   CONCLUSION

The preceding chapter attempts to provide a background for PR, both in terms of how traditional research was and is being conducted in development and also in terms of the epistemological and methodological research paradigms that influenced it. PR can be seen as a reaction to the insensitivity of traditional research in development with its positivistic epistemology and narrow quantitative research methodology. Epistemologically PR is closely aligned to critical theory with ties to both feminism and phenomenology. Methodologically, because of its preference for 'people friendly' research methods, PR is more closely associated with qualitative research. This does not mean that PR excludes quantitative research methods but uses them where they are appropriate under the circumstances.

The following chapter is an analysis of the 'nitty-gritty' of PR and encompasses sections dealing with: the nature of PR, the PR family, the origins of PR, knowledge in PR, the PR research process and the validity of PR.

NOTES

(1.)   In traditional research the actual people who were being questioned by the researcher were normally referred to as respondents i.e.: the people who are responding to the questions being asked. Conversely, in PR with its more inclusive theory and practice, individuals from a community who are participating in a PR process are referred to as participants. (pp 26)

(2.)   'Outsiders' was a term coined by Chambers (1993:2-4) in one of his earlier works: ***Rural Development: Putting the Last First*** where he used it to refer to people outside the cycle of poverty who where interested in launching interventions to alleviate it. Subsequently he has also used it to refer to the outside facilitators who come into a community to help implement PRA processes. (pp 27)

(3.)   Park (1993: 4) departs from Habermases terminology and simply uses the terms instrumental, interactive and critical knowledge to describe the three knowledge-constitutive interests that Habermas recognises. (pp 36)

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

4.1 WHAT IS PR?

PR has generally been described as an inter-related process, which integrates three activities namely: research or social investigation with education and action (Hall, 1993: xiv). Ideologically this process is geared towards achieving structural change and social transformation (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1996: 40). It creates knowledge, which is used to take action that results in emancipatory and transformative structural and personal change.

> "We should recall that PAR, while emphasising a rigorous search for knowledge, is an open-ended process of life and work - or vivencia - a progressive evolution toward an overall, structural transformation of society and culture, a process that requires ever renewed commitment, an ethical stand, self-critique and persistence at all levels. In short it is a philosophy of life as much as a method." (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991 in Wetmore and Theron, 1997:95)

Box 1: Definitions of PR

Because PR is used in so many different ways in so many different settings it is hard to find a definitive definition of it. Here follows a list of some PR definitions and descriptions.

> "...research which (1) is of direct and immediate
> benefit to the community, (2) involves the community in
> the entire process from the formulation of the problem
> to the interpretation of the findings and the
> discussion of how to seek solutions, (3) is seen as
> part of a total educational experience, which increases
> community awareness and commitment, (4) is viewed as a
> dialectical process, a dialogue over time and not
> static, (5) fosters mobilisation of human resources for
> the solution of social problems, and (6) requires the
> researcher to be conscious of the ideological

implications of research." (from Hall, 1977 in Comstock and Fox, 1993: 103)

"Participatory research is defined as co-operative enquiry by both the researcher and the people who are the focus of the study. Several steps have been identified by its advocates, which involve a two-way educational process at every level. They include: joint identification of the problem to be studied; analysis of the best way of conducting the study; planning the actual work involved; acquiring resources for the study process; implementation; analysis and evaluation of the study; reporting of results; and incorporating the results in future problem solution." (Rowan and Reason, 1981 in Ramphele, 1990: 2)

"Participatory research attempts to present people as researchers themselves in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily struggle and survival." (Tandon, 1988 in Hall, 1993: xiv)

"Participatory research is a way for researchers and oppressed people to join in solidarity to take collective action, both short and long term, for radical social change. Locally determined and controlled action is a planned consequence of inquiry." (Maguire, 1987 in Hall, 1993: xiv)

"The final aims of this combination of liberating knowledge and political power within a continuous process of life and work are: (1) to enable the oppressed groups and classes to acquire sufficient creative and transforming leverage as expressed in specific projects, acts and struggles; and (2) to

produce and develop socio-political thought processes
with which popular bases can identify." (Fals Borda and
Rahman, 1991 in Hall, 1993: xiv)

"Participatory research attempts to break down the
distinction between the researchers and the researched,
the subjects and the objects of knowledge production by
the participation of the people-for-themselves in the
process of gaining and creating knowledge. In the
process, research is seen not only as a process of
creating knowledge, but simultaneously, as education
and development of consciousness, and of mobilisation
for action." (Gaventa, 1988 in Hall, 1993: xiv-xv)

"An immediate objective...is to return to the people
the legitimacy of the knowledge they are capable of
producing through their own verification systems, as
fully scientific, and the right to use this knowledge,
but not be dictated by it - as a guide in their own
action." (Rahman, 1991 in Hall, 1993: xv, not my
omission)

Because PR is made up of a broad and growing family of research approaches and methods
that all share its basic ideology it is not possible to propose one precise and final definition.
Therefore the best alternative is to attempt to describe it.

The main aim of PR is to help ensure a just society in which no groups or classes of people
suffer from deprivation of life's essentials and in which all enjoy basic human freedoms and
dignity (Park, 1993: 2). PR aims to help the poor to be self-reliant, self-assertive, self-
determinative and self-sufficient as explained by Park (1993:2):

"...participatory research acts as a catalytic intervention in social transformative
processes. It assists organised activities of ordinary people who have little power and
small means to come together and change the structural features of their social milieu in

an effort to realise a fuller life and a more just society. In this process, individuals involved may often change by becoming more aware, more critical, more assertive, more creative and more active. Participatory research aims to empower people, not only in the sense of being psychologically capacitated but also in the sense of being in-power politically to effect needed social change." (Park, 1993: 2)

In practice this translates into the following four main goals: better community diagnosis of the problem, efficiency in action, effectiveness in implementation and empowering people to take initiatives to improve their situation (Mavalankar, Satai and Sharma, 1996: 216).

There are several principles that guide PR. Most of them are the product of induction as opposed to deduction and are thus generally the product of trial and error and seeing what works. These principles are:

- a reversal of learning: being willing to learn from the local people, one on one, gaining from their local understanding of their physical, technical, and social situation (Chambers, 1993: 168-217; Chambers, 1997: 156; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100);

- learning rapidly and progressively: with conscious exploration, flexible use of methods, opportunism, improvisation, iteration, and cross-checking, not following a blueprint programme, but being adaptable in a learning process (Chambers, 1997: 157; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100; Mukherjee, 1993: 33);

- off-setting biases: by avoiding the biases of development tourism, by relaxing, listening, probing, being unimposing and seeking out the poorer people and finding out what their priorities and concerns are (Chambers, 1997: 157; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100; Mukherjee, 1993: 32);

- optimising trade-offs: between quantity, relevance, accuracy, and timeliness (Chambers, 1997: 157; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100; Mukherjee, 1993: 31-32);

- triangulating: cross-checking by means of different methods, types of information, investigators, disciplines and respondents (Chambers, 1997: 157; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100; Mukherjee, 1993: 32);

- seeking complexity and diversity: analysing difference instead of looking for representativeness of data or results (Chambers, 1997: 157; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100; Mukherjee, 1993: 32);

- embracing error: learning from mistakes, failing forward (Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100);

- listening, keeping quiet and letting people do things for themselves (Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 100; Mukherjee, 1993: 33);

- handing over the stick: the facilitator must let the people do it themselves (Chambers, 1997: 157; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 101);

- self-critical awareness and responsibility: facilitators must consciously subject their behaviour to examination and take responsibility for it (Chambers, 1997: 157-158; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 101);

- sharing: sharing ideas and experiences between the people and facilitators as well as with other people and facilitators (Chambers, 1997: 158; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 158).

It is not possible to expand on the objectives of PR since it is implied that each separate case of PR will determine and try to achieve its own specific objectives. These objectives are attained by applying the principles, processes and methods of PR to the research situation. (Mukherjee, 1993:31)

Finally PR can be seen to have three foundations namely: attitudes and behaviour, methods, and sharing together (see Figure: 3). These three foundations of PR are bound together through the process of participation, which is the most basic element of PR (INFRUITEC Interview, 1998). Participation together with these three foundations of PR allows those involved in PR to engage in a continuous process of analysis-action-reflection, which is the real source of empowerment (see Figure: 2).

4.2   THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH FAMILY

PR consists of a diverse family of research methods and approaches. This is borne out by the growing array of new names and abbreviations that are continually being added to the list

4.2.1 PR Abbreviations

Participatory research and related approaches have bred numerous names and consequent abbreviations.

FIGURE 3:   The Three Pillars of PR

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ 1. BEHAVIOUR/ATTITUDES                                   │
│                                                          │
│ * Unlearn  * Facilitate  * Embrace error                 │
│                                                          │
│ * Sit down, listen, learn, respect                       │
│                                                          │
│ * Be nice to people          *"Hand over the stick"      │
│                                                          │
│ * Relax          *"They can do it"                       │
│                                                          │
│ * Use your own best judgement at all times               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

            ↕                              ↕

┌──────────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ 2. METHODS                   │   │ 3. SHARING                  │
│                              │   │                             │
│ * Map *Model *Estimate *Compare │ │ *They share their knowledge and │
│ *Score *Rank *Diagram *Analyse  │ ←→ │ analysis.  *We share our learning │
│ *Present *Plan *Teach us *Act │   │ experience, methods, ideas, training. │
│ *Monitor * Evaluate          │   │                             │
└──────────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────────┘
```

(from Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 104)

This can be confusing since almost everyone who uses PR seems to want to rename it to suit the particular way they have used it. It is hoped that this renaming is the desire of the participants themselves and not as the result of outsiders who want to be seen to have 'founded' something new. However one can regard this as proof of the success of PR since it signifies the sense of ownership that participants experience when they feel obliged to create a new name to describe their unique process of doing PR.

Here follows an extensive though not exhaustive list of PR and related subject abbreviations that this researcher has encountered:

DMR	-	Development Market Research (Mikkelsen, 1995: 215)
DRP	-	Diagnostico Rurale Participativo (Chambers, 1997: 104)
FSR	-	Farming Systems Research (Mukherjee, 1993: 26)
MARP	-	Methode Accelere de Recherche Participative (Chambers, 1997: 104)
PALM	-	Participatory Assessment and Learning Methods (Mikkelsen, 1995: 68)
PALM	-	Participatory Learning Methods (Chambers, 1997: 104)
PAME	-	Participatory Assessment Monitoring and Education (Mikkelsen, 1995:68)
PAME	-	Participatory Assessment Monitoring and Evaluation (Case, 1990: 4)
PAR	-	Participatory Action Research (Chambers, 1997: 106)
PLA	-	Participatory Learning and Action (Theron and Wetmore, 1997: 95)
PME	-	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (Mikkelsen, 1995: 169)
PPA	-	Participatory Poverty Assessment (Chambers, 1997: 127)
PPP	-	People's Participatory Planning (Bloem, Biswas and Adhikari, 1996: 141)
PR	-	Participatory Research
PRA	-	Participatory Rapid Appraisal (Mukherjee, 1993: 30)
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Activity (Mikkelsen, 1995: 68)
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers, 1997: 103)
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Assessment (Mikkelsen, 1995: 68)
PRRA	-	Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal (Mukherjee, 1993: 30)
RA	-	Rapid Appraisal
RAP	-	Rapid Assessment Procedures (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 1)
REA	-	Rapid Ethnographic Assessment (Chambers, 1997: 109)
RGA	-	Rapid Gender Analysis (Mikkelsen, 1995: 160)
REFLECT	-	Regenerated Frerian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (Chambers, 1997: 121)
RRA	-	Rapid Rural Activity (Mikkelsen, 1995: 68)
RRA	-	Rapid Rural Appraisal (Mikkelsen, 1995: 67)
RRA	-	Rapid Rural Assessment (Mikkelsen, 1995: 68)
RRA	-	Relaxed Rural Appraisal (Mikkelsen, 1995: 67)

Most of these abbreviations stem from adaptations and combinations of the two most popular sources of PR namely: participatory action research (PAR) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA).

4.2.2 Participatory Action Research

PAR has its origin in the work of Kurt Lewin who pioneered action research in the late 1940s (Voth, 1979: 68-72). At the same time social scientists like Whyte (1991a: 4) were engaging in participant observation (1, pp93) and allowing some of their informants to take a more active role in the actual research. This resulted in what became known as PAR. However, it was being used and developed in the First World to study worker relations and potential innovations in industry. (Whyte, 1991c: 10)

It was only after action research and PAR became popular in Latin America that it began to have an impact on development. In Latin America it was combined with the works of Freire, who emphasised the need to enable and allow the poor to analyse their own reality in a process known as conscientisation as noted (see sections 2.4; 4.3 and 4.5.10). (Chambers, 1997: 106)

Conscientisation laid emphasis on the need for participants to engage in dialogue and to take part in the analysis-action-reflection cycle with the intent of gaining empowerment. This resulted in PAR emphasising the need for people to participate in an ongoing cycle of gaining knowledge about their situation, taking action on the basis of the new knowledge and then afterwards reflecting upon what had happened before repeating the cycle again. (Chambers, 1997: 106-108)

PAR mostly focuses on alleviating the plight of the underprivileged emphasising the need to engage in action that leads to political empowerment. This focus makes it fairly militant and has resulted in it often being in confrontation with both professional and political established interests. (Chambers, 1997: 108)

PAR makes several contributions to PR. The first is that professionals should critically reflect on the concepts, values, behaviour and methods that they use. Secondly, they should learn through engagement and committed action. Thirdly, professionals need to acknowledge their roles as convenors, catalysts and facilitators. Fourthly, recognition that the weak and marginalised can and should be empowered. Finally, that poor people can and should do the investigation, analysis and planning themselves. (Chambers, 1997: 108)

4.2.3   Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRA has its origins in rapid rural appraisal (RRA). RRA originated in the late 1970s when it became apparent that there was something wrong in the way that development was being conceptualised, planned and implemented (Mikkelsen, 1995: 67).   There was growing dissatisfaction with the anti-poverty biases of development tourism and the way that these biases were hiding the worst cases of poverty and deprivation (see section 3.1). There was a sense of disillusionment with both the process of administering questionnaire surveys and the results they obtained. Finally, the value of indigenous knowledge was being recognised and new ways were being sought to tap into it. (Chambers, 1997: 111; INFRUITEC Interview, 1998)

The main sources of RRA were the agro-ecosystems analysis, farming systems research and applied anthropology of the late 1970s. Agro-ecosystems analysis contributed the visual representations and some of the innovative participatory methods of doing research that are still used in PRA. Farming systems research contributed by showing the rationality, experimental mindset and the ability of small farmers to conduct their own research in what was often complex, diverse and risk prone settings. Applied anthropology contributed the use of participant observation, the distinction between the etic and emic and especially the richness and validity of indigenous technical knowledge. (Chambers, 1997: 108-109; Selener, 1997:149-195)

RRA blossomed during the 1980s but it was still a tool used by outsiders to extract knowledge from communities. Both the process and the knowledge extracted was owned and managed by outsiders (Chambers, 1991: 527). However, by the late 1980s the idea of participation had started to impact on RRA. This led to a new emphasis and adaptation of RRA into PRA. PRA placed more stress on the behaviour and attitudes of researchers than on methods. This meant that researchers were continually analysing their behaviour and trying to do better. PRA also emphasised the need for researchers to facilitate or 'hand over the stick' and so allowing the people to do the research themselves, resulting in both new knowledge and empowerment. Finally, PRA also emphasised the fact that the community, as the creators of knowledge, owned it. (Chambers, 1997: 113-115; Mikkelsen, 1995: 68-70; IDSS, Video 1; INFRUITEC Interview, 1998)

4.2.4   Participatory Research

While there are a host of ways of doing PR there is no guarantee that employing PR methods will result in PR. Mouton (1996: 36-37) recognises two central motives that are integral to authentic PR, namely: the **democratisation motive** and the **emancipation motive**.

The democratisation motive in PR can broadly be described as the need for transformational participation in research. Firstly, this implies authentic involvement of research subjects in the design and execution of a project. Secondly, it implies equality in research roles. This means that research subjects are seen as equal partners in the research and referred to as research participants. Thirdly, it emphasises dialogical exposure and encounter between all parties in the research process. (Mouton, 1996: 36)

The emancipation motive in PR is the need for PR to attempt to promote empowerment in all the participants in PR. Firstly, this implies accountability and responsibility on the part of the research team, both insiders and outsiders, to the rest of the participants and the community. Secondly, and most importantly of all it implies the empowerment of the participants. This means that the process of doing PR must be aimed at achieving authentic change in the lives of the participants and through participating in this process the participants must gain empowerment (Mouton, 1996: 37). Research that does not adhere to this criteria cannot be regarded as PR. This means that every research exercise has to be judged on its own merits to determine whether or not it is PR. Simply calling research PR does not constitute PR.

Strictly speaking, the inclusion of RRA and similar research methods in the list of abbreviations is incorrect. Because of their extractive nature, which does not emphasise either genuine participation or empowerment of the participants, they cannot really be considered to be members of the PR family. They were included firstly, because there are so many references to them in terms of especially the use of PRA. Secondly, they were also included because a lot of research that is intended to be PR but that fails to fulfil the criteria as stipulated above falls into the category of RRA.

4.3   THE ORIGINS OF PR

PR first emerged in the mid to early 1970s. Since then, over the last twenty years, it has evolved into an alternative paradigm of social scientific research. Essentially, in contrast with most other research paradigms, PR arose in the South. In fact, as far as is known, the first reference to the term 'participatory research' was made, in the early 1970s, in Tanzania.

However, the development of PR was not an isolated process and there were parallel developments in other countries not only in Africa but also in Asia and North and South America as well. (Hall, 1993: xiiv; De Koning and Martin, 1996: 4; Tandon, 1996: 20)

The reason for this experimentation with an alternative methodology was as a result of the fact that:

- "Quantitative research methods do not provide adequate understanding of reality.
- There is a need for practical research that could serve as a basis for the formulation of social justice.
- A view of human behaviour was accepted that regards individuals as actively creative beings rather than passive objects that should be studied."
(Hall, 1982 in Mouton, 1996: 33)

Therefore, originally PR was seen an alternative research that challenged the premises of neutrality, objectivity and value-free character on which traditional research was based. PR dismissed the dichotomy of the subject object relationship, eliminated the distance between researcher and researched and ignored the narrow-minded reliance on statistical and quantifiable techniques. (Tandon, 1996: 20)

Tandon (1996: 20-23) identifies several historical trends and contemporary tendencies that have contributed to the evolution of the concept and practice of PR which will be examined in more detail.

- *The sociology of knowledge*

The first of these trends was a debate about how knowledge was and is formulated (see section 4.4). By looking at the epistemological formulations of sociology and science it became evident that knowledge of society was conditioned by historical context and that the context was determined by the more dominant groups in society. Consequently these formulations of knowledge tended to increase and consolidate the power of the rich and already powerful to the detriment of the poor who were increasingly marginalised, once again proving the old axiom that knowledge is power. (Tandon, 1996: 20; Holscher and Romm, 1989: 112-122; Selener, 1997: 24-29)

One of the leading contributors in this debate was Jurgen Habermas whose critical theory (see section 3.2.3) illustrated the domination and detrimental effects that resulted from a system of

knowledge production that served the vested interests of the powerful in society and that had as a consequence the further entrenchment of the inequality and deprivation of the poor. Habermases (1972) critical theory with its emphasis on emancipatory knowledge production provided crucial epistemological segments of the foundation on which PR built itself.

- ***The works of Paulo Freire***

Freires (1983) work ***'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'*** had a significant effect on adult educators in that it provided the basis whereby PR could be linked as an educational process within the framework of popular education. By illustrating that knowing and learning are interlinked through a continuous cycle of action and reflection, Freire provided the basis for the idea that individuals could actively participate in their own education as more than mere receptors of information. (Tandon, 1996: 21; De Koning and Martin, 1996: 6; Selener, 1997: 14)

Freire also criticised the aims of conventional research. It was his contention that for people to become liberated they had to undergo a transformation through a process he termed conscientisation (see section 2.4) that would lead the individual to become a critically conscious person. Consequently, Freire criticised any research that did not allow people to think, reflect and act upon their own information and knowledge because in effect they were denying groups and individuals the ability to fight off their inequalities. (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 6; Selener, 1997: 14)

- ***Adult Education***

Adult education played a big role in developing and nurturing PR in its initial stages. Essentially adult educators were caught in a contradiction. They subscribed to and tried to practice a view of adult education in which there was horizontal dialogue between teacher and learner and where the learners were in control over their own learning process. However, when it came to research, they found themselves employing conventional research methods that distanced them from the learners. The one way control, extractive nature and need to be objective all led to a process which had little impact on the adult learner and which in turn stood in contradiction to the adult educators philosophy of education. (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 4-5; Tandon, 1996: 20-21)

Perhaps this is best described by Maguire (1996: 29) as she explains the problems students at the Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst had with doing conventional research, "...many of us grappled with the contradiction of doing traditional, non-

participatory doctoral research or actual project evaluation when the centre's approach to education and development was premised on participatory philosophies and practices. This struggle to find congruency among our education, development and research practices brought many of us to the door of PR." (Maguire, 1996: 29)

This contradiction led adult educators to try to reformulate their research theory and practices so that they would be in agreement with their practices and theory of adult education. Consequently, as has been mentioned, it was a group of adult educators who first coined the phrase 'participatory research'. And it was the International Council of Adult Education that was instrumental in the dissemination of PR throughout the world by means of its national and regional member organisations. (Tandon, 1996: 21)

- *Action Research*

Action research was another trend which made a contribution to PR. Action research, as the name suggests was a research approach that was aimed at more than just the production of knowledge but was also aimed to initiate action and change within particular contexts (see Appendix 1). In doing so action research challenged the idea that research should be a static activity and created the practically applicable idea that acting should form the basis for learning and knowing (Tandon, 1996: 21; Stevens, 1997: 36). As Kurt Lewin, the founder of action research, is reported to have said:

> "There is nothing so practical as a good theory."
> (Reason, 1990: 13)

Action research therefore became a means of improving practice through the implementation of the research process itself and could thus be seen as a form of intervention research. Action research also began to lay the ground work for the idea that the detachment of traditional social research was not such a good thing. Action research, which had become popular in Latin-America, formed the basis for the creation of what eventually became known as participatory action research or PAR (see section 4.2.2) with its emphasis on action as a legitimate form of knowing. (Steven, 1997: 36-37; Hall and Hall, 1996: 51; Tandon, 1996: 21; Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995: 56-61)

- *Phenomenology*

Phenomenology (see section 3.2.2) contributed to the development of PR by providing the means by which experience could be legitimated as a form of knowing. This meant that human emotions and feelings could also be recognised as valid modes of knowing. Phenomenology also gave rise to the idea that experiential learning was a legitimate form of knowledge that could influence practice. This explains the value that PR places on the knowledge and experience of people, who generally have been ignored by traditional social science. (Tandon, 1996: 21; Van Rooyen and Gray, 1995: 88)

- *Participation*

As has already been said (see section 2.3 and 4.5.3), by the mid-seventies the debate around development had raised the issue of participation. This was chiefly as a result of the failure of what had been mostly top down, expert designed and driven development initiatives. (Tandon, 1996: 21-22)

Participation is an ambiguous term in development since it can have meanings ranging from almost compulsory legitimisation of government projects to the other end of the spectrum where:

> "Participation is about facilitating processes whereby people can reflect, analyse, plan
> and take action. It also enables people to develop new, or build on existing skills and
> knowledge and increases confidence. This facilitates the process of empowerment,
> which leads on to potential changes at a structural as well as a personal level."
> (Dockery, 1996: 167)

In the strong, transformational view of participation leading to empowerment, of which PR is part, importance is given to the use of the knowledge and skills of the people who are participating in a development exercise (Tandon, 1996: 22). The practical rationale behind this and consequently PR is simply the following:

> "People who are involved in the recognition of a problem are more likely to assist in
> identifying solutions to the problem. Similarly, those who are involved in the
> identification of potential solutions will be more willing to work towards implementing the
> solutions and institutionalising the selected intervention.' (Kaluzny quoted in Sarri and
> Sarri, 1992 re-quoted in Stevens, 1997: 36)

This is very much in line with the philosophy of the RDP:

> "The RDP is a people-centred programme – our people must be involved in the decision-making process, in implementation, in new job opportunities requiring new skills, and in managing and governing our society. This will empower our people..." (ANC, 1994: 8)

- ***The new politics of science***

Since the time of Newton, science has regarded the world as a mechanical cosmology. In the Newtonian scientific paradigm the world consists of material cause and effect relationships that can be manipulated and exploited. The Newtonian scientific paradigm also tends to follow a fragmentary, reductionist approach where the 'sum of the parts is equal to the whole'. Since just after the Second World War, development has been guided and influenced by Newtonian sciences methodology and consequently also its fragmentary approach. Unfortunately as Kotze and Kotze point out:

> "The simple methodological fact that it is impossible to determine the causal relationships among three or more mutually interacting variables is overlooked by developers who insist on analysing the influence of a variety of contextual and other factors on a development project, programme, policy or strategy." (Kotze and Kotze, 1997: 63)

While the Newtonian scientific paradigm has contributed to production of material benefits through its development of science and technology it has also been responsible for large scale ecological devastation and has also contributed to human and social fragmentation and spiritual impoverishment (Reason, 1990: 10). As a result there has been unhappiness with the fragmented and reductionist approaches in development in general, but especially in sustainable development. As Kotze and Kotze put it:

> "...it might just be possible that the way of thinking of development problems and their solution is part of the problem. It might be necessary to move out of existing ways of thinking; to move out of existing reality and beliefs about the nature of knowledge and ways of gathering it." (Kotze and Kotze, 1997: 63)

PR is part of the new way of doing research.

- ### *The linkage between ideology and education*

The link between ideology and education is a relatively old one and is one of the main reasons why education is regarded as such a powerful force. At present in development large numbers of people are beginning to be integrated into a global education order. The question that remains to be answered is whether these people will be integrated into a education system which perpetuates the status quo and upholds the dominant ideas of positivistic science or whether they will be integrated into the alternative education system which is linked to social transformation based on popular knowledge and popular education of which PR is a fundamental part. (Tandon, 1996: 22)

- ### *Feminism*

As has already been said (see section 3.2.4) feminism has been instrumental in voicing critique of the mainstream ideologies of science and its knowledge systems by illustrating their male bias and patriarchal roots. At the same time feminists have given PR practitioners a reality check by subjecting PR to similar criticism. Feminism's commitment to empowerment and also to being part of an ontology has strengthened PR. (Tandon, 1996: 23; De Koning and Martin, 1996: 12-14; Maguire, 1996: 27-38)

- ### *Indigenous knowledge systems*

According to Tandon (1996: 23) indigenous knowledge systems (see section 4.4.2) gained prominence due to the ecological movement. The relevance of indigenous knowledge systems has been demonstrated through research into sustainable human life that is in harmony with ecological balance. These studies have illustrated the depth of knowledge that is available, often acquired through centuries of struggle and survival efforts. These knowledge systems have gone a long way to proving that ordinary people are capable of performing intricate analysis of their situation. They form part of the foundation of the PR family but especially of PRA. (Tandon, 1996: 23)

- ### *Emergence of new methodological labels within PR*

The scope of PR is being expanded through the emergence of new methodological labels that have arisen recently in the PR family (see section 4.2.1). On the one hand it can prove to be a daunting task to sift through and understand the, sometimes fine, differences between various

PR labels. On the other hand this explosion of new PR labels proves the versatility of PR by showing its practical applicability and capability to cope with new and diverse settings. It also shows the vitality of PR since the act of modifying and renaming PR indicates a certain sense of identification with, and possession of, the process of doing PR by participants, researchers and the research community. (Tandon, 1996: 23)

- *New paradigm research*

New paradigm research emerged from the work that Reason and Rowan (1981) edited, '**Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research**'. This work was one of the first books to deal with what was then known as 'co-operative inquiry' and what was to be known in development as PR. This work provided some of the earliest justifications for and explanations of the use of PR. It was instrumental in bringing together a number of diverse trends within PR. (Tandon, 1996: 23; Mouton, 1996: 31-32; Reason, 1990: 1-3)

As can be seen, PR has diverse origins all of which contributed and are still contributing to a greater or lesser extent to what is now PR. Mouton (1996: 32) is of the opinion that besides the theme of participation running through PR there is also a emphasis on the political dimension of social research and consequently power and that this is what distinguishes PR from other social science paradigms. The origins of this idea are evident if one reviews the above. This is also what De Koning and Martin are referring to when they argue:

> "The common ground in the push towards this practice was the concern with persistent inequalities in the distribution of power and resources, and the processes which help to keep in place dependency and domination in the relationships between privileged dominant and marginalised groups of people. There was a growing awareness that to fight oppression and alleviate poverty one needed to address the feeling of helplessness that is associated with it." (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 4-5)

One of the ways that PR uses to address this feeling of helplessness is to empower poor and oppressed people by helping them to recognise, produce and utilise their own knowledge.

4.4   KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge and information have become key resources in today's society. Even the way we describe our period of time, the information age reflects this fact. The way knowledge is produced and owned within today's knowledge society has created a knowledge elite who have

a monopoly on knowledge production. This has a consequent effect on both social and power relations in society. (Sohng, 1995: 2; Gaventa, 1993: 21-40; Chambers, 1993: 75-76; Selener, 1997: 24)

> "Industrial society is the co-ordination of machines and men for the production of goods. Post-industrial society is organised around knowledge, for the purpose of social control, and the direction of innovation and change, and this in turn will give rise to new social relationships and new structures which have to be managed politically." (Bell, 1974 in Gaventa, 1993: 23)

With the rise of modern science and the resulting advances in technology, knowledge has become a commodity that is regulated by market mechanisms. This has led to the production of knowledge becoming a specialised profession with only experts who have been trained in that profession able to legitimately produce knowledge. (Sohng, 1995: 2; Selener, 1997: 24)

Society, in general, tends to associate modern scientific knowledge with wealth, power and prestige. This forms the basis for the belief in the superiority of modern scientific knowledge and also sustains the idea that it is the only knowledge that really counts. The experts maintain their monopoly on knowledge production by relying on society's belief in modern science as the only model for producing truth. This gives the experts the ability to invalidate other forms of knowledge production and simply dismiss them by questioning their ability to produce valid truth in terms of the scientific ideology they subscribe too. (Gaventa, 1993: 29-30; Chambers, 1993: 76; Selener, 1997: 24)

Elite domination is therefore perpetuated through unequal relations of knowledge. However, similar inequalities apply when it comes to access to information between countries in the First and Third Worlds. The state of data dependency that exists between these groups of countries affords states in the North political and economic leverage, which they exploit when dealing with the economically and informationally poorer South. (Sohng, 1995: 2; Gaventa, 1993: 24; Selener, 1997: 21-23)

To be able to see the production and utilisation of knowledge in PR in perspective it is necessary to first examine the production and utilisation of knowledge in traditional research and in indigenous knowledge systems.

4.4.1   Knowledge and Traditional Research in Development

The following quotation, although quite old, perhaps best illustrates the sentiments that have often prevailed when it has come to the knowledge of the 'experts' in development:

"Here I stand, my name is Jowett

There's no knowledge but I know it.

I am the Master of this college

And what I don't know isn't knowledge."

(Attributed to Prof. B. Jowett, former Master of Balliol

in Hall, 1981: 449)

Initially, developers were often characterised by the idea that they knew what was good for the people they were going to develop. These days there is a growing realisation that the people in Third World countries know themselves what they need. With this realisation has come a change in emphasis as regards the type of information that developers brought to developing countries. Initially developers focused on improving the bureaucracy by importing administrative technology. They did this chiefly because they were of the opinion that the bureaucracy, as the largest organisations in most developing countries, would be the main vehicle of development. Currently their emphasis has shifted to improving the socio-economic context. (Kotze and Kotze, 1997: 62; Mukherjee, 1993: 20; Treurnicht, 1997c: 93-97)

As has been said before, the tools that the early developers used for determining the state of underdevelopment in communities were not very practical. They used questionnaire surveys that relied on quantitative research techniques as well as standardised concepts and yardsticks. This, together with the communication gap that existed because of the top down model of development, resulted in data and information being produced that was too simplistic and elementary to explain the complex relationships and interactions that existed within the lives of the poor. This in turn, combined with the standard use of blue print models of development, resulted in poor policy formulations that did little to alleviate the state of underdevelopment that was meant to be addressed. (Mukherjee, 1993: 20-24; Chambers, 1997: 122-125; Selener, 1997: 16)

Often developers attitudes can be characterised by what Burkey (1993: 54-55) calls 'intellectual arrogance'. He ascribes this view chiefly to modern education, which imparts the idea that knowledge that has not been gained from reading books or experiments does not count. This

attitude leaves other knowledge systems open to dismissal and the people who use them are then easily labelled ignorant. (Selener, 1997:15)

Traditional researchers in development did not believe in the ability of ordinary people to participate in research as anything other than subjects under study. Consequently, the ordinary people were never accorded the opportunity to generate new knowledge about themselves. Rather, they were required to wait until outside elite researchers could come and 'objectively' study them, make policy recommendations about their situation, which would then be implemented by other outsiders who would supposedly solve their problems. This created a situation of intellectual dominance in which the poor were incapable of generating knowledge about themselves on which they could have based actions which would have allowed them to take control over their lives. (Burkey, 1993: 60-64; Chambers, 1997: 128-129; Selener, 1997: 16)

If one looks at traditional research in terms of critical theory (see section 3.2.3), it becomes apparent that traditional research was using empirical analytical science to create instrumental knowledge that would fulfil the technical interest of exercising control. Hence we may conclude with the following quote by Gaventa:

> "A knowledge system which subordinates common sense also subordinates common people." (Gaventa, 1993: 30)

4.4.2 Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The idea that local people can be sources of information is not new, especially in anthropology. Traditionally though, classical anthropologists who collected indigenous knowledge were more concerned with understanding the people they were studying than changing them. However the increased recognition and legitimacy that was accorded to applied anthropology and development anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s allowed social anthropologists the opportunity to start to make an input in the development process. Social anthropologists did this by illustrating the richness and validity of indigenous knowledge. They also helped development professionals to distinguish between the etic and emic. (Marindo-Ranganai, 1996: 178; Chambers, 1993: 82-85; Chambers, 1997: 109-110; Burkey, 1993: 45)

Indigenous knowledge systems are hard to access in comparison with the dominant knowledge systems of outsiders. To gain access to the dominant knowledge system is relatively easy, it is available in the form of books and other information retrieval systems. In contrast, to learn

about an indigenous knowledge system requires actual learning from the people themselves. This is essentially because: "Culture is how people structure their experience conceptually so that it can be transmitted as knowledge (information) from person to person and from generation to generation." (Fuglesang, 1982 in Burkey, 1993: 45)

And to glean and understand the knowledge contained in a specific culture requires the researcher to be immersed in it, which is not as easy as it may seem. Therefore, even the ethnographic literature only covers a small percentage of what is contained in indigenous knowledge systems. (Chambers, 1993: 84)

There have been several terms used to describe local people's own knowledge systems. These include amongst others the following: ethnoscience, people's science, folk-ecology, village science, local knowledge, indigenous knowledge systems and indigenous technical knowledge. Of these **indigenous knowledge systems** and **indigenous technical knowledge** seem to be the most practical to use since they both emphasise the origin of the knowledge and the 'technical' also emphasises the practical aspect of local knowledge. It also implies the idea of a system of knowledge with its own methodology. (Chambers, 1993: 82-83; Treurnicht c, 1997: 93)

There are a multitude of sources of local knowledge that can be tapped to gather a better picture of what is going on in a community. Here is a brief list of sources of rural knowledge that Mukherjee has identified:

-        Local (oral) histories;
-        stories, case studies and portraits;
-        folk-lore, folk-tales, proverbs and poetry;
-        sharing practices and beliefs;
-        traditional management systems, farming practices and local resource inventories and
-        key informants and village analysts.
         (Mukherjee, 1993: 41-43)

It is worth noting that despite their name, indigenous knowledge systems are dynamic and not at all averse to adopting or being influenced both positively and negatively by other knowledge systems. However, the criteria and values that local people use to decide on a course of action is often substantially different from those of outsiders and results in some of their decisions being labelled 'irrational'. Furthermore, the poor's seeming reluctance to adopt new technology

or innovation can often be ascribed more to caution than to ignorance. A mistake at their level of subsistence can prove to be fatal. (Chambers, 1993: 77-78; Burkey, 1993: 46)

Because local people's knowledge is not stored on paper it is vulnerable to being lost through death and needs to be constantly replenished. Observation is the main faculty that is used to both renew and acquire new knowledge. This faculty is often well developed and combined with a keen sense of discrimination and a good memory can provide a functional body of knowledge.

Furthermore, despite the widespread idea that experiments are the domain of scientists, there are many recorded instances of local people using experiments to increase and substantiate their understanding of social reality. Farmers are perhaps the most documented of these experimenters but this should come as no surprise since almost every crop known to man has been the result of similar experiments in the past. (Chambers, 1993: 89-92; Selener, 1997:167-169)

Since local knowledge is usually not committed to paper the usual means of transmission is oral and may include amongst other things teaching, apprenticeships, observation and story telling. New innovations that prove to be good can spread rapidly through a community, although often, the new innovation or idea may be subjected to a small-scale trial run, just to be sure. (Chambers, 1993: 89-92)

However, at the same time it must be noted that local knowledge systems are not perfect. As with all knowledge systems, knowledge is not spread evenly through a community. Often, when outside researchers are trying to gain a better understanding of a local knowledge system they tend to select informants who are very knowledgeable and well informed. This does not necessarily mean that the average person in the community has access to the same or as much information. Individuals ability to generate, implement and transfer knowledge varies. Factors such as the social group they belong to and their economic stratification can effect both the type and extent of the knowledge they have access too as well as their ability to use it. This can result in outsiders overestimating the value of a local knowledge system for the larger community. (Chambers, 1993: 84-85; IDS Workshop, 1989: 37; Selener, 1997:27)

Since indigenous knowledge systems are usually passed on orally and then have to be remembered they are prone to being forgotten and sometimes being remembered incorrectly. The lack of outside intervention also implies that 'pure' indigenous knowledge systems are constrained to using the local pool of techniques, materials and genetic resources. These

knowledge systems are also prone to breakdown when people are faced with a dire environmental crisis or an external intervention. (IDS Workshop, 1989: 37)

Furthermore, local knowledge systems are often lacking when it comes to measurement. Local communities lack the ability to measure with the precision or examine microscopically that outside scientific researchers have. This does not mean that local knowledge systems do not have measurements or that they are insignificant. Some local measurements, despite their crude nature, can contain more relevant data than the more precise measurements of outsiders. Also it is fairly easy to teach local communities how to measure. However, local communities understanding of for instance medicine, to name but one example, is severely hampered by their inability to measure and examine with the precision of outsiders. Taylor and Marais (1999: 39) use a case study about a community bridge building project gone wrong to illustrate the need for both indigenous and expert advice when dealing with new technology. (Chambers, 1993: 93-101; IDS Workshop, 1989: 37)

4.4.3   Participatory Research and Knowledge

Participatory researchers are mostly of the opinion that elite's often control, pacify and manipulate people using knowledge gained through traditional social science. At the same time modern science provides a technical, and ideological means for maintaining that control (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 103). This, combined with poor peoples often low opinion of both themselves and their ability to change their circumstances results in a passiveness that makes them easy to exploit.

Consequently, as Burkey (1993:51) states:

> "The poor, if not oppressed by the more powerful, are oppressed by their own limited knowledge and poverty. Their lack of knowledge and information prevents them from competing successfully for their fair share of resources and keeps them from effectively utilising the few resources that they do control. Although often aware of their limitations, they do not know how to acquire knowledge or gain access to information." (Burkey, 1993: 51)

Therefore, because knowledge is a crucial element to allow people to have a say in how their social reality is put together and run, participatory researchers try to initiate research which is designed to empower the oppressed. They do this because they believe that the right to create knowledge is not the sole prerogative of the elite but that the people who are to be affected by

the new knowledge should have the right to participate in the formulation of the problem as well as the collection and analysis of the data, and they should also be able to decide how to use the new knowledge that was created thus giving them ownership over the whole process. (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 103; Sohng, 1995: 2; Selener, 1997: 27-28)

Within the ranks of participatory researchers there are varying views on indigenous technical knowledge or popular knowledge. There are some participatory researchers who seek a theoretical understanding of local people's problems in terms of the local people's own knowledge of their situation. They feel that theory should arise from the peoples own analysis of their situation thus forming part of their own praxis, and not from the researchers analysis. (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 107)

Other participatory researchers view local knowledge as ideologically distorted. This ideological distortion has clouded people's view of their social reality and of their own capabilities, resulting in a passive acceptance of the status quo as both natural and unchangeable. Consequently they feel that local knowledge, like all knowledge, needs to be subjected to critique and then transcended. (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 107; Selener, 1997: 27)

The fact remains though, that in an effort to do this it is very easy for the participatory researcher to adopt an authoritarian stance à vis à vis the community, stifling their capacity for self-analysis and self-critique and thus perpetuating domination in another form. A situation of intellectual imperialism on the one hand and reinventing the wheel on the other, has to be avoided. A balance is therefore needed between the perspectives of the community and the participatory researcher. This balance must allow a non-antagonistic dialectic or dialogue between people with differing perspectives so that the community's raw knowledge can become systemised by other reflected knowledge. At the same time, control over this process must remain with the community so that the critical knowledge gained through it will remain popular knowledge otherwise it will merely result in further alienation and renewed domination. (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 108; McTaggert, 1996: 246; Selener, 1997: 27-28)

Thus if we look at Figure 4 we see that it is necessary for a conceptual movement to take place through the process of doing PR. This movement involves both pooling knowledge and a shift of attitudes on both the part of the outside researcher and on the part of the participants of a PR exercise. This should result in an increasing expansion of the boundaries of quadrant I and a concurrent reduction in quadrants II, III and IV.

Figure 4: **The Four Squares of Knowledge**

I	II
We know They know	We don't know They know
III	IV
We know They don't know	We don't know They don't know

(From Tolley & Bentley, 1996: 51)

To achieve this requires authentic participation and sharing as equals by everyone who is part of the process (Tolley and Bentley, 1996: 51; Selener, 1997: 36-37). Participation provides people with the means to break the monopolies of knowledge that constrain their lives and keep them underdeveloped (Coetzee, 1996: 146).

This is particularly important because participatory research aims not only to generate knowledge that is capable of allowing people to fulfil their concrete goals but it also aims to generate knowledge and skills that allows people to become self-reliant. Self-reliance is an abstract goal of PR, which can only be learned through doing; an individual cannot make another self-reliant (Burkey, 1993: 50-51). Therefore, the outside researcher must be careful, because as Burkey says:

> "People must have confidence in their own knowledge and skills, in their ability to
> identify problems and find solutions in order to make improvements in their own
> lives....As their self-confidence increases, they can move on to bigger and more complex
> activities. This evolvement of self-confidence, leading to self-reliance, can easily be
> destroyed by outside agents pushing the process too quickly." (Burkey, 1993: 50)

Since learning how to learn forms part of the foundation of self-development it is important that the researcher allows the participants in a PR exercise to determine themselves what they need to learn. In the beginning this can be hard since the participants can often feel constrained by their own lack of knowledge. To overcome this, initially, the researcher will have to assist the participants in determining what they already know and what knowledge they need to learn. However, if the PR process is to become empowering then the participants will have to

internalise the process of determining what they need to learn and then find ways to gain that knowledge. (Burkey, 1993: 52; Selener, 1997: 18)

Because the issues under study in a PR exercise have been identified by the people as real tangible problems that they need to solve, the knowledge and skills that they generate are mostly of a technical nature (Park, 1993: 4). However, these are not the only type of skills and knowledge that are imparted through the process of participating in a PR exercise; equally important, if not more so, are what Burkey (1993: 52) calls the human skills in communication, organisation and management that allow the participants to function effectively in a group.

PR has as its aim more than just the production of mere technical information but also generates knowledge that has social, political and even psychological dimensions. It is the generation of this type of knowledge combined with participation that allows PR theorists to make their claims about: empowerment, critical consciousness, transformation, conscientisation, dialogue, and social action. (Park, 1993: 4; Selener, 1997: 28)

4.5   THE PR RESEARCH PROCESS

Because PR has many variations and because so many diverse groups apply PR to diverse situations it is a misnomer to talk about a PR research process. The term was used merely as a crutch to aid in illustrating some aspects of PR research. One of the hallmarks of PR is its inventiveness. There is definitely no blueprint, model, cookbook or sequence that should or could be followed. These sections should not be seen in any way to be binding or prescriptive. While some of the sections do describe criteria that are necessary for a research process to constitute PR, fulfilling them should be both a matter of trying to do PR and a question of whether the participants want to or not.

Ultimately, PR is like a work of art in progress: others outside the process may observe, they may comment, they may suggest, they may emulate, they may even criticise, but they may never prescribe. Doing PR should be a social learning process that is designed and managed by the participants so that it both belongs to and is uniquely part of them. Perhaps it would be best to start here with what is probably the most sage advice that can be given about doing PR, the principle of the one sentence manual:

> **"Use your own best judgement at all times."**
> (Mikkelsen, 1995: 70)

4.5.1 The Problem

Essentially for PR to begin there must be a problem. This problem, even if it is not necessarily articulated as such, must be a felt problem. A sense of this problem must arise from the community which is effected by it and in whose interests it needs to be solved. This problem need not be social in nature but it must require a collective solution. (Park, 1993: 8)

Often the sense of the problem may not necessarily have been externalised as a consentually derived and objectified target of attack by the community or group of people it affects (Park, 1993: 8). Even if the problem is not articulated or identified as such, it may create suffering and it may engender a sense of anger and frustration and even malaise. Because of this, initially PR may require an outsider to intervene to help with the formulation of an identifiable problem that can be tackled. This is a crucial step in the process since it is here that the trend for the rest of the research process will be set. (Park, 1993: 8-9)

Research is a process of knowledge construction that is the result of trying to raise and answer specific research questions. The creation of a research question reflects a certain perspective of social reality that will be reinforced by raising that question. A specific question will elicit specific answers that will result in specific knowledge. The issue of who is in a position to decide which question is chosen to address or translate a certain problem is important. Clearly then:

> "Who controls the question controls a lot."
> (Maguire and Mulenga, 1994 in Meulenberg-Buskens, 1996: 44)

Participation at this stage is of crucial importance. As Elden (1981, 257-258), who identifies 'problem definition' as the first of four critical decisions in any research design (2, pp93), says: "Research is participatory when those directly affected by it influence each of these four decisions and help carry them out." (Elden, 1981: 258)

Consequently, in PR the problem must originate with and be defined by, the participants themselves. (Selener, 1997: 18)

4.5.2 Initiating PR

It usually requires an outside or external change agent to initiate a PR process or intervention. These outside external change agents can be any concerned group or individual. They could

be a church group, a university, a NGO, or even a community development agency. Usually this group or organisation sends a researcher or a team of researchers to enter the community and stimulate the interest of the community to participate in a research activity. (Park, 1993: 9)

It may seem strange that outsiders have to come and initiate research within a community when the community itself experiences its own social reality and must therefore be aware of it. Unfortunately, it does not happen very often that a community will spontaneously subject their situation to analysis in order to engage in effective social action that will improve it. The main obstacle to a community spontaneously organising themselves or engaging in research is their own sense of powerlessness. (Park, 1993: 9)

The **researcher** (3, pp93) in PR is initially required to be an organising force, facilitator and enabler around which the community can rally to deal with their problem. If the researcher is an outsider he or she has to be introduced to the community so that he or she can build up rapport with them (see section 5.7.1). Ideally the researcher should live in the community. This is necessary because the researcher must build up a personal as well as scientific relationship with the community before engaging in PR work. (Park, 1993: 9)

On a scientific level the researcher must gain as clear a picture as possible about both the community and its members. To obtain a clear sociological and historical picture of the community the researcher will have to go through the available records in search of secondary data as well as conduct interviews, make observations and participate in community life. The researcher will have to also try to ascertain if there were any previous development initiatives in the community and what their effect and legacy was; important lessons can be learnt from this. (Park, 1993: 9; Uphoff, 1991: 489)

On a personal level the researcher should be introduced to the community to gain their confidence so that they begin to trust him or her and accept him or her as a participatory researcher. This is especially difficult if the researcher is an outsider. This aspect of the research cannot be hastened and may therefore take considerable time. (Park, 1993: 9)

It is during this period that the first organisational work is done, when the researcher starts to identify and solicit help from key personalities who could play an active role in the process. Eventually, after the researcher has created enough interest in the problem it will be possible for the researcher to organise a meeting with the interested parties in the community where both the problem and the research process will be discussed. This phase of PR will require the

researcher to have a lot of interpersonal and political skills as an organiser. To get to this initial stage may take a long time. (Park, 1993: 10)

The success of the initial organising phase of the research process will depend to a large extent on the degree to which the community feels and perceives the problem and also their level of motivation to combat it. (Park, 1993: 10)

4.5.3 Participation in PR

As has been mentioned previously (see section 2.3 and 4.3) participation is a jargon concept that is part of the rhetoric of development and therefore has many different meanings and can be used in many contexts. (Oakley et al., 1991: 6; Mikkelsen, 1995: 62; Dockery, 1996: 166; Roodt, 1996: 312; Burkey, 1993: 57)

However, despite the cloud of rhetoric that hangs over the word, it is possible to distinguish between participation as either a **means** or an **end**. As a means participation is seen as a tool for increasing efficiency in project management and implementing development policies. As a means, participation is known as instrumental participation and is seen as a way of achieving specific targets. Instrumental participation is often regarded as the weak interpretation of participation where participation is equated with involvement and sometimes co-option. (Mikkelsen, 1995: 63-64; Burkey, 1993: 58; Oakley et al., 1991: 7-8; De Beer, 1997b: 128-129)

As an end participation is empowering and is seen as a means for achieving ideological and normative development goals like social justice, equity and democracy. As an end, participation is known as transformational participation and seen as both an end in itself and as a way of achieving higher objectives such as sustainability. Transformational participation is regarded as the strong interpretation of participation where participation is equated with empowerment and transformation. (Mikkelsen, 1995: 63-64; Burkey, 1993: 58; Oakley et al., 1991: 8; De Beer, 1997b: 129-130)

Burkey quotes the following 'strong' definition of participation:

> "...the meaningful participation of the rural poor in development is concerned with direct access to the resources necessary for development and some active involvement and influence in the decisions affecting those resources. To participate meaningfully implies the ability to positively influence the course of events." (Oakley and Marsden, 1984 in Burkey, 1993: 59)

From the above it can be deduced that participation involves achieving a situation where poor people gain control and power over their lives. Up until recently the question has always been how to get the community to start this process:

> "...in which the rural poor themselves become more aware of their own situation, of the socio-economic reality around them, of their problems, the causes of these problems and what measures they themselves can take to begin changing their situation. This process of awakening, raising of levels of consciousness, or conscientisation, constitutes a process of self-transformation through which people grow and mature as human beings." (Burkey, 1993: 57)

PR can be a very effective way to start this first step. The concept of participation in PR falls within the strong interpretation of participation. In PR, participation is about facilitating a process where people can reflect, analyse, plan and take action so that they can build and develop both existing and new skills and knowledge. By doing this PR facilitates a process of empowerment that can lead to changes at both the structural and the personal level. (Dockery, 1996: 167; Video 1; Video 2)

Despite this, even if one where to regard the participation in PR strictly in the light of a means it still makes good sense since it follows that people who have identified a pertinent problem that they are experiencing will be more inclined to find potential solutions for that problem and will also be more inclined to work towards implementing those solutions and institutionalising the intervention that has been selected. However, it is hoped that increased efficiency will not be the only or driving motive for initiating PR (4, pp93). (Stevens, 1997: 36; Burkey, 1993: 56-57)

The degree of participation in PR is a complex issue. One can deduce from the name itself that participation in PR is probably the most noticeable aspect of this type of research. Ideally, members of a PR target group should participate fully in every aspect of the research design, namely: initiation, design, data collection and analysis, interpretation of data, discussion, presentation and dissemination of the findings. (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 3; Elden, 1981: 257-258). Unfortunately this is not always the case.

> "...the way of co-operative inquiry - is for the researcher to interact with the subjects so that they do contribute directly both to hypothesis-making, to formulating the final conclusions, and to what goes on in between. This contribution may be strong, in the sense that the subject is co-researcher and actively contributes to creative thinking at all

stages. Or it may be weak, in the sense that the subject is thoroughly informed of the research propositions at all stages and is invited to assent or dissent, and if there is dissent, then the researcher and subject negotiate until agreement is reached." (Heron, 1981: 19-20)

There are many reasons why the level of participation in PR can vary. The research may not have focused on local needs. If the problem that is identified and formulated does not focus on a felt need of the target group then it is predictable that levels of participation may flag or dry up completely. Lack of participation may also occur because the researcher does not want to lose control of the research process and by maintaining control is inhibiting the level of participation. (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 3-4)

One of the biggest constraints to participation in PR is the issue of time and energy. One of the biggest misconceptions about poverty is that poor people who are struggling to survive have plenty of spare time; they do not, they are busy trying to stay alive. PR participants may face constraints in terms of time, energy and finances that can severely hamper their ability to participate fully (5, pp93). Finally, people may just not be prepared to take the risk. (Pratt and Loizos, 1992: 10-11; De Koning and Martin, 1996: 3-4; Martin, 1996: 87; Ramphele, 1990: 8)

To overcome this the researcher has to consult participants to determine and negotiate what type and level of participation will be employed in that particular PR process in the form of a social contract. In essence this process must also be participatory. Once there is clarity about what is going on, efforts can be set in motion to help overcome both the real and perceived constraints that have been identified. To a large extent the level of effective participation in a group will be determined by the level of internal organisation in a **target group** (6, pp93). (De Koning and Martin, 1996: 4; Martin, 1996: 87; Ramphele, 1990: 8; Pratt and Loizos, 1992: 10-11; Uphoff, 1991: 486-488)

Some authors argue for what could be termed a reality check (Ramphele, 1990: 7-12). Dockery (1996,169) proposes that participation be seen as a continuum upon which there are different entry points that move according to the particular research situation and circumstances that are being experienced. What she regards as important is to look for and facilitate situations where participation may be moved along the continuum towards the ideal (Dockery, 1996: 169). Swantz and Vainio-Mattila express similar sentiments when they argue:

"The crucial criterion is not the degree of participation but whether the planning and action accompanying the research emancipates the people involved, and gives

especially peripheral groups more room for action, or whether the ultimate result is to incorporate the people in plans made from above and to build on people's sentiments of obedience to the authorities." (Swantz and Vainio-Mattila, 1990: 130)

In terms of doing PR it is important to determine to what degree the participants are gaining control over the process over time, if at all. Another question that needs to be answered is to what extent the researchers position of power and control based on his or her perceived knowledge and expertness is being eroded by the participants sense of empowerment (Maguire, 1996: 33). This forms part of Chambers (1993: 201-210) ideas about "reversals in learning" in which he points out the need for outsiders to learn from the poor people they are helping, leading to a reciprocal learning experience. Therefore in PR:

"...while the researcher and the people in the community may not begin as equals, every attempt must be made to progress toward reciprocity and equality as the research proceeds. This can be accomplished by conveying information and skills to the people as rapidly as possible and by maintaining a dialogue with the people about their interpretation of the analysis. In this process both the people of the community and the researcher learn and grow." (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 110)

There are many constraints to participation itself, and even more in PR. Participation is relatively unpredictable and will vary from group to group depending both on the composition and the circumstances they are facing at that particular moment. This makes it hard for outsiders who are initiating a project to plan with or for, since there is no standard defined way that it may evolve. (Burkey, 1993: 59)

A further problem that sprouts from participation in PRs relative unpredictability is the question of whose priority counts, a major development debate itself, as Chambers (1997) argues. Outside initiators and researchers in PR are often in a quandary when they are faced with a situation where the problem that they have been mandated to try and initiate PR around and the problem that the target group wants to give priority to, are different. This is the age old debate about who decides and who benefits from development intervention which Taylor and Marais (1999: 33) illustrate in a case study about a facilitator who ended up with a completely different mandate from the one he expected to get during an initial meeting of stakeholders.

Participation may be inhibited by other members of a community who can feel threatened by both the target groups physical objectives and/or their new found sense of personal power which may upset the status quo. Because successful PR implies a change in economic status it

is almost a foregone conclusion that there will be conflict with other individuals who feel threatened by this. (Burkey, 1993: 59-60)

Another constraint of participation in general and consequently also for PR is the fact that participatory initiatives can take a long time to implement. At the same time it is also difficult to predict with certainty the exact duration of time that participation will require. Planners tend to avoid unknowns as much as possible and this can be a reason for explaining why they are reluctant to initiate PR. This also explains planners preference for RRA with its 'quick fix' approach as opposed to PR which they often regard as a 'hard way' of doing research. (Dockery, 1996: 172)

Many people are also afraid of initiating participation in PR because they fear that it may lead to a situation of dependence. In a similar way researchers may also be hesitant about participation in PR because they feel that it may generate false expectations in the target group. Unfortunately, to totally avoid these situations requires doing nothing. (Burkey, 1993: 60; Uphoff, 1991: 491)

Participation also tends to not 'move money' (Uphoff, 1991: 489). All this really implies is that planners tend to focus more on the technological aspects of a project than on the social aspects in what is generally known as the 'quick fix approach'. Consequently they tend to budget more finances to these aspects in their planning. (Uphoff, 1991: 490)

4.5.4   The Target Group

There is a common misconception in development that communities are homogenous entities in which all the members reside in complete harmony with each other and try valiantly to band together as best they can to stave off the never ending assault from outsiders who are trying to exploit and undermine them in every conceivable manner they can. This idealised perception of community life is known in community development theory as the harmony model. (Burkey, 1993: 40)

Unfortunately the harmony model of community life is false (see section 5.1). Like everywhere else, poor communities are stratified into socio-economic class structures. At the same time the average community can also be divided up into different groups and individuals who have different and sometimes opposing interests (Burkey, 1993: 40-42). This implies that the community can be divided along individual, social, economic, political, racial, religious, age, gender and geographical lines.

At the same time it is imperative, if participation is going to occur in the PR process, that the participants engage in a collective effort. Therefore it follows that for PR to be successful, within such a divided and stratified environment, people will have to organise to carry out activities in like minded groups. (Burkey, 1993: 59)

It is the task of the researcher in the initiation stage to feel out and start to bring together people whom he or she believes will be interested in participating in PR about a particular problem or issue that they feel strongly about. It is important that the researcher gives careful thought to this activity and takes his or her time about it. A divided target group with irreconcilable differences is a certain way to make a PR effort fail.

At the same time it is important that when the researcher starts to compose the target group he or she actively discriminates in favour of the poor (Burkey, 1993: 43). To do this the researcher must firstly have a clear idea of both the position of all the actors in a community and also the interactions and relationships that serve to maintain the particular structure of that community. At the same time the researcher must bear in mind all the anti-poverty biases that Chambers (1991: 518-519) identifies (see section 3.1).

Oakley et al (1991: 184-186) identifies two types of groups that function within participatory development, namely: groups as social action and groups as receiving mechanisms. Target groups within PR fall into the category of groups as social action:

> "...in which groups serve to forge social and economic links between people and can help develop the cohesion and solidarity which are the basis for the groups' taking action. Groups help overcome the impotence of individuality and also to break the isolation that many rural people experience. In this type of group it is important that the approach should be a slow building up of trust and confidence, the development of the groups' structure and the emergence of group members able to take responsibility for future direction." (Oakley et al., 1991: 185)

Unia (1988 in Oakley et al., 1991: 186-187) identifies several characteristics that groups for social action or social action groups have in common:

- "a shared analysis of the causes of poverty and underdevelopment, and a shared belief in the necessity for social change through a process of empowerment of the poor;
- a shared methodology of theory-practice-action-reflection;

- emphasis on creating awareness and building people's organisations;
- a core group of between five and 20 people;
- a range of activities which include non-formal education, street theatre, leadership training and para-legal training;
- activities centred around putting forward demands for such things as drinking water, loans, tenancy rights access to land."

(Unia, 1988 in Oakley et al., 1991: 186-187)

Oakley et al. (1991: 187-188) identifies three key issues, which are crucial to the eventual outcome of group development and also target groups in PR. The first is the issue of group membership. As has already been said it is important to ensure a ideological homogeneity within a target group so that there is a common point of interest that binds members together and that there are as few as possible internal divisions within the group.

The second key issue is the internal structure of the group. This is important if the group are to both develop an identity and to engage in independent action. Given time, this structure will form on its own, usually moving from loose and informal too more formal. However, it is important that this process be allowed to evolve on its own and not be imposed from the outside. (Oakley et al., 1991: 187)

The third key issue is the groups relationship with the external agent or in this case the researcher. If the researcher fails to systematically disengage him or herself from the process of running the activities of PR the participants will never become truly self-reliant and will always be dependent on the researcher. It is important that the researcher let the participants do as much as they can otherwise the process will never become sustainable. (Oakley et al., 1991: 188)

4.5.5 The Researcher

As is apparent from the previous sections, PR does not occur spontaneously within communities very often. It usually requires an outsider to help initiate the process. There is little agreement as to what to call this person and he or she may be described amongst other things as a: development worker, animator, change agent, activist, facilitator, convenor, outsider, catalyst, investigator, PR organiser, or simply as the researcher. This last term may be ambiguous since one of the accepted ideas in PR is that all the participants are researchers, however, **researcher** seems to be the most commonly used term and will be used in this text to

refer to the outsider engaged in helping a community do PR. (Oakley, 1991: 179; Martin, 1996: 85)

The role of the researcher in PR is a very complicated one that changes over time. During the initiation stage of PR, the researcher is required to assist the community to turn what is often an unarticulated problem into an identifiable topic that can be subjected to collective investigation. To do this the researcher must firstly gain an informed and critical view of the daily realities surrounding both the prospective participants social realities and the research issue. This implies gaining as much knowledge as possible about the substantive content issues of the actual research topic. It also implies gaining historical and sociological knowledge about the prospective participants using both secondary sources of information as well as observing and participating in everyday life. This information can then be used to create a community profile analysis (7, pp93). It is this information that will help the researcher to compile tentative target groups to address problems that have become apparent. (Park, 1993: 9; Sohng, 1995: 4; Burkey, 1993: 209)

During this stage of PR it is essential that the researcher builds up a good rapport with the participants since it is a key to facilitating participation in PR. To achieve this it is important that the researcher exhibits the correct behaviour and attitude. It is vital that the researcher is completely honest about his or her motives for being there. It is also important that the researcher shows both a willingness to participate in the daily activities of the people and to learn from and with them. The researcher must also show humility, respect, patience, and interest in what the people are doing. Finally, the researcher must also be seen to have confidence in the participants and their ability to do PR. (Chambers, 1997: 133-134)

To do this implies congruence on the part of the researcher:

> "...congruence between 'the being' and 'the doing', between words and actions, behaviour and intent, between the message of PR and the way the message is conveyed and worked out in the research (and education) process. Congruence is crucial given the normative and emancipatory claims of PR. Incongruencies in self and others can be detected and faced. (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1996: 43)

Once the members of a target group begin to participate in meetings to discuss their collective problem the researcher must also participate to help formulate the problem so that it is conducive to investigation. The researcher does this by relying on the knowledge and

understanding he or she obtained earlier about both the community and the problem. (Sohng, 1995: 4)

At this stage, as the participants start to participate more actively, the researcher should start to act more and more as a resource person, guarding against becoming a 'superman' who does everything. This is the point where the researcher must fulfil his or her role as a facilitator by making it possible for the people themselves to engage in research that results in actions that they themselves have decided on. This allows the participants of a PR process to become actors in their own development process. (Sohng, 1995:5; Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 102)

On a practical level the researcher will need to illustrate various research techniques and perhaps assist initially with the analysis of data. Otherwise the researcher may be called upon to provide organisational training, leadership development, technical training, build internal capacity and external linkages, assist with the exchange of experiences between groups and give general support and encouragement. (Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 103)

Because the research in PR is people-centred and consequently unpredictable it requires a certain flexibility on the part of the researcher since they cannot always rely on procedures. To be able to achieve this it is necessary that the researcher be able to critically reflect on the research process. This will allow him or her to make choices, reflect upon them, justify them and communicate them. This will in turn lead to flexible and creative decisions being made that will avoid the pitfalls of the blueprint approach. In this way PR also becomes a social learning process for the researcher and so forms part of his or her own personal development process. (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1996: 42-43)

The researcher must slowly make him or herself redundant. Chambers (1997: 154) refers to this process as 'handing over the stick'. It is an essential part of the process of doing PR since without it the participants will never gain the self-reliance they need to engage in their own research, planning, implementation and eventually action. This reversal in learning and roles leads the participants to undertake new tasks, learn new things and gain new status, which in turn leads the participants to a self-reflected critical awareness of their social reality. (Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 103; Meulenberg-Buskens, 1996: 42)

Finally, there are the two guiding principles that researchers need to apply to successfully facilitate PR:

"Don't do anything for people that they can do for themselves."
(Burkey, 1993: 211)

and

"...assume that people can do something until proved otherwise..."
(Chambers, 1997: 133)

4.5.6   The Question of Control

One of the objectives of PR is to reduce the power and control that the researcher has over the participants and the process while doing research. Ideally the process of generating knowledge should progress under the direct control of the participants.

This raises questions about the locus of power in PR. Power in research is a dynamic force that moves between the researcher and the participants. It cannot be possessed, it can only be exercised. The question then becomes when and how do the researcher and or the participants exercise power in the research process. (Martin, 1996: 86-92)

One way to shift the ownership of data is to let participants participate in the research using visual and diagrammatic methods (see Chambers, 1997). Because they are easily understood, they tend to level the playing fields, which makes it easier for everyone to contribute (Martin, 1996: 51). At the same time it is also necessary for researchers to actually let participants do the research themselves in a process, as already indicated (see section 4.5.5), which Chambers (1997: 154) calls 'handing over the stick'. This shift is important because it is one of the most successful ways of reversing power and learning in the PR process. It is done by shifting the emphasis: from closed to open; from measuring to comparing; from individual to group; from verbal to visual; from paper, table and wall to ground; from reserve to rapport and from reserve to fun (Chambers, 1997: 154).

However, it is apparent that a certain amount of pragmatism is needed in PR. There is no argument that in PR it is necessary that the participants must gain control over the research process so that:

"...they have succeeded in appropriating to themselves the knowledge and science which the researcher brought. Acquisition by the group of methodological tools, which were once the monopoly of the researcher, prevents the repetition of the dependence

relationship vis à vis those who 'have knowledge' and allows the group to develop, autonomously, its movement of action and reflection." (De Oliveira and De Oliveira, 1982 in Gaventa, 1993:34)

However what needs to be answered is, what control amounts to. It should be possible for the participants to negotiate with the researcher to enable them to have democratic participation in defining the problem, setting up research priorities, deciding how the knowledge will be produced, and finally determining to what ends the new knowledge will be put. If a division of labour is agreed upon a lot of care must be taken to ensure that it does not create relationships of dependence and powerlessness. This will allow participants to maintain control, despite their specific and sometimes adverse situation, to a degree that they can cope with. (Gaventa, 1993: 39; Ramphele, 1990: 1-12)

A final issue that needs to be touched on here is the ownership of information and what it will be used for. It is commonly accepted in PR that the knowledge and information or outputs generated by PR belongs to the participants who generated them. Consequently only in rare circumstances may researchers or other outsiders 'borrow' outputs (Chambers, 1997: 155). If academics need to publish results then they will need to negotiate with the participants, preferably before doing the process of PR, as part of **the social contract** between researchers and participants, to get their permission to be able to use the outputs. This social contract should be seen as a moral obligation, which bestows on a researcher a legitimate mandate to do research within a community. (Tolley and Bentley, 1996: 54)

4.5.7   Research Design and Methods

The next step in the research process is for the participants together with the researcher to decide on what data is to be gathered, how the data is to be gathered and how it is to be analysed. In practice, these three questions need to be confronted together at the beginning of the methodological discussion and not separately as discrete steps. This is because the question of what data and how data is to be gathered is determined to a large extent by how the data is going to be analysed. Similarly, how the data is going to be analysed depends on the purpose and objectives that the knowledge generated from this process is going to serve. (Park, 1993: 11-12; Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995: 58)

The researcher performs an important role at this juncture by illustrating to the participants the logic, efficiency and limitations of various methodological options they can consider, bearing in mind the material and personnel resources they have available. In theory, PR can draw upon

all social science research methods. In practice, because PR advocates participants carrying out research themselves, it avoids methods where there is a separation between the subject from the object of research, as researcher and researched. This does not imply a complete rejection of formal methods, it just means they need modification. (Park, 1993: 11-12)

Methods which are beyond the technical and material resources of participants will also logically be excluded. Ultimately the extent to which participants agreed that a problem is to be elaborated and investigated will determine the methods used. On the other hand, the methods that participants are capable of using should help determine the extent to which a problem is defined. (Park, 1993: 11-12)

PR techniques are intended to serve the purposes of creating dialogue, generating information, providing analysis and assisting to instigate action and mobilisation (Mikkelsen, 1995: 73). Because PR is inventive by nature it follows that there will be myriad's of methods that will be used to gather data in different PR settings. It is not feasible to describe all the methods since the list ranges from adaptations of the conventional methods of quantitative and qualitative social science to the more unconventional methods of PRA. Neither is it possible to prescribe how these methods should be employed since they need to be adapted to each unique situation. The most prolific producer of new methods seems to be PRA (see Appendix 2 for a brief description of some PRA methods).

By showing participants the various research methods they can use, this aspect of PR serves to demystify research methodology and allows them to use this knowledge as a tool of empowerment. Once participants have mastered these methods it is possible for them to investigate their problems scientifically without having to rely on experts. (Park, 1993: 11; Sohng, 1995: 6)

4.5.8 Dialogue

Park (1993: 12) recognises dialogue as the one methodological feature that distinguishes PR from other research. Dialogue is the basic tool on which PR is based. It leads to an interchange and discussion of ideas between the researcher and the participants that is based on open and frank questioning (Burkey, 1993: 62). Park (1993: 12-13) explains:

"As a tool of research, dialogue produces not just factual knowledge but also interpersonal and critical knowledge, which defines humans as autonomous social beings. This is an essential reason for the people's participation in research. It is not

just so that they can reveal private facts that are hidden from others but really so that they may know themselves better as individuals and as a community."

People are normative beings who create their own social reality in terms of both norms and values. Peoples norms and values and thus also their social reality continually change with time. People who share a continually changing social reality are referred to as a community. (Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 90-91)

It is not possible to gain an understanding of a community's social reality without sharing in its conceptually bound nature. Using a universal methodology to come into a community to gather answers to predetermined questions which are then analysed by someone who is part of another social reality will not result in a clear understanding of the original community in question. The only way to gain a realistic understanding of a community's social reality is for the members to engage in an analysis of their own contextually bound social reality using a dialogical process. (Wetmore and Theron, 1997: 90-91; Burkey, 1993: 61)

The process of dialogue relies on a conceptualisation of humans as 'homo dialogicus', where:

"This conception of a person refers to a person's capacity to question and reconstitute those meanings which have become taken for granted as rigidified certainties in society. This implies that people can question a given situation, that they are open to alternatives, that they can make choices, and that they can revise their life-world in the light of their understanding of alternative positions." (Hölscher and Romm, 1989: 111)

To be able to do this requires reflexivity which can be called methodological inter-subjectivity. This implies that a person tries to confront his or her world by making it meaningful. In doing so he or she also comes into contact with other peoples efforts at trying to make their world meaningful. This means that the person has to come to terms with and account for, other people's meaningful visions giving rise to a mutual learning process. Ideally, this takes place through a process of dialogue, which enriches all the participants. (Romm, 1996: 175)

Empowering participation, that is the aim of PR, occurs when participants engage in a process called co-generative dialogue, in which they:

"...operate out of their initial frames of reference but communicate at a level where frames can be changed and new frames generated. Exchange on a level that effects

ones frame of reference is a much more demanding form of communication than mere information exchange." (Elden and Levin, 1991: 134)

Shanmuganathan summarises the essentials of the dialogical approach in PR as follows:

-   "It is based on a participatory principle which eliminates through effective dialogue the distinction between the researcher and the poor although the external researcher may draw his or her own independent inferences from the research;

-   A basic premise is that the rural poor's perceptions of their own conditions are different from the perceptions of outsiders however sympathetic they may be. It is the perceptions of the rural poor that should form the basic point of reference for any analysis. These perceptions can be identified and understood only through intimate and continuous dialogue and joint reflections;

-   A convergence of perceptions between the concerned outsider and the rural poor is possible only through such a dialogical process which is essentially action based." (Shanmuganathan, 1984 in Burkey, 1993: 62)

PR cannot exist without real dialogue. Dialogue liberates participants because it allows them to identify that which oppresses them, reflect on the nature of the oppression and take action against it. Dialogue forms an integral part of participation, social learning, capacity building and conscientisation which in turn all result in empowerment and finally sustainable development (see Figure 2). (Freire, 1983: 77)

4.5.9   Data Gathering and Analysis

In traditional social research, for data to be considered reliable it must be collected using a standardised data gathering instrument across all respondents. To avoid bias the researcher must administer the questions in a uniform manner, maintain social distance from the respondents and avoid elaborating on the content of the questions being asked. (Park, 1993: 13)

In PR the person who is performing data collection is required to explain to the respondents to the best of his or her ability the nature of the data being collected. This is because in PR the validity of data depends on the degree to which the respondents empathise with the objectives

of the study, understand the questions and want to give the correct information as best they can. (Park, 1993: 13)

It is an assumption of PR that everybody who participates is informed of the intent and the logic of the questions being asked to a point where they can share this knowledge with others. To be able to achieve this it is necessary to make data-gatherers feel comfortable and competent when they ask questions to get information. It is also necessary to ensure that the data-gatherers have a clear understanding of the objectives of the questions and that they are capable of conveying this to respondents. It is also important to ensure that the data-gatherers accurately record at least the essence of what the respondents say.

As with research methods, PR uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyse data, but is limited to the extent that the participants must be able to participate in the type of analysis undertaken. This means that easy to understand, descriptive statistics such as the mean, the meridian, percentages, ratios and two way tabulations can be used. Qualitative analysis where data is allowed to speak for itself can also be used. Qualitative data reveals the connections inherent in the stories that the people tell by showing the patterns of events that occur. (Park, 1993: 13-14)

In PR the participants own the knowledge that comes out of the research process. Therefore, it is imperative that knowledge must be returned to them after the process is finished. They should also be encouraged to document, store and disseminate this knowledge in their own language and using their own cultural traditions. This allows the participants to inform others about their struggles for liberation and allows the participants to become researchers and facilitators in their own right. (Burkey, 1993: 63)

4.5.10 Action

Because the actual act of engaging in PR entails participants taking action it can be artificial to separate the act of research from the utilisation of results. Furthermore, in PR, it does not necessarily follow that research will lead stepwise to practical applications. Unlike conventional research, where utilisation of results takes place sequentially after analysis of data, in PR, action may take place concurrently with research. (Park, 1993: 14-15)

The reasons for this is that firstly, the path from knowledge generation to knowledge utilisation can be direct in PR since the same actors can be involved in both activities (Sohng, 1995: 6). Secondly, often what is being investigated is not necessarily a theory but rather the

implementation of a practical idea, meaning that, as new knowledge is gained it will be implemented. (Park, 1993: 15; Sohng, 1995: 6)

However, the research can also reach a crystallisation point where the findings are all brought together at the end. This helps to clarify the social reality, which in turn allows the patterns of social causation to be discerned. This allows the identification of concrete measures that need to be taken to either change the participant's physical reality or allow them to engage in political processes that influence the social policies that affect them. (Park, 1993: 15-16)

On another level, these findings serve as topics of collective reflection achieved through dialogue. If one looks at PR in terms of critical theory (see section 3.2.3) it becomes apparent that PR is aimed at generating critical knowledge that fulfils the emancipatory interest that Habermas recognises. By critically examining their problems and then reflecting on the root causes of these problems people begin to realise their ability to engage in actions that can transform their social reality. (Park, 1993: 7-8)

Action is important to the process of PR because as critical knowledge is needed to engage in action, so to, new knowledge emerges from action. Raising critical consciousness requires more than simply the study of a problem, it also requires action to transform the situation. Therefore the goal of critical knowledge in PR becomes praxis which amounts to more than just simple problem solving but also involves the generation of theoretical insights that allows people to engage in political action that gives them both the voice and the power to reduce their oppression. (Park, 1993: 8; Comstock and Fox, 1993: 111-112)

Burkey (1993: 63) elaborates by stating that:

> "Participatory action research is intended to increase the people's knowledge of
> themselves and their situation and, with this knowledge, gain greater control over their
> own lives through action emerging from the research. Without action by the people
> themselves, research becomes an exercise for the benefit of the researchers only."

Figure 5:   **Participatory Research Cycle**

| ANALYSIS | → | ACTION | → | REFLECTION |

(Burkey, 1993: 64)

For PR to be deemed successful it must result in a self-sustaining dialectic cycle of analysis-action-reflection (8, pp94) (see Figure 5). This cycle is an important measure of the success of PR as an authentic development process because it is through engaging in this cycle that both consciousness and conscience develop, giving rise to a state of conscientisation. It is also this cycle that allows PR to make the claim that it is part of a process of social praxis, which can be seen as the dialectic relationship between thinking and acting that leads to transformation. (Burkey, 1993: 63-64; Park, 1993: 8; Comstock and Fox, 1993: 112; De Koning and Martin, 1996: 6-7; Selener, 1997: 34-35)

This allows the participants to see the larger picture of structural contradictions, which cause their social, economic and political situation. Through this process they also come to recognise that other groups suffer a similar plight which stems from the same structural contradictions as their own. This understanding paves the way for horizontal coalitions with other groups engaged in struggle in the form of political alliances and collaborative ventures, highlighting the need for linking PR efforts with one another. (Park, 1993: 15)

> "...participatory research is a continuous educational process, it does not end with the completion of one project. When successful, it lives on in the radicalised critical consciousness and the renewed emancipatory practices of each participant." (Park, 1993: 15)

4.6   THE VALIDITY OF PR

The results of PR are often questioned by raising doubts about its objectivity and validity. These criticisms stem from the positivistic idea that research which is not objective is not valid. In terms of this epistemology, PR cannot be perceived as objective since from the outset it is motivated by the goal of helping the poor and powerless. Furthermore, the involvement of the beneficiaries (the participants) in the research process also compromises the objectivity of the research. Supposedly, PR can therefore not be valid. (Park, 1993: 17-16; Sohng, 1995: 7)

This view of objectivity stems from positivism's purpose which is to produce instrumental knowledge which is valid to the extent which it can be used by the natural sciences to regulate the physical world (see section 3.2.3). It is not correct to judge the validity of PR strictly in terms of instrumental knowledge. PR also produces interactive knowledge, which is valid to the extent that it produces communal relations characterised by understanding. Finally, and most importantly, PR also produces critical knowledge which validates itself by creating a vehicle for

social transformation and emancipation. (Park, 1993: 16; Sohng, 1995: 7; Comstock and Fox, 1993: 111-112)

Comstock and Fox (1982 in Burkey,1993: 63-64) state this dimension as follows:

> "The validity of the results of participatory research can be gauged first, by the extent to which the new knowledge can be used to inform collective action and second, by the degree to which the community moves towards the practice of a self-sustaining process of democratic learning and liberating action."

Despite this, Chambers (1997: 141-146) does compare some PRA methods that generate numerical data with more formal methods to determine their validity and reliability. From the comparison it can be deduced that, barring bad practice, PRA methods can be as good if not better than the supposedly more objective and valid formal methods.

PR findings are often not necessarily valid for other communities. In an effort to avoid bias in PR findings and to ensure internal validity of findings PR makes use of triangulation. Triangulation implies looking at any problem from at least three or more different perspectives to ensure that the information generated is as accurate and unbiased as possible (Tolley and Bentley, 1996: 55; Freudenberger, 1994: 8; Video 1). Pretty et al (1994 in Keartland, 1997: 117) suggest triangulating information by comparing the results of: repeating the same method between different groups; using different methods to crosscheck information; and monitoring and comparing the differences between groups.

The final, and probability most important, criteria of validity in PR is the degree to which it generates a self-sustaining dialectic of reflection-action-reflection. When the community is empowered enough to engage in a cyclic process of self-criticism and political action on its own, PR has attained its objective. (Comstock and Fox, 1993: 112; Sohng, 1995: 8)

In concluding this section Comstock and Fox (1993:112) state that:

> "...the object of participatory research is not only to generate liberating knowledge and practice but also to initiate a permanent process of action and reflection which leads communities to undertake further analyses and struggles on new issues....Participatory research must contribute to the transformation of the oppressed into historical subjects who are capable of critical reflection upon the conditions of their oppression and autonomous political action to overthrow those conditions."

4.7   CONCLUSION

PR is a relatively new research methodology. It is principally a dynamic method of social research in which ordinary people participate as full researchers in the creation of knowledge about themselves and their social reality with the intention of taking action to change their situation and circumstances. Through this process they become part of a social learning, capacity building and conscientisation experience. This in turn results in increased individual and group empowerment which allows participants the space and opportunity to choose and engage in sustainable development initiatives by and for themselves (see Figure2).

PR has its origins in both the growth of humanism and as a reaction to a general sense of dissatisfaction with traditional social research methods in development. It has given rise to a plethora of derived methodologies, each with their own name and abbreviation. While this can often prove confusing it also attests to the vibrant creativity and adaptability of PR as well as the sense of ownership that participants attain through the process.

PR attempts to address the monopolies of knowledge that result from the disparity of access to and ownership of knowledge which forms part of the social reality of underdevelopment. It does this by acknowledging the value and sources of indigenous knowledge. It also does this by allowing participants to create not only their own technical knowledge but also knowledge with social, political and psychological dimensions that allows them to engage in their own social learning process with its concurrent benefits of dialogue, critical consciousness, transformation, conscientisation, social action and empowerment leading to sustainable development.

In the PR research process the main role players are the participants and the researcher. As the name suggests active participation by the participants is essential. Participation in PR is part of the strong transformational view that leads to action, making it a system transforming process that leads to the empowerment and emancipation of the participants. PR usually takes place in small groups of committed individuals. In PR, participants should participate right from the initial problem identification, they should also be part of designing the research and choosing the methods that are to be used, they should be active in data gathering and analysis and finally they should be part of the action that emanates from the research process. The PR process should result in a continual dialogical research cycle of reflection - action – analysis that replicates itself independently amongst the participants; engaging them in their own unique social learning process that leads them to improving their own levels of capacity building and

conscientisation, resulting in an increasing sense of empowerment and culminating in them engaging in their own sustainable development initiatives.

The following chapter will look at the possibilities for using PR in community development. It will deal with aspects like: what is a community? what is community development? characteristics of community development, groups, in community development, the similarities between the community worker and the PR researcher, participation in community development and research in community development.

NOTES

(1.)   For a more detailed account of participant observation see Pelto (1970). (pp 53)

(2.)   The other three critical decisions that Elden (1981: 258) recognises in the research design are: methods choice, data analysis, and use of findings. (pp 72)

(3.)   In this study the term **researcher** will be used to refer to an outsider who initiates a PR process in a community as opposed to a person who is implementing a community development initiative, who for the sake of clarity and to aid the comparison of community development and PR will be called a **community worker**. (pp 73)

(4.)   On the other hand the solid practicality of this rationale does seem to form the basis for motivating a lot of ordinary people to adopt PR. It seems doubtful that many PR researchers start off proceedings with a new group with a speech on empowerment. (pp 75)

(5.)   The constraints that women face are the most routinely underestimated in this context, especially in terms of finances since their functions and activities within the home are often not accorded a financial value. (pp 76)

(6.)   In this study, to create greater conceptual clarity and assist with the comparison of PR with community development, the term **target group** will be used for a group of people who are involved in PR while the term **action group** will be used to distinguish groups in community development. (pp 76)

(7.)   A common way to perform a community profile analysis is to use the acronym NEROP which stands for: needs, resources, opportunities and potential. (pp 81)

(8.)   This cycle is both referred to as the analysis-action-reflection and the reflection-action-reflection cycle by various authors. It is essentially the same thing. (pp 90)

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Because the basics of community development are well known this chapter will focus on the compatibility and viability of PR as a research method in community development. It will do this by first looking at what community development is and then it will focus on the research requirements of community development projects.

5.1   WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

The term community is an elusive concept that is difficult to define (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 17-19). Parker (1994) illustrates the practical difficulty this poses in practice. According to Groenewald (1989: 259), in a simplified version of Talcott Parsons social systems approach to community analysis: "...community refers to the place where the individual experiences, and has to deal with, the constraints of society and physical environment." Swanepoel (1993:11) describes a community as a:

> "...unique living entity and, like its people, it continuously changes physically and psychologically. It is also in a continuous relationship with its own individuals, its environment and other communities."

Many outsiders who have not experienced community life tend to think of a community as a definable entity in which all the residents live in harmony with each other. This assumption, as stated previously, is known as the false harmony model of community development. It has governed much of community development thinking to the extent where until recently most community development efforts tried to work with whole communities without recognising the basic contradictions and conflicts that existed within them. (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 18-20)

As has been noted before (see section 4.5.4), the false harmony model is equally relevant to PR where it has also resulted in a false assumption about the homogeneity of communities bringing about a consequent lack of cohesion in PR target groups. Unfortunately, development efforts that do not discriminate in favour of the poor in a community tend to end up serving the interests of the more well off. Even interventions that intentionally avoid disturbing the status

quo by following a supposedly neutral approach tend to end up serving the dominant interests. (Burkey, 1993: 40-43; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 3)

It is worth noting that both PR and community development are committed to, and focused on, helping the poorest of the poor. This means that the practitioners of these approaches have to actively seek out and work with the poorest people in a community. Often these people, because of their social position and circumstances, are very hard to work with and it can take a lot of time and patience to achieve even small successes with them. This also implies that, theoretically at least, both approaches take care to ensure that the benefits gained by their use do not become co-opted by the more well off element in the community to the detriment of the poor. This is important since, any effort which leads to an increase in the gap between the poor and the more well off, has to be considered anti-developmental. (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 18-19; Selener, 1997:20)

Therefore, because communities are not definable, isolated, permanent entities that are easy to approach and organise for community development purposes it follows that, as with PR, a smaller grouping, an **action group**, from within the community will have to be identified to be worked with in community development

5.2 WHAT IS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

As with PR, it is not easy to find a definitive definition of community development, despite the fact that Groenewald (1989: 257) describes the literature as being 'littered' with definitions. This is mostly due to the fact that community development has always tended to reflect the view of development that was in fashion at any particular time. Effectively that means that, like the concept of development, our views about community development today are radically different to those of forty years ago. (Treurnicht, 1997a: 25; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 1-14)

Despite this, one of the longest standing definitions of community development is still relevant today:

> "...to connote the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. This complex of processes is, therefore made up of two essential elements: the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the

provision of technical and other services in ways, which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make those more effective. It is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements."
(UNDESA, 1963 in Groenewald, 1989: 257-258)

This definition lays a strong emphasis on the need for participation and improving peoples potential within community development. Therefore, according to this definition, in a similar fashion to PR, community development can be regarded as a learning process that has sustainable development as one of its objectives. (Groenewald and Van Wyk et al., 1995: 12)

Currently, PR and community development reflect the people centred development strategies, emphasis on participation with the aim of creating self-reliant and sustainable development (Selener, 1997: 20). In this strategy development is formulated as: "...a process by which the members of a society increase their potential and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations." (Korten, 1990 in De Beer, 1997: 30)

Both community development and PR regard themselves as social transformation processes that allow individuals the opportunity to unite and through collective participation and own initiative change the structural features of their social reality. At the same time through engaging in these actions and activities the individuals also gain a personal sense of their own worth and their ability to change their environment to better suit their needs. These feelings of empowerment, which can be described as an individuals sense of his or her own physical and psychological capacity to alter their own social reality, are the cornerstone on which sustainable development is built. (Park, 1993: 2; Selener, 1997: 19-20; Happy Valley Interview, 2000)

5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Swanepoel (1993: 113) recognises nine characteristics of community development. Let us now look at these in more detail also considering the relevance and correlation that PR has to them.

- *Abstract and concrete needs*

To start with people in community development always organise themselves around a concrete need. This correlates with the requirement for a target group in PR to focus on a felt problem or need. This is necessary because it would be very difficult if not impossible to motivate an action group or target group solely through trying to achieve abstract needs. However, in the process

of trying to attain their concrete need people also gain abstract needs that they may not know about. (Swanepoel, 1993: 2; Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996:24-25; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 24; Selener, 1997: 18)

Abstract gains are the primary goal of community development and PR. They can take the form of increased self-reliance, self-sufficiency and human dignity. By attaining this goal both community development and PR fulfil the primary objective of development, namely: assisting people to a point where they can help themselves. (Swanepoel, 1993: 2; Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 24-25)

- *The social learning process*

The most important characteristic of community development is the fact that it must constitute a social learning process for the people who take part in it. By achieving objectives people not only gain the objective but also the ability to gain other objectives. In other words, they start to learn how to do things for themselves. This results in an increased sense of self-sufficiency and self-reliance, which in turn results in an increase in people's human dignity. (Swanepoel, 1993: 3; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 24; Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 43-45) (see also Korten and Klauss, 1984)

PR is also expressly committed to a social learning process. The main learning mode in PR is experiential and participatory learning. This is because PR involves participants as total human beings who do not learn through didactic transmission of knowledge but rather through participating in searching and researching with the intention of taking action on the basis of their findings. Thus, PR fulfils the ideal of goal-orientated experiential social learning and transformative pedagogy. (Park, 1993: 3; Meulenberg-Buskens, 1996: 46-47)

It is important to note that self-reliance can only be gained through a social learning process. One person cannot make another self-reliant, a person can only become self-reliant. To achieve this it is important that individuals within an action group or target group be instilled with the idea that it is their efforts that are driving the process.

The social learning process in both PR and community development cannot take place without participation. This participation has to fall primarily into what Oakley et al. (1991: 8-9) identifies as the empowering interpretation of participation which leads to sustainable development (see Figure 2).

This social learning process results in the poor gaining self-confidence in themselves and their ability to help themselves. Again, this cannot be taught, it must be acquired. Ultimately, this results in conscientisation, where people gain a self-reflected critical awareness of their social reality and also the ability to change that reality through their conscious collective action. (Burkey, 1993: 53-55)

- *Collective action/Participation*

Community development takes place in a group context. This is simply because, as stated previously (see sections 4.5.4 and 5.1), it is not possible or expedient to try to organise and work with a whole community. Community development is thus a collective effort in which people who share a similar interest, sentiment or concern form an exclusive action group in order to try to act together and in concert in an attempt to address their need. (Swanepoel, 1993: 4; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:24-25; Swanepoel, 1997: 13)

PR also has a group focus, because it is not possible to organise a whole community to participate. In PR it is generally accepted that participation is meaningless outside the collective context and so, like community development, PR is also orientated around group work. (Burkey, 1993: 59)

- *Need oriented*

To begin with, both community development and PR need to address specific and concrete needs. Neither community development or PR can take place without a need, and until the members of the action or target group perceive it as such. (Swanepoel, 1997: 13-14; Selener, 1997: 18)

- *Objective orientated*

Because both community development and PR are orientated around addressing specific concrete needs it follows that they must also both need to orientate themselves towards the realisation of concrete objectives. It is imperative that these objectives be spelt out to all members of the action group or target group. If objectives are vague or broadly stated it will render collective action impossible in either context since there will be too many different perceptions and interpretations, which will inhibit decisive action. (Swanepoel, 1993: 5, Swanepoel, 1997: 14-15; Selener, 1997: 18)

- ***Action at grassroots level***

Both community development and PR are micro-level, grassroots approaches. Neither can be used as a national strategy in which needs identification and planning have to take place on the national or macro level, nor are either suitable for the creation of large-scale modernisation or infrastructural projects. Both are aimed at addressing the basic needs of the people at grassroot level. (Swanepoel, 1993: 2, 5-6; Swanepoel, 1997: 15)

Essentially, both PR and community development are processes in which the ordinary members of the action group and target group should play the central role. Other elements in these processes like government, experts and the community worker or the researcher should all act as facilitators. If this is not the case then members of the action group and the target group will lose the initiative and the social learning process on which both these approaches are based will not occur. (Swanepoel, 1993: 6)

- ***Community building/Empowerment***

By engaging in community development or PR the action group or target group not only gain in self-sufficiency, self-reliance and human dignity but they also gain in what Swanepoel (1993: 6) refers to as community building and what is also sometimes called capacity building, and empowerment. The lessons imparted through the social learning process of community development and PR also start to have an impact on other parts of people's lives. (Swanepoel, 1993: 6-8; Kellerman, 1997: 53)

The community starts to organise itself more appropriately, effectively and efficiently, allowing them to expand. Its institutions become more adaptable and development orientated which also results in the creation and development of new leadership. New linkages are formed both between individuals and between institutions as well as between individuals and institutions. Linkages external to the community are also improved. Existing leadership is enhanced and new leadership is brought to the fore. Individuals gain specific skills, which they can utilise outside of the community development or PR context, even to the point where they can use them to seek employment. Both community development and PR also contribute to the community in the form of attaining the concrete objectives they set out to achieve. (Swanepoel, 1993: 8, Swanepoel, 1997: 17-18)

- *Awareness*

Both PR and community development are aimed at allowing people to become more aware. This awareness is the cornerstone of Freires conscientisation. By generating self-reflected critical awareness in individuals, people begin to understand their reality. This brings about the realisation that together with like minded others an individual can change that social reality (Burkey, 1993: 55; Swanepoel, 1997: 15-16).

Therefore, the awareness that both these approaches are trying to create in a community can result in it recognising its ability to change its environment and can make it into an active doing entity. (Swanepoel, 1993: 9)

- *Further development/Sustainability*

Successful community development projects tend to spark off further projects and activities. The attainment of one objective leads to the identification of further needs, which can result in community development becoming a continuous cycle. (Swanepoel, 1993: 9; Swanepoel, 1997: 16)

An identical process takes place in PR, where this process, which is known as the analysis-action-reflection cycle, is an express aim by which the success of PR can partly be measured.

As can be deduced from the above both PR and community development are similar in terms of their priorities and characteristics. In terms of the broad characteristics the two processes are interchangeable.

5.4   GROUPS

As has been mentioned above, it is not possible nor ideal to work with the total community in either community development or PR. As a consequence, both approaches focus on specific groups. Following Swanepoel (1993: 12; 1997: 32-36) the groups in community development have been referred to as **action groups** and are thus distinguishable from groups in PR which have been referred to as **target groups**.

Swanepoel (1993: 12-13) recognises various ways in which an action group can be defined or established: an institution or a few institutions with a high level of interaction which share

common interests; a small legal entity; a small geographical unit; and an ad hoc collection of concerned individuals who share a common need and boundaries.

It is important that an action group be distinguished by some type of criteria. At the same time the size of the group and the proximity of members are important aspects of action group composition. Action groups in which members share common needs and objectives will avoid the phenomena of 'free riders'. The action or target group is the entrance point for the researcher or community worker to discriminate in favour of specific groups like for instance women. The size of an action group will also determine the ease with which its members can identify common needs and objectives. Finally, members who are spread over a wide area will find it hard to get together to engage in collective action. (Swanepoel, 1997: 36)

Swanepoel (1993: 14) lists the following advantages of using a smaller or ad hoc group. They are smaller than a community; they have a well defined membership who know each other and who share the same needs and interests giving the group a strong feeling of belonging and making it less prone to hangers on and free riders; leadership is more simple and well developed; organisation, communication and administration in the group is easier; and the social learning process is more meaningful.

Swanepoel and De Beer (1996: 68-69) list eight guidelines for strong and healthy groups:

- A common threat: this can strengthen the group by making it close its ranks, however if the threat is too powerful or occurs too soon it can cause the group to dissolve.
- Active: activity leads to an increase in motivation, while passiveness tends to kill enthusiasm.
- Inner strength: mutual trust within a group leads to inner strength which in turn creates a feeling of togetherness and purpose.
- Group identity: a group identity is formed within a group by having a name for the group, holding regular meetings, having common objectives, members accepting each other and having a common belief in their ability to stand on their own two feet.
- Communication: communication within a group must be encouraged and conflict resolved.
- Leadership: the leadership within a group must be given respect and support allowing them to be efficient and strong.
- External acknowledgement: when outsiders show respect to a group it enhances the dignity of the group and the members.

- Boundaries: a group needs boundaries to keep it together and distinguish it from other groups. By being slightly exclusive, members feel like they have earned their membership and are proud of it.

(Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 68-69)

Both Parker (1994) and Huizer (1997) illustrate the practical dimensions of working with groups in community development and PR. It appears that the logistical dimensions of working with groups are more expressly worked out in the community development literature than in the PR literature. PR researchers should therefore look to community development with a view to incorporating at least some of the ideas in it, when dealing with this dimension of their work. Almost everything that is applicable to an action group in community development in this section can be made applicable to a target group in PR.

5.5   THE COMMUNITY WORKER AND THE RESEARCHER

The person from outside a community who facilitates the process of community development can be known by a variety of names including: community developer, development agent, facilitator, developer and community worker to name but a few (Groenewald and Van Wyk et al., 1995: 9). For the sake of clarity the term **community worker**, as used by Swanepoel (1993; 1997), will be used in this text. This is distinguishable from the term **researcher** which applies to the outsider involved in the PR process.

Like the researcher, the community worker is usually an outsider who is not a member of the community. He or she need not necessarily be a professional, but quite often is. Usually, the community worker represents either a government agency or a NGO. He or she may be tasked specifically with addressing community development or may just, because of his or her position, be suited to initiate community development. (Swanepoel, 1993: 14-15; Swanepoel, 1997: 36-37; Selener, 1997: 35-39)

It is important for both the community worker and researcher to realise that despite the fact that he or she possesses and has access to many more resources than a community it does not imply that he or she is to be the 'saviour' of the community. Both are required to facilitate the process of doing community development or PR without allowing the action group or target group to become dependent on him or her. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 31-32)

To be able to achieve this it is necessary for the community worker or the researcher to have the correct attitude and behaviour. This involves learning to be able to:

- Sit down, listen, watch and learn: learning not to dominate, but to learn.
- Use your own best judgement at all times: relying on personal judgement and accepting responsibility for it fosters flexible and adaptable responses.
- Unlearn: being open to changing beliefs, attitude and behaviours.
- Be optimally unprepared: enter unknown participatory situations with a repertoire and not a pre-set program.
- Embrace error: learn from mistakes, fail forwards.
- Relax: do not rush.
- Hand over the stick: facilitating not leading.
- They can do it: assume that people can do something until proven otherwise.
- Ask them: ask locals for information and advise as well as how they would like you to behave.

(Chambers, 1997: 216)

In PR this is known as the need for congruency. The community worker or the researcher must have respect for people as human beings, as well as for their knowledge and wisdom and their views and feelings. He or she must guard against paternalism and against being a 'superman'. He or she must also be compassionate and humble. Generally, the community worker or researcher must align him or herself with the people and regard him or herself as the people's servant and supporter. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 32-33; Swanepoel, 1993: 15-16; Swanepoel, 1997: 36-38; Taylor and Marais, 1999: 16-17)

As a facilitator, the goal of a community worker or a researcher is not to help the community attain their concrete goals as quickly as possible. The goals of both the community worker and the researcher can be expressed as: firstly, to help the action group or target group to fulfil their abstract needs; secondly, to enhance the social learning process and thirdly, and most importantly, to assist the people to gain meaningful empowerment. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 32)

The community worker and researcher fulfil various roles in an effort to achieve these goals.

- **Guide**

Because the community worker or researcher has a much broader and longer view than the members of the action group, he or she needs to fulfil the role of a guide. This entails helping them to avoid pitfalls and obstacles on their way to reaching their objective without assuming a

leadership role, but simply by giving advice. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996:33; Swanepoel, 1993: 19; Swanepoel, 1997: 40-41)

- *Advisor*

It is necessary for the community worker or researcher to act as an advisor to the action group or target group to enable them to make informed decisions. This does not imply that either one can dictate what must be done, but only that he or she must act as a conduit, channelling information as it is needed and asked for. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 34; Swanepoel, 1997: 41)

- *Advocate*

Both the community worker or researcher must provide the action group or target group with contact, networks and communication to elements in the outside world to whom they do not have access. This can entail being required to act as a conduit of messages from a group to outsiders and also defending their wishes and actions against misunderstandings, jealousy, bureaucracy and apathy from outsiders. To achieve this the community worker or researcher must identify with his or her group, however this does not mandate him or her to take decisions for the group or compromise them in any way. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 34; Swanepoel, 1993: 20; Swanepoel, 1997: 41-42)

- *Enabling*

Both the community worker and the researcher are required to create the space, climate and atmosphere for members of their group to become empowered. He or she does this by allowing the members of the group to participate, take the initiative and take action. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 34; Swanepoel, 1993: 20; Swanepoel, 1997:42)

- *Facilitator*

By fulfilling all of the above roles the community worker or researcher becomes a facilitator. This entails helping the action group or target group to identify their needs; look for and apply their own resources; decide about their objectives; decide the best way to achieve their objectives; and enjoy the fruits of their labour. In no way does this imply that the group helps the community worker or researcher make these decisions for them. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 33-34; Swanepoel, 1997: 42-43; Selener, 1997: 37-39)

It is obvious from the above that the role of the researcher and the community worker are compatible to the point where the two are interchangeable in this context. This makes a strong case for the use of PR in community development.

5.6   PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Participation, as argued throughout, is an important part of both the community development and the PR process. In community development efforts where the goal is to get the members of the action group to engage in a social learning process, participation becomes an end in itself. Without the members of the action group taking the initiative, community development will never get off the ground (Swanepoel, 1997: 4-6).

> "Community development can be a learning process only if the people really participate. Participation does not mean that people should be brought into a project when physical labour is required. By that stage people should already have been involved for a long time. There is no other stage for people to begin to participate than right at the start of a project. People should not only do, but their right and ability also to think, seek, discuss, and make decisions should be acknowledged. The people should therefore participate in the very first survey action to establish their needs and resources, and thereafter never again stop doing so. Only if they participate can they learn to improve on their own action, gain in self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and move towards self-help, be that participation full of flaws and very tentative at first."
> (Swanepoel, 1993: 3)

PR is a perfect means for getting the members of an action group to participate in the first survey action and then continue doing so (Video 2).

It is also interesting to note that the goals of participation in PR are: better diagnosis of the problem, efficient action, effective implementation, and empowering individuals to take the initiative themselves. The goals for participation in community development are: efficiency, cost-sharing, effectiveness, capacity building, and empowerment. Again there is a high correlation between community development and PR. This indicates that PR is compatible with community development in this respect since they both try to achieve the same goals in an effort to realise the building blocks of development (see Figure 2). (Mavalankar, Satai and Sharma, 1996: 222; Groenewald, 1990: 166; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 23-25)

5.7   RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In community development, research has three main objectives, namely: firstly, to establish a factual base or community profile as well as a priority list of problems and needs that the community faces; secondly, to design models and strategies to address at least some of the problems and needs; thirdly, to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the solutions to the selected needs and problems. This gives rise to three types of research in community development that correspond to these objectives, namely: problem-defining research, problem solving research and evaluation research. (Groenewald, 1989: 266)

This correlates closely with the four phases into which Selener (1997: 39) divides the research process in PR. The first phase is concerned with organising the research project and gathering information about the area. The second phase involves having the PR participants define the problem. In the third phase the problem is subjected to critical analysis. The last phase of the cycle is dedicated to planning and implementing a plan of action after which the cycle repeats itself, making it an on-going process.

5.7.1   Contact Making

Contact making is normally the first phase of community development. This phase of community development involves a low-key introduction during which the community worker and the community get to know each other. This phase cannot be rushed and may require a considerable amount of time. Swanepoel (1997: 83-94) records two case studies that illustrate the right and the wrong way of going about contact making in community development. Contact making corresponds closely with the initiation stage of PR. (Swanepoel, 1993: 31-32)

During this phase the first informal research takes place. This type of research falls into the defining the problem category. It takes the form of the community worker getting to know the community and their social reality and becoming more aware of the prevailing needs in the area. This is the same role that the researcher is required to fulfil in the initiation stage of PR. (Swanepoel, 1993: 31-32; 39; Swanepoel, 1997: 77-80; Selener, 1997: 39-40)

The community worker must draw up a community profile from which he or she must make a demographic and sociological study of the area. This entails getting to know the social networks that exist in the community and how the people who compose these networks interact. (Swanepoel, 1993: 34; Swanepoel, 1997: 75-77)

It also involves getting to know the larger environment in which the community is situated as well as other groups and communities who are role players in that environment. This means trying to assess all the natural, social, economic, political, psychological and cultural factors that serve to compose a community's environment. (Swanepoel, 1993: 34-35; Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 6-11)

The community worker must also tentatively start to identify potential resources and the possible obstacles to their utilisation. The community worker does this by assessing the potential human, natural, manufactured and organisational resources that are available and influence the community. (Swanepoel, 1993: 34-35, 61-67)

The community worker must also make contact with formal and informal groups within the community with a view to seeing whether one or more of them could become an action group. He or she must also begin to draw a social picture of the community's needs and the way they perceive those needs. For community development to get underway it is necessary for people to start to think positively about their ability to do something about their needs. The groups of people who start to identify with certain needs and the way they perceive those needs will indicate who the action group will be when the project gets started. (Swanepoel, 1993: 35)

All of the above tasks that the community worker must perform are the same as those that a PR researcher must perform during the initiation stage of PR.

5.7.2 Formal Need Identification

Once contact making has taken place and the community worker starts to have some idea about the possible composition of the action group and the possible felt needs they may be prepared to organise around, he or she organises a formal meeting. This ushers in the more formal stage of research in community development. The type of research that takes place now is both problem defining research and problem solving research. (Swanepoel, 1993: 75-77)

At this juncture it becomes necessary to gain clarity about what the needs of the members of the action group are. Need identification, which falls into the problem defining type of research, encompasses both the informal and formal stages of research in community development. (Swanepoel, 1993: 39-41)

Need identification has to be addressed very carefully by the community worker. Firstly, it is important to note that an action group should address one need at a time. At the same it is also important that the need that is focused on has to be a felt need of the action group about which there is consensus. If this is not so, then the chances are good, that the action group will disintegrate. (Swanepoel, 1993: 51-52)

At this point it may be necessary to use a community survey to gain clarity on the needs of the members of the action group and which is first in terms of priority. This research should also establish the inter-relatedness and causality between needs as well as the variables that influence needs. (Swanepoel, 1993: 39; Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 45-47)

It is important at this stage that members of the action group participate in this and other surveys since it will contribute to their social learning process. They are after all the leading authorities on their own situation. They also know the sources of information much better than the community worker. Finally, they will not arouse as much suspicion as an outsider, when they ask questions. (Swanepoel, 1993: 41-42)

The methods of PR are geared to perform formal need identification with the members of the action group in community development. Per definition the methods of PR are participatory. Furthermore PR methods have the added advantage that they gently and naturally can provide the initial 'take off' that is needed for people to overcome their hesitancy about involving themselves. Time and again methods like participatory mapping have been used to get people involved in participation and on the path of a social learning process.

It may also be necessary to conduct research to establish which resources are available to deal with a particular need and the possible obstacles that impede the use of the resource. Research which is aimed at resource identification falls into the problem solving research category. (Swanepoel, 1993: 40)

It is important to point out that research in community development does not take the form of a once off survey. It may entail many smaller surveys, which are aimed at researching different problems as they come up. This is in line with PR and its commitment to a never-ending cycle of analysis-action-reflection.

The community worker performs certain functions in research. He or she has to assist the members of the action group: establish what information must be obtained; decide how it will be obtained; process and analyse the information; and co-ordinate the research. The community

worker must also ensure that unnecessary research is not undertaken by ensuring that the information collected will be used and by looking up information in secondary sources and so avoiding the duplication of existing research efforts. Again these functions are synonymous with the role that the researcher plays in PR. (Swanepoel, 1993: 42-43; Selener, 1997: 40)

5.7.3   Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

The next real stage in community development is planning, implementation and evaluation. By this time it should be established who is going to be a member of the action group and who is not, needs identification should have been completed and prioritised and the planning and implementation committee should have been elected.

During this phase, research falls into both the problem solving and evaluation research categories. Planning makes use of the results of the problem-defining research that was used to identify resources that can be used to address the need that has been identified. This information is used to formulate an objective and help determine how it will be reached. Again, PR can be used to perform this task which is in line with its stated commitment to engage in research that leads to action. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 49; Konttinen, 1995:15)

The objective that the members of the action group decide on, needs to be realistic. This implies that it must be precisely formulated and it must address the need that has been identified. It also needs to be within reach of the members and they should be able to attain it in a relatively short time. To be able to do this requires a thorough understanding of the resources that are available to the action group and any constraints that they may have on their use.

For planning in the community development context to be successful it must be done on an incremental, short-term basis. The whole process should be as simple as possible with as many people as possible participating so that it can be a social learning process for them. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 48-49)

To be able to achieve these requirements Swanepoel and De Beer (1996: 59-50) propose using a planning cycle (see Figure 6). Implementation takes place when the plans formulated during meetings are put into action, usually before the next meeting. During the next meeting the group will evaluate the implementation that has been done, in a process known as monitoring. Evaluation is an integral part of the social learning process. By assessing what they have done and what happened as a consequence the members of the group learn the impact of their actions which in turn helps them to plan and implement future plans better. It stands to reason

that participation in monitoring and evaluation is essential for capacity building and empowerment. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 51-52; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:54-56)

Figure 6:   The Community Development Planning Cycle
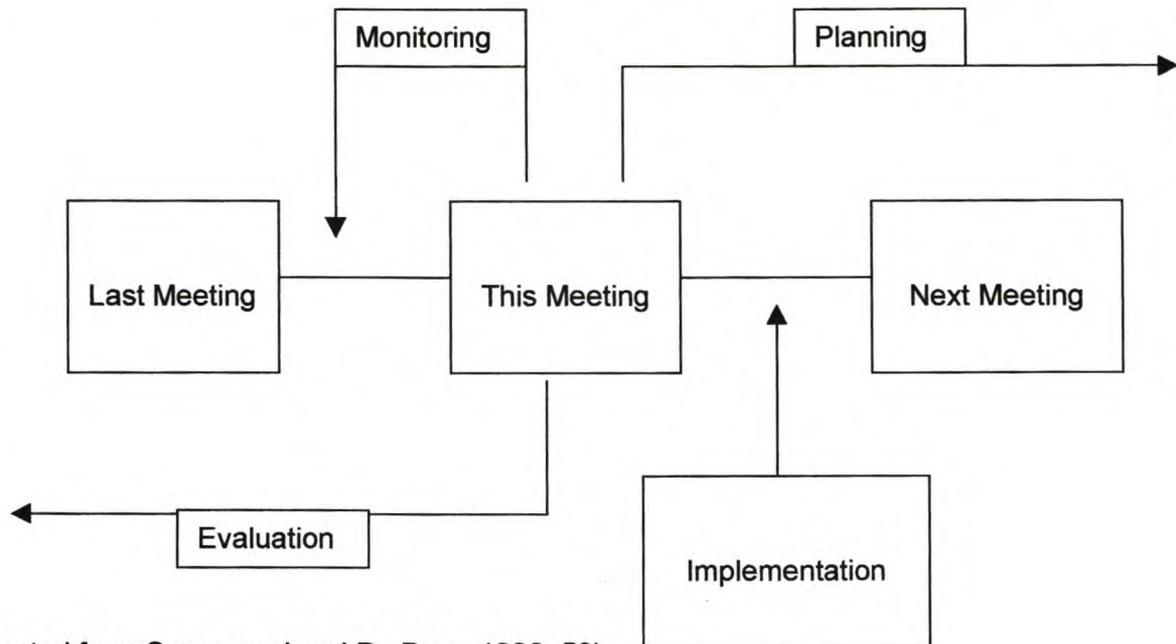
(Adapted from Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 50)

Besides monitoring, the action group should also undertake participatory self-evaluation every couple of meetings. This evaluation should serve to orientate the members of where they stand in terms of reaching their objective and what they still need to do. Finally, when the action group has attained their objective, they have to launch an evaluation of the whole process, reviewing it from beginning to end. This is the culmination of the learning process of community development and again it stands to reason that the members of the action group must participate to gain any benefit. When members of an action group or a target group evaluate their actions they are engaging in a social learning process that builds their capacity, improving their ability to engage in self-reliant and sustainable development initiatives. One of the members of the PR family, PAME (participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation) is expressly focused on dealing with the need for participation and PR in monitoring and evaluation. (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 52; De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 81-84)

5.8   CONCLUSION

If community development is to fulfil its role as a social learning process it is vital that the members of the action group are active participants in the research process. By being active participants in the initial research, the identification and definition of needs, defining the

problem, taking actions to address the problem, the monitoring of those actions and eventually the evaluation of the whole process the members of the action group become part of an authentic social learning process that builds their capacity and increases their level of conscientisation to the point where they are empowered enough to independently engage in their own self-reliant sustainable development initiatives (see Figure 2). It is inconceivable that members of an action group can reap the full benefits of the social learning process that community development has to offer if they do not fully participate in its research processes.

Members of an action group are the people who are best able to perform research since they are logically the most well informed about their own circumstances and environment. They are the people most likely to know where to find relevant information and they are also the most capable of being able to obtain it. They will also be the people with the best ability to evaluate and verify research results. Finally they are the people with the greatest ability to see research and the results of that research in its appropriate context. Therefore, to deny members of an action group the opportunity to participate in the community development research process reduces the chances of that research process producing valid and reliable knowledge that can be used to achieve the concrete goals of the action group. It also completely denies the members of the action group the opportunity to realise the abstract goals of community development because it denies them the opportunity to participate in an authentic social learning process and so will not lead to increased levels of capacity building and conscientisation. This will consequently leave them disempowered and unable to engage in their own authentic self-reliant sustainable development initiatives. Therefore, denying members of a community development action group the opportunity to participate in their own research process can be considered anti-developmental.

There is a high correlation between the principles and characteristics of PR and community development. The basis of this correlation is a similar underlying philosophy of development which can be translated into the need for members of small groups to engage in authentic transformational participation that leads them to a social learning process that results in them experiencing increased levels of capacity building and conscientisation which in turn results in them having a heightened sense of empowerment that allows them to engage in their own sustainable development initiatives (see Figure 2). This, combined with the fact that PR is more than adequately able to fulfil community developments research requirements leads this researcher to conclude that PR is compatible with and beneficial to the practice and process of doing research in community development and in that capacity plays a vital role in helping community development achieve its goals and objectives.

The following Chapter will look at the ways in which both community development and PR can be assisted on the macro level through the use of using the requirements of the people-centred development approach and the social learning approach.

CHAPTER 6

THE INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Community development and PR are micro level, grassroot development initiatives. However, to a large extent their success is dependent on the level of expertise with which national and local level institutions lend them financial, infrastructural and management support and the degree to which this support is appropriate to their basic philosophy of people-centred development that emphasises participation and social learning.

Rondinelli (1979 in De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 33-34) identifies several characteristics that help make organisational networks appropriate. He feels that to be appropriate an organisation needs to be designed and built in conjunction with local people so that its arrangements, practices and behaviour are culturally acceptable to them and so that it can adapt itself to their requirements and the wide variety of problems and conditions they face on the local level.

The following sections will look at how institutions can give community development and PR appropriate support that adheres to and supports the requirements of the people centered development, participatory and social learning process approaches, of which community development and PR form part.

6.1   PEOPLE- CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

Both community development and PR are part of the people-centered development approach.
In the people-centred development approach a development institution is required to become an enabler. This implies that the institution must move away from resource management and service delivery and concentrate more on capacity building and support. The poor are encouraged to address their own needs. People's creative initiative is regarded as the major development resource at hand. The main objective of this type of development becomes the mental as well as the physical well being of the people. (De Beer, 1997a: 30; Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 36)

To be able to do this a development institution has to be able to adhere to the following principles. The assistance it provides to each individual group in the community should be specifically designed and managed to suit the particular situation and changing circumstances

of that group with the emphasis being placed on allowing the community to manage and control the resource to the point where they are accorded legal confirmation and control over it. The needs and preferences of the beneficiaries have to be ascertained before designing facilities and can only be implemented if representatives from the community group formally accept them. Actions should be launched from within existing social and organisational structures where possible and should be of a bottom–up participatory nature. (From Korten, 1991 in De Beer, 1997a: 30-31)

However institutions supporting community development and PR must go even further than that since it is the view of the people-centred development approach that for development to succeed people have: "...to exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities, the people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information, and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable." (Korten, 1990 in Roodt, 1996: 318)

For community development and PR to succeed, the people-centred development approach has to be translated at the national level into a development policy that has the following objectives:

- It must be human-centered so that it will support and promote human development.
- It must be aimed at empowering communities to the point where they can take responsibility for and have access to the means which they need to bring about self-sustainable community development.
- It must encourage sustainable development so that the use and preservation of natural resources is ensured for present and future generations.
- It must be achievable and obtainable within the limited (financial) resources that the country possesses.
- It must build on and expand the existing infrastructure.
  (Swanepoel and De Beer, 1996: 3-5)

In the people-centred development strategy, institutions play an important role. Not as 'givers of good things" but as an enablers that allow grassroots development initiatives, like community development and PR, the scope and support to engage in participatory development that leads to a social learning process that increases the levels of capacity building and conscientisation which in turn results in empowerment and finally sustainable development.

6.2   PARTICIPATION

Besides committing themselves to the people-centred and social learning development approaches, agencies and institutions that implement community development and PR have to have an overt commitment to participatory approaches.   Participation places unexpected and often diverse demands on the bureaucracies of implementing agencies and institutions. Participatory approaches challenge the bureaucracies of NGOs, government departments and donor agencies by: revealing that local peoples priorities are different from those that were supposed for them; generating diverse demand and actions that do not fit top-down packages; making planned targets hard to meet; slowing the disbursement of funds; increasing spending on personnel and logistics and reducing spending on hardware; and generating benefits that are hard to inspect, measure or count. (Chambers, 1997: 221)

Participation at the lower levels also places demands on the higher levels of bureaucracies by changing: reward systems, upper-lower relationships, values and personal interactions, planning and procurement procedures, and budgeting.   The challenge is to address these problems and transform these organisations at all levels so that they become learning organisations in which people are continually learning how to learn together.   This is important, because participation at the lower levels is insecure without participation higher up. (Chambers, 1997: 221-226)

It is also important for implementing organisations and institutions to make their interventions conducive to, and supportive of, participatory approaches at the lower levels.   To do this, Chambers (1997: 226-227), recognises six prescriptions, namely:

- Committing with continuity: being prepared to provide a favourable policy environment and staff availability for a number of years or even decades.
- Networking with allies: by networking, change in one organisation can lead to learning and change in others.
- Starting small and slow: gradual evolution is more productive that abrupt moves.
- Funding flexibly: funding should be provided according to emerging needs and opportunities and should make allowances for change in direction and priority.
- Training encouraging and supporting grass-roots staff: efforts expended on the grass-roots staff are important, since they are the ones really doing the work.
- Building up and out from grass-roots success: done properly, over time, participatory approaches become easy to replicate through example and enthusiasm.

Participation is very important in community development and PR approaches. It is the foundation on which these two development approaches are based (see Figure 2). Institutions which implement community development and PR should make every effort to ensure that they realise their participatory nature since without participation neither approach will fulfil its objectives of being a social learning process that results in empowerment and sustainable development for the participants.

6.3   THE SOCIAL LEARNING PROCESS APPROACH

Because both community development and PR are committed to participation, they result in a social learning process that combined with capacity building and conscientisation culminates in an increased level of empowerment that leads to sustainable development (see Figure 2). For a social learning process approach in development to succeed it requires close interaction between the following three elements:

-       The planning and design of the programme.
-       The programmes implementing organisations.
-       The programmes intended beneficiaries.
        (Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 44)

To achieve this closeness there has to be consensus between the following:

-       The people and the programme: The needs of the target group and the output or results of the programme have to be in line with each other.
-       The people and the organisation: The way the people formulate their needs and the demands they make and the organisations decision-making process has to be in line with one another.
-       The programme and the organisation: The organisation responsible for reaching the objectives of the programme has to have the capacity to be able to deliver.
        (De Beer, 1997a: 28-29; Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 43-44)

In order to be able to achieve the above fit the learning process approach requires:"...organisations with a well developed capacity for anticipatory adaptation -- organisations that (a) embrace error; (b) plan with the people; and (c) link knowledge building with action." (Korten, 1980 in De Beer, 1997a: 29)

For the social learning process approach to succeed there have to be vertical support links between the local organisation and the institution funding the project which must accept that the social learning process approach does not lend itself to rapid results. The institution should endeavour to maintain a continuity of competent personnel who are capable observers. It should also endeavour to pursue a well-managed decentralisation policy with good vertical and horizontal co-ordination. Finally, the institution should be able to allow experimentation and failure to take place and learn from the results. (Kotze and Kellerman, 1997: 45)

6.4   CONCLUSION

The success or failure of community development and PR initiatives is dependent on the degree of institutional support that they receive. Institutions that wish to support community development and PR must express this support in a commitment to a people-centred, participatory, social learning, development approach.

Ultimately institutions which wish to help community development and PR must also share their commitment to their primary objective. Their primary objective is to facilitate a participatory development process which leads to increased levels of social learning, capacity building and conscientisation that results in a heightened sense of empowerment to the point where participants can engage in their own authentic, self-determined, self reliant, sustainable, development initiatives.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1   CONCLUSION

This study commenced with the research question in the first chapter that asked: **Is participatory research able to fulfil the research needs of community development?**

The second chapter dealt with the concept of development. It started by illustrating the degree to which the concept of development has evolved over the last fifty years, paying particular attention to the evolution from modernisation to a more humanistic view of development which forms the backdrop against which PR has its origin. The next three sections in that chapter were dedicated to explaining the interaction between the various building blocks of development, which were linked into a functional model (see Figure 2).

The third chapter in this study first dealt with traditional research in development and then carried on to address the metatheoretical research paradigms in which PR has its epistemological basis and culminated in a brief look at the two competing methodological research paradigms. The first section which highlighted the basic shortcomings of traditional research was used to explain the need for an alternative research methodology that treated people as equals and not as objects that are to be subjected to research. The second section looked at the major metatheories that directly or indirectly form the epistemological basis for PR, namely: positivism; phenomenology; critical theory and feminism.

The fourth chapter deals exclusively with PR. The first section in this chapter attempts to define PR research methodology. The second section is dedicated to attempting to clarify the various abbreviations that abound in PR literature and illustrate some of the better known members of the PR family. The third section deals wit the origin of PR. The fourth section deals with knowledge by first looking at the way knowledge was treated in traditional research, then at indigenous knowledge and finally at the way knowledge is created in PR. The fifth section takes an in depth look at the PR research process. Cumulatively it deals not only with the PR research process but also with what makes PR into a participation based social praxis that leads to a process of social learning, capacity building and conscientisation that contributes to an increased sense of empowerment in participants of PR and allows them to engage in their own self reliant sustainable development initiatives.

The fifth chapter deals with the research requirements of community development and to what degree PR is capable of fulfilling those requirements. The first two sections of this chapter deal with the concepts of community and community development. The third section looks at the characteristics of community development and finds a high correlation with the characteristics of PR to the point where they are almost interchangeable. The fourth section deals with group work and again there is a correlation between the requirements of community development and PR. The fifth section compares the role of the community worker and the researcher, and finds their tasks in research to be very similar. The sixth section deals with participation in community development and PR and finds that both development initiatives are aimed at using transformational participation that leads to a social learning process that results in increased empowerment for the participants. The final section deals with the research process in community development and PRs compatibility to it. From this comparison it is concluded that besides the fact that PR is highly compatible with and beneficial to community development it is also more than able to accommodate the research requirements of community development.

The sixth chapter looks at organisational strategies that institutions can use to enhance community development and PR in development. The first section looks at the people-centred development strategy. The second section looks at the ways in which institutions can enhance participation in PR and community development. The third and final section looks at ways in which institutions can bolster the social learning process approach within community development and PR.

It can be concluded, that PR is compatible with community development, and that it can be used to fulfil community development research requirements. This was proven by means of a comparison between PR and community development, both in terms of their general philosophy as well as the ability of PR to fulfil the goals and objectives of community development research. This is chiefly the result of the fact that both these development initiatives share a basic underlying philosophy, Namely: a commitment to participation that results in a social learning process, capacity building and conscientisation which all together contribute to an increased sense of empowerment which in turn forms the basis on which participants can engage on their own initiative in self-reliant sustainable development.

It is fitting to conclude with the credo that James Yen devised for the Rural Reconstruction Movement in China in the 1920s since it so beautifully describes the attitude, mindset and underlying philosophy which should guide researchers during the implementation of PR in community development.

"Go to the People.

Live among the people.

Learn from the people.

Plan with the people.

Work with the people.

Start with what the people know.

Build on what the people have.

Teach by showing; learn by doing.

Not a showcase but a pattern.

Not odds and ends but a system.

Not a piecemeal but an integrated approach.

Not conform but to transform.

Not relief but release."

(James Yen in Swanepoel, 1993:23)

7.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Handling internally divisive conflict**

The literature on PR and community development deals extensively with situations in which a group engages in conflict with an outside party. This type of conflict serves as a rally point, giving members something tangible to focus their attention on and organise around (Selener, 1997: 44-53). This tendency is so widespread that both these approaches may be regarded as conflict based approaches of development. Yet there is very little information about handling conflict within the group.

The literature on both approaches is replete with advice on avoiding potentially divisive conflict, but makes no mention of how to accommodate it once it occurs between members of the group or worse still between members of the group and the researcher/community worker. The fact that this type of situation is fairly common is borne out by the work of Taylor and Marais (1997). This researcher recommends that an attempt be made to clarify the position of both PR and community development on internally divisive conflicts within the ranks of the group members and what strategies both approaches can launch to combat this before and after it has occurred.

- **Clear delineation of the social contract**

The need for a social contract between the researcher/community worker and the group with whom he or she is working is widely acknowledged. However there is a lack of clarity about what the contents should be. This is mostly attributed to the fact that the social contract is a unique document that is negotiated between the researcher/community worker and the specific group that they are dealing with. This researcher recommends that a greater obligation be placed on the researcher/community worker to enter into a social contract with the groups they are working with. At the same time efforts should be made to compile a basic ethical guideline that should be followed when entering into this kind of negotiation so that there will be at least a degree of conformity and regulation in the ethical obligations between the researchers and groups in the practice of PR in community development.

- **Lack of clarity about the logistics of working with a community and groups in PR**

PR is a 'bit thin' on entering, initiating and working with groups in a community when it is compared to community development, resulting in a conceptual lack of clarity on how this is supposed to be done. Not all PR is done in conjunction with community development and it may prove beneficial to PR in other fields if care is taken to clarify the logistics of working with groups and communities in PR.

- **The unpredictability of PR in community development**

PR places unpredictable and diverse demands on researchers and institutions that support the process in community development. This is chiefly due to the fact that participants are voicing their own felt needs and engaging in a process of social praxis to address them. The consequences and demands that this process makes will inevitably be different from what outsiders expect them to be. Potential sources of conflict in these situations usually centre around issues like the duration and levels of institutional and financial support the project will need, participation, underlying differences and emphasis in development philosophy, and differing objectives and priorities that are being addressed by the research and the institutions supporting that research.

Consequently it is advisable to warn institutions and individuals who are new to the process of doing PR in community development of the potential roller coaster ride they can be in for and the potential this holds for conflicts of interest to occur with and within their institution.

- **The need to continue the process of empirically verifying PR as a valid research strategy in community development.**

At present community development is experiencing an upsurge in popularity as a development strategy at the local government level. This is chiefly attributable to the fact that it has been prescribed by the RDP, IDP, Local Government Act and other relevant policy documents as a viable strategy that should be used to try an effect development at the local level. It is absolutely imperative that PR be recognised as a valid and reliable research strategy for use in this process.

This study is a first step towards that goal. However this study is a qualitative exploratory comparison of PR with community development and has therefore not subjected the relationship between these two variables to empirical testing. From the favourable result obtained a **hypothesis** may now be set up which postulates the following question: **Is participatory research able to fulfil the research needs of community development?** This study can now be used as a basis to justify this research hypothesis and also serve as a means through which the relevant variables and indicators can be identified and operationally defined. This will allow the incidence and correlation between the variables to be measured and will either prove or disprove the hypothesis.

Superficially it may appear slightly contradictory to subject a research methodology which is at pains to keep research as simple as possible to such an elaborate scientific process. However by doing this the validity of PR in community development will be established beyond all doubt. If the hypothesis is proved it will allow PR, which is commonly regarded as an alternative research strategy, to take its place as a mainstream research option in community development.

- **The need to incorporate PR training in formal development training.**

With institutions like the World Bank and the IMF admitting to the fact that their development interventions have failed it is time to rethink conventional or traditional development training. As part of this process it is necessary to start incorporating the so-called 'alternative strategies' like PR into formal development training.

- **The need to impart community development and PR skills on a wider level at tertiary level.**

At present a large number of people who are involved in the management and administration of community development and PR initiatives have qualifications in other fields and have simply assumed the secondary task of initiating development because they perceived a need that they felt had to be addressed. These people are often professional people like doctors, nurses, health workers, agricultural workers, teachers, social workers, engineers and many others.

This researcher recommends that an effort be made to impart community development and PR management skills as part of these and other professions tertiary level education requirements. Specifically this will result in a rethink of tertiary level education which will result in a more multi-dimentional, holistic and inter-disciplinary point of departure. This will not only increase the spread of knowledge and skill about community development and PR but will also serve to legitimate development initiatives undertaken by these professionals in the eyes of both their fellow colleagues and other development managers. This recognition will in turn break down the barriers to personal ambition and advancement which often restrict individuals who initiate development using the 'unscientific' PR initiatives.

- **The need for PR to promote itself.**

PR is not very well known and needs to promote its "message' on a wider basis if it wants to make an impact on the way development is practised. To achieve this it will not only have to focus on education but will also have to promote itself using conferences, workshops and declarations of intent on the local, national and international level. This is very important since ultimately PR is validated through its use and the effects it has on people who participate in that process.

CHAPTER 8

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APPENDIX 1

ACTION RESEARCH

CATEGORY	ACTION RESEARCH
Purpose of research	Solve problems within a programme, organisation or community.
	A cyclical problem-solving process where practitioners/researchers familiarise themselves with community needs, plan collaboratively to take action and to evaluate the identified problem.
Focus of research	Organisation and/or community practice problems.
Desired results	Immediate action, solving problems as quickly as possible.
Desired level of generalisation	The specific situation under study.
Key assumptions	People in a setting can solve problems by studying themselves.
	Involve participants as collaborators in all phases.
Philosophical underpinnings	Heuristic paradigm. Individuals are involved as creative beings rather than as passive objects. Intervention/research is a reciprocal encounter involving co-ownership and shared power with respect to the process and product of intervention/research.
Standard for judging	Feelings about the research process among participants, the feasibility of a solution generated.
	Establishment of authentic collaboration.

(From Stevens, 1997: 37)

APPENDIX 2

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF PR

- Secondary data: such as files, reports, maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery, articles and books.

- Do-it-yourself: roles of expertise are reversed, with local people as experts and teachers, and outsiders as novices.

- Local analysis of secondary sources: most commonly the analysis of aerial photographs and satellite imagery to identify soil type, land conditions, and tenure.

- Mapping and modelling: people's mapping, drawing and colouring with chalk, sticks, seeds, powders, pens etc, on the ground, floor or paper.

- Time lines and trend and change analysis: chronologies of events, listing major local events with approximate dates.

- Seasonal calendars: by major season or more usually by month to show: distribution of days of rain or soil moisture; crop cycles; women's, men's and children's work, including agricultural and non-agricultural labour; diet and food consumption; illnesses; prices; animal fodder; fuel; migration; sources of income; expenditure; debt etc.

- Daily time-use analysis: indicating relative amount of time, degrees of drugery etc. of activities, and sometimes seasonal variations in these.

- Institutional or Venn diagramming: identifying individuals and institutions important in and for a community or group, or within an organisation, and their relationships.

- Linkage diagrams: of flows, connections and causality.

- Well being (or wealth) grouping (or ranking): card sorting into groups or ranking of households according to local criteria, including those considered poorest, worst off and most deprived, often expressing key local indicators of well-being and ill-being.

- Analysis of difference: especially by gender, social groups, wealth/poverty occupation and age.

- Matrix scoring and ranking: using matrices and counters to compare through scoring.

- Shared presentations and analysis: where maps, models, diagrams and findings are presented by local people, and/or by outsiders.

- Participatory planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring, in which local people prepare their own plans, budgets and schedules, take action, and monitor and evaluate progress.

- Drama and participatory video-making: on key issues, to enable people to discover how they see things, and what matters to them, and to influence those in power.

- Short-standard schedules or protocols as alternative to questionnaires to record data in a standard and commensurable manner.

- Immediate report writing, either in the field before returning to office or headquarters, or by one or more people who are designated in advance to do this immediately on completion of fieldwork. (Chambers, 1997: 116-119)

(For more see: Mikkelsen, 1995: 72-81; Wetmore, 1996: 22-24; Chambers, 1991: 523-527; Treurnicht, 1997c: 100-102; Case, 1990: 88-143; Freudenberger, 1994: 23-51; LDU, 1996: 1-83; Mukherjee, 1993: 43-87)